

Regulating the deregulation

Post-totalitarianism, musical culture and privatization in East-Central Europe

Anders Hammarlund Ever since the First World War the arts sector in East-Central Europe has depended upon the state. The communists takeovers that followed the Second World War offered many artists a safe position. The historical overview by Anders Hammarlund offers many such surprising insights and pleasing paradoxes. The state may have been powerful but it also worked hand in hand with deregulation on a gigantic scale: the black market. State socialism sailed with the big battleships of traditional cultural policy and ignored the mass culture, such as rock music. Hammarlund sketches the ambiguous roles of artists and politicians and illustrates how since 1989, in record companies and mass media, the supporters of free speech are forced to confess themselves, defeated by the hordes favouring free enterprise.

In april 1991 I travelled in Slovakia and Hungary, collecting material for a series of radio broadcasts about Béla Bartók and his epoch. In Slovakia I visited some of the mountain villages where the Hungarian composer started to document peasant music at the beginning of this century. The local people certainly had very interesting things to tell about their traditional culture and Bartók's interpretation of it. But almost everywhere the conversations soon slipped into the contemporary problems of

privatization and democratization. Those issues were important not only in the agricultural, political and economical spheres, but they also affected the conditions for local cultural ensembles. I realized that the ongoing post-totalitarian transformation and its cultural consequences might be even more revolutionary than the upheavals during Bartók's chaotic early 20th century, and that this process of change ought to be studied not only by economists and political scientists but also by

cultural researchers. This idea was strongly confirmed in conversations with cultural administrators and researchers in Budapest, Bratislava, Prague and Warsaw, and in 1994 it finally materialized in a research project called Music, cultural policy and post-communism in East-Central Europe.¹

Focusing on aspects of privatization and de-regulation in the musical sphere, in this article I present some of the findings of this project. Note that East-Central Europe here is defined as consisting of Poland, the Czech republic, Slovakia and Hungary (in the unavoidable discussion of the historical background the perspective of course has to be widened to the predecessors of these modern states, namely the kingdoms of Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary and the Austrian Habsburg state). Although it is a part of Europe which is characterized by ethnic and linguistic diversity, there is undoubtedly a common heritage which among other things has to do with the centuries-long presence of German culture, interacting with local ethnic cultures. One could also point at the structural similarities between the fundamentally feudal regimes which dominated the region well into the 20th century and at the unifying influence of the dominating catholic church which provided a strong cultural link to Western Europe.

Of course, in such a short article it is not possible to cover the whole, immensely complex restructuring activity taking place in the 1990s. I will therefore only shortly exemplify some of the forms of privatization and desettatization encountered. The first half of the article is devoted to the historical background, since I consider it impossible to comprehend and evaluate the contemporary transformation without some knowledge of the political and cultural conditions which prevailed in the region before 1989.

Revolution as a cultural event

'The social forces which led to the downfall of the communist power (...) are not those that will eventually benefit from the construction of the new system.' Zygmunt Bauman (1992, 157)

When totalitarianism was dismantled in East-Central Europe in the dramatic autumn of 1989 many of the leading roles were not played by politicians. Revolution also was a cultural event. This was most clearly the case in Czechoslovakia, where actually the strategy of the *velvet revolution* was formed during long, happening-like meetings in the *Laterna Magica* theatre in Prague. Parallel to the discussions and proclamations of the leading group of intellectuals and artists (and partly following their dramaturgy) a semi-spontaneous street show was staged in the Wenceslas square, a place full of historic symbolism and a very apt location for political mass performance. Most commentators interpreted this fusion of artistic and political activity as a unique expression of a general feeling of mobilisation against the corrupt and disintegrating communist regime. But the political awareness and involvement of the artist seems to be in fact an old tradition in this part of Europe. The velvet revolution to a certain extent followed a pattern set by earlier political upheavals, like 1848 and 1918.

