

Music in the Year of Truth

*A View on the Contribution
of Selected Songs to National
Unity during the Velvet Revolution
in Slovakia*

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ABSTRACT

The term Velvet Revolution denotes the events that took place between 16 November and 29 December 1989 and resulted in overthrowing the long-standing communist regime in Czechoslovakia. This historical milestone is often connected with specific symbols, such as the V sign and the jingling of keys, a gesture signifying that the country unlocked its door to the Western world. Music also played an important role during demonstrations in the squares. Alongside political activists and dissidents, several artists representing various genres of pop, folk, and classical music performed there to support the crowds. Some of the songs sung during those revolutionary days were written in the heat of the moment or shortly before. Others were evergreens without political overtones. As a form of protest or an expression of hope for a better future, they all perfectly captured the atmosphere of this final reckoning with totalitarianism. The artistic activities of some of the participating singers had been restricted under communism and their performances had an even greater effect for that reason. At the same time, the involvement of popular artists was risky for them personally because, if the change of regime had failed, it would probably have meant the end of their careers. Regardless of their previous status, the musical pieces they performed became an essential part of the demonstrations.

This article reflects on the significance of music during the Velvet Revolution as an important persuasive element. Along with a survey of the characteristics of song authors and performers, selected songs will be categorised according to the specific features through which they contributed to national unity in those decisive moments.

Keywords: Velvet Revolution, musical performance, persuasion, magnetic song, rhetorical song

‘As one talks in English of a “moment of truth” for some undertaking, so this was a year of truth for communism’.¹ British historian, author and commentator Timothy Garton Ash used these words for the events of 1989, arguing that it was the year communism died in Eastern Europe. After more than forty years, Czechoslovakia, alongside Poland, Hungary, and the German Democratic Republic, bade farewell to a regime that had become a symbol of lack of freedom and oppression for many people who lived there.

Even several years before few had expected such a radical change. This was because, unlike for instance in Poland, the political situation in Czechoslovakia had stagnated considerably in that decade. This was reflected in the reactions to the policy of perestroika and glasnost announced by Mikhail Gorbachev after his accession as head of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in

1985. Although the Czechoslovak Communist leadership verbally supported these principles, they remained extremely conservative in their attitude towards any opposition movements.

The Candle Demonstration (Slovak: *Sviečková manifestácia*), held on 25 March 1988 in Bratislava, offers an outstanding example of this state of affairs. It was the first mass demonstration against the regime after 1969.² It was organised by Roman Catholic dissent groups demanding religious freedom in the country. The peaceful rally, which was attended by almost five thousand people in the square and adjacent streets in the city centre, was abruptly interrupted by the decision of communist officials, who were watching from the balcony of a nearby hotel building. Although no speeches were given and people attended it to express their beliefs only with burning candles and prayer, the demonstration was violently suppressed. With blaring sirens, the public security service vehicles began driving furiously around the square, dispersing the crowd, beating people with batons, using tear gas and dogs. Although the protesters did not intend to take violent action, the police deployed water cannons against them. Dozens of citizens, including some who accidentally found themselves in that place, were arrested and subjected to several hours of cross-examination. Despite its aggressive nature, the intervention of the riot police was approved of by the Presidium of the Central Committee of Czechoslovak Communist Party without any objections. The party authorities thus demonstrated their power and sent a warning message to participants of any such possible events in the future.

In the following year, the social situation grew even more tense, especially after the Palach Week demonstration in Prague, anniversaries of the Warsaw Pact invasion on 21 August and Czechoslovak independence on 28 October. As it turned out, it was a student movement, not politicians, that finally rang the death bell for the communist regime. 17 November 1989 was both the International Students’ Day and the fiftieth anniversary of Jan Opletal’s death at the hands of Nazis. Prague’s students held an official memorial meeting at the Charles University campus at Albertov. After this commemoration had ended, the situation soon got out of hand, with thousands of students marching towards Prague, chanting slogans such as ‘Free

¹ Timothy Garton Ash, *We the People. The Revolution of ‘89, witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin and Prague* (Cambridge, 1990), 138.

² Peter Jašek and others, *Sviečková manifestácia I. Štúdie, spomienky a svedectvá* (Bratislava, 2015), 7–8.

Elections' and 'Democracy'. The non-violent character of this demonstration is aptly symbolised by protesters adorning police riot shields with flowers and the security force being urged to lower their arms. Since the security had only one goal – to prevent students from reaching the city centre, they closed the main access and began to bottleneck the crowd. The only escape was through side lanes, through the gauntlet of baton-wielding police, resulting in over 500 injured students and dozens arrested during what the regime euphemistically called 'restoration of peace and order'.

