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Studies

The Janáček Affair

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Abstract: The current investigation addresses several pivotal inquiries: in which trajectories ought musicological exploration be pursued to authentically encapsulate the oeuvre of a multifaceted artist? What methodological frameworks are requisite to penetrate the fundamental artistic and intellectual phenomena that characterize his legacy? To what degree do contemporary sociocultural dynamics influence the individual under scrutiny? Moreover, can the most rigorous and comprehensive understandings be attained by a solitary scholar, who is tasked with navigating an exceptionally expansive cultural milieu, or is a collaborative methodology, wherein specialists impart their expertise within discrete domains, more advantageous? Although these inquiries can be examined within a broad theoretical context, it is ultimately more fruitful to pursue specific answers. Consequently, this study conducts a case analysis of the most crucial aspects of the life and oeuvre of the eminent Czech composer, Leoš Janáček.

Keywords: vision, work, motif, folklore, philosophy.

1. Introduction

What definitive answer, if any, can be given to the question: Is the cultural aspiration of contemporary musicology a fundamental necessity or an unattainable utopia?[1] In the discussion that follows, I shall approach this inquiry with due caution, carefully unpacking the underlying assumptions and nuances.

When analyzing a musical score, limiting the study to its semiotic dimensions alone is unlikely to yield a genuine understanding of its deeper meanings. Creative musicians have always been profoundly shaped by the multifaceted realities surrounding them; consequently, musicology requires a broad cultural perspective. Simultaneously, deciphering the complexities of a score, where such complexities exist, as not all music aspires to profundity, remains an arduous task in the absence of direct engagement with the composer. Such interactions could offer researchers invaluable insights into the inner workings of the compositional process. This, in turn, highlights the subtle utopianism of those who assume that cultural openness alone suffices to uncover the elusive semantic layers of a musical work, let alone to fully grasp and explicate an entire musical phenomenon.

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[1] Generic question at the Conference of Doctoral Schools of the "George Enescu" National University of Arts from Iași, December 5-6, 2024.

Where should one begin and to what extent can or should research extend? To what degree do external influences manifest in music, in what precise ways, and in what proportion to one another? Beyond prior knowledge, information acquired through study, personal insights, and ideas drawn from others, to what extent does intuition and instinct contribute to the researcher's endeavour? These are only a few questions that have undoubtedly preoccupied musicologists in the past and to which contemporary scholars must likewise formulate their own responses – not only in relation to the works of present-day composers but also regarding the rich cultural heritage bequeathed to us by our predecessors.

To support at least some of the perspectives outlined above, I will focus on one of the most prominent figures in modern composition: the Czech composer Leoš Janáček.

2. The Janáček Affair

The history of sound art encompasses figures who, beyond their roles as composers, conductors, or performers, have pursued a variety of other interests related to their discipline. Some of these individuals confined their focus to music-related domains, whereas others expanded their inquiry to encompass broader intellectual and artistic pursuits. As Leoš Janáček falls into the latter category, I have chosen the title *The Janáček Case* for this article, a designation that, by extension, refers to his opera *Věc Makropulos* (*The Makropulos Affair*), the penultimate lyrical work composed by the Czech composer between 1923 and 1925.

2.1. The Individual[2,3]

Janáček's biography, when synthesized, elucidates several pivotal moments. Born in the locality of Hukvaldy within the Czech region of Moravia on July 3, 1854, the eminent composer was entrusted by his progenitors to undertake music studies in Brno, where he would reside until his untimely demise in 1928. As a resident pupil at St. Thomas' Abbey, he acquired proficiency in organ performance and actively participated in the choral ensemble. Subsequently, he advanced his education in Prague, Leipzig, and Vienna.

The majority of his professional endeavours transpired in Brno, where he engaged as a choir and orchestra conductor, an instructor of organ and composition, a music journalist, and, significantly, a frequent patron of the

[2] Information is obtained from John Tyrrell (2006). *Janáček, Years of Life*: *The Lonely Blackbird* (1854-1914). London: Faber and Faber, and John Tyrrell (2007). *Janáček, Years of Life*: *Tsar of The Forests* (1914-1928). London: Faber and Faber.

[3] See also Jiří Zahrádka, Šárka Zahrádková (2017). *In the Footsteps of Leoš Janáček*. Brno: Brno City Guide.

local vegetable market, wherein he would meticulously observe and "record" the quotidian vernacular of both vendors and patrons. In Brno, he established the Organ School, participated in numerous musical societies, and became affiliated with an organization dedicated to the advancement of Russian culture. Janáček's personal existence was characterized by a juxtaposition of elation and grief – he entered matrimony, yet, lamentably, experienced the loss of both of his offspring: his son Vladimír at merely two years of age, and his daughter Olga at the age of twenty-one. Although he often struggled with being overlooked as a composer, he also received overwhelming applause after the premiere of several operas. His marriage, however, remained a source of dissatisfaction, and he had several extramarital affairs, starting with the writer Gabriela Preissová, who penned libretto for his opera *Její pastorkyňa* (*Jenůfa*). After a passionate relationship with mezzo-soprano Gabriela Horvátová, in the final years of his life, he fell deeply into love with Kamila Stösslová, the wife of a businessman. He even maintained extensive correspondence with all three women, writing nearly 800 letters to Kamila Stösslová alone. Until the age of 60, Janáček was primarily known as a musician in Brno and its surrounding areas. It was only after the Prague premiere of Jenůfa, the German translation of its libretto, and international performances that he gained recognition worldwide. He tragically died from pneumonia, which he contracted in August 1928.

2.2. The Public Figure

2.2.1. The Collector of Folklore[4,5]

The young Leoš Janáček was deeply interested in the folklore of Moravia, his native region, and neighboring Slovakia. Before delving into the musician's accomplishments in this area, it is important to note the following: Czechs have inhabited the provinces of Bohemia and Moravia since the beginning of their history. Although the same language is spoken in both regions, their musical folklore is distinctly different. Bohemian folk music shares similarities with German and Austrian folk music, aligning with the Western tradition. In contrast, Moravian folk music exhibits characteristics of Eastern European folk spirituality, influenced by the cultures of Slovaks, Hungarians, Romanians, Croats, and Serbs. Motivated by his love for the music of his region and nearby Slovakia, Janáček undertook several "expeditions" to gather folklore, which he later published in their original form or as accurate reproductions. In the extensive catalog of Janáček's music, compiled by Nigel Simeone, John Tyrrell, and Alena Němcová, the folklore

[4] Information is obtained from Hollander, Hans (1963). *Leoš Janáček. His Life and Work*. Translated by Paul Hamburger. London: John Calder.

