

“And When We’re Gone It’s Over:” Transmission of Šumava Music and Identity in the Case of Eduard Hones from Horská Kvilda

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Abstract: *In this article I write about music and the transmission of musicianship in the village of Horská Kvilda, in the Šumava region of the Czech Republic. I base my research on the memories of my godfather, Eduard Hones, a locally well-known musician from Horská Kvilda. Eduard was one of the last German-speaking inhabitants who were not resettled from the Šumava after WWII. In my interviews with him, Eduard talked about the changes in local Šumava music culture in the last century and about music and music transmission that in one way registered the wider socio-political changes in the Šumava region, but in another also transcended them. I thus study the relationship between music and identity in the borderlands of the Šumava region through a discussion of Eduard Hones’ memories, his life, and his music practice and repertory.*

Key words: *Šumava, Böhmerwald, borderland, Eduard Hones.*

Introduction

The Vimperk cemetery is full of people who came to say their last goodbye to Eduard Hones. The crowd of maybe one hundred people winds from the gate of the cemetery to the grave, where Eduard’s brother Herbert is standing. He is one of the last two siblings left alive in the Hones family. In speeches held at the grave no one has forgotten to mention that the deceased was “a real Šumavan”¹ and that he was “connected to the Šumava.” After the speeches, all held in Czech, the priest says a few last words and the cemetery aides, along with Herbert, lower the coffin into the grave. The local brass band starts to play the Šumava “anthem” –“Es war im Böhmerwald.” (Author’s field notes, October 2014.)

In this article,² I explore intergenerational transmission of music and the construction of local borderland identity in the case of my godfather, Eduard Hones, from the village of Horská Kvilda, in the Šumava.³ Identity issues in this region are complex as they exist literally on the border and between different official and national identities. In the book *Emotions and Human Mobility* Maruška Svašek claims that “border peoples in different parts of the world demonstrate ambiguous identities because they are pulled in different directions by political, economic, cultural, and linguistic factors.” Due to

¹ i.e., “Böhmerwalder,” an inhabitant of the Šumava

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³ The Šumava is a mountainous region in the southeastern part of the Czech Republic.

particular historical and political circumstances, the “official” national identity in the Czech borderlands (i.e., the Sudetenland) on the border with Germany was changed numerous times in the last century. This situation also “left its marks” on the local people living through the historical changes in the region (Svašek 2012: 146).

One of these people was my godfather, Eduard Hones, who talked in my interviews with him about the changes in local Šumava music culture in the last century and about music and music transmission that in one way registered the wider socio-political changes in the Šumava region, but in another also transcended them. In a similar manner, Eduard Hones had to assume several different “official” national identities throughout his life, but kept to his local and separate Šumava identity that often came to the fore through music. In this article, I study the relationship between music and identity in the borderlands of the Šumava region through a discussion of Eduard Hones’ memories, his life, and his music practice and repertory. I look at these issues through the perspective of place and I start with a consideration of the historical context of Eduard’s hometown Horská Kvilda, in the Šumava.

Horská Kvilda in a Historical Context

Horská Kvilda (or Innergefild in German) is a small village in central Šumava (or Böhmerwald in German, Bohemian Forest in English), situated under the hill of Antýgl. It is one of the highest settlements in the Czech Republic at 1070 meters above sea level. It lies in the former Sudetenland region, a border area which had a majority of German-speaking inhabitants before 1945. Nowadays, Horská Kvilda has 30 houses on an upland plateau characterized by moors and peat bogs. It stands on the crossroads between the Upper Golden Road from the German town of Grafenau and the newer trade road from German cities Freyung and Mauth. It is assumed that the primal reason for founding Horská Kvilda was to defend the security of these roads.⁴

In the past, everyday life in Horská Kvilda was not simple. Due to the high altitude of the village, it was impossible to develop an agricultural settlement as in the lowlands. An important source of sustenance for the inhabitants of Horská Kvilda was herding and trading with dairy products, and most of them also picked mushrooms and collected blueberries and cranberries. However, the main source of income for the villagers was logging, which was at its peak at the turn of the 19th century.⁵

Before 1945, only German-speaking citizens lived in Horská Kvilda; in the neighboring village Kvilda (Aussergefild), a few kilometers away from Horská Kvilda, four Czech families lived among the German majority.⁶ In 1938, with the Munich Agreement, signed by Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and Italy, all of the borderland German majority regions in Czechoslovakia (termed “Sudetenland”) fell under

⁴ For more about the roads see Internet source one.

⁵ This is also the time when Šumava glass foundries were developing which needed a constant source of wood for their operation. This booming economy also spurred more people to move into the area.