The news of this brutal crackdown spread like wildfire across the country, and events soon gained momentum. Students were the first to speak out in public for democratisation as well as freedom of social change. Their protests were followed on both sides of the republic by those of actors. Their participation was of great social importance as they enjoyed strong public support and popularity. Equally important were the meetings of anti-regime activists from the ranks of artists, writers, and intellectuals, their debates about the situation and planned responses to the events at the universities and in theatres.

On the same day, 19 November, broad-spectrum civic coalitions were formed both in Prague and Bratislava, uniting most of the anti-communist groups. The Czech Civic Forum joined forces with The Public Against Violence in Slovakia. In addition to the much-needed investigation of the crackdown on students in Prague, their leaders declared a peaceful approach, social change, democracy, and dialogue across the society. Large public meetings were initiated to achieve these goals in the following days. Because of their completely non-violent course, leading towards democracy, this series of events earned the title of the Velvet Revolution.³

This historical milestone was accompanied by a number of specific visual symbols and gestures. In addition to the logo of The Public Against Violence, the V-sign for peace and victory frequently appeared in the squares. Unlocking the door to the Western world and the end of the country's long-standing regime were heralded by people with jingling keys.

Verbal slogans used during the demonstrations included 'We Are Not Like Them', 'Unity Is Strength', 'We Do Not Want Violence', and 'Truth Prevails'. Especially that last one went viral thanks to an extremely

interesting coincidence. For years, the phrase was known as the national motto of Czechoslovakia, adopted by its first president, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, shortly after gaining independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918.⁴ The reason was not only nostalgia for the democratic times of the First Republic. At the time, these words were also associated with the title of the song 'Pravda vítází' by the popular band Tublatanka, where they appeared in the incipit of its refrain.

Pravda vítází, pravde čas nevadí, ani lesk všemocných peňazí.	Truth prevails, truth doesn't care about time, or the lustre of all-powerful money.
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Pravda vítází ak u sám nezradíš, pravda vždy zvíťazí zvíťazí.	Truth prevails, if you don't betray it yourself, truth will always prevail, it will prevail.
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Tublatanka hard rock trio, formed in 1982, played a key role during the early revolutionary days not only due to their music. On the first two days, demonstrations were held in the Hviezdoslav Square (in the same spot where the Candle Demonstration had taken place), with hundreds of people taking part. Since the number of demonstrators was expected to grow to thousands, they moved to the larger Slovak National Uprising Square, where a sufficient sound system proved to be the biggest problem. The band members therefore willingly provided their own equipment and installed a sound system with four PA cabinets and two guitar amplifiers. This was used during the first three days of the revolution, allowing speakers to address a crowd of over 50,000 people.⁵ This decision was very risky for the band since the situation in the first days was uncertain, with the threat of police and militia intervention. According to archival materials, more than 2,000 soldiers, a hundred ten prisoner transport vehicles, thirty-eight armoured personnel carriers and sixty-three tanks were on standby, ready for immediate action. In case of attack, a plan was devised to prevent panic and injuries. The organisers intended to make people sit down or squat and wait.⁶ In addition, the entire action was monitored by State Security agents.⁷

⁴ Ladislav Holý, *The little Czech and the Great Czech Nation. National Identity and the Post-Communist Social Transformation* (Cambridge, 1996), 40.

⁵ Peter Jašek and others, *Od totality k slobode. Nežná revolúcia 1989* (Bratislava, 2019), 146.

⁶ Jozef Žatkuliak and others, *November 1989 a Slovensko. Chronológia a dokumenty (1985–1990)* (Bratislava, 1999), 67.

⁷ Pavol Balun, *November očami ŠtB a ulice* (Bratislava, 2009),

³ Jan Měchýř, *Velký převrat či snad revoluce sametová? Několik informací, poznámek a komentářů o naší takřčené něžné revoluci a jejích osudech 1989–1992* (Praha, 1999), 13.

Since their main task was to identify and investigate all activities and persons considered to be in opposition to the regime, they had been monitoring Tublatanka as a potential object for several months.