[5] Information obtained from Simeone, Nigel; Tyrrell, John and Němcová, Alena (1997). *Janáček's Works. A Catalogue of The Music and Writings of Leoš Janáček*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

collections are located in Section XIII. This section lists five collections that together contain a remarkable total of 2,601 songs and dances. These works were gathered and arranged in collaboration with František Bartoš (XIII/1-3) and Pavel Váša (XIII/4-5). The influence of folklore on Janáček's musical compositions is unmistakable, and I will further explore this impact in the following sections.

2.2.2. The Conductor[6]

Leoš Janáček's conducting career started in 1872 when he took over leadership of the choir at the Augustinian monastery of St. Thomas in Brno. This choir had been previously led by his former teacher, the composer Pavel Křížkovský. By 1873, at the age of not yet 20, Janáček became the conductor of the men's choir of the "Svatopluk" society in Brno. Janáček achieved such high-quality performances with this amateur ensemble that they rivaled those of professional choirs. This success inspired him to dedicate several choral works to them. In 1876, he left the "Svatopluk" society to take on the prestigious role of conductor for the "Beseda" society. In 1879, this society evolved into the Philharmonic Society of the Moravian capital. Until 1888, Janáček conducted numerous choral concerts, followed by performances of symphonic and vocal-symphonic works. These included compositions by well-known composers such as Mozart, Beethoven, and Dvořák, as well as some of his own creations. However, after 1888, Janáček became increasingly focused on his work as a composer and educator, leading him to conduct less frequently. He ultimately retired from conducting in 1909.

2.2.3. The Professor[7,8]

Leoš Janáček dedicated a significant portion of his life to teaching – a vocation he approached with both talent and commitment. For nearly three decades, from 1876 to 1904, he served as a professor at the Pedagogical Institute in Brno, taught at the Czech Gymnasium, and founded the Organ School in 1881, which he also directed. When the Organ School was integrated into the newly established Conservatory in Brno, Janáček became the first head of this institution. Additionally, starting in 1920, he taught at the School of Mastery, which was opened in Brno under the auspices of the Prague Conservatory. The subjects he taught to his students were diverse, encompassing music theory, harmony, composition, and musical forms. Among Janáček's students were composers, conductors, musicologists, and

[6] Information is obtained from Simeone, Nigel (2019).
[7] *Ibidem*.
[8] Information is obtained from https://www.leosjanacek.eu/en/biographical-data/, accessed on October 24, 2024.

pianists, including Jaroslav Kvapil, Vilém Petrželka, Jan Kunc, Josef Blatný, Břetislav Bakala, Osvald Chlubna, Josef Charvát, Gustav Homola, Cyril Metoděj Hrazdira, Václav Kaprál, and Ludvík Kundera, names that became prominent in the Czech musical circles of the time.

2.2.4. The Columnist[9,10]

Leoš Janáček, deeply engaged in all aspects of music, founded the music journal *Hudební listy* in 1884, serving as its editor until 1888. In this journal, he authored numerous articles, particularly those focusing the musical performances at the newly established National Theatre in Brno. In addition to addressing purely musical issues, he also examined logistical and organizational concerns to improve artistic standards. Janáček made a significant contribution, both quantity and quality, to *Lidové noviny* (*The People's Newspaper*) in Brno. Demonstrating remarkable journalistic skill, he wrote performance reviews, analytical articles on musical compositions, theoretical writings on his compositional methods, memoirs, and travel impressions. These works reflect his deep involvement in society. Furthermore, in the pages of this newspaper, Janáček found inspiration for some of his musical compositions. In addition to his work as a publicist, Leoš Janáček delivered a substantial number of lectures in various scientific and academic contexts. As a result, he was awarded an honorary doctorate, the first ever granted by Masaryk University in Brno.[11]

2.2.5. The Patriot

Leoš Janáček's life unfolded in three distinct political contexts: from 1854 to 1867, he lived in the Habsburg Empire; from 1867 to 1918, in the Austro-Hungarian Empire; and from 1918 onward, in Czechoslovakia. Brno, where he spent over 60 years, lies just 120 km from Vienna, meaning the influence of Austrian culture and the German language in the Moravian capital was (and perhaps still is) significant. However, as strong as this influence was, so were its detractors. Biographers of the composer highlight some intriguing, often even provocative details from his life: his wife's family was of German origin, bearing the surname Schulz, and his father-in-law, Emilian Schulz, was a former director of the Pedagogical Institute in Brno. Though Janáček initially corresponded with his fiancée in German, after their marriage, he famously refused to speak German at home, insisting that only Czech be used. He also

[9] See Zemanova, Mirka (selected, edited and translated, 1989). *Janáček's Uncollected Essays on Music*. London: Marion Boyars Publishers.

[10] See Nedbal, Martin (trans. and ed., 2020). *The Published Theoretical Works of Leoš Janáček*. Brno: Editio Janáček.

[11] See https://www.muni.cz/en/about-us/awards/honorary-doctorates-conferred-by-mu?page=12, accessed on November 21, 2024.

made it a point to avoid traveling on trams built in Austria. At train stations, he scrutinized the differences in duration and pronunciation between announcements made in Czech and German. From an early age, Janáček demonstrated a deep connection to his roots and strong pride in his Slavic heritage, as evidenced by the way he wrote his first name, Lev, and the names of his children, Vladimír and Olga, until the end of his life. A member of the Russian Circle in Brno, Janáček traveled to Russia, and his Russophilism can be understood as both a homage to the largest Slavic nation and a deliberate resistance to the Austro-German cultural dominance in which he lived. His works *Mša glagolskaja* and the symphonic poem *Taras Bulba* are tributes to Slavic culture, while his *Sinfonietta* is dedicated to a sporting event marking the new Czechoslovak state. Nevertheless, Janáček was deeply attached to his native province, Moravia, which he never left, perhaps in part due to the numerous failures he faced in Prague, where national recognition of his work only came late, in the final years of his life.

2.3. The Composer[12]

In the collective consciousness of music lovers and the majority of musicians today, Leoš Janáček is primarily recognized as a composer. Outside the Czech Republic, where his legacy is cherished as a national treasure, and perhaps Slovakia, the broad scope of the genres he explored remains relatively unknown. Internationally, only four operas and approximately a dozen chamber or symphonic works enjoy widespread recognition. However, alongside these true masterpieces, performers have access to numerous other compositions, many of which are equally valuable, although only occasionally brought to public attention. Among Romanian musicians, both performers and scholars, interest in Leoš Janáček is growing steadily.

2.3.1. The Genres

The directions taken by the Czech composer and the opus numbers in each domain are consistently provided by all the consulted sources. According to the order and system of numbering established by John Tyrrell and his colleagues, Leoš Janáček's oeuvre appears as follows:

- JW I: stage = 11 works (10 operas and a ballet);
- JW II: Liturgical = 14 works (most of them motets for vocal ensembles and organ, including *Zdrávas Maria* (*Ave Maria*);
- JW III: Choral-orchestral = 9 works;
- JW IV: Choral = 45 works;

[12] See Simeone, Nigel; Tyrrell, John and Němcová, Alena (1997), and https://www.leosjanacek.eu/en/work/.