Therefore, trying to understand the consequences for cultural policies of the turnover in 1989 we have to consider the traditional role and position of aesthetic activity in the general culture of East-Central Europe. One could say that the artistic field here was differently defined than in Western Europe. This was only partly due to the experience of the four decades of state socialism. The main causes for this artistic *Sonderweg* is to be found in the enduring enforcement of feudal social and political

structures during the period in which the national states of Western Europe gradually evolved into liberal, constitutional democracies.

Nationalism and etatism

Attempts at a cultural policy that strives to liberate artistic activity from the social representativity of feudal ostentation were made at the end of the eighteenth century by the Austrian administration. These emancipating tendencies however soon were counteracted by the nationalist political movements which gradually took over the scene during the following century. In Central Europe the middle strata in society were politically and economically rather insignificant; the modernizing role of the liberal bourgeoisie had to be taken by the *intelligentsia*, a rather nebulous entity, not a class, not an estate. Rather a controversial collection of individuals who loved to act as self-appointed symbol-creators and spokesmen for a political, i.e. national cause. The intelligentsia lacked a secure and stable social anchorage, it had a very diffuse social *Hinterland*. Freed from the obligations to feudal patrons, the artists and intellectuals gladly accepted and even competed for the obligatory duty to the national cause. Art was not supposed to be *l'art pour l'art*; the artist should be an instrument only.

The Austro-Hungarian Habsburg empire was a dynastic polity and its regime was supra-ethnic and supra-national. This meant that the different national movements could not count on the state for matters of ethno-national cultural policy.² Also, as a consequence of a gradually more liberal and de-regulative economic policy, the state refrained from too much involvement in the cultural sphere. Especially since the 1860s, when the regulations concerning civic organizations and associations were liberalized, cultural activity to a large

extent became a responsibility of numerous private, civic associations. Some of these were centred around a purely artistic activity (artists clubs, music and theatre associations, et cetera), others had wider aims and sponsored aesthetic production only as branches of a multifaceted social activity (e.g. the *Czech Sokol* movement, a nationalist organization with physical training as its main activity). Notwithstanding the in many respects (at least in hindsight) culturally favourable pluralism of this system there was a general feeling of dissatisfaction with its unsystematic ad hoc solutions. In 1918 the Czech musicologist Vladimir Helfert published a study on cultural policies in which he claimed that the new Czech state which were to emerge after the collapse of the multinational empire should take over the cultural responsibility from the nation (Fuka 1993). This etatisation was supposed to solve all the problems of artistic education and was also seen as a means to improve the social and economic standing of the artists and the distribution of the cultural good.

Cultural etatism, a confidence in the ability of state organs to supervise and finance cultural activity, became a strong component in cultural policies everywhere in the new East-Central Europe that emerged after the first world war. Of course this was partly due to the general political and economical situation in the new states which were created by the peace treaties. A large amount of centralization and dirigisme simply was required to forge these reorganized territories into functioning economic and cultural systems. For example, Poland had been partitioned since the end of the eighteenth century between Prussia, Austria and Russia, and these three sectors with different political, administrative and legislative systems now had to be reunited. The actual resources of the state organs eventually remained relatively limited, due to the

restrictions of state interference which were posed by the capitalist structure of the economy but also to the world-wide economic problems of the interwar period. Existing central institutions were put under state ownership, new ensembles and institutions were created and subsidized, but there was still large private and commercial sectors in cultural life. However, also in these private sectors the state exerted a strong influence through supervision, standardization, authorization, issuing of official diplomas, et cetera.

In 1945 economic reconstruction and national consolidation was seen as the central tasks of the first post-war, in principle democratic governments after the traumatic experience of war and Nazi occupation. This led to a reinforcement of the already strong etatist tradition. This was most clearly demonstrated in Czechoslovakia, where cultural institutions now to a very great extent were put under public or state ownership. When the communist party took over in 1948 there was actually not very much left to do in order to accomplish the fully fledged cultural etatism (Fuka 1993; Poledák 1996). The strong involvement of the state met with considerable sympathy among the ranks of the artists, who now for the first time achieved a secure social and economic position.

