

**CZECH PIANO MUSIC FROM SMETANA TO
JANÁČEK:**

STYLE, DEVELOPMENT, SIGNIFICANCE

SARAH MURPHY

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Cardiff University

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SUMMARY OF THESIS

Sarah Murphy (student no.016208519)

This dissertation will examine the development of Czech piano music through the key figures of Smetana, Dvořák, Foerster, Fibich, Novák, Suk, and Janáček between 1840 and 1912. This period begins with the early piano polkas of Smetana and ends with the last major solo piano work of Janáček in 1912. The chronological framework of the dissertation is important in defining its purpose: the early nineteenth century was a key period in Czech society, and one characterised by aesthetic debates. Central to this was the *Národní obrození* [National Revival], and the social and cultural framework is essential for a full understanding of the output of the composers in question. At the start of the National Revival, music became invested with an ideological burden which meant that composers were responsible for creating a specifically Czech form of expression. One of the key dualities explored within this dissertation is that of European influence vs the absorption of Czech and Slavonic folk music in the musical languages of the individual composers, so the issue of national vs international is of primary importance here.

The ideological background of the National Revival meant that opera was afforded more attention, and other genres were marginalised as a result of this focus. This introduces a second duality, namely that of piano music vs opera. Previous literature examining this period of Czech music has focused upon opera and neglected piano music. That which does exist is in Czech, and these writers have concentrated upon detailed analyses of individual works, meaning that a more macroscopic approach linking and connecting the key Czech composers of the period has not existed. This dissertation aims to combine this Czech literature with modern scholarship on surrounding figures and musical movements in order to give a fuller and more multifaceted account of the period in question, and the role of the piano within it.

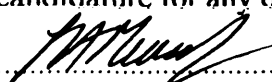
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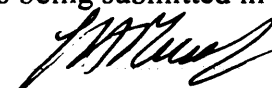
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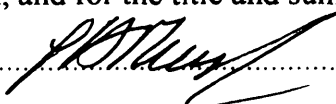
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation will examine the development of Czech piano music through the key figures of Smetana, Dvořák, Foerster, Fibich, Novák, Suk, and Janáček during the period 1840–1912. This period begins with the earliest piano polkas of Smetana and ends with Janáček's last major solo piano work. The chronological framework is important in defining the purpose of the dissertation: the early nineteenth century was a key period in Czech history, and one characterised by aesthetic debates. Central to this was the *Národní obrození* [National Revival], a burgeoning sense of national identity after centuries of Habsburg rule. This social and cultural framework is essential for a full understanding of the output of the composers in question and, at the start of the National Revival, music became invested with an ideological burden which meant that composers were responsible for creating a specifically Czech form of musical expression. This means, in turn, that one of the key dualities explored within this dissertation is that of European influence vs the absorption of Czech and Slavonic music in the musical languages of individual composers.

The ideological background of the National Revival meant that some genres were afforded more attention and significance. Opera was the most public expression of nationalistic sentiment, with the effect being that other genres were marginalised. This introduces the second duality to be explored in this dissertation, namely that of piano music vs opera. Previous literature on this period in Czech music has focused upon opera and, in doing so, has neglected piano music. Any pre-existing source material which does focus on Czech piano music during this period is in Czech, and the writers concentrate upon detailed examinations of particular works, meaning that a more macroscopic approach which looks for links and connections between the key figures of the period has not existed. This dissertation aims to combine this Czech literature with modern scholarship on surrounding figures and musical movements in order to give a fuller and more multifaceted account of the period in question, and the role of the piano within it.