- JW V: Vocal = 17 works;
- JW VI: Orchestral = 18 works;
- JW VII: Chamber = 13 works (including two string quartets);
- JW VIII: Keyboard (for two and four hands), organ and armonium = 33 works;

In addition to these 160 completed works, there are 13 that Janáček only sketched, 23 considered lost, and five arrangements and transcriptions of works by other composers.

2.3.2. The Themes of Inspiration

Janáček's inspiration came from a wide range of sources, as evident from the list provided. His work emerged from an ongoing spiritual turmoil and reflects this diversity, drawing on rich elements such as folklore, sacred and secular Christian spirituality, literature, and history. Notably, Janáček incorporated texts from contemporary Czech authors, including Jaroslav Vrchlický, Svatopluk Čech, František Sušil, Petr Bezruč, František Procházka, Antonín Trýb, František Čelakovský, and Jaroslav Tichý, which highlights common literary themes in his compositions.

In addition to these sources, which are also found in the works of other composers, there are others, less common, that can be noted. Regarding Janáček's operatic works, three of them belong to the category of those with unusual origins and subjects, and thus warrant a more in-depth examination here.

The opera *Osud* (*The Fate*), JW I/5, composed between 1903 and 1905, is by far the most unusual. The action begins with a libretto written by Fedora Bartošová, based on a story that Janáček himself had heard while sitting on a bench in a park at the spa resort of Luhačovice. In that idyllic natural setting, the composer listened in shock as Kamila Urválková, a young woman, confided that she had been forced by her family to leave her poor lover, none other than the Czech composer and conductor Ludvík Čelanský[13], and was compelled to marry a respectable forester. Feeling betrayed and disillusioned, Čelanský himself went on to write the opera *Kamilla*[14], in which his former lover is depicted as the main negative character. Moved by the suffering of the young and exceptionally beautiful woman, and convinced of her innocence, Janáček decided to compose his opera to exonerate and even rehabilitate Kamila Urválková. The potentially delicate nature of the subject may explain why the work was not staged during the composer's lifetime, and it is

[13] Ludvík Vítězslav Čelanský (1870-1931), Czech composer and conductor, founder of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra. See Simeone, Nigel (2019, pp. 32-33).

[14] *Kamilla*, an opera in one act by Ludvík Vítězslav Čelanský, written in 1897. The premiere took place on October 23, 1897, at the National Theatre in Prague. See *ibidem*.

infrequently included in the repertoires of opera houses in the Czech Republic and Slovakia today.

Another opera of distinctive origins is the masterpiece *Příhody lišky Bystroušky* (*The Cunning Little Vixen*), JW I/9, composed between 1922 and 1923. The impetus for the work came from Marie Stejskalová, the Janáček housekeeper, who drew the composer's attention to a story that had been serialized in a newspaper in Brno. The author of this narrative was Rudolf Těsnohlídek, who had adapted a series of children's comic strips created by the visual artist Stanislav Lolek. Thus, the creative process unfolded in a sequence: first, the visual representation, followed by the text, and ultimately, the music. The opera is now widely celebrated on major international opera stages. Notably, in Janáček's birthplace, Hukvaldy, a statue of the little fox[15] has been erected as a symbolic tribute to the work.

The final operatic work to be addressed, which also serves as inspiration for the title of this study, is *The Makropulos Affair*, JW I/10, composed between 1923 and 1925. A distinctive feature of this opera is that its libretto was penned by Janáček himself, based on the eponymous play by Karel Čapek[16]. The narrative centers on a woman who, having lived for over 300 years, becomes disillusioned with existence and tormented by the secret of eternal youth, ultimately resolves to end her life.

After exploring Janáček's operatic works, I will now focus on the unusual origins of some of his compositions in other genres within his oeuvre.

Among the works of religious inspiration is the *Mša glagolskaja* (*Glagolitic Mass*), JW III/9, composed in 1926 for soloists, choir, organ, and orchestra. In this work, one can recognize elements of ancient Slavic liturgical texts. It is worth noting the meaning of the term Glagolitic, which refers to an old Slavic alphabet, modeled after Greek lowercase letters, and used primarily in religious writings.

A delightful work for mixed choir and orchestra, inspired by folklore, is *Komáři se ženili* (*The mosquitoes got married*), JW III/2, composed in 1891[17].

A much more serious work, cataloged as JW IV/43 and written for soprano and male choir, is *Potulný šílenec* (*The Wandering Madman*). It sets to music the eponymous poem by the esteemed Indian thinker Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), whose lectures the composer attended in Prague in June 1921.

Among the vocal works with less conventional sources of inspiration, I first mention the cycle *Šest národních písní, jež zpívala Gabel Eva* (*Six folk songs sung by Eva Gabel*), cataloged as JW V/9. This work, rooted in folklore, takes its title from the woman, Eva Gabel, from whom Janáček collected the

[15] See https://www.czechit.eu/challenge/liska-bystrouska, accessed on November 21, 2024.
[16] Karel Čapek (1890-1938), Czech fiction writer, and playwright. See *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.
[17] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82huuXyUpdY, accessed on November 21, 2024.

melodies[18,19]. Next, two works composed in 1925 and 1926 are worth mentioning: *Říkadla [1]* (*Nursery Rhymes [1]*, JW V/16), based on texts intended for kindergarten children from Czechia and Moravia, and *Říkadla* [2] (*Nursery Rhymes [2]*, JW V/17, which draws on texts for children from Bohemia, Moravia, and Subcarpathian Ruthenia.

An origin of particular distinctiveness is attributed to the programmatic works *Šumařovo dítě* (*The Fiddler's Child*), JW VI/14, a ballad composed for orchestra in 1913, inspired by a poem by Svatopluk Čech, and *Taras Bulba*, JW VI/15, a rhapsody for orchestra from 1915, based on Gogol's eponymous novel. Janáček's patriotic commitment is notably demonstrated in *Balada blanická* (*The Ballad of Blaník*, JW VI/16), an orchestral piece from 1919, as well as in the *Sinfonietta*, JW VI/18, composed in 1926, whose movements are subtitled in tribute to his beloved city of Brno.

The first string quartet, JW VII/8, composed in 1923, draws inspiration from Lev Tolstoy's novella The Kreutzer Sonata. The second string quartet, JW VII/13, from 1928, is distinguished by its unusual title, *Listy důvěrné* (*Intimate Letters*). For those acquainted with the composer's life, the title unmistakably alludes to the correspondence with Kamila Stösslová, the muse of his later years.

Finally, two of the piano works are notable for their evocative titles. The first, *1. X. 1905* (*Z ulice dne 1. října 1905*), JW VIII/9, portrays the street battles between Germans and Czechs in Brno[20] on October 1, 1905. The second, *V mlhách* (*In the mists*), JW VIII/22, composed in 1912, reflects Janáček's childhood memories and evokes the harmonies of Debussy[21].