And so the program of nationalism in many ways was fused with the program of state socialism. One could even say that it was the planned socialist economy which made the fulfilment of Helfert's nationalistic ideas really possible! Incidentally, the English term *nationalization*, which in the central European context is somewhat clumsy since it presupposes the coincidence of state and nation, now really becomes appropriate. But with the communist restructuring of society a third actor appeared on the stage - the Party, which now took over the cultural responsibility from

the state. The presence of this powerful political entity now again made the dramaturgy of cultural policies rather complex and paradoxical. In order to understand the implications of the privatization and desetatization implemented after 1989 it is necessary to briefly analyze the workings of the cultural policies of really existing socialism, the system against which the ongoing deregulation is directed. State socialism created very peculiar relationships between the public and the private. Contrary to the belief of most people in the West the dichotomy between the two was not cancelled, only reinterpreted.

Paradoxes of state socialism

Under the rule of the marxist-leninist parties, private ownership certainly was dramatically reduced. Market mechanisms were avoided, entrepreneurs and middlemen replaced by personally disinterested functionaries and institutions who were supposed to act for the common good without much personal remuneration. On the one hand, this created an extremely regulated situation in which every transaction was supposed to be the function of a plan. On the other hand, however, it also resulted in a grand scale deregulation: the individuals all the time continued to seek personal advantage; in fact they were impelled to do so by the notorious shortage situation which resulted from the inertia of planned commodity production. Here I am of course describing what is usually called the black market. This often rather efficient field of transactions was illegal; officially it did not exist, and therefore it also was completely unregulated. Almost everybody in some way took part in this completely private and informal sector in which contracts, written agreements, accountancy and even real ownership were unknown.

The 'public' sector, the official economy of state enterprises, cooperatives and institutions in the same time tended to become 'privatized', as the managers belonging to the *nomenklatura* of party members, holding their positions as a kind of fiefs, became more and more inclined to treat their establishments as property.

To the ordinary little man it was clear that this 'public' sector was kept completely out of control of the public. Therefore he by all means tried to cheat this sphere of supposedly collective ownership which in reality was regarded as nobody's property, as a common in which anybody could pick the flowers and graze his cattle. The flowers were brought back home, to the little, secluded world of family and friends in which a high standard of ethics was maintained.³

What were the consequences for cultural production of these general mechanisms of state socialism? First, we have to realize that the peculiar kind of dualism between the 'public' and the 'private' which I just described existed also in this sphere of social activity. The multifarious cultural institutions on central, regional and local levels of course represented a 'public' sector, which was financed by budget allocations and largely independent of commercial considerations. But there also was a 'private' and 'black' sector: the *samizdat*, the unofficial, 'dissident' culture. The 'blackness' of this culture mainly was a consequence of the ideological symbolism of its products and the political standpoints of its creators. But since it did not conform to the official norms it could not use the official institutional network. Production and distribution had to be managed through informal channels, where ownership and author's rights could not be claimed.

A great deal of idealistic uninterestedness undoubtedly prevailed among the supporters and distributors of *samizdat* culture. But of course, even in this sector economic trans-

actions played a not insignificant role. Naturally, the scope of this informal sector is hard to estimate. The internationally well known intellectual and literary circles were numerically quite insignificant. A much larger and internally more important part of black or underground culture was the youth music movement, mainly centred around rock music. With the arrival of cassette recorders around 1970 here an almost professional chain of production and distribution evolved, partly due to the efforts of a generation of clever brokers and middlemen who under the cover of some legal activity managed to use the premises and facilities of official institutions. This created a kind of 'grey' sector, which actually became quite significant, especially for different amateur activities. It is important to realize that the lower reaches of the 'public' sector consisted of small cultural clubs and centres which belonged to enterprises, trade unions, cooperatives and municipalities. Here ideological control became very lax, especially during the 1980s.