The nine chapters that follow examine the period in question from a variety of perspectives. The first chapter is an introduction to the issue of nationalism, and examines the way in which it developed both prior to and within the chronological period under examination. This chapter will also examine the wider issue of Romanticism and the place of the piano within this aesthetic, examining and exploring the range of genres created for the instrument by both Czech and foreign composers. Chapters 2–5 explore the relationship between Smetana and Dvořák, and examines how an understanding of how these composers were perceived by contemporary commentators can help us to appreciate the part each of these composers played in the nationalist debate of the second half of the nineteenth century. The significance of the piano in the output of both Smetana and Dvořák will be considered, along with a consideration of what genres each worked in and what influences they absorbed at different stages of their development. Chapter 6 will focus upon the piano music of Fibich and Foerster and, in doing so, will also explore the connections between Czech music in the 1890s and the wider musical and cultural environment of the European *fin-de-siècle*. Chapters 7, 8, and 9 examine the piano works of Novák, Suk, and Janáček in turn, and the subsequent conclusion provides a summary of the main issues explored within the dissertation, as well as suggesting ways in which the subject could be extended and explored as Czech music developed in the twentieth century.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

1. ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used frequently throughout the study:

RH/LH: Right hand and Left hand (in the discussion of piano figuration and texture)

NG2: Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (eds): *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London, 2001).

JAWO: Nigel Simeone, John Tyrrell, and Alena Němcová: *Janáček's Works: a Catalogue of the Music and Writings of Leoš Janáček* (Oxford, 1997).

LJOLP: Jiří Vysloužil (ed.): *Leoš Janáček 'O lidové písni a lidové hudbě', dokumenty a studie* [Leoš Janáček 'On folk music and folk song', documents and studies] (Prague, 1955).

2. CATALOGUE NUMBERS

Throughout this dissertation, works are consistently referred to by a catalogue number. The numbers used in conjunction with each composer come from the published catalogue of works for that composer. The following list provides a summary of these:

Bedřich Smetana: Jiří Berkovec: *Tematický katalog skladeb Bedřicha Smetany* [Thematic catalogue of the works of Bedřich Smetana] (1999).

Antonín Dvořák: Jarmil Burghauser: *Tematický katalog, bibliografie, přehled života a díla* [Thematic catalogue, bibliography, and survey of life and work] (revised edition, Supraphon, Prague, 1996).

Zdeněk Fibich: Vladimír Hudec: *Zdeněk Fibich: tematický katalog* [Zdeněk Fibich: thematic catalogue] (Prague, 2001).

Vítězslav Novák: Miloš Schnierer and Ludmila Peřinová: *Vítězslav Novák – tematický a bibliografický katalog* [Vítězslav Novák – thematic and bibliographic catalogue] (Prague, 1999)

Josef Suk: Zdeněk Nouza and Miroslav Nový: *Josef Suk: tematický katalog skladeb* [Josef Suk: thematic catalogue of works] (Prague, 2005).

Leoš Janáček: Nigel Simeone, John Tyrrell, and Alena Němcová: *Janáček's works: a catalogue of the music and writings of Leoš Janáček* (Oxford, 1997).

3. DATES OF COMPOSITION

The dates of composition provided for each work have been taken from the catalogues above.

4. TRANSLATIONS

Translations of titles

The translations of the titles of works discussed in this dissertation have come from a variety of sources. For each composer in question I wanted to use a standard source for a translation and aimed to use those provided in the worklist of each composer in *NG2*. However, for the works of Smetana, titles are provided in Czech, German, and French in *NG2*, and English translations are not given consistently. There are also no English translations given in the two collected editions of Smetana's piano works (those published by SNKHLU and Supraphon given in the subsequent list of music examples), so for the piano works of Smetana I have used my own translations from the original Czech: where I have encountered problems, the help of Jarmila Hickman has been invaluable

For the other composers discussed in this dissertation, the translations given in *NG2* worklists have been used: these have been checked for consistency against those provided in the catalogue for each composer, except in cases where this was not possible (the Novák thematic

catalogue is entirely in Czech and provides no English translations of titles). Where there has been inconsistency between the two, this has been explained within the text, and an explanation provided as to where the used translation is derived from.