2.4. The Thinker

2.4.1. The Philosophical Conception

Leoš Janáček was one of the intellectually expansive musicians who, from his early years, showed a keen interest in disciplines such as philosophy and sociology. As a student in Prague, he was deeply influenced by a dominant ideological current that pervaded the German-speaking regions of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, particularly in the Bohemian capital: Herbartism. This movement, rooted in the ideas of Johann Friedrich Herbart[22], posited that "Changing relationships between independent real simple elements; applied to the philosophy of mind this generated a kind of associationist psychology."[23] Evidence suggests that Janáček engaged extensively with the major

[18] See Simeone, Nigel (2019, p. 175).
[19] See Dumitriu, Leonard (2023, p. 93).
[20] See Simeone, N. (2019, pp. 7-8).
[21] *Ibidem*, pp. 98-99.
[22] Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841), German thinker, father of scientific pedagogy, theorist of educational philosophy. See Runes, Dagobert D., editor (1960, p. 125).
[23] See Blackburn, Simon (2005, p. 184).

philosophical, psychological, and aesthetic works of his time, and these intellectual explorations profoundly shaped his understanding of the act of musical composition.

2.4.2. The Creative Conception

Biographical sources unanimously affirm that Janáček was far from a compliant student, content with merely following his teachers' instructions and imitating their compositional techniques. After being rejected in a composition competition in Vienna, he returned immediately to Brno, where he gradually forged his distinctive compositional style. For a music lover familiar with the great classical and romantic composers, listening to Janáček's music can be a perplexing experience from several perspectives. Even if one manages to overlook the occasionally unconventional harmonies and the sometimes-raw orchestration, one crucial element is bound to leave them unsettled: a long, captivating melody that would move, enchant, and speak directly to the listener. A melody that one could hum on the way home from a concert or opera performance. Is it accurate to claim that Janáček lacks melody? The dissatisfaction of the music lover can be easily understood by any researcher of the Czech composer's works, tasked with explaining why Janáček's musical language – melodic and otherwise – differs significantly from that of other composers, including his Czech contemporaries. The music professional must guide the listener to understand that the enjoyment of Janáček's music, including its melodies, requires a shift in their conceptualization of melody itself and a commitment to listening to his works repeatedly to fully appreciate their extraordinary intensity.

In essence, Leoš Janáček's compositional style, which I will explore further, is based on two fundamental elements: musical motifs and speech melodies.

2.4.2.1. The Musical Motifs

In his approach to all levels of music, particularly the melodic and architectural dimensions, Leoš Janáček starts from the concept of the musical motif, which he views primarily as a self-contained musical unit. Much like Herbart's philosophical concept, in which the whole is formed by an accumulation of small, disparate parts, the Czech composer assembles small musical structures, and their aggregation forms the larger musical entity. When discussing melody, we observe that it comprises a sequence of varied intonations, often unfolding in a lengthier progression.

Starting from the concept of melody, Janáček offers a rethinking of thematism itself. If we consider the themes from the symphonies of his contemporary Gustav Mahler, we encounter melodies with a unique breadth, often paradisiacal in their beauty, instantly captivating the listener. In contrast,

Janáček's themes are less immediately accessible. They consist of sequences of intervallic structures that might seem devoid of conventional beauty, their aesthetic value becoming apparent only after more attentive and repeated listening.

Especially in his operatic works, the Czech composer treats the musical motif as a combination of sounds, rhythms, and timbres imbued with descriptive meaning, often carrying both simple and esoteric significances. This approach brings him closer to the concept of the leitmotif, as it enables him to depict events from nature, actions, thoughts, and human emotions. This method reflects a distinctive characteristic of Janáček's work: his frequent use of sounds from the surrounding environment, a technique that few other composers have employed as extensively.

2.4.2.2. The Speech Melodies (Nápěvky Mluvy)

Within the Janáček Memorial House in Brno, several notebooks bear witness to the composer's meticulous and impassioned observations of both nature and society. In his hurried, almost calligraphic scrawl, Janáček recorded not only spoken sentences and brief utterances, but also the onomatopoeic sounds of birds and animals, as well as the mechanical noises of objects. Elements that could be transcribed into musical notation and rhythm were placed on the staff, whereas the remainder were inscribed in prose.

Over several decades, Janáček systematically documented sonic occurrences in urban and rural environments, transforming these notations into a foundational material for his compositional process. Unlike composers who directly quoted melodic speech patterns in works inspired by folklore, Janáček did not employ these transcriptions as mere ethnographic artifacts. Rather, they gave him unparalleled sensitivity to the dynamic, organic flow of human expression.

Critics who accused him of lacking musical inspiration failed to grasp the profound function of these speech melodies, Janáček's term for the fragments of notated speech and text. Far from being a mere imitation of human existence, these melodic patterns constituted a generative principle from which his music derived its essential character. This aesthetic is particularly evident in the vocal writing of his operatic works, where textual repetition, so prevalent in operatic tradition due to the structural constraints of libretti, is conspicuously absent. For Janáček, speech melodies revealed that in natural discourse, individuals seldom repeat more than a single word or phrase, and certainly never an entire utterance that has already been articulated.

Although his habit of hurriedly jotting down words or onomatopoeic sounds in his notebook was often perceived as eccentric, it was precisely this practice that enabled Janáček to cultivate a profound sense of authenticity,

develop a style of remarkable individuality, and ultimately attain the artistic singularity he had pursued throughout his life.

2.4.2.3. The Composition Techniques

Janáček was profoundly invested in the theoretical exploration of his compositional techniques, encompassing melody, motif, harmony, and counterpoint, as evident even from a cursory examination of the titles compiled in Chapter XV of his catalogue of works[24]. Many of the solutions he proposed have remained contentious, which has prevented his ideas from being integrated into standard textbooks on these subjects, either in the Czech Republic or internationally.

The following statements are based on my impressions, formed through the analysis and listening of Leoš Janáček's scores. They are not influenced by the composer's thoughts or the views of other researchers. Having already addressed the composition of melody, particularly the use of small, juxtaposed motifs, I will now discuss rhythm and meter, orchestration, harmony and polyphony, and the treatment of voices and instruments.

The Czech composer consistently imagines highly dynamic rhythms irrespective of the tempos in which they are realized. The profound influence of everyday human speech is evident, and the technique of concurrent rhythmic layers. integrating rhythmic juxtapositions within the framework of polyrhythm, is employed with great intensity. This rich complexity is accompanied by a graphic system, specifically a metric system, which also exhibits considerable diversity. Just as rhythmic overlaps occur, so too do overlaps of metric systems, sometimes contrasting (binary with ternary) and at other times within the same category (e.g., 3/4 with 6/8). Regarding the pulse unit, Janáček demonstrates remarkable inventiveness in that it is not always congruent with the denominator of the time signature by which he notates the measure. Were I to compile an ad-hoc ranking of rhythm and meter among the great composers, I would place Béla Bartók, Igor Stravinsky, and Leoš Janáček on the podium, though not necessarily in that order.