⁶ There were 34 Czech-speaking and 1094 German-speaking inhabitants in Kvilda in 1930 (see Internet source two).

the Third Reich, which also turned all of the native German-speaking population there into citizens of the Third Reich.⁷

However the political situation in Czechoslovakia at that time was not simple. Since 1920, the borderlands with a German majority, which were connected in 1918 to the newly established Czechoslovakia after the break-up of the Austro–Hungarian Empire, aspired toward unification with Germany. This situation also escalated as Hitler’s Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP) was acquiring more political influence and pressure from political movements inside Czechoslovakia such as the Sudetendeutsche Heimatfront (SHF) led by Konrad Henlein and the Sudetendeutsche Partei (SDP) led by Karl Hermann Frank. These movements and parties were supported directly from Germany and obtained the motto *Heim ins Reich* (“Back to Reich”), which became very popular not only among the Germans from the former Austro–Hungarian Empire but also for German-speaking minorities throughout Europe.⁸ With the Munich Agreement in 1938 the delegates from France, Great Britain, Germany and Italy agreed that all of the Sudetenland with a majority of German inhabitants should be connected to the Third Reich. This led to the massive expulsion of approximately 150,000 – 250,000 Czech and Jewish inhabitants from the Sudetenland; the remaining Czech-speaking people became a minority in the Sudetenland. Expulsion also led to the prohibition of Czech publications and to a ban on the use of the Czech language in public. After WWII the situation turned around. In 1946, the Munich treaty was declared invalid in Nurnberg and the Sudetenland region was annexed to the new Czechoslovak state. In accordance with the Beneš decrees,⁹ the German-speaking Sudetenland populations, now a minority in the new Czechoslovak state, lost their German nationality and were forced to resettle. During the “wild expulsion” in the period from May to August in 1945, three million ethnic Germans and Hungarians were expelled from Czechoslovakia. Some of them were also killed as the Czech inhabitants wanted to take their revenge on the war crimes of the Nazi regime. The possessions of the Germans and Hungarians were confiscated by the state and the abandoned houses were filled with Czech newcomers or were demolished by the new communist government.¹⁰

These political circumstances also affected Horská Kvilda. Most of the men from there were forced to join the Wehrmacht during the war and, when (or if) they returned from the war, they were forced to resettle. After the resettlement, the former population of about 600 people from Horská Kvilda shrank to only a few families, which included the Hones family. Settlements of Horská Kvilda in Zhůří, Bernstein and Ranklov were abandoned and demolished. This also included some buildings in the center of the village

⁷ Czechoslovakian borderland regions with a German-speaking majority became part of Czechoslovakia after the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918.

⁸ For instance, this was also the case of the connection of Luxembourg to the Third Reich

⁹ The Beneš decrees were a series of laws drafted by the Czechoslovak government in exile during the WWII German occupation of Czechoslovakia. They aimed to restore the country after the war and are also associated with the expulsion of three million ethnic Germans and Hungarians from Czechoslovakia and with the consequent confiscation of all of their property.

¹⁰ For more historical details, see eg. Pánek, Jaroslav; Tůma Oldřich a kol. 2008. *Dějiny českých zemí*. Praha: Karolinum.

itself. Horská Kvilda had become a well-known tourist destination in the 1960s because of its landscape and the perfect conditions there for cross-country skiing. After the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, tourism started to flourish in the Šumava and the region was turned into the Šumava National Park in 1991. As a result, new houses were built and the remaining ones restored in Horská Kvilda, which now lies in the middle of the national park. New inhabitants started to move in, many of them with the intent of establishing tourist businesses such as guest houses and hotels there, so the number of Horská Kvilda inhabitants rose to 73 in 2008.¹¹

The Hones Family

I had been visiting the Šumava and the Hones family in Horská Kvilda since my childhood. My grandfather and Eduard met in the 1950s, during their military service in Slovakia. They became good friends and since that time the doors of the Hones' house have always been open to our family. We used to visit the Honeses for holidays, first with my parents, and later with my friends. We would stay in the Hones' house whenever we came there to go cross-country skiing (in wintertime) or bike riding (in summertime).¹²

Music was always present in the Hones' family; every time they had visitors, Eduard, or Eda (as we called him), took his accordion and sang some songs for us which could be either in Czech or German or in the local Šumava German dialect. Eda was called "the oldest Šumavan" and was a very well-known person in the whole Šumava region. In 2013 and 2014, I visited Horská Kvilda several times and convinced Eda to make a few recorded interviews with me about the role of music in his life and about his present and past life in Horská Kvilda. During the interviews, I also recorded several songs that he played to me.¹³

We recorded all of the interviews in the Hones' house, where Eda lived with his wife Gertruda. They had no children, but they always hosted many visitors there, either from the extended Hones family or their friends and villagers. Eda and Gertruda lived a "traditional" family life. Gertruda took care of the house, which despite being located in the middle of the Šumava forest was always perfectly tidy. She used to cook, do the laundry and take care of the garden, while Eduard worked in the forest and did house chores such as chopping wood, repairing the house, clearing the road from the snow during winters, and driving Gertruda to the city. He also plowed the snow from the roads for others and took care of the local administrative affairs as mayor of Horská Kvilda (see below).

¹¹ For more info about demography, see Internet sources one, or Zavřel, Petr; Anděra Miloš, 2003. *Šumava – příroda, historie, život*. Praha: Baset.

¹² We had a true family relationship with the Honeses – we always stayed there with my family or friends for as long as we wanted, we were always well-fed there by the hostess Gertruda, and they never wanted anything in return for their favors.