Translations of Czech articles

The translations of the numerous Czech articles used as sources within this dissertation have been made by myself with the extensive help of Jarmila Hickman. Where we have come across words which have an inexact translation into English, these have been explained within the text itself

Presentation of titles in different languages

Where the original title of a work is in Czech, the first time it is discussed the title will be given in its original language in italics (with a catalogue number derived from the publications discussed in no.2 above) with an English translation in square brackets. When it is discussed hereafter, it will be referred to by its English title in italics. When the original title is in German or French, no English translation will be given.

MUSIC EXAMPLES

The music examples in this dissertation have come from a variety of sources, all of which are outlined below:

CHAPTER 3

Exs 1, 2a, 3a, and 5a: *Chopin; Preludes*, Henle, Munich (2007) and *Chopin; Études*, Henle, Munich (1983).

Exs 2b, 3b, and 8: *Bedřich Smetana klavírní dílo* [Bedřich Smetana piano works], volume 1, Supraphon (Prague, 1982).

Exs 4, 5b, 6, and 7: *Bedřich Smetana klavírní dílo* [Bedřich Smetana piano works], volume 3, Státní nakladatelství krásné literatury, hudby, a umění [State publisher of literature, music, and art], SNKLHU (Prague, 1957).

Exs 9: *Robert Schumann, Klavierwerke, Band II*, Henle (Munich, 1977).

Exs 10: *Bedřich Smetana, Composizioni per pianoforte*, volume 2, Supraphon (Prague, 1986).

Exs 11: *Bedřich Smetana, Macbeth a čarodějnice* [Macbeth and the Witches], Supraphon (Prague, 1989).

Exs 12, 13, and 14: *Bedřich Smetana, Composizioni per pianoforte*, volume 4, Supraphon (Prague, 1987).

Exs 15: *Bedřich Smetana, Composizioni per pianoforte*, volume 6, Supraphon (Prague 1987).

CHAPTER 4

Exs 1: *Chopin; Mazurkas*, Henle, Munich (2003).

Exs 2: *Bedřich Smetana klavírní dílo* [Bedřich Smetana piano works], volume 2, SNKLHU (Prague, 1982).

Exs 3 and 4: *Bedřich Smetana, Composizioni per pianoforte*, volume 7, Supraphon (Prague, 1990).

Exs 5: *Dvořák, Slavonic Dances, op.46*, volume II, Boosey and Hawkes (London).

CHAPTER 5

Exs 1: *Dvořák: Tema con variazioni*, Souborné vydání děl Antonína Dvořáka [Collected edition of the works of Antonín Dvořák], Artia (Prague, 1955).

Exs 2: *Dvořák: Silhouety* [Silhouettes], Souborné vydání děl Antonína Dvořáka [Collected edition of the work of Antonín Dvořák], Supraphon (Prague, 1981)

Exs 3: *Dvořák: Eklogy* [Eclogues], Hudební matice (Prague, 1921).

Exs 4: *Dvořák, klavírní skladby*, SNKHLU (Prague, 1961).

Exs 5: *Dvořák: Poetické nálady* [Poetic Tone Pictures], Kritické vydání [Critical Edition], Supraphon (Prague, 1955).

Exs 6: *Dvořák: Suita* [Suite], Kritické vydání [Critical Edition], Supraphon (Prague, 1977).

CHAPTER 6

Exs 1: *Fibich, Z hor* [From the Mountains], Městská lidová knihovna [People's Municipal Library] (Prague, 1955).

Exs 2: *Foerster: Snění* [Dreaming], Urbánek (Prague).

Exs 3: *Foerster: Erotovy masky* [Eros's Masks], Universal Edition (Vienna, 1916).

Ex.5a: *Wolf: Gedichte von Eduard Mörike*, Peters (Leipzig).

Ex.5b: *Wolf: Gedichte von Michelangelo*, Peters (Leipzig).

Exs 4 and 6: *Fibich: Nálady, dojmy a upomínky*, Souborné vydání [Collected edition], volumes I/1, I/3, and I/4, Supraphon (Prague, 1952).