When viewed in isolation, Janáček's orchestration may not appear as his most prominent strength, particularly when compared to the rich, colourful textures found in the works of composers such as Richard Strauss or Maurice Ravel. However, for the music he conceived, I am firmly convinced that no more fitting orchestral arrangements could have been achieved. The choice of instruments and colour combinations reflects his aesthetic vision, conceptualization of the sound world, and creative personality with remarkable fidelity. Moreover, it is widely acknowledged that he composed directly into

[24] See Simeone, Nigel; Tyrrell, John and Němcová, Alena (1997, pp. 357-445).

the full score, without resorting to sketches or drafts; nevertheless, he frequently returned to a completed score for revision.

In terms of harmony, it is essential to note that Janáček persistently employs chords with extended sonorities. Among these, we frequently encounter structures built on stacked thirds, which are often enriched with the ninth and even the eleventh. His treatment of these harmonies does not adhere to a classical conception, where dissonance is understood as a harmonic conflict that must inevitably resolved into consonance. Nor can we speak of dissonant sequences in which consonance is delayed to the threshold of tolerance, as in Richard Wagner's music. Janáček possesses a highly individual understanding of consonance and dissonance, at times reversing their traditional roles. From an aesthetic standpoint, tension is sometimes conveyed through consonances, while dissonances may evoke states of tranquillity and calm. Quartal chords are also present within his harmonic constructions, alongside harmonies derived from the whole-tone scale.

Polyphony is a central technique in Janáček's compositional approach, often employed through repetition, sequence, imitation, inversion, and occasionally canon. However, these devices are not merely structural; they serve as instruments of persuasion and emotional intensity, designed to provoke profound responses in the listener. Whereas for many composers, polyphonic techniques function as contrasts to moments of accompanied monody or as neutral bridges between more impactful passages, for Janáček, they are intrinsically aesthetic, serving to heighten the emotional and expressive impact. In his musical language, polyphonic gestures transcend mere technical function, instead becoming vehicles for impression, emotion, and persuasion – perhaps even the conquest of the audience.

At first glance, one might be tempted to view Janáček's treatment of the human voice as almost instrumental, due to the wide intervallic leaps, complex register shifts, extended phrases demanding significant breath control, unpredictable rhythms, and tempos that challenge the clarity of diction. While these aspects are undeniably present in his vocal scores, a deeper examination reveals a more nuanced understanding. Janáček presents a new modality of *bel canto*, distinct yet highly expressive. Are not the operas of Bellini, Donizetti, Rossini, and Verdi replete with similar technical challenges? Do these passages not require not only the performers' technical skill but also their emotional engagement? Furthermore, are we not often faced with orchestrations that, out of politeness, we might call uninspired? In Janáček's operas, however, even the secondary characters' lines carry substantial weight, adorned with sounds that deeply move the audience, although not necessarily at first hearing. This is a refined form of singing (*bel canto*), attuned to the era and conditions of the characters, and, when listened to repeatedly, it unveils extraordinary beauty and profound emotional depth. Consider, for instance, a few vocal passages

from *Kát'a Kabanová* and *Příhody lišky Bystroušky* (*The Cunning Little Vixen*).

When considering the instrumental aspects, one finds that the principles governing vocal lines are seamlessly extended vertically, with many vocal characteristics infiltrating the orchestral discourse. This phenomenon is evident not only in Janáček's lyrical works but also in his symphonic and chamber music. In the instrumental scores, one encounters numerous notations that evoke a sense of vocality, with registers employed by instruments such as the cello, flute, and clarinet, among others, that most closely resemble the human voice. Beyond the recitative, it is clear that in Janáček's operas, voices and instruments often coalesce into a unified sonic body, even within the character arias. Musicians, regardless of the specific composition, are seldom confronted with challenges of agility; instead, they must navigate rhythmic intricacies that demand their emotional engagement. More so than in the works of many other composers, Janáček's music calls for an emotional participation that transforms the technical passages into gestures of profound expression, thus creating an aesthetic resonance with the audience. Whether performing in small ensembles or larger orchestral settings, the sensitivity of the instrumentalists is essential. To captivate and move the audience in a performance of Janáček's work, musicians must not only attune themselves to the spirit of the composer but also, individually and collectively, envision themselves as characters within the imaginative and rich *nápěvky mluvy* (*speech melodies*).

2.5. The Confessor

The extensive and multifaceted need for communication expressed by Leoš Janáček is thoroughly examined in biographical sources, particularly those readily accessible in English. A specific book[25] and a website[26] provide the most comprehensive information, while also offering references to other invaluable sources. Undoubtedly, musical composition serves as the primary and most significant form of expression for Janáček, yet it remains only one of the channels through which he engaged with his contemporaries. Beyond sound, written language played an essential role in conveying his thoughts: on the one hand, through his journalistic endeavors, aimed at a broader public and briefly discussed above; on the other hand, through an exceptionally voluminous correspondence. In this latter realm, two categories emerge: the first consists of letters addressed to various individuals and institutions, where the composer articulates his ideas and opinions on public matters; the second encompasses deeply personal letters, intended solely for a select group of

[25] See Simeone, N. (2019).
[26] See https://www.leosjanacek.eu/

intimate correspondents, in which Janáček, amid everyday concerns, interweaves poignant revelations of his emotions and inner world.

The musician's correspondence is housed in the Janáček Archive, which is part of the Department of Music History at the Moravian Museum in Brno. Those interested can access digitized documents on-site, while the originals are available for viewing upon receiving special approval. Through the concerted efforts of the institution's staff, alongside collaborators from the Department of Musicology at the Faculty of Arts at Masaryk University in Brno, and with financial support from the Czech Science Foundation, a dedicated website[27] was developed and contains nearly 14,000 entries. These documents are presented in their original languages, primarily Czech, with some in German. The editors have also included a concise yet invaluable English summary. Finally, it is important to mention that the archive also contains letters received by Janáček's wife after his death.

2.5.1. Public Correspondence

Leoš Janáček engaged in correspondence with a wide range of institutions and individuals, reflecting his diverse connections and interests. The earliest document in the correspondence archive is dated January 14, 1875[28], in which the 20-year-old musician expresses his gratitude to the "Svatopluk" Workers' Association in Brno for appointing him as an honorary member. The final handwritten entry, dated August 11, 1928[29], was written the day before his death. While hospitalized in Ostrava due to an unforeseen pneumonia, Janáček wrote to his friend William Ritter, inviting him for a visit.

In order to gain insight into the scope of the correspondence written and received by the composer, I propose the year 1920 as a reference point – the first of the two years during which the masterpiece *Kát'a Kabanová* was composed. Of the total of 97 letters sent by Janáček, 23 are of a personal nature, while the remaining 74 are addressed as follows:

- To institutions:
    - National Theatre of Brno, three letters;
    - "Smetana" Choral Society, one letter;
    - To the leaders of the province of Moravia, one letter;
    - To the Orchestra of the National Theatre in Brno, one letter;
    - Musical Journal, one letter.
- To people:

[27] See https://korespondencejanacek.musicologica.cz/index.php?language=en.

[28] See Zahrádka, Jiří et al. (ed.) (2016). Leoš Janáček's Correspondence [online]. Brno. Available at https://korespondencejanacek.musicologica.cz, document D01260.

[29] See Zahrádka, Jiří et al. (ed.) (2016). Leoš Janáček's Correspondence [online]. Brno. Available at https://korespondencejanacek.musicologica.cz, document BmJA0306.

- Emil Hertzka, the director of the Viennese publishing house "Universal Edition", 18 letters;
- František Serafínský Procházka, poet whose lyrics the composer wrote numerous works to, 13 letters;
- Otakar Ostrčil, the conductor of the opera company at the National Theatre in Prague, composer, and professor at the Conservatory in the capital, 12 letters;
- Jan Branberger, professor and musicologist, three letters;
- Gustav Schmoranz, stage and theater director, two letters;
- Hynek Bím, folklorist, student of Janáček, two letters;
- Rudolf Reissig, conductor and professor, one letter;
- František Neumann, the conductor of the upcoming premiere of the opera *Kát'a Kabanová*, one letter;
- Marie Calma Veselá, singer and writer, one letter;
- Jan Kunc, composer and professor, student of Janáček, one letter;
- Anastazie Sládková, resident of Hukvaldy, the composer's home village, one letter;
- Václav Ertl, linguist and literary historian, one letter;
- Arnošt Píša, music editor, one letter;
- Otakar Šourek, musicologist and music critic, one letter;
- Otakar Nebuška, music editor, one letter;
- Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, philosopher and politician, the first president of Czechoslovakia, one letter;
- Břetislav Bakala, conductor, student of Janáček, one letter;
- Max Brod, musician, writer, translator, one letter.

In contrast to the letters sent, the composer received twice as many, totaling 185. It is worth noting that only one of these letters is of an intimate nature, written by Kamila Stösslová. Of the remaining 184, I will not delve into the numerous individuals, some of whom were close relatives, nor into the matters they addressed, many of which concerned ordinary, everyday issues. However, the list of official correspondence directed to Janáček stands out as particularly significant:

- Institutions:
  - The Viennese publishing house "Universal Edition", 17 letters;
  - The Ministry of National Education, six letters;
  - The Prague Conservatory, four letters;

- The Vocal Association of Lady Professors from Prague, two letters;
- The branch of an Austrian bank in Prague, one letter;
- The Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts, one letter;
- The "B. Svoboda" Bookstore, one letter;
- The German House, one letter;
- The Disciplinary Committee of State Officers, one letter;
- The Chancellery of the President of the Republic, one letter;
- The Musical Magazine, one letter;
- The "Smetana" Singing Club in Pilsen, one letter.

Although only the public epistolary profile for the year 1920 is presented above, it is immediately evident how multifaceted the daily activities of the Czech composer were. It becomes apparent that most of the letters he sent addressed various matters related to his work as a composer: he corresponded with editors, poets, conductors, fellow composers, musicologists, and former students concerning all his compositions, whether completed or still in progress. He sought their opinions, as well as their input on the publication and performance of his works. In return, many of these individuals replied, offering their opinions, concepts, and sometimes even advice. As an anecdotal instance, on April 14, 1920, Janáček wrote a letter to none other than Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, the President of Czechoslovakia, to whom he sent the score of his opera *The Excursion of Mr Brouček to the XV century*, while also extending an invitation to the premiere. [30]

As for the institutions that sought Janáček's involvement in various matters, a careful reading reveals the profound engagement of the individual, followed by that of the musician and citizen, in both conceptual and organizational affairs, as well as in civic responsibilities. Few composers, regardless of the time or place in which they lived, can be considered his peers from this standpoint.

2.5.2. The Epistles to the Muse-Woman

It is widely recognized that Leoš Janáček harboured a profound and enduring attraction to women throughout his life. While his affection for his wife, Zdenka Schulzová Janáčková, quickly diminished, his emotional engagements soon turned towards other women he encountered in various contexts. For some of these women, the relationships were brief and inconsequential; however, three married women, in particular, aroused deep emotional responses within him. Consequently, he corresponded with them

[30] See Zahrádka, Jiří et al. (ed.) 92016). Leoš Janáček's Correspondence [online]. Brno. Available at https://korespondencejanacek.musicologica.cz, document D01660.

with an intensity marked by both sincerity and passion. These letters, at times amorous in nature, and at other times reflections of the emotional turbulence or joy stemming from his compositional endeavours, are imbued with the full range of human sentiment. The women reciprocated, replying with letters, some brief, others more extensive, that brought Janáček moments of joy and hope, as well as sorrow and despair. Regardless of the personal nature of these connections, he dedicated a significant portion of his musical output to them, either directly or indirectly.

2.5.2.1. Zdenka Schulzová Janáčková

Eleven years younger than Leoš Janáček, Zdenka Schulzová (1865–1938) was the daughter of Professor Emilian Schulz, who was appointed director of the Pedagogical Institute in Brno in 1872[31]. Within the confines of her father's home, Zdenka began her piano studies under the tutelage of the young Janáček. In 1880, they became engaged, and on July 13, 1881, they were wed. Their marriage, though enduring until the composer's death, was, in many respects, more legally binding than harmonious, marred by numerous periods of turbulence. The untimely deaths of their son Vladimír, who lived barely two and a half years, and their daughter Olga, who passed away at the age of 21, caused profound anguish for both spouses. Moreover, Janáček's extramarital entanglements presented further challenges, yet Zdenka, though deeply wounded, demonstrated the fortitude and wisdom to tolerate and, ultimately, rise above these tribulations. In later years, she authored a memoir[32], an invaluable source for scholars exploring the life of her illustrious husband, in which she chronicles, with both candour and introspection, the full spectrum of her experiences with Janáček, detailing both the joys and the sorrows of their shared life.

The Janáček Archive houses a collection of 621 letters addressed by the composer to his wife. In the years preceding their marriage, the correspondence reflects a dynamic and frequent exchange, characterized by the exuberance of youth and an earnest engagement with personal aspirations and professional ambitions. However, as time progresses, the tone of the letters gradually becomes more detached, with the once passionate expressions giving way to more utilitarian communications focused on quotidian matters such as the cost of living, the climate in various spa resorts, or familial updates. The first letter, written by the youthful Janáček while studying in Vienna to his teenage pupil, is dated June 23, 1879[33]. The final letter, bearing the date July 15, 1928[34], marks the close of this significant correspondence, spanning nearly five decades.