¹³ I recorded around eight hours of interviews with Eda and we spent many more hours talking about the family and about Czech and German politics without recording all of our conversations. I recorded around 20 songs that Eda played for me during these conversations.



Figure 1: Eduard Hones playing accordion in his kitchen in Horská Kvilda.

The kitchen was the main place where all of the activity took place, including all the music life (see Figure 1).¹⁴ Gertruda cooked in the kitchen while Eda would sit there at his computer and talk on Skype to relatives in Germany. Eda was fluent in Czech and German and in the Šumava German dialect and he switched among them according to the visitors: when they had Czech or German guests, he talked in Czech or German, respectively, and with family members or Šumava natives he spoke the Šumava German dialect. With foreigners the couple always used Czech. They would occasionally use German words when they groped for the right expression. Eduard spoke in the loud voice of a mountain dweller and without any accent in Czech, while Gertruda had an immediately recognizable German accent. This multilingualism of the household was also manifested on the decorations in the kitchen: on the door there was an embroidered cloth with writing in Czech, “Dej Bůh štěstí” (“God bless us”) and on the table there was a small decorative plaque with the German inscription, “Im Himmel gibt’s kein Bier, drum trinken wir es hier!” (“In heaven they don’t have beer, that’s why we drink it here!”).

This borderland identity could also be observed in the food customs of the Hones family. After the fall of the Iron Curtain, when they could go shopping over the border in Germany, they always bought the best things from both countries. During my times spent at their home, there always was a big lunch because Gertruda as a housewife and a former professional cook always wanted everybody to be well fed. She cooked popular foods from Czech and German cuisine: on every important occasion, there were “schnitzels” (breaded and fried pork steaks) with potato salad, a German dish popular in both Czech and German regions, or “svíčková na smetaně” (sirloin in a cream sauce) with dumplings, a Czech

¹⁴ The living room was used mostly for watching TV in the evenings and in the attic there was one little room with three beds for guests. In the summer, we would often sit outside at the table in the garden, but always only after the meal was first served in the kitchen.

signature meal. Gerta cooked the local Šumava recipes only for themselves. These dishes were considered “food for the poor” and therefore not suitable to be served to visitors.

For dinner, there was always as an assortment of cold food such as Bavarian pâté, sausages from relatives in Germany, and Czech bread. The Honeses always emphasized that they only bought meat and meat products from Germany and bread and pastry from the Czech town of Srní. The same was with beverages: the beer was always Czech Pilsner Urquell, but the *digestif* we enjoyed after the meal was always German herbal spirits (e.g., Jägermeister).

Eda’s accordion was also made in Germany, although he bought it in the Czech town of Pilsen. He told me about this occasion:

“Then I bought this accordion – a Weltmeister. I bought it after 1968 because my old one was like... gone. So I bought this Weltmeister, it cost 7,800 crowns then, it was expensive. After 1968, ’69, I spent my last money on a refrigerator and this accordion in Pilsen.”

Eduard Hones’ Life

I learned much about Eda’s life from the interviews I made with him and, since I was an actual part of the Hones family, Eda told me more than he would to an outside journalist or researcher. Eduard Hones was born on February 12, 1937, as the oldest child to a German-speaking family of a forest worker. Like most of the men in Horská Kvilda, Eda’s father had to join the Wehrmacht in 1942. Just before his departure to the Eastern Front, he contracted a severe inflammation of his legs due to the cold weather, so he was sent to Bavaria as a forced laborer and, in 1945, he returned safely home to the Šumava. He had eight children with his wife Anna. After the war, the schools were closed to German-speaking citizens, who were in the process of resettlement, so Eda attended only five years of the municipal school in the 1950s, when they opened a school in Horská Kvilda. His early school experiences were difficult, as he told me: “... the teachers were sent here for punishment. They had done something wrong somewhere, so they were sent here. And they did not speak German, so you can imagine what it was like for us.”¹⁵

Just after 1945, Eda began to work in the forest with his father since, as he remembers: “father had no one to go to work with and, as I was the oldest child, it was up to me because the family had to be fed! We were many, as I said.” Eda worked in the forest until 1970. After that, he worked for two years on the “Klostermann cottage” in Modrava, which is now a big hotel with a restaurant, and then he became the manager of a recreational facility of the Radotín cement works in Nový Dvůr, an hour’s drive away from Horská Kvilda. Eda left this job and returned to the forest works in 1978 and, in 1983, he opened a small grocery store in Horská Kvilda, where he worked for 19 years. In 1990, he became the first mayor of Horská Kvilda, an office he held until 2008.

In 1963, he married his wife, Gertruda, who was also a German-speaking Šumava native. They were not only a married couple, but also professional partners: when Eda ran the recreational facility in Nový Dvůr, he employed Gertruda as a cook and maid there and

¹⁵ From the interview with Eda, January 7, 2013

they ran the grocery store together. Because they had all their relatives in Germany, during their lifetime they requested to be resettled there six times. However, since Eduard was indispensable as a forest worker, the communist regime never gave them a permit to move. Eduard died on October 24, 2014, after a long terminal illness. He is buried in a family tomb with his parents in the cemetery in the nearby city of Vimperk.