Exs 7: *Fibich: Malířské studie* [Studies of Paintings], Orbis (Prague, 1951).

CHAPTER 7

Exs 1: *Novák: Serenády*, Simrock (Berlin, 1896)

Exs 2: *Novák: Barcaroly*, Simrock (London-Hamburg, 1929).

Exs 3: *Novák: Za soumraku* [At Dusk], Simrock (London-Hamburg, 1897).

Exs 4: *Novák: Můj Maj* [My May], Supraphon (Prague, 1980).

Exs 5: *Novák: Bagately*, Urbánek (Prague).

Exs 6 and 7: *Novák: Sonata eroica, Orbis* (Prague, 1951).

Exs 8: *Novák: Písňe zimních nocí* [Songs of Winter Nights], Artia (Prague, 1960)

Exs 9–13: *Novák: Pan*, Artia (Prague, 1963).

CHAPTER 8

All of the music examples in this chapter (with the exception of those references given in the chapter itself) come from:

Josef Suk: Klavierwerke, volumes I–III, Elite Edition 4024, Simrock, (London-Hamburg).

CHAPTER 9

With the exception of those listed below, all of the examples used within this chapter have been reproduced from:

Souborné kritické vydání děl Leoše Janáčka [Collected edition of the works of Leoš Janáček], volume F/I, Supraphon (Prague, 1978).

Ex.3: *Janáček: Národní tance na Moravě* [National Dances in Moravia], SNKHLIJ (Prague, 1953).

Exs 7, 8, and 9: *Janáček: Moravská lidová poesie v písniích* [Moravian Folk Poetry in Song], Hudební matice (Prague, 1947).

Ex.10: *Novák: Písničky na slova lidové poesie moravské* [Song set to Moravian Folk Poetry], SNKHLIJ (Prague, 1955)

All other examples discussed in this chapter have references provided within the chapter itself.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In investigating Czech piano music from Smetana to Janáček, the period under consideration spans 1840 (the time of Smetana's earliest piano polkas) to 1912 (the date of Janáček's last major work for solo piano). This time frame covers an interesting and significant period in music history in general – the transition from Romanticism to modernism. In Czech culture specifically, there were important socio-political events that were to have a huge effect on the nation, and these also had an effect on the music produced during this period. This dissertation will examine the way in which Czech music relates to the significant wider European artistic and musical movements of the period and, in doing so, will investigate the individuality and uniqueness of Czech music in general, and its repertory for piano in particular. Consideration will be given to the idea of 'Czechness', and to whether certain musical characteristics can be identified which demonstrate this, or whether the very notion of a national style is something externally imposed upon a work.

As a counter-balance to the idea of a nation possessing unique musical characteristics, the dissertation will also examine how Czech piano music shares features with the piano music of other major figures of western Europe, and whether it is receptive to the wider movements and directions of the nineteenth century or follows a separate path in response to its specific socio-political, cultural, and musical environment. In considering this, an examination of the piano's role in the aesthetics of the nineteenth century is necessary, along with a study of the relationship of the repertoire for the piano in comparison to other significant genres of the period. In order to situate Czech piano music meaningfully within the context of wider developments in the nineteenth century, a clear background of the major figures, genres, and styles of piano music in western Europe will be provided, enabling a move from the wider, general characteristics of the period to specific, localised, 'national' elements. Before commencing an examination of the main features of the period in question, the notion of

nationalism will be introduced, as the duality of national and universal is crucial to an understanding of what a specifically Czech form of expression may be.

Nationalism is an ideology that reached its most powerful state of expression in the second half of the nineteenth century, but that is not to say that the movement had no effect prior to 1850, merely that the forms it took, and its ideological assumptions, were different. The most important question with regard to this dissertation is how the whole notion of nationalism affected the development of Czech music during the nineteenth century. Within pre-existing studies of Czech music, opera is generally defined as the dominant vehicle of nationalist expression, with piano music remaining on the peripheries of the Czech national consciousness. This dissertation will attempt to redress this balance by exploring the importance and significance of the piano both to the individual composers in question and to the development of Czech music throughout the period under consideration.

