

## RESULTS OF THE EVENT NORWEGIAN DAYS AND ITS IMPORTANCE FOR FURTHER VŠMU ACTIVITIES

The international event **NORWEGIAN DAYS** consisted of three activities:

- **Workshop Nórske husle / Hardanger Fiddle**, which took place in the Concert Hall Dvorana at the Music and Dance Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts (HTF VŠMU) on 31. 5. 2016 at 6:00 p.m.
- **Concert of Norwegian-Slovak Cooperation** in the Mirror Hall of the Primatial Palace on 1. 6. 2016 at 7:00 p.m.
- **Concert Dancing to Grieg** in Dvorana on 2. 6. at 7:00 p.m.

The main guest artist was the outstanding Norwegian violinist of young generation **Eldbjørg Hemsing**, one of the most sought-after performers of today.

Within the workshop on 31. 5., E. Hemsing presented for the first time in Slovakia a most important and popular instrument of Norwegian musical culture "hardingfele" (Hardanger Fiddle), which has had a strong influence on Norwegian composers from the 19th century (Ole Bull, Edvard Grieg) up to now. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the workshop, the Spectrum Quartet (VŠMU) played two movements from Grieg's *String Quartet op. 27 No. 1 in G minor*, inspired by Hardanger fiddle. In the subsequent discussion of E. Hemsing and the quartet members, Ján Kružliak (1<sup>st</sup> violin), Daniel Herich (2<sup>nd</sup> violin), Peter Dvorský (viola) and Branislav Bielik (violoncello) attention was paid to some aspects of musical performance.

Concert of Norwegian-Slovak cooperation on 1. 6. was held with the purpose of celebrating the visit of Olemic Thommessen, the President of the Norwegian Parliament in Slovakia and was intended for closed community from among government, diplomatic and cultural circles and representative offices („High-Level Event"). At this concert, E. Hemsing accompanied by Eduard Lenner (VŠMU teacher) played two works for violin and piano by Norwegian composers Johan Halvorsen and Ole Bull in a Slovak premiere. At this concert, only Norwegian and Slovak music was played, and for many visitors, this concert was the first contact with the music of this provenance.

At both concerts, E. Hemsing presented herself also as a soloist in the works for violin solo and orchestra with the VŠMU Chamber Orchestra led by VŠMU teacher Jozef Horváth – *The Last Spring* by Edvard Grieg and *Allegro* from *Concerto in D minor* by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. The orchestra presented also the *Musica Slovaca*, composed by a significant 20th century Slovak composer Iľja Zeljenka and *Grieg's Holberg Suite*.

Concert Dancing to Grieg on 2. 6. was a ceremonial concert of VŠMU Chamber Orchestra on the occasion of the finishing of the academic year. This concert, which is organized annually, was in 2016 from the beginning conceived to be a direct continuation of GRIEG DAY. This was the first successful bilateral project, which took place in November 2015 at HTF VŠMU in Bratislava and was supported by EEA and Norway Grants and Norwegian Embassy in Bratislava. The great success of the dancing production of selected movements from the *Holberg Suite* at the concert Grieg Evening on 11. 11. 2015 was the impulse for studying the whole piece by the VŠMU orchestra and its complete ballet production in the choreography of the VŠMU student Zuzana Andelová – on 1. 6. a selection with the author as a soloist; on 2. 6. the whole work with a dance group.

All activities of NORWEGIAN DAYS aroused a great interest of very diverse target groups and for the engaged artists, it was a unique opportunity of mutual cooperation, to learn new repertoire and about

the peculiarities of authentic performing traditions of Norwegian music. The project was a further step in the organic development of the cooperation between the VŠMU and leading Norwegian cultural institutions and artists.

During her 5-day stay in Bratislava, E. Hemsing gained a lot of experience in the artistic cooperation with VŠMU teachers (pianist Eduard Lenner and conductor of the VŠMU Chamber Orchestra Jozef Horváth) and students (members of the Spectrum Quartett, members of the VŠMU Chamber Orchestra). As she stated in the interview with Markéta Štefková for the Musical Life 7-8/2016, E. Hemsing was satisfied with the artistic level of her collaboration with young Slovak artists, and she would appreciate to be invited to VŠMU in future. For Slovak musicians, the possibility to work together with E. Hemsing as a prominent performer of her generation was a great challenge.

For the leadership of VŠMU, projects of Norwegian – Slovak cooperation are very important activities, because they increase the prestige of VŠMU as the leading Slovak artistic university in diplomatic and government circles in Slovakia, and in a broader international context.

Based on good experiences, the students and teachers of VŠMU were engaged in the further cooperation with the Norwegian Embassy on 17. 5. 2016 (celebration of the Norwegian Constitution Day) as well as with the Slovak Government Office (Signing ceremony of the Agreements on the Financial Mechanisms of EEA and Norway Grants 2014 – 2021) on 28. 11. 2016.

In 2017, a next bilateral project between VŠMU and Norwegian artists and musicologists is planned. In the dramaturgy of the project, the 110th anniversary of the death of the most important Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg (1843 – 1907) will be taken into account. The attention will be paid also to the fact that the founder of the modern Slovak musical culture Ján Levoslav Bella (1843 – 1936) was born in the same year as Grieg. Parallels will be sought also between contemporary music of both countries. The project will consist of more activities (workshop/s, concert/s, musicological seminar) and a part of these activities will take place in Norway. In early 2017, the VŠMU organizers will enter into negotiations with the artists and artistic organisations in Norway, the Norwegian Embassy, Slovak Government Office etc.

The project was an important contribution to the Slovak presidency of the Council of the EU in 2016.

Prof. Markéta Štefková  
Initiator and guarantor