A Historical Perspective on Music and Music Transmission in the Šumava

A major part of Eduard Hones' life was music and, as a musician, he experienced significant historical and political changes that also affected the musical practices in the Šumava. In this way, Eda represents a musical bridge between pre- and post-WWII music traditions, which reflect the general socio-political changes in the border regions between Germany and Czechoslovakia (and the Czech Republic after 1993). In this part, I first describe the musical life in the Šumava before WWII and, in the next one, I focus on the post-WWII era and demonstrate the continuities and discontinuities in music practices between both periods. In both parts, I primarily rely on Eduard's memories, which I also compare to historical sources.

Musicianship in the Šumava has a long tradition. There were always so-called *muziky* there, which was a term designating both music bands and musical events. Musicians were mostly forest workers who also played music after their work. They often played music for dances in local taverns and fairs and were called to accompany major local events: christenings, marriages, birthdays, and funerals; they provided music for New Year's Eve celebrations or they would accompany carolers and Church processions. The musicians sometimes made some money with their music, but the main source of their income came from working in the forest.¹⁶

During the 19th century, *selská muzika*, or peasant music (i.e., in the Šumava), was dominated by violins, bagpipes, clarinets and zithers but, at the same time, brass music started to emerge there. New Šumava brass bands were formed by military veterans who brought this new type of music, together with the discarded brass instruments, back from their deployments in Austrian garrison bands.¹⁷ They taught the locals how to play the instruments and they would pass the instruments over to the other musicians.¹⁸ Eda explained further:

¹⁶ Eduard remembered some details about the economic side of the pre-WWII Šumava musicians: "Well, they made a little money; there was an entrance fee at Polauf's inn, when there was a band. Gertruda's father always said that if they made twenty crowns [about 7.50 EUR in today's money] during the First Republic they were happy."

¹⁷ Typical brass band instrumentation was two flugelhorns, two bass flugelhorns, and a tuba and sometimes they would add a clarinet and a trumpet.

¹⁸ Music making was a very popular pastime in Šumava, and there were many musicians there who were eager to play. In Eduard's words, "[T]here was no radio, no television, no electricity, so everybody who had a chance and could afford or inherit an instrument did it." He also remembered that "they [the musicians] inherited instruments from one another because they couldn't afford to buy one - the salaries were not that big."

I know this from the stories told by her [Gertruda's] father; he always wanted to teach us. Her father played flugelhorn and he played it well. And then, here in Výchledy lived my uncle, my father's brother, and he had a bass flugelhorn. I don't know if he played the first or the second... And then there were some guys from Bernstein and one of them was in the military service in Budweis [České Budějovice] and he played in a garrison band. And because he was talented he learned it [by himself] and then he taught the others. These brass instruments are quite similar you know.¹⁹

There were no specialized musical schools in Horská Kvilda or even in the wider Šumava. Instead, musicians used their own houses for rehearsals. They played each week in somebody else's house. They learned songs by ear from each other, but they also used notes. They wrote down their own instrumental parts and thus created handwritten music manuscripts that were shared in the community and passed further to other musicians. These little books, bound together with a thread, usually had about 40 songs in them. Furthermore, as Eda remembers, the music was also passed down to the children, who were often present at the rehearsals: "They [the musicians] rehearsed once a week in each other's houses. I remember when they rehearsed at my Uncle Adolf's house, my father's brother. My father didn't play, but my uncle did, and I listened to him and I got really interested in the music back then."

The local repertory of songs included older and newer pieces, some local and some borrowed from elsewhere. In regard to the latter, Eduard remembered how his father brought the song *Einmal tät ich spazieren* ("One time I went for a walk") from forced labor in Germany: "I know this song in German; it was sung by our father! He returned from war and sang it all the time."²⁰

Before WWI, Šumava musicians often went on music tours, or *šumy* (Šafránková 2014: 10).²¹ On these tours, which lasted for about a week or two, they often played at fairs or at bigger religious events. As Eda remembers, they would play in local inns or squares, mostly for food, and occasionally for money.²² Between the world wars, Šumava musicians started playing for European circuses, which gradually replaced their regular *šumy* tours (ibid.: 42).²³

In the last chapter, I described some of the main music practices of Šumava musicians before WWII and also some of the ways of their music transmission, which came both from outside and from within the Šumava, either orally or through handwritten

¹⁹ From the interview with Eda, April 9, 2014

²⁰ From the interview with Eda, January 7, 2013

²¹ *Šumy* were strictly a male profession, as women were supposed to stay at home and take care of the house, the animals, and the children (Šafránková 2014: 37, 146).

²² From the interview with Eda, January 7, 2013

²³ With circuses, they would sometimes travel as far as to France, Italy, Poland and Russia (Šafránková 2014: 39,40). Šafránková describes this time as the golden era for Šumava musicians, and adds that Šumava became a "hatchery" of musicians for the European circuses (ibid.: 25).

manuscripts. Before WWII, musical life in the Šumava was very rich, vital, and widespread, but things changed with WWII and after it, as I describe in the next chapter.

Eda as One of the Last Musicians of “Old Šumava”

The continuity of musical practices was first interrupted with the onset of WWII, when the local men had to join the Wehrmacht, which consequently affected the reduction of musical practices in the Šumava. Moreover, the resettlement of German inhabitants from the Sudetenland after WWII further prevented the reconstruction of cultural and musical life there. Resettled musicians continued to play in their new homes in Germany which, in Eda’s words, happened in the case of Michael Klostermann’s band (i.e., Michael Klostermann und seine Musikanten), a brass band from Sand am Main, in Bavaria: “Michael Klostermann has a big brass band there. He is a police officer and a leader of that band and he’s originally from here, from Horská Kvilda.”²⁴ We must keep in mind that music life was diminished only in the Czech part of the Šumava. After the rise of the Iron Curtain, the communist regime did not allow anyone to travel abroad without special permission. Henceforth, the close neighborly connections between the villages were cut off. Musical continuity was preserved on the Bavarian side of the Šumava forest, which also at least partially explains why most of the German people from there know and like the songs from the Šumava, both the German and Czech ones, since they were exposed to them before WWII. Eda confirmed this in our interview: “They really like Czech songs in Bavaria. Every time you play German songs, after a while they demand a Czech song. And when you sing one verse in German, the applause is instant.” On the other hand, on the Czech side of the Šumava, the newcomers who moved there after the war were often from very different environments and therefore knew nothing about local Šumava musical practices, nor did they know the local songs from there. Eda started playing music after WWII while being one of the few musicians who remained in Horská Kvilda after the war. The only other local musicians from that time were his brother Herbert and his two brothers-in-law, who also played with him. However, while there was a big historical disruption of music continuity in Horská Kvilda and on the Czech side of the Šumava in general, Eda and his musical companions also exemplify some continuity with the local past (cf. Erll 2011: 56).

Eduard learned to play accordion mostly by himself.²⁵ Eda could not read notes, and he learned all the songs by ear. Soon he established a band with his brother Herbert and with the two brothers of his wife Gertruda. All of the musicians were self-taught and could not read the notes. Most of the time they played without rehearsals. This was possible because they all relied on the commonly known local repertory, which they obtained either from their parents or from musicians from surrounding villages. An indispensable item for Eda’s playing was also his songbook. Just as the old musicians created their own songbooks

²⁴ From the interview with Eda, January 7, 2013

²⁵ Eda also attended “a few” music lessons from a family friend and teacher Ms. Koňasová, who played the piano. Eda’s first diatonic accordion was bartered in the local inn by his father for ration tickets for meat. He claimed his first keyboard accordion from his brother Gustav, who got it for Christmas but did not play it.

with music parts for their instruments, so did Eda write down the lyrics of the songs he liked and played into his own songbooks. Eda took great pride in them and considered them as his “lifetime work.” He liked to show them to everybody and played the songs from them. He had two songbooks: one for the Czech and one for the German songs, each one including more than a hundred songs. Since he could not read the notes, he only noted the song’s name, the lyrics, and the song’s genre (e.g., polka, waltz, tango).²⁶ Most of the songs he played were musically the same, but they often had both German and Czech versions of the lyrics. The German songbook was also divided into parts with songs in common German and songs he sang in the Šumava dialect.²⁷

Most of the songs were simple waltzes and polkas based on three chords. Most of them had the typical central European brass band music scheme, with verse and refrain parts composed in one key and the “trio” in another key. In Eda’s songbooks there were a lot of commonly known brass band songs from the “dechovka”²⁸ music repertory, which come from all over the Czech Republic. He learned many of these songs from radio and TV and from the tapes (and later CDs) he bought to enrich his repertory.

Eda played local Šumava songs, on the other hand, only for local occasions such as reunions (see below) or birthdays. Sometimes Eda was invited to an event as mayor of the village and they wanted him to play there. In the 1990s, after the elimination of the Iron Curtain border restrictions, Eda was often invited with his band to Bavaria to play for various celebrations and at fairs. In our interviews, he remembered: “The musicians from Bavaria were mad about it because we were cheaper - we played for less money than they played” (cf. Gális 2013). Eda’s music travels were in a way a continuation of what Šumava musicians had been doing for a long time: playing abroad for some extra income.²⁹ The occasions they played at were similar to the ones before the war such as caroling or playing for bigger life-cycle events. Here is how Eda talked about these excursions:

We went from house to house to wish people a happy new year and play. We were with Gerta’s brother with two accordions and we went around to the houses. And when we finished we were limping from all that liquor people gave us. We played for lots of marriages and birthdays. Not the bigger event because we haven’t got the amplification needed for that.

At their music gigs, they adjusted their language and songs to the audience: they often played Czech songs for Czech audiences, and German or Šumava German songs for German audiences. The Germans also liked to hear the Czech songs but Eda never

²⁶ Genre indications helped Eda to identify which accompaniment to play with the song.

²⁷ Because of his lack of formal education, he wrote all of the lyrics down phonetically. Once he told me: “I have all the lyrics written down phonetically because I don’t know grammar a hundred percently in Czech or even in German. It’s written down the way I hear it.”

²⁸ Czech umbrella term for brass music as a genre, instrumentation and songs.

²⁹ These places were often only 15 kilometers away, so the musicians would often use bicycles for their music travels.

mentioned anything similar about the Czech audiences. Eda explained to me why Germans liked the Czech songs: “Czech folk music is like mood music. And they really like it. And every time you play a German song”, they say, “Play some Czech songs, too!”

In the 1900s, the “traditional” music-making events in Horská Kvilda and the Šumava became scarcer, mainly because of the changing tastes of the new generations. Eda explained: “These old songs [...] not everybody wants to listen to them [...] I only play them for older people like myself - when somebody celebrates their 50th anniversary, and so on [...] The young ones don’t want to listen to these old songs.” In addition, the older generation of those who moved out of the region stopped visiting Horská Kvilda due to their advanced age and with this the demand for the older repertory also decreased.

As I demonstrate in the last chapter, there existed both continuation and discontinuation of music practices in Horská Kvilda and the wider Šumava region after WWII. The number of musicians decreased due to the war and the post-war forced expulsions, and then there were technological changes that facilitated an introduction of a new music repertory to the Šumava region and the new changing tastes of the new generations. During the communist period, the music tours across the border were discontinued because of the restrictive Iron Curtain policies, but these were then revived after 1989 and, with that, also some new occasions for playing emerged such as reunions. On the other hand, some of the older practices continued. For example, there still existed similar occasions for playing such as caroling or the celebration of life-cycle events. Music transmission also continued mostly on the informal level of learning, and the practice of repertory memorization remained with the use of Eda’s songbooks. In this regard, Eda represented a continuation of the older Šumava music traditions as one of the last “old Šumava” musicians. This is also what he himself claimed: “And when we’re gone, it’s over.”³⁰

Music and “Šumava Identity”

In this last chapter, I address the issue of Šumava identity as it exists in music and songs and as it is negotiated within the larger context of an official national Czech culture. In that regard, I examine some Šumava songs from Eda’s repertory and talk about different social occasions at which these songs were performed, mainly post-1989 reunions and Eda’s funeral.

Considering the songs that Eduard Honer played at different music and social occasions, there is a question to be asked about the phenomenon of “Šumava identity.” According to Adelaida Reyes, identity emphasizes sameness or equivalence on the one hand and difference on the other (Reyes 2004: 48). Identity, therefore, has two basic aspects: with whom people identify and whom the others identify them with.³¹ In the

³⁰ The only musician who has remained in Horská Kvilda since Eda’s death is his brother Herbert. To my knowledge, there are also no remaining “traditional” musicians left in the wider Šumava region..

³¹ Reyes writes in this regard: “To identify clearly, therefore, people must perceive difference, and they must see the need to make that difference recognized” (Reyes 2004: 50). In addition, the identity is also constituted through the process of how the people perceive themselves as different from others (cf. Eriksen 1993).

Šumava, this dynamic phenomenon is particularly relevant because of the fast changes of regimes that affected the region in the 20th century, especially in regard to the changing “official” identity of the people living there which was imposed on them from the states that controlled the region. More specifically, Austro-Hungarian Germans from the Šumava became Czechoslovak Germans after 1918 and, in 1938, they became Third Reich Germans. After the war they were resettled and those who stayed became Czechoslovak citizens officially, even if they did not know the Czech language.³² As I wrote above, Horská Kvilda was an entirely German-speaking environment and, because of the remoteness, high altitude, and isolated nature of the region, inhabitants did not find the need to speak the official Czech language.³³ It also has to be recognized here that during the period of the First Czechoslovak Republic, in the areas with more than 20% of ethnic minorities, the use of minority languages was allowed in everyday situations (see Internet source three).

Eda and other Šumavans did not identify as Czechs or Germans, but as *Šumavané* (i.e., Böhmerwalders), so even when their “official” identity, imposed from outside, changed many times during the 20th century, their language and local identity persisted or was perhaps even reinforced by these same changes.³⁴

The “unofficial” borderline of Šumava identity also comes out in the local repertory of Šumava songs, which in this way can be considered as “musical markers” of Šumava identity (cf. Reyes 2004: 52). This is apparent, for example, in a very popular Šumava song *Mir sam von Void dahoam* (“We live in the forest”)³⁵ that Eda often played at various local events: “We live in the forest and the forest is beautiful, our girls make us proud, they are like young trees among the firs.” It is interesting to observe in this song how Šumavans see themselves in it as a “natural” part of the Šumava forest region (e.g., Šumava girls are seen in the song as young Šumava trees), which in a way counters the “official” historical narratives of the Czechoslovakian state after WWII (cf. Furlong 2006).

Another popular local “Šumava” song in Eda’s repertory was the song *Es war im Böhmerwald* (“It was in the Šumava”).³⁶ The text of the song is sung from the perspective

³² Eda made a comment to me in this regard: “Father knew some [Czech] phrases, but not many, and mother could only say ‘hello’ in Czech.”

³³ The custom in some remote Šumava villages, mostly in winter, was to put the body of a deceased person in the attic or cellar until the weather was better and the body could then be taken to the church (for more see Internet source five).

³⁴ This is similar to how Astrid Erll talks about transcultural phenomena: “aspects of remembering and forgetting which are located between, across, and beyond what we construct as ‘cultures.’ What we can see with the ‘transcultural lens’ is at first, the many fuzzy edges of national cultures of remembrance, the many shared sites of memory that have emerged through (...) cultural exchange” (Erll 2011: 65)

³⁵ This song was written in 1938 by Ferdinand Neumaier. He was born in 1890 in Kirchberg im Wald on the German side of the Šumava forest.

³⁶ The song was originally written in 1870 by glass painter Andreas Hartauer from the city of Sloup, in north Bohemia.

of an exiled Šumava person who nostalgically remembers an idealized image of Šumava, and how he or she desires to return there, to his or her “homeland” (see Figure 2).³⁷ *Es war im Böhmerwald* is played at almost every social Šumava occasion and is considered as the “Šumava anthem.” It has lyrics in German and Czech and is often sung and performed by both German and Czech Šumava inhabitants.

<p>“Es war im Böhmerwald” (German version)</p>	<p>“In the far depths of the Böhmerwald (English translation of the German version)</p>	<p>“Na krásné Šumavě” (Czech version)</p>	<p>“There in the Šumava” (Translation of the Czech version)</p>
<p><i>Tief drin im Böhmerwald, Da ist mein Heimatort, Es ist gar lang schon her, Dass ich von dort bin fort.</i></p>	<p><i>In the far depths of the Böhmerwald , There is my homeland, It’s been a long time, Since I left it.</i></p>	<p><i>Na krásné Šumavě, tam víska je malá a už po dlouhý čas stojí opuštěná.</i></p>	<p><i>There in the Šumava There is my native village, And it’s been a long time Since I left it.</i></p>
<p><i>Doch die Erinnerung, Die bleibt mir stets gewiss, Dass ich den Böhmerwald Gar nie vergiss!</i></p>	<p><i>But this memory Remains in me, That I will never Forget the Böhmerwald</i></p>	<p><i>Však přece vzpomínka zůstala v mém srdci, že já na Šumavu zapomenout nechci.</i></p>	<p><i>But still the memory Remained in my heart, That I don’t want to Forget the Šumava.</i></p>
<p><i>Es war im Böhmerwald, Wo meine Wiege stand Im schönen, grünen Böhmerwald.</i></p>	<p><i>It was in the Böhmerwald , Where my cradle stood, In the beautiful green Böhmerwald ,</i></p>	<p><i>Vždyt’ tam na Šumavě kolébka má stála, v krásné, zelené Šumavě,</i></p>	<p><i>Because in the Šumava, Stood my cradle, In the beautiful green Šumava, Because in the Šumava,</i></p>

³⁷ This topic of nostalgic longing for the Šumava is common for many Šumava songs. The song was first written in German, but was later also translated into Czech. The Czech lyrics were first mentioned in a collection of songs *Český jih a Šumava v písni* (South Bohemia and the Šumava in songs) collected by Karel Weis in 1920. Most of the Šumava songs that Weis collected and published in his books focus in their lyrics on various aspects of everyday life in the Šumava: working in the forest, going to dances in local pubs, unfaithful girlfriends and the beauty of the Šumava landscape.

<p><i>Es war im Böhmerwald, Wo meine Wiege stand Im schönen, grünen Wald.</i></p>	<p><i>It was in the Böhmerwald Where my cradle stood, In the beautiful green forest.</i></p>	<p><i>Vždyť tam na Šumavě kolébka má stála, v krásné, zelené Šumavěnce.</i></p>	<p><i>Stood my cradle, In the beautiful green little Šumava.</i></p>
<p><i>O sel'ge Kinderzeit, Kehr einmal noch zurück, Wo spielend ich genoss der allerhöchste Glück, Wo ich am Vaterhaus Auf grünen Wiese stand Und weithin schaute auf Mein Heimatland.</i></p>	<p><i>Oh hallowed childhood, Come back one last time, When I enjoyed, The greatest of happiness. When I stood by my home, In a green meadow, And looked far away, On my homeland.</i></p>	<p><i>Můj drahý tatiček, ten na to vždycky dbal, abych tu Šumavu navždycky miloval. Jak milo, útulno v té malé dědince nevyměnil bych ji ani za tisíce.</i></p>	<p><i>My dearest father, He taught me well, So that I Will always love the Šumava How nice and cosy It is in that small village, I wouldn't trade it even for thousands.</i></p>
<p><i>Nur einmal noch, o Herr, Lass mich die Heimat seh'n; Den schönen Böhmerwald, Die Täler und die Höh'n; Dann scheid ich gern von hier Und rufe freudig aus: Behüt' Gott Böhmerwald, Ich geh nach Haus!</i></p>	<p><i>Oh, Lord, one more time, Let me see my homeland, Beautiful Böhmerwald, Valleys and heights, I would return gladly, And shout happily, Take care of yourself Böhmerwald, I am going home.</i></p>	<p><i>Ach Bože, Bože můj, kdy spatřím domov svůj, tu zlatou Vltavu, zelenou Šumavu. Až já půjdu nazpět, radostí zapláči, pozdrav ted' Šumavě zdaleka poslat chci.</i></p>	<p><i>Oh Lord, dear Lord, When will I see my home, That golden Vltava, The beautiful Šumava? When I come back, I will cry with joy, But to say hello to the Šumava, I want now from far away.</i></p>

Figure 2: The German and Czech versions of the song “Es war im Böhmerwald” or “Na krásné Šumavě,” and their English translations.

Šumava songs were sung at various local Šumava events such as birthdays, family gatherings, or in taverns and they also represented an important part of the post-1989 “reunion” events. “Reunions” were social and cultural events that started after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, when the connection between the German and Czech lands was

reestablished. Long separated relatives were finally able to meet and the resettled people had a chance to visit their former homes. These events were public celebrations for the whole village. There were always beer and food present and Šumava songs were always played in addition to popular Czech “dechovka” songs. These reunions were organized once a year as official events on both the German and the Czech sides of the border and they could also be part of other kinds of local events, for example, the consecration of a new chapel.

For the reunions on both the Czech and the German sides, Eduard was often invited to play music and also to mediate between people who did not always speak the same language. As the audience was both German and Czech, he often played both German and Czech songs or versions of the same songs in both languages. With the song *Es war im Böhmerwald*, he even often played one verse in German and one in Czech at these occasions. Eda told me the following about his experiences at reunions: “They invited us to Bärnriegel, that’s a fancy hotel in the first village on the other side, in Finsterau, where we sat down first and then we took the accordions and entertained all the people until the midnight. They were just happy that this was happening, that we can go there [to Germany] and they can come here [to Czechoslovakia], that you can pass the border as you want right now.”

Šumava songs were also part of people’s life-cycle events, which was also the case with Eduard’s funeral. He died on October 19, 2014, in the Sušice hospital of kidney disease and leukemia. Local media wrote of his departure as follows: “From the world departed Eduard Hones, a real Šumavan from Horská Kvilda” (see Internet source four). At his funeral, only one Šumava song was performed, the obligatory *Es war im Böhmerwald*. All the other music repertory at Eda’s funeral was in Czech, which was the case with the singing in the chapel. Moreover, most of the speeches at the grave were given in Czech, too, regardless of the fact that perhaps half of the bereaved people at the funeral had come from Germany. On the other hand, nobody forgot to mention that Eduard was “a true and the oldest Šumavan,” while nobody mentioned any nationality, neither Czech nor German.

From this particular event, we can also observe how official and Šumava identities were negotiated. The Šumava identity was in the main part assimilated into the national identity during this official event but, on the other hand, in a more informal setting, everyone at the grave spoke about the Šumava identity. The Šumava identity at that moment appeared as something alive and even prosperous, even though the only ones who were born in Horská Kvilda and remained there were Herbert and Anna, Eduard’s brother and sister, the last two siblings from the Hones family. However, it is also alive through the presence of the Czech newcomers who resettled in the Šumava after WWII. Nevertheless, with Eduard’s death, a large part of Horská Kvilda culture departed as well. He was one of the last members of the Horská Kvilda community who spoke the Šumava dialect fluently and he was also one of the last active musicians there before he passed away.

Conclusion

In this article, I examine music and the transmission of musicianship in the village of Horská Kvilda, in Šumava. Moreover, I also discuss the historical changes in Šumava in the last century and how they are reflected in the music and identity of my godfather, Edward Hones. In this regard, I analyze the situation before and after WWII and after the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia. I observe many changes after the war as related to the music life such as a diminished number of musicians, new repertoires, changing tastes, and restrictive travel. However, I also see a continuation of older practices after the war, in the cases of informal learning, traditional occasions for playing, and the use of songbooks. Furthermore, after 1989, I notice the reestablishment of cross-border music travels and the emergence of new social and music occasions (i.e., reunions).

In the last part of the article, I also study the relation between “official” national identities imposed on Šumava people during the 20th century and the resilience of “Šumava identity” in this regard. Finally, I investigate how this borderline and in-between Šumava identity are expressed in the local Šumava song repertory and how these songs also mark the tensions between “official” and Šumava identity at present-day Šumava public events (i.e., reunions, funerals). Eduard Hones was an exceptional Šumava musician and local public figure. He was at the same time a link between the past and the present, a mediator among the people from both sides of the border, and a person who negotiated different kinds of identities in his life and his music. After his death in 2014, a part of Šumava music and identity will certainly disappear with him but, on the other hand, the mostly Czech newcomers to the region are already in the process of transforming and carrying forward the Šumava music and identity in their own way.

Video excerpts

Eduard Hones – <https://youtu.be/nEjKTeTr1Bc>

Illustrations



Figure 3: Eda and Gerta Hones



Figure 4: Marriage photograph of Eda and Gerta



Figure 5: Hones' house on a historical photography



Figure 6: Hones' house in its present state



Figure 7: A harsh winter surroundings of Horská Kvilda



Figure 8: Eda and his brother Herbert

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