A year before the revolution, the band had released their third studio album titled *Žeravé znamenie osudu* [The Blazing Sign of Destiny]. The refrain of the eponymous song with the words 'Som dieťa plameňov / Cestu vám osvetlím / Zomriem až s nádejou / Až posledný' [I'm a child of flames, I'll light up your way, I'll die with hope, as the last one], was a clear allusion to Jan Palach, who immolated himself in January 1969 in protest against the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. Another song that became a 'thorn in the flesh' was titled 'Truth Prevails'. State authorities' dislike of its provocative lyrics led to a series of interrogations of the bandleader at the premises of the State Security, threatening his expulsion from university if Tublatanka continued to perform it. Despite these efforts, the song was already rather widely known among the people, and upcoming events made its impact even greater. Although it was not played live at the demonstrations, when the band members appeared in the square waving the national flag, their presence on the stage was appreciated by the enthusiastic crowd chanting 'Truth Prevails'. Moreover, in addition to its being chanted, the slogan frequently appeared on handwritten large-format banners during the protests. The combination of historical legacy with the rebellious character of the lyrics and the involvement of its authors thus turned the song into one of the main symbols of the entire revolution.

Demonstrations in the squares were initially held every day and sought to be socially inclusive, from artists to blue-collar workers and a wide political range from dissidents and activists to repentant speeches by party members. In addition to actors and writers giving speeches, music performances added a cultural dimension to the protest meetings and were also some of their key moments. Based on such cases, scholar Kerran L. Sanger argues that songs were more important to rhetorical success than speeches or other forms since they provided a special opportunity to express emotions, encouraged emotional involvement and a heightened sense of spirituality.⁸

Although there had not been any such major chance for change before, not everyone was willing to take part in the

demonstrations, especially after the television appearance of the then Minister of Culture on 23 November. He described the artists involved as 'hysterical elitists who are trying to subvert the state authorities just to entertain themselves'. In his speech, the politician branded the meetings as fanaticism and political rampage.⁹ It was therefore a huge surprise when in the following days two extremely popular musicians representing different genres appeared on stage. These were the popular singer-songwriter Marika Gombitová and the operatic tenor Peter Dvorský.

Unlike rock bands such as Tublatanka, to which the state had a rather negative attitude, popular music was considered to be the showcase of the socialist regime. During the 1980s, Marika Gombitová occupied a dominant position in domestic popular culture. Once a member of the popular band Modus, she gradually developed her public image as a solo artist, making her solo debut in 1977. Three years later, in 1980, her career was significantly affected by a car accident. Due to multiple injuries, she was reliant on a wheelchair for the rest of her life. Following a partial recovery, Gombitová returned to the spotlight scoring top rankings and even touring again. Her impact on the music video scene is reflected in her songs frequently reaching top of various popular video charts. In spite of that, Gombitová stopped performing completely in 1987 due to deteriorating health caused by the accident, and appeared in public only occasionally. Her appearance in November 1989 was therefore an unexpected and all the more powerful event. For her performance preceded by the words 'Let me sing freely for the free people', she chose the words of one of her biggest hits, 'Zem menom láska' [The Land Named Love].

Vrav čo ťa bolí, žiaľ sa hojí v nej. Záhady morí, mušle vedia v nej.	Talk about your pain, please, it heals sorrow. Secrets of the sea, shells inside it know.
Zem menom láska Zem menom láska.	The land named Love The land named Love.
Nádherné mlyny ticho melú v nej. Môžeš byť iný, trocha lepší v nej. Zem menom láska Zem menom láska.	Gorgeous mills are grinding silently inside it. You can be different a bit better through it. The land named Love The land named Love.

118–120.

⁸ Kerran L. Sanger, 'Functions of freedom singing in The Civil Rights Movement. The Activists' Implicit Rhetorical Theory', *Howard Journal of Communications*, 8/2 (1997), 179.

⁹ Ľubomír Feldek, *Keď sme brali do rúk budúcnosť* (Bratislava, 1990), 29.

She explained her primary intention had always been to leave a trace in people with her music,¹⁰ and this situation brought out a completely new dimension in her song. Gombitová had written it in 1984. Although the lyrics are about an imaginary promised land, the performance in the square revealed its hidden spiritual potential, as later confirmed by the author of the lyrics, the poet Kamil Peteraj.¹¹ Keeran L. Sanger suggests that the rhetoric of freedom songs derives its power from spirituality.¹² Given the communist atheisation of the mainstream, this newfound element played an important role in the perception of Gombitová's apparent love song as a piece about devotion and persuasion.