If the term 'national' stands for all that is unique and individual about the music of a nation, this in turn presupposes the existence of a dominant musical culture. The musical life of the nineteenth century is commonly defined as a period of German cultural hegemony,¹ with all other musical languages and styles defined by how they relate to this dominant musical force. In order to understand how this situation came into being, a discussion of the connections between the main ideologies at the beginning of the nineteenth century, namely the Enlightenment, romanticism, and nationalism, is necessary. The Enlightenment was an intellectual movement that occurred in the latter part of the eighteenth century, and was characterised by the rejection of superstition and the supremacy of reason. However, despite the importance given to this codification and organisation, the movement anticipated the arrival of romanticism with its emphasis on the Sublime, a 'moment of transcendence that escapes the grasp of normative, conceptual models'.² During the Enlightenment, philosophers placed great emphasis upon language and speech, an idea that was significant in the beginnings of nationalism. Johann

¹A term used in Taruskin (2005), p.463.

²Beard and Gloag (2005), p.59.

Gottfried Herder's *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* (1772) proposes that each language is a unique manifestation of ideas and values and that, as a result, each nation has its own particular form of expression, an assertion that constitutes the beginnings of national thought.³ It is significant that these ideas were expressed by a German, as this nation was in need of a greater sense of definition and identity at the beginning of the nineteenth century, following the French Revolution and the rise of French imperialism, and Taruskin states that, during the period of the Enlightenment, German-speaking lands were a 'political and religious crazy quilt'.⁴ A form of unification could be achieved through a common language and folklore (evoking a common history), and a significant element of Herder's writing was the new emphasis placed upon *Volkstümlichkeit* ('folkness').

Folk culture was defined by Herder as embodying essential authentic wisdom and truth, a result of its removal from the sullyng influence of cosmopolitan urban centres, and this redefinition of folklore led to a great explosion of published folksong collections. Bohlman calls this activity 'reclaiming history for the nation' and defines it as a 'bottom-up' approach, whereby the music of the peasant classes forms the basis of a national music.⁵ Various German anthologies exist from the early nineteenth century, including *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (1806 and 1808) and *Deutsche Lieder für Jung und Alt* (1818), which can be considered as building on Herder's early contribution *Stimmen der Völker* (1778–9). However, it has to be noted that the texts of many of these folksongs were not authentic, but were written by leading Romantic poets such as Goethe, thereby connecting folksong with the beginnings of romanticism.⁶ An example of this is Goethe's *Erlkönig*, whose syllabus of Germanic nature and mythology, forests, nocturnal spirit worlds, hidden reality, invisible truth, and the superiority of nature over culture all connect the idea of folk culture with the ideals and images of romanticism, as well as the notion of a specifically German form of expression, illustrating how the connections between

³Discussed in Taruskin (2001), p.691.

⁴Taruskin (2001), p.691.

⁵Bohlman (2004), p.82.

⁶See Taruskin (2001), p.693.

nationalism and romanticism are crucial in the establishment of a dominant German form of expression at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the expression of concepts such as the Sublime and the Infinite, along with notions of human individuality and subjectivity, dominate the writing of German poets and philosophers of the early nineteenth century, providing further evidence that the ideals of romanticism were first articulated as part of a German cultural agenda.⁷