To conclude this overview of the cultural realities of really existing socialism I would like to point out that during the whole period of communist rule there were significant differences between the states of East-Central Europe. The stalinist principles of 'democratic centralism' were most thoroughly and lastingly enforced in Czechoslovakia (though with a more 'liberal' interlude in the 1960s), whereas in Poland and Hungary already after 1956 a certain pragmatism was allowed to mollify the totalitarian principles. In Hungary the reforms in the general economic system made possible an involvement of small-scale private enterprise; thereby the importance of the black or 'second' economy partly was recognized and part of its activities legalized. All the time, however, the big institutional edifice of the

cultural sphere which had been built up during the 1950s continued to exist, and in some areas even expanded. The accelerating economic problems from the 1970s and onwards however led to certain budget restrictions.

It looks like a paradox that the cultural policy and the system of cultural institutions of state socialism favoured exactly those cultural genres that did not have a mass appeal, namely the classical or 'serious', academic fields of aesthetic production, whereas the objectively existing mass culture was treated with scepticism and rejection. This was most clear in the musical field, where the tradition of musical scripturalism and its aesthetic value system completely dominated in the institutions. Partly this has to do with the classicist orientation of 'socialist realism' which in its turn has roots in the leninist idea of 'popular enlightenment', of 'raising the cultural level'. But it is also a fact that it was the musicians of the 'serious' sector, dependent as they were on subsidized institutions, that had most to gain from an 'alliance' with the party-state. Not artistically, of course, but socially, institutionally and economically. For them, commercial activity in a cultural market never was a realistic alternative. Mass culture on the other hand, increasingly depending on electronic media also in the socialist countries since the 1960s, could appeal to very big audiences and therefore wanted to break out of the paternalistic guardianship of the party-state. It is not surprising to find rock musicians in the circle of velvet revolutionaries around *Laterna Magica*. It was even a rock musician who organized the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia in 1990.

Freedom of expression and freedom of enterprise

'Freedom' was one of the concepts most frequently used during the mass demonstrations in Wenceslas square in Prague

in November 1989. In these collective manifestations 'freedom' was defined negatively (freedom from what), not positively (freedom for what). People demonstrated for freedom from the surveillance by the secret police, from travel restrictions, from censorship, from restrictions on access to higher education and from many other forms of state intervention in personal lives. No demands were expressed for the restitution of private ownership during the demonstrations (Holy 1996). The opposing notions used during the manifestations were not socialism versus democracy but totalitarianism versus freedom, but the positive definition was given to freedom not by the demonstrators themselves but by the politicians who came to power during and after the revolution. To them, freedom was basically not the freedom of individual consumer choice but the freedom to exert private ownership, i.e. the freedom of owners-producers.

Soon after the shift of power and the introduction of political pluralism in the central European states privatization became a pressing and much-debated issue. A switch to market economy was seen as a necessary step in the adjustment to the international economic system. This is not the place to discuss the many convolutions of the complicated general economic transformation. Let me just remind the reader of the vast amount of legislative and actually regulative work (regulating the deregulation) that had to be carried out by the new administrations and which in some respects still is not finished. The reorganization of cultural institutions was not the first item on the agenda of the post-communist governments, but as soon as the command-economy (in which the real costs of anything never were assessed) was broken up, the problems of financing the activities of prestigious institutions like national theatres, national philharmonics, et cetera became

acute. Cutting down the staffs and raising the ticket prices was not enough to compensate the ebbing away of ministerial budget subsidies, especially in a situation characterized by a decreasing purchasing power of the audiences. Attendance rates were decreasing also as a consequence of the growing competition with new media and commercial culture. Sponsorship was seen as a way out of this blind alley, but was sometimes greatly hampered by unfavourable tax legislation. 'Adjustment to the market', trying to expand audiences through a popularization of the repertoire and a revision of the programme policy was regarded as unavoidable.