According to the sociologist R. Serge Denisoff, songs of persuasion can be perceived as a way to achieve several primary goals. In order to perform these functions, songs of persuasion should fulfil certain structural prerequisites such as, for example, ease of communication, that is, being familiar and having a simple musical scale, which facilitates audience attention and participation.¹³ The manner in which a song of persuasion fulfils the functions based on these prerequisites provides a guideline for the identification and categorisation of these songs. These functions can be performed in two ways, magnetic or rhetorical. One of the main qualities of a magnetic song is its appeal to the listener, resulting from introducing unity and a moral stance that supports the ideas expressed in such a song. By virtue of its message, Gombitová's song represents the magnetic type.¹⁴

Another song that can be classified as magnetic despite its completely different character was performed by a regime-supported artist and member of the Communist Party, Peter Dvorský. Officially considered one of the then four best tenors in the world (alongside Plácido Domingo, Luciano Pavarotti, and José Carreras), at the beginning of the revolutionary events Dvorský was undergoing treatment for his vocal cords in a spa located in the Moravian countryside. Due to censorship in the state media, he had no official news about recent events.

However, at the call of his colleagues from the theatre, he interrupted his cure immediately and without hesitation, and appeared on the square on that very day.¹⁵ Dvorský ended his speech in front of more than a hundred thousand people with the words: 'After my performances all over the world, I am often asked where I come from. I sincerely want the world to know that I come from the most beautiful and freest place on earth.' These final words were a prelude to his performance that followed. He sang 'Pieseň o rodnej zemi' [Song About the Homeland] from the operetta *Hrnčiarsky bál* [Potters' Ball] written in 1956 by the well-known Slovak composer Gejza Dusík. Shortly after its premiere, the operetta became one of Dusík's most famous works. Its action takes place in the nineteenth century, during the culmination of the Slovak national revival. The rural setting of the operetta is enhanced by the music, which is dominated by the Slovak idiom. This was an effect of Dusík's development as a composer. In the 1950s he enriched his musical language by introducing melodic and rhythmic elements from traditional Slovak folklore.¹⁶ 'Pieseň o vlasti' appears in the second act of the operetta, providing contrast to the light and amusing character of the genre.

Najkrajší kút v širom svete	The most beautiful part of the entire world
je moja rodná zem,	is my homeland,
zelený sad v plnom kvete	a green orchard in full bloom
bloom	
je moja rodná zem.	is my homeland.
Čierne hory pyšne stoja	The black mountains proudly standing,
až sa nebies dotýkajú	even reaching the skies
a pod nimi šíre polia kvetmi posiate	and wide fields underneath dotted with flowers,
kvetmi posiate na zemi raj vytvárajú.	making the earth a paradise.
Najkrajší kút v širom svete	The most beautiful part of the entire world
je moja rodná zem,	is my homeland,
zelený sad v plnom kvete	a green orchard in full bloom
je moja rodná zem.	is my homeland.
Tá jediná a nie iná	She's the only one
má pre mňa toľko krás	that has so many
beauties for me	
a preto verným chcem jej ostať	and that's why I want to remain faithful
po celý čas.	to her until the end.

10 Marika Gombitová and Miroslav Gracík, *Úlomky spomienok* (Bratislava, 2016), 250.

11 Alexander Balogh, 'Zem menom Láska, kde nádherné mlyny ticho melú', *N Magazin 30 rokov Novembra*, 4/11 (2019), 34.

12 Sanger, 'Functions', 193.

13 R. Serge Denisoff, 'Songs of Persuasion. Sociological Analysis of Urban Propaganda Songs', *The Journal of American Folklore*, 79/314 (1966), 582.

14 Denisoff, 'Songs', 584.

15 Jaroslav Blaho, *Legenda bez legend* (Bratislava, 2011), 95.

16 Terézia Ursínyová, *Cesty operety* (Bratislava, 1984), 182.

As a staple of several classical singers' repertoire, the song became extremely popular and, according to some, was even meant to replace the Slovak national anthem. Since the political situation in recent years offered an analogy to the Hungarian oppression in the nineteenth century, the patriotic lyrics, hymn-like praise and familiar melody of the song perfectly fitted into the revolutionary atmosphere of the November days. With regard to folk-stylisation, Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison note that the strongest emotions are evoked primarily because many songs are bearers of musical tradition.¹⁷ While undoubtedly serving as magnets, they also open channels of self-identification through which the past can become the present. It is no coincidence, then, that the above-mentioned qualities, supported by Dvorský's personal charisma, meant that the performance of *Song About the Homeland* created a truly magnetic atmosphere during the protests.