The emergence of a German nationalism alongside the beginnings of romanticism provided material for composers such as Schubert and writers such as E.T.A. Hoffmann. The latter can be credited with the first well-documented use of the term romanticism (in an article from 1810)⁸ and, significantly, the association of this term with the instrumental works of Beethoven. Important points that arise from Hoffmann's writings on Beethoven are the dominance of instrumental music ('absolute' music which, with its indefinite abstraction, made music 'the most Romantic of all the arts')⁹ and the creation of what Dahlhaus terms the 'cult of the genius',¹⁰ which became linked with both the idolisation of the virtuoso performer and the emphasis upon subjectivity within romanticism. Pure instrumental music was endowed with values of spirituality, inwardness, and an ability (through its abstract nature) to express the Infinite, towards which Romantic art was constantly striving. In defining instrumental music as the supreme expression of Romantic ideals, the final link of the chain is in place connecting romanticism with the dominance of a German instrumental style. The writings of E.T.A. Hoffmann and A.B. Marx had the effect of universalising German music and, by the middle of the century, instrumental music was identified in the minds of many Europeans as a German art, with Taruskin noting that 'the programme of German nationalism quickly metamorphosed into one of German universalism'.¹¹ The German cultural hegemony of romanticism is therefore a

⁷For more details of the ideas of Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, and their connection to Romanticism, see Beard and Gloag (2005), pp. 161–2. Further information on the relevance of Nietzsche to Romantic thought can be found in Dahlhaus (1980).

⁸Beard and Gloag (2005), p. 162.

⁹Quoted in Beard and Gloag (2005), p. 162.

¹⁰Dahlhaus (1989), p. 2.

¹¹Taruskin (2001), p. 693.

result of the derivation of the values of this movement from the folk collections which provided the basis for the beginnings of German nationalism, meaning that the presence of a universal style was itself derived from a celebration of the uniqueness and individuality of a nation. For German nationalism ‘what began as a philosophy of diversity became one of hegemony [...] In the history of no other modern art has nationalism been so pervasive – and so covert – an issue’.¹²

The presence of this universal German style and its emphasis upon instrumental music goes some way to explaining the rise in status and the development of new genres for the piano during the nineteenth century. Romantic piano writing is characterised by the presence of a diversity of musical genres and styles, many of these constituting a move away from the strict sonata forms of Viennese Classicism towards a freer and more fluid form of expression. The idea of subjectivity is important, not only in freeing music from the rigours of a strict form but, by incorporating elements such as autobiography and programme, emphasising a solo instrument as the ideal means of communication. The significance of socio-political elements also has to be taken into consideration, and the rise of the bourgeois middle classes in the nineteenth century had a huge impact upon musical life, with these emancipated individuals becoming the ‘taste-bearing’ strata of cultural life and defining the type and style of musical event that was significant. The subsequent emancipation and professionalisation of musicians led to a greater number of public concerts, chamber music events, and choral societies. In addition to these larger scale public events, amateur music making was at a high during the nineteenth century, meaning that the market for smaller scale, more intimate genres for solo piano grew rapidly. Linked with this is the growth of the salon, a crucial venue in the history of music, and hugely significant in the development of new genres for the piano in the Romantic period.

The importance of the piano during the nineteenth century can be seen in the way in which the instrument seems to embody the juxtaposition of large- and small-scale genres within romanticism. On the one hand, the intimate *albumleaves*, *songs without words*, *impromptus*, and

¹²Taruskin (2001), p.693.

sketches are characteristic of the small-scale, intimate environment of the salon whilst, on the other, the virtuosic figuration of large-scale orchestral transcriptions dominated the concert halls. The piano genres developed in the first half of the nineteenth century thus embrace the principal dualities of the age, namely virtuosity versus intimacy and concert hall versus salon, and the two figures related most closely to these styles and venues were Franz Liszt (1811–1886) and Fryderyk Chopin (1810–1849), whose output and personalities were to have a significant influence upon the development of Czech piano music.

The establishment of a German cultural hegemony at the beginning of the nineteenth century had an impact upon the development of a national consciousness in other countries. The notion of creating a national style would have had particular resonance in the Czech lands as they had been politically and culturally dominated by Habsburg rule for centuries, leading to a complete Germanisation of their culture and a relegation of their language to that of a lower class.¹³ However, during the first half of the nineteenth century there was a growing national consciousness which can be observed in the creation of polka music by Joseph Labitský and František Hilmar, the *Věněc* [Bouquet] from 1835–44, