

TAPE INDEX

Victor Kuchera
+ Phillips Czech Singers

Int. by J.P. Leary
Sony Cassette Recorder
TDK D-90 tape

Phillips, WI
June 15, 1991

Side B

(1) Announcement.

2. B. 1929, lives in house where born. Dad from northern corner of Czechoslovakia, near German border. Mother b. in Iowa, her mother cousin of Anton Drorak. Mother moved from there to Rice Lake + Hugen, WI, thence to Phillips. Name was Barta. Children were Ed (1917-1989), Elske Piska, Agnes Micek, Dorothy Legner, Adeline?, and Victor.
3. [Mother struck harmonica in V's mouth, she also played button acc.] V learned button accordion + then trumpet. Played trumpet in ~~Chicago~~ ^{Army} and later in Chicago in polka and dance bands.
4. Moved back to Phillips in 1971. Got going on the accordion. Started festival six years ago. Got heavily into rejuvenating Czech music.
5. Mother played button accordion, two-row. People came for card parties or invited her to visit. A cousin in Iowa still plays piano accordion + Ben Barta, a relative in southern MN, has a band. V. not related to Frank and Ernie Kuchera in NE.
6. Plays some Czech songs from years ago! Prune Song, Cervený Sateček, Šla Andulko do Zeli, Louka Zelena. ~~His~~ interest in songs not so well known. "I like to go after --- some of these have real nice language, real nice meanings." "Midnight Rose" is one. "Vzpomínám" comes from old sheet music. V played to a Czech family who hadn't heard it.
7. V got seven boxes of old music when a local accordionist died. Have copied a lot of Jerry Mazanec songs. There was a Zech Family ^(Hank Zech) Orchestra. Wants to find someone to donate music to (Leary Bushes Mills Music Library). V has 6-800 old 78s, many are Czech. Has put them onto cassette tapes.
8. In Chicago. Early 1950, then to Korean War, out in 1952. Played w/ Joe Pat (Patersek) and over LaGrange Radio w/ Tom Kastel (Kashell) + the Polka Gents. Knew the "Berwyn Bohemians." [Breen in the tape] Played w/ a 16 piece "big band," two jobs to save the Trianon. Played at Sokol Hall on 26th + Kielzie, and Huralek's (sp?) in Berwyn. Then 16 yrs. in Elmhurst, then 6 years to Elgin where he discontinued music.
9. V recalls Dick Dittke barely.
10. Had 5 piece band when still in school in Phillips. "Stardusters." Played 2 1/2 times a week in high school. Accordion, drums, two trumpets, female singers. Jitterbug, two step, polkas, waltzes.
11. Inspired by Ronny Goetz. V likes to play harmony above lead rather than below. V. loves to play higher notes. Also admired Lawrence Duhan. Sweet, smooth sound, played lot of diminished chords. Liked Wally Lves from Marshfield, Gene Heier, Cousin Fuzzy. Whoogie John, Slim Fat.
12. Jerry Mazanec most inspr. re: language because so much good singing. Also liked another Cleveland duo, piano acc. + drums, Frank & Bukac.

13. V doesn't go for Jan Koric, Prefers the original "Red Skirt Waltz" to "Blue Skirt Waltz." (2)

14. Got together Czech singers after First Festival. Sat down in R.E.A. office. V. set down words, started w/ones they knew. Taught them to sing in key, lots of them knew the words. Then threw new songs at them. Singers have just ^{words} ~~musical~~, no notes. Adapts keys to fact that mostly women sing. Median age 72. Other Czech singing groups have same problem.

15. Group doesn't do any songs made up in community, but V has adapted a duet from ~~East~~ Polish to Czech. Sings "Tom lat Polka," "Deer Barrel" in Czech, English, German.

"We sat down in a ... don't use any music at all."

[End of Interview]

Side A

Victor Kuchera, accordion + vocals; Dolly Petruzalek, vocal.

1. Medley [begin in progress] Heski od Podlahi / A Ja Sam / Zelene Hajje / Zistan Ti S Nam

2. Dobry Rana

very nice → 3. Do Lesicka Na Cekanova [Czech + English] 2:08

4. Vz pominame

also good 5. Ten Nas Stary Deda
but w/ some clumsiness.

6. Moj Mili Pepicku / Baba Fousata / Ach Bozelasko / Briza Zelena

Begin
choir

7. Pisnicka Ceska

8. Čokovička 2:55

9. Ctyri Pary Bilejch Koni

10. Ja Mama Rada Kapelinika

11. Pisen Pro Kristinko Kladno

12. Kladno

13. Bile Konvalinky

14. Cikanke Ti Krasna

[End of session]