Denisoff's second category, the so-called rhetorical songs, are divided into two subcategories: universal and specific. This means that songs can either transcend the context of the specific event for which they were written for or only relate to specific events.¹⁸ A primary example of the former subcategory is the song titled 'Do batôžka' [Into the Backpack], written, like the other songs discussed above, years before the Velvet Revolution. Its author was the well-known musician and actor Jaro Filip. The song, originally intended as incidental music, was released in 1981 on the album *Bolo nás jedenásť* [There Were Eleven of Us], considered one of the best albums in the history of Slovak popular music.¹⁹

The author of the lyrics, playwright, novelist, lyricist, singer and actor Milan Lasica, was one of the most influential public figures in Slovakia, despite the fact that, after his criticism of the August 1968 occupation of Czechoslovakia, he was banned from performing in public for several years. Lasica was moreover under surveillance by the State Security, which eavesdropped on his conversations for a long time, even during his visits outside Slovakia.

Lasica gained popularity with theatrical and later television audiences thanks to the subtle political innuendos he was able to weave into his works. As he recalled in one of his interviews, audiences as well as

censors and ideologues sometimes looked for these allusions even where they were not present.²⁰ His collaboration with acclaimed pianist and composer Jaro Filip resulted in a number of remarkable musical pieces, such as the song 'Do batôžka', an outstanding example of Lasica's aforementioned innuendo:

Do batôžka si nalož	You've got a backpack, it'd be nice
pretvárku, lož a faloš	to load it with pretence, deceit, lies
a potom ich hod' z mosta do vody.	and then to throw them far away.
Bez pretvárky a falše	Without pretence there's no more crying.
hneď by ti bolo krajšie,	You'd feel so happy and so fine,
hneď by tu bolo viacej pohody.	you'd make our mood and our day.
Ak k tomu pridáš hádky,	If you also load rows and fights,
ach, to by boli sviatky,	oh, gosh, if only someone might
keby sa ľudia vadiť prestali!	stop people arguing at any price!
Veď stačia dve–tri zvady	Two or three fights and, as you know
a hneď si bez nálady	you'd feel terrible, you'd feel low,
a krvný tlak sa nechce ustáliť.	blood pressure can't be stabilised.
Načo sú hlúpe spory,	What does it serve to put a fellow into a stupid
čo vedú podaktorí,	dispute, pretending pure
a vyzerajú pritom nevinné	innocence.
Je lepšie zatať zuby,	It's better to clench one's
teeth,	
a ak ťa jazyk svrbí,	and if you're itching to have a word with,
tak si ho radšej omoč vo vine.	sipping wine would make greater sense.
Klebety, škriepky plané,	Useless gossip and fighting tone,
vykašlime sa na ne,	let's leave them pretty well alone,
vyhubme razom túto záhubu!	let's fix this issue once and for all!
A tí čo pykle kuli	And those who always want to win
dostanú po papuli,	will get their faces smashed in,

¹⁷ Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison, *Music and Social Movements. Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1998), 43.

¹⁸ Denisoff, 'Songs', 585.

¹⁹ Marián Jaslovský, *Jaro Filip. Človek hromadného výskytu* (Bratislava, 2002), 68–76.

²⁰ Milan Lasica, *Lenže ja som iba komik. Rozhovory s Jánom Štrasserom* (Bratislava, 2005), 61.

dáme im jednoducho zámku na hubu.	we'll seal their lips, that's the only way.
Do batôžka si nalož	You've got a backpack, it'd be nice
pretváрку lož a faloš	to load it with pretence, deceit, lies
a potom zahod' všetky do studne.	and then to throw them to a well.
A rovno z prvej várky	And from your very first admittance
skús život bez pretvácky	try to live without lies and pretence –
a uvidíš, či z teba ubudne.	and you'll see if you're doing well.

Although the song's ironic lyrics, accompanied by a melancholy acoustic arrangement, do not reveal any political undertones, words such as pretence, deceit, and lie were in most cases associated with politicians and the unfulfilled promises of long-term prosperity that the communist regime was supposed to provide. Reconciliation and a happy ending, which according to the author is one of the main messages of the song, found its parallel in the vision of freedom for which many came to the squares. Such an interpretation of the song was evident from the huge applause when Filip modified the last verse to 'we promise that we will surely do well'.