The question of actual privatization, the selling out of these big battleships of cultural policy hardly was seriously discussed, partly because there was little commercial interest in these economically inefficient institutions, but also because of the traditional symbolic rôles of the national ensembles. The flourishing of cultural life and of aesthetic creativity per se never was the traditional mission of these establishments. Right from the beginning they were instruments in the construction and maintenance of symbolic, national solidarity and identity. Long before communism they were actually political organs, and therefore the links with political power were unseverable.

Outside the world of 'serious', academic culture the situation was different. In performance genres with a mass appeal a lot of new actors appeared soon after 1989. They established agencies and record labels and dealt with both domestic and foreign artists. This private, commercial sector had links to the old 'black' or dissident private sector, now being legalized. From this side, quite a big interest was shown regarding the production and distribution networks of the old state monopoly institutions in media and culture promotion. But foreign competitors now also appeared on the scene.

Record industry

The record industry was among the first branches to be affected by this tendency. Under communist rule in each country record production was centralized into one single national enterprise, which also controlled record distribution.⁴ In principle only records from other socialist countries were imported, but even they could be hard to get. This monopoly situation made possible a large output of records with domestic, mainstream popular music which tried to follow the international trends without offending the limits of political correctness. The income from this activity made possible a high-quality serious production, which partly was intended for exportation to the West and thereby generated income in hard currency.

It is important to point out that the record plants and back-catalogue archives of these monopoly firms were the sole facilities of their kind in each country. The opening of the borders after 1989 and the free import of international record production completely changed this picture. The main international record companies soon were established in the area and started to compete with the local actors. To be or not to be now was the question for the old monopoly firms; privatization proper in some form, the transfer of property rights, thereby acquiring fresh capital, was seen as the only solution by most people in the business. But the methods of privatization differed. The model of a *management buy-out*, the sale of the company to the manager or one of the employees was applied in the case of the Slovak company Opus, which immediately sold out its stock-in-trade, gave up serious production, and in principle relinquished any cultural responsibility.⁵

Even for many of the adherents of the radical market liberalism which soon became so prominent in post-communist politics, this medicine tasted to bitter. In Hungary

privatization was delayed for several years when the conservative government which was elected in 1990 realized that the selling out of Hungaroton would mean that its back catalogue also would be privatized.⁶ As a consequence of the monopoly system the vast tape archives of the record companies actually (though not formally) had become national sound archives, documenting all professional recording activity outside the broadcasting organizations for forty years. Now the government ran the risk of losing control of this important cultural asset, which was regarded as part of the national heritage. An attempt at what can be called a *management buy-in*, the selling of ownership rights to an external buyer, was made in 1990, when the EMI was interested in raising the capital of Hungaroton by 15 million dollars and thereby getting a 50 per cent share in the company (Hollós 1996). The government stopped this deal but could not solve Hungaroton's acute economic problems, which resulted in a dramatic drop in the company's output.

This example illustrates the ideological paradoxes and contradictions which were typical of the first post-communist governments. On the one hand, they advocated a quick shift to market economy which of course presupposed a general and far-reaching deregulation of economic activities. On the other hand, they were adherents of a policy of national rebirth and consolidation, a kind of cultural revolution which needed strong, centralized institutions. Typically, in Hungary the reorganization of public broadcasting also became the object of a tough political struggle, the so-called media war (Gombár et al. 1994).

Radio and television

During communism the legal status of the broadcasting organizations was somewhat ambiguous. In fact, radio and television had closer links to the party than any other cultural institution; they stood under the

direct control of the central committee and its 'information bureau'. Broadcasting policies did not belong to the area of ministerial administration, they were handled directly by the political elite. After 1989 it soon became clear that these politically dependent bodies had to be reorganized, and the national public service companies of Western Europe were held up as models. In Poland and the Czech republic the broadcasting organizations were reformed in this direction rather swiftly, by incorporating them into new public owned companies. But for the hardliners of 'national rebirth' in the Hungarian government the tradition of direct broadcasting supervision had some rather attractive aspects, and this contributed to the halting of the process of transformation which was not completed until 1996, when the public broadcasting corporations came out as juridically independent joint stock companies (Györi 1996).

