

# SOUNDCZECH

## HISTORY

April 2017 marked a turning point in the history of the Czech music industry. Based on the demands from the representatives of the music sector and an initiative of the Arts and Theatre Institute, an export agency, SoundCzech/Czech Music Office, was founded with the aim of supporting the Czech music scene in all varieties of music genres.

Behind the foundation of the office are players from the field of the Czech music sector themselves. In 2015, a meeting of the initiators took place, where they voiced the importance of creating a bureau to represent the Czech music scene abroad, as well as supporting export activities. They were inspired by their foreign colleagues, who have successfully drawn support from the export offices in their home countries for the last couple of years.

Kateřina Kalistová (Deputy director of the live art section of the Ministry of Culture) says: *“The Ministry of Culture supported the idea of creating the Czech Music Office from the beginning as an important part of the promotion and export of Czech culture abroad as well as a part of the creative economy itself. The experience of similar offices abroad showed that the music sector's impact on the economy is no less than the movie or audio-visual industry's. Without the purposeful support of the Czech music industry and its infrastructure, engaging in international networks and promoting its interests abroad with the help of the export office, the industry will not be able to withstand the competition from abroad.”*

Pavla Petrová (Director of the Arts and Theatre Institute) adds: *“We have decided to support the creation of the Czech office for music exchange in the manner of existence of similar offices abroad and in accordance with the mission of Cultural policy of the State and the Concept of the Support for the Arts of the Ministry of Culture up to the year 2020. In 2015 and 2016, preparations for launching the office took place. Meetings with the representatives of the music industry were held where the concept of the office's scope of operation was discussed and prepared to be later presented at the Ministry of Culture as a foundation for financing the office's activities in the coming years.”*

In March 2017, an open competition for the position of the director of the office took place. Based on the evaluation of the committee, it was decided that the position was offered to [Márton Náráy](#). He has been an active member of the international music scene for the past two decades and one of the initiators of the Hungarian export office Music Export Hungary.

Out of the members of the committee, nine were chosen to form CMO's Dramaturgical Board for the term of office to the end of the year. Following on from this, members of the board will be elected for two-year terms of office by a music platform. Márton Náráy confirms the importance of launching the platform: *“We are all aware that without the initiative, in addition to activity and cooperation within the*

*music sector, it is not possible to create an effective organisation that would cover and reflect the needs of the music industry.”*

The role of SoundCzech/Czech Music Office will primarily be to support the Czech music scene on a local and global scale. The European Union is also planning to officially classify the music sector as one of the European creative industries. There are plans to start direct support aimed at boosting the growth of the music industry from 2020. Music is not only a living element of our national tradition and a means of cultural communication, it is also one of the most successful creative industries. This is why support for the growth of music scene also has a great social and financial impact apart from its visible cultural influence. To attain the growth of the music sector on the European scale, the music industry in every country needs to have local infrastructure and representatives on a local and international level. The music export office should fulfill this role. SoundCzech/Czech Music Office is an active member of a number of international networks. One of those is the European Music Export Exchange, which represents and lobbies for the music industry on European level.

#### **GOALS:**

- Creating a platform out of the ranks of representatives of the music industry in The Czech Republic as a foundation for activities of the music export office; supporting the infrastructure and cooperation between individual players and segments of the music industry; encouragement to exchange information, experiences and best practices. Active communication will play an important role in that regard. A new information web portal, created under the Arts and Theatre Institute, will serve that role. It will be launched at the end of September and made fully-functional by the end of this year. It will serve as an information channel for the Czech music industry targeting external regions.
- Promotion of the Czech music scene abroad at relevant fairs, showcases, festivals etc.; support and promotion of Czech music artists on the international market based on their effectiveness and actual popularity in the given country; This year, SoundCzech will create favourable conditions for presenting the Czech music scene at the [Waves Vienna](#) festival. Six bands will introduce themselves within this year's edition under the banner of "Czech Focus". Two banquets will take place in addition to speed meetings. The Czech music office will ensure the accreditation and cover the travelling costs of twenty selected music professionals who will attend B2B meetings during the event. SoundCzech financially supports the [Czech Fresh](#) project, which has been created to support a chosen Czech artist. A competition took place and in its final round, Thom Artway was selected as a winner. He was chosen after his performance at the Rock for People Festival by Mark Bennet himself - an agent for one of the biggest foreign agencies, [United Talent Agency](#). This year, SoundCzech will ensure the attendance of Marta Töpferová at the [Womex](#) 2017 Music Fair in Katowice. The artist was chosen by the organisers themselves.

- Organizing and financial support of professional training (VET – Vocational Educational Training) in the form of informal training courses, workshops, coaching sessions etc. for Czech music artists, promoters, managers, production managers, agents, etc. and establishing the basic know-how of professionalism in the music industry. “By education, we don't mean a formal music education or teaching how to play an instrument, but teaching artists and music professionals necessary skills to become successful on the foreign market.” adds Márton Náráy. This year, SoundCzech has already supported important international music conferences organised in The Czech Republic ([Czech Music Crossroads](#), [Czeching](#) and [Nouvelle Prague](#)) by financially supporting the educational part of their programmes - participation of qualified foreign lecturers and mentors.
- Searching for local and international financial partners (fundraising) This year, director Márton Náráy initiated an organisation called “CEEtrnal party” at the significant music conferences and showcase festivals [Eurosonic Noorderslag](#) and [Reeperbahn](#). This is a collaborative presentation and co-financed together with other countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE Region): Slovakia, Austria, Poland, Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Russia. Potential significant partners have been addressed: OSA, Intergram, IFBI, Czech Radio (Český rozhlas) and further partners from the public as well as private sector will be progressively addressed. For the future, preparations are to be made to draw support from grants for particular projects on European, regional and local level.
- Connecting Czech music professionals with international music scenes by exchange projects and collaboration strengthening the regional music industry within CEE region and consequently supporting the improvement of competitiveness of the region, which includes The Czech Republic, on a global music market. Apart from the CEE region, the SoundCzech/Czech Music Office will also focus on relevant foreign markets based on a long-term concept or current foreign cultural policy.