The song 'Sľúbili sme si lásku' [We Promised Love to Each Other], written during the revolution and captures its key moments, belongs to the subcategory of specific rhetorical songs. In addition to publishing samizdat magazines, its author Ivan Hoffman was a representative of the domestic folk scene in the 1980s. Over the years, his songs gradually shifted from urban topics to religious themes, making him one of the leading representatives of Slovak gospel music. As his concerts were considered a form of civic activism, starting in the second half of the decade they were completely banned by the regime.²¹ In this context, his August 1989 appearance at the Bratislavská lýra [Bratislava Lyre], the most popular music festival in socialist Czechoslovakia, remains unforgettable. Unexpectedly, Hoffman was invited onto the stage by the headliner of the whole event, Joan Baez. When he started to play one of his anti-regime songs, 'Nech mi nehovoria' [Let Them Not Tell Me], after about a minute the organisers muted his microphone. Although the state media did not talk about Joan Baez's concert, information about the scandal spread fast and wide.

In November 1989, when Hoffman was present in Bratislava as a reporter for the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe, members of the The Public Against Violence, aware of his status as a banned artist, asked him to write a song to be performed during the demonstrations. According to his words, their request was completed in less than an hour, and the final result was not intended to express a form of dissent, just the opposite. As its title suggests, its motto was that of love, then frequently heard from the stage, not only in Gombitová's song but also throughout the speeches by many other artists, who called for deeper understanding and dignity. On 25 November, paraphrasing the final chorus from Arthur Honneger's oratorio *Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher*, the actress Magda Vášáryová asked people to stop jingling keys and rather shake their hands, hug, and promise to love each other.

On the next day, Hoffman played his song, whose lyrics refer to the events of August 1968, the darkness of the subsequent 'normalisation', and the crackdown on Prague students that led to a revolution where no one was going to give up. In the refrain that lends its text to the song title, 'Sľúbili sme si lásku', he ingeniously included the words of the actress's appeal from the previous day, which was both topical and timeless.

Videli sme tých, ktorí vystierali ruky,	We saw those holding out their hands,
mali ich prázdne a ešte bola tma.	empty hands in the dark stream.
Po našich uliciach odvtedy prešli veky,	Since then, ages have passed in our streets,
zobudili sme sa zo zlého sna.	we have woken up from a bad dream.
Sľúbili sme si lásku, sľúbili vravieť pravdu len, sľúbili sme si vydržať, sľúbili sme si nový deň.	We promised love, to tell the truth, nothing else, we promised persistence and brand-new days.
Tí mladí za nás vystreli prázdne ruky,	The young ones held out their hands for us,
za nás boli bití, za naše mlčanie.	they were beaten for us, for our silence.
Po našich uliciach odvtedy prešli veky a zaznelo zlému posledné zvonenie.	Since then, ages have passed in our streets and the bell tolls for the evil, hence.
Sľúbili sme si lásku, sľúbili vravieť pravdu len, sľúbili sme si vydržať, sľúbili sme si nový deň.	We promised love, to tell the truth, nothing else, we promised persistence and brand-new days.

²¹ Marcel Forgáč, 'Sľúbili sme si lásku... Na folkovú nôtu s Ivanom Hoffmanom', *Premený*, 2/17 (1990), 14.

Vystríme s nimi všetci prázdne ruky, a bude v nich naša budúcnosť.	Let's hold out every hand to them, it's our future in those hands, my dear.
Na našich uliciach podajme si ruky, neviery a strachu už ozaj bolo dosť.	Let's shake our hands in our streets, then, we're weary of disbelief and fear.
Sľúbili sme si lásku, sľúbili vravieť pravdu len, sľúbili sme si vydržať, sľúbili sme si nový deň.	We promised love, to tell the truth, nothing else, we've promised persistence and brand-new days.

Unlike the other songs mentioned above, Hoffman's performance was not a one-off event, as it was also played later during the meetings. A leaflet with the lyrics of the song was distributed among people in the streets, in schools and factories, so that they could sing it together and express their common resolution.

The efforts of all those involved eventually led to the end of the communist regime and the establishment of democracy. On 28 November, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia announced that it would relinquish power and end the one-party state. On 10 December, the first largely non-communist government was appointed, and a new president assumed office shortly thereafter.

On the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the revolution, Tublatanka's sound equipment, which was used during the demonstrations, was moved to the Slovak National Museum to remind the younger generation of the breakthrough events in the city's squares. The songs performed there made a significant contribution to national unity at those decisive moments. The Velvet Revolution, of which singers and other involved artists were an integral part, has shaped Slovak national memory throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As in so many other cases, this historic milestone is proof that the power of music in the struggle for freedom and democracy is limitless.²²

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