An important part of the media transformation was of course the demonopolization, which opened the space for private and commercial broadcasting. The fact that this took place before the transformation of the old party media seriously hampered the competitiveness of their successors, the new public service corporations. For serious musical life, the fate of the former party-state broadcasters was of outmost importance. The monopoly radio organizations were in fact big, centralized music institutions with a set of different professional ensembles and with big staffs of well-educated editorial personnel. They also played important roles as commissioners and concert managers, providing opportunities for composers and performers. Demonopolization, reorganization and financial restrictions severely hampered the fulfilment of this traditional mission, without providing any new institutions which are really able to take over the cultural tasks of the old radio system.

Amateur arts

Amateur culture during communism to a great deal was financed by the state, both directly through the ministries of culture, and indirectly through enterprises and trade organizations. Much of the support was canalized through budgetary central institutions for 'cultural enlightenment' who organized national festivals, educated activists and supervised local activities. It was an important but difficult task to reorganize this sector, making it more independent of political organs without destroying its economic and social base and its public character.

As an illustration of the handling of the problems in this sphere we can look at the Czech situation. In 1991 the central institution for cultural enlightenment, the *Ústav pro kulturu výchovnou innot* was reorganized into an information and consultation center for local culture, with a special branch for amateur arts, the ARTAMA. This is partly financially supported by the ministry of culture, but the regular support now is only covering working costs. To finance the activities the organization has to apply for grants for specific projects, and is also supposed to generate some income.⁷ In its activities ARTAMA has to rely on cooperation with local, municipal authorities who often do not put priority on cultural amateur activities. Earlier, local amateur ensembles often could use the premises of cultural centres and clubs free of charge; their travelling to festivals was heavily subsidized: now they have to face real working costs, paying market rents and travel expenses. A heavy drop in the amateur activities occurred in 1991-1992 as a consequence of these difficulties.

But it is not only the financial and organizational problems that affect the outlook of amateur culture. The function and standing of this field of social activity has been fundamentally altered by the grand societal

transformation. Before the downfall of communism, the only alternative to organized amateur activity was the cultural underground, which was socially and politically risky and mostly not very profitable economically. As a consequence, amateur ensembles were able to attract people with considerable managerial and artistic skills, who mostly did not care much about ideological matters but here found an appropriate field of social influence and confirmation. When economic deregulation opened new fields of entrepreneurship, many of these persons left the amateur sphere and went into commercial or political activity. Some ensembles have also taken the step into professionalism, for instance in the Czech-German border areas where new musical markets now took shape.

Concluding remarks

It is important to point out, in this overview of privatization and desetatization in East-Central Europe, that central, national and regional cultural institutions actually only to a very limited extent have been subjected to privatization proper. There is a shift from budgetary financing towards grant allocation on a project basis, and a restructuring of the public sector which can be described as regionalization and deregulation.

The actual sale of ownership has taken place mostly in a sector which can be defined as production of cultural goods by editorial offices of, i.e., the production of records, books, videos, films... These kinds of activity largely have been transferred into a legalized, commercial sector, becoming more and more regulated through market-oriented, legislative reforms. Demonopolization has also led to the emergence of private artist agencies, exploring the new commercial possibilities of an internationalized cultural market.⁸

Also, a non-commercial private sector has emerged, which was made possible by the establishment of freedom of organization and expression. These associations and foundations however often are financially weak, and even if new systems of national cultural funds have been established, to which such civic organizations can apply for project grants, their activity is still often hampered by the lack of capital and managerial experience.

Da coda

'At the height of popular disaffection in Poland, during the heyday of Solidarity and the years of its legal suppression, research after research found that a large (and growing!) majority of the population wanted the state to deliver more of its, specifically communist, promise. In 1985, for example, 62 percent of those questioned emphatically stated their preference for the model of a "caring" patronage state...' (Bauman 1994, 20)

To set a coda to my article about the somewhat paradoxical process of desetatization and privatization in four post-communist countries I now once again quote the Polish-British sociologist Zygmunt Bauman. Most people actively taking part in the massive protests against the Jaruzelski regime in Poland and the post-1968 'normalizers' in Czechoslovakia actually demanded that the governments should fulfil their ideologically underpinned promises of a just, prosperous and egalitarian society! The ideals of market liberalism were restricted to a thin layer of dissident economists and intellectuals and to some of the protagonists of populist mass culture. In the serious cultural sector, people undoubtedly wanted more pluralism and personal freedom, but this pluralism was conceived more in aesthetic terms. The setting free of individual profit-seeking and cultural

consumerism and the relinquishing of state and public patronage were alien ideas in these circles of ardent but not always outspoken opponents to the marxist party-regimes. But the propagators of freedom of enterprise soon were to dominate over the defenders of freedom of expression.

Notes

1. The project is financed by HSFR, the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences.
2. I remind the reader that the state is a political institution; the term here denotes the organizational and administrative entity which through its monopoly of violence and coercion stands as the superior social authority of a polity. The nation, on the other hand, is a cultural concept which can be used as the ideological basis or legitimation for a state. Historically, most states used other kinds of legitimating concepts (religion, dynasty, economic interests...). In East-Central Europe the coincidence of state and nation is a phenomenon of the 20th century; only the genocides and ethnical cleansings of nazism and stalinism here created comparatively homogenous nation-states.
3. In his book about national identity and the post-communist social transformation the Czech-British anthropologist Ladislav Holy recently has accomplished one of the best analyses of the psycho-social consequences of state socialist totalitarianism (Holy 1996, especially chapter 1).
4. Some of these enterprises used more than one record label, mainly to identify certain specializations, but there was no actual competition between the labels. In Prague the Czech Musical Fund (a royalty-based institution for the promotion and support of Czech music) issued records under the label Panton, and in Budapest the Hungarian Radio had released a few records, but this was mainly a promotional activity which in no way was intended to challenge the general monopolistic system.
5. Such methods of 'spontaneous' privatization became very popular among the former upholders of state socialism, the manager stratum of the planned economy, who apprehended that a quick 'institution of market economy basically legalised the effective ownership which had prevailed in the official socialist system' (Holy 1996, 157).
6. The fate of the Polish record enterprise *Polskie Nagrania*, the back catalogue of which slipped out of governmental control as a result of a too hastily privatization, was a mone tekel for the Hungarians.
7. In the old system, the institute for cultural

enlightenment had its costs for organizing a festival or a competition covered to 80-100 per cent through the Ministry of Culture. Now only 25 per cent comes this way, while 50 per cent of the costs must be covered by the town or the region in which the event takes place or by eventual sponsors; 25 per cent has to be paid by the members of the local amateur organization (Interview with V. Šrámková, head of ARTAMA in Prague; internal reports of the organization).

8. Pluralism of ownership of cultural enterprises does not guarantee a plurality of content and a high standard of quality. The opening of the borders in 1990 and the comparatively low prices in the Czech republic generated a boom in tourism, which to a great deal explored the picturesque qualities and cultural traditions of Prague. However, music here is merely reduced to one of several components in a touristic staging of the historic city. A visit to a concert in one of the palaces or churches of old Prague is very often included in the arrangements of travel agencies, and there are actually cases of an outright fusion of travel and music agency activities. In this context classical music becomes just a symbol of aesthetic refinement and is used as an accompaniment to historic architecture. Under such conditions, where the majority of the audience do not respond to artistic subtleties, the ambitions of the performers tend to be reduced to the level of (at best) professional craftsmanship.

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