[31] See Simeone, N. (2019, p. 99).

[32] See Tyrrell, John (editor and translator, 1998). *My Life with Janáček. The Memoirs of Zdenka Janáčková*. London: Faber and Faber.

[33] See Zahrádka, Jiří et al. (ed.) (2016). Leoš Janáček's Correspondence [online]. Brno. Available at https://korespondencejanacek.musicologica.cz, document E01225.

Of the 106 letters written by Zdenka to Leoš Janáček, the first, somewhat surprisingly, is dated July 24, 1903[35], with a simple greeting from Vienna. The last letter, dated July 16, 1928[36], contains a brief inquiry regarding the time of his return to Brno. One particular letter, chosen at random, stands out due to the frustration Zdenka expresses when Janáček, having been away from home for an extended period, seemingly "forgets" to write to her[37]. Regrettably, few of Zdenka's letters offer insight into her personal feelings or emotions. Most of her correspondence focuses on practical matters: health concerns, either her own or those of others, daily routines, and the minutiae of everyday life. Although this correspondence spans the longest period, it is neither the most frequent nor the most emotionally engaging. The reasons for this are further explored below.

2.5.2.2. Kamila Urválková

The affair with Mrs. Kamila Urválková (1875-1956), a 28-year-old woman, began in the spa town of Luhačovice in the summer of 1903. One day, Leoš Janáček, then 49 years old, asked if he could join her on a bench in the park, and the two struck up a conversation. What followed was a relationship that could easily be compared to a soap opera, with threats from her husband and scenes of jealousy from Zdenka, to which Janáček responded with vows of chastity. Despite the tumult, this affair lasted for several years, during which an exchange of letters between the musician and the young woman developed. Although there are sources that suggest a significant and prolonged correspondence[38], the Janáček Archive in Brno holds only 33 letters sent by the composer and, curiously, only three letters from Mrs. Urválková.

In his first letter, dated August 25, 1903, the composer praises the beauty of the woman who has captured his heart[39]. In a loose translation, he writes: "Dear Madam! The beauty, splendour, and delicacy of your person could give rise to a magnificent symphony." A fervent declaration of love, intertwined with intense longing, is found in his letter from September 20, 1903[40]. It opens with the

[34] See Zahrádka, Jiří et al. (ed.) (2016). Leoš Janáček's Correspondence [online]. Brno. Available at https://korespondencejanacek.musicologica.cz, document A05062.
[35] See Zahrádka, Jiří et al. (ed.) (2016). Leoš Janáček's Correspondence [online]. Brno. Available at https://korespondencejanacek.musicologica.cz, document A01622.
[36] See Zahrádka, Jiří et al. (ed.) (2016). Leoš Janáček's Correspondence [online]. Brno. Available at https://korespondencejanacek.musicologica.cz, document A03017.
[37] See Zahrádka, Jiří et al. (ed.) (2016). Leoš Janáček's Correspondence [online]. Brno. Available at https://korespondencejanacek.musicologica.cz, document A01598.
[38] See Simeone, N. (2019, p. 232).
[39] See Zahrádka, Jiří et al. (ed.) (2016). Leoš Janáček's Correspondence [online]. Brno. Available at https://korespondencejanacek.musicologica.cz, document D01432.
[40] See Zahrádka, Jiří et al. (ed.) (2016). Leoš Janáček's Correspondence [online]. Brno. Available at https://korespondencejanacek.musicologica.cz, document A07464.

exclamation: "Gracious lady! Your beauty is beyond imagination!" and concludes with the poignant words: "Why are we separated by mountains, and why does the river of life flow between us? Oh, I would shatter and destroy everything. I despise the clouds that obscure my sun. I long to see you, dear Camilla."

The letters from Kamila Urválková to Leoš Janáček transcend mere brief notes or mundane messages. They reveal a complex emotional landscape, one where a yearning to be loved and a profound capacity for giving love are evident, even though she never explicitly identifies the composer as the object of her affections. Despite this, her correspondence reveals a genuine interest in his work, particularly his opera *Osud*, in which she seems to serve as the alter ego of the central character. It seems that the affair gradually faded away of its own accord; indeed, after 1909, no further references to any ongoing connection between the two are found[41].

2.5.2.3. Gabriela Horvátová

Had fate not intervened, Gabriela Horvátová (1877-1967), a Czech mezzo-soprano of Croatian descent, would most likely have remained one of the many opera singers in early 20th-century Prague whose names have faded into relative anonymity. However, she became known primarily for her role as Kostelnička in the Prague premiere of *Jenůfa*, which took place on May 26, 1916, a pivotal event in Janáček's career that marked the beginning of his recognition as a major composer. The two met during the rehearsals for the opera, and a relationship soon developed between them. This affair eventually reached a critical point when "Zdenka confronted Janáček about his relationship with Horvátová, and he confessed that he now regarded Horvátová as his wife"[42]. On the brink of divorce and already contemplating a new attachment, Janáček ultimately ended the affair. The Janáček Archive preserves a total of 125 letters from this period: 66 written by Janáček and 59 received from Mrs. Horvátová.

The first letter, in chronological order, is the one addressed by the mezzo-soprano to the maestro. Dated May 14, 1916, it begins with an apology for missing a rehearsal, followed by a heartfelt expression of admiration in which she confesses that she "remembers the wonderful moments spent in his beloved company," and signs the letter "Yours, and only yours, *Kostelnička*"[43]. The last letter in the archive, dated March 7, 1918, reveals a more desperate tone as she pleads: "My soul, my beloved, write to me [...] so we may walk in the sun again next summer", concluding with "yours, Jelča"[44].

[41] See Simeone, N. (2019, p. 234).
[42] *Ibidem*, p. 88.
[43] See Zahrádka, Jiří et al. (ed.) (2016). Leoš Janáček's Correspondence [online]. Brno. Available at https://korespondencejanacek.musicologica.cz, documentA00500.
[44] See Zahrádka, Jiří et al. (ed.) (2016). Leoš Janáček's Correspondence [online]. Brno. Available at https://korespondencejanacek.musicologica.cz, document A04735.

Had they existed, it is reasonable to presume that no letters sent by the composer to Mrs. Horvátová in 1916 have survived, a period seemingly marked by the intensity of their affection. In his first preserved letter from the Janáček Archive, dated November 26, 1917, Janáček addresses her in a light-hearted manner, focusing on financial matters, and signs simply "yours, Leoš," without any trace of the passion or emotion that might have characterized their earlier correspondence[45]. On January 1, 1918, he sent two letters: the first consisting of perfunctory New Year's greetings, and the second limited to a discussion of the interpretation of certain musical works. The final preserved letter, dated June 23, 1918, follows a similarly impersonal tone, as Janáček casually informs Gabriela Horvátová that he would be coming to Prague[46]. The lack of sentiment in these letters can be readily explained by the fact that Janáček's heart had already been claimed by another woman.

Gabriela Horvátová's career extended long beyond her brief but intense affair with Leoš Janáček, and her final public performance took place in 1961 at the prestigious *Rudolfínum* concert hall in Prague[47,48].

2.5.2.4. Kamila Stösslová

The relationship with Mrs. Kamila Stösslová (1891-1935) sparked a deep and passionate love in the Czech composer, swiftly followed by an extraordinary wave of creativity and artistic inspiration. The two first met in the summer of 1917 in Luhačovice, a place that had once witnessed Janáček's earlier affair with another Kamila, fourteen years prior. As was his nature, Janáček took the first step toward the woman 37 years his junior, and his heart ignited with an intensity that was almost instantaneous. Married and the mother of two children, she met his fervent feelings with a certain reserve, perhaps unable to fully comprehend the depth of his emotions. Nevertheless, until his death in 1928 – caused by pneumonia after a desperate search for Kamila's youngest son lost in a forest – Janáček regarded her as his muse, dedicating to her, more or less openly, nearly every work he created[49].

The composer directed an extraordinary volume of letters to his beloved, with the earliest preserved in the Janáček Archive dated July 16, 1917, and the

[45] See Zahrádka, Jiří et al. (ed.) (2016). Leoš Janáček's Correspondence [online]. Brno. Available at https://korespondencejanacek.musicologica.cz, document B02513.

[46] See Zahrádka, Jiří et al. (ed.) (2016). Leoš Janáček's Correspondence [online]. Brno. Available at https://korespondencejanacek.musicologica.cz, document B02577.

[47] A wonderful and anthological voice and piano recording of the aria "Co chvíla" from the opera *Jenůfa* by Leoš Janáček can be listened to at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11PxDH5NX-k.

[48] Information is taken from the website https://en.operaplus.cz/opera-plus-retro-1-gabriela-horvatova-janaceks-anti-heroine-digitalized-for-the-first-time-audio/, consulted on November 15, 2024.

[49] In this regard, see Simeone, N. (2019, p. 213).

final two from July 24, 1928, amounting to 742 letters. It is likely that this number is even higher, though many of these heartfelt missives have not withstood the passage of time. In contrast, the number of letters Janáček received from Kamila Stösslová was significantly smaller. Her replies, often marked by carelessness or forgetfulness, reveal a certain distance from the passion of his words. The Brno archive holds 339 of her letters, the first dating from July 31, 1917, and the last from July 25, 1928. However, as noted by Nigel Simeone, there were instances when, at Mrs. Stösslová's request, Janáček destroyed some of her letters, leaving us only with fragments of their correspondence[50].

The relationship between Leoš Janáček and Kamila Stösslová has been extensively studied[51], and their correspondence has been published both in the original language[52] and in English translation[53]. Therefore, further insights can be drawn from the already available sources. A relatively concise, yet invaluable source of opinions on the life[54] and style[55,56] of Leoš Janáček is the writing of Milan Kundera. Born in Brno to Ludvík Kundera, a pianist, musicologist, and former student of Janáček, the brilliant writer offers several reflections on the life and style of the composer. Some of these statements are quite unusual, while others are even provocative[57].

3. Conclusions

The preceding sections offer a comprehensive overview of Leoš Janáček's life and his multifaceted scholarly and artistic endeavours. The information provided herein was derived from publicly available sources, meaning that any musicologist with access to the same materials could arrive at similar conclusions regarding the Czech composer. The topics addressed here are those that have been extensively explored in widely circulated bio-bibliographic studies authored by leading scholars, thereby limiting the potential for significant new insights. My contribution, therefore, lies in the synthesis and juxtaposition of already established ideas – a task which, while not inherently original, remains a critical facet of musicological inquiry. The action of compiling and structuring information, as the adage suggests, "books derive from documents and other books," is undeniably a fundamental aspect of musicological work. Music historians and researchers engage in precisely

[50] see Simeone, N. (2019, p. 213).
[51] See especially Tyrrell, John (2006, 2007) *Janáček, years of life*. London: Faber and Faber.
[52] See Přibánová, Svatava (1990).
[53] See Tyrrell, John (1994).
[54] See Kundera, Milan (2004).
[55] See Kundera, Milan (1993).
[56] See Kundera, Milan (1983, pp. 371-380).
[57] See Kundera, Milan (1993, p. 192).

this endeavour: their primary objective is to meticulously sift through archival materials in search of previously unpublished documents, which they then bring to light for scholarly examination and public discourse.

To a lesser extent, this text also reflects my personal insights, predominantly shaped by my own experiences, with only marginal influence from documentary readings. These are subjective opinions concerning the creative conception of Leoš Janáček, which I presented as part of my analysis. In this regard, the originality of the study lies in the subjective perspective I offer, aligning with a crucial yet inherently complex and contentious aspect of musicological work: the formulation of value judgments. Those who engage in the task of interpreting the technical and aesthetic elements of musical works are well aware that such an endeavour requires not only profound musical expertise but also refined intuition, sensitivity, and taste. However, even the culmination of these qualities does not guarantee success. From numerous perspectives, Janáček's compositional legacy represents a monumental challenge, akin to the ascent of an artistic Everest. To fully comprehend and analyse his work, one's intellectual and technical capacities, however extensive, are insufficient, much like an excellent physical condition is inadequate to ensure the successful summit of a peak. In light of these considerations, I recognize that the most fruitful results would arise from collaboration within a multidisciplinary team devoted to the thorough exploration of Leoš Janáček's musical heritage.

I now shift focus from the Czech composer and present a broader reflection to conclude my case study. Looking back at the development of musicology as a scientific discipline, it becomes clear that it has always been intertwined with cultural ambitions, often yielding results that ignite debates and opposing views. It would be naive to expect a unanimous critical consensus regarding any given work of art. However, by bringing together large, interdisciplinary research teams, the apparent drawback of these contradictions can be transformed into a valuable opportunity. I envision the collaboration of musicologists, composers, educators, vocalists, and instrumentalists, whose ideas would be complemented by those of philosophers, sociologists, and other thinkers, as well as by the perspectives of historians, mathematicians, and even astronomers. I am firmly convinced that only through such collaborative study can we authentically follow the path of a great composer, come as close as possible to the musical essence of their work, and uncover the profound extra-musical ideas embedded within the score or, indeed, the broader musical phenomenon being studied.

Finally, when addressing the question, "Is the cultural aspiration of contemporary musicology a requirement or a utopia?" My response is as follows: The cultural aspiration of contemporary musicology is undeniably a requirement, an imperative that must persist on its journey towards perfection,

fully aware that it may never attain it. In contrast, the cultural aspiration of the musicologist, as a singular individual, is more of a utopia – an idealized, ethereal fantasy that, much like perfection itself, remains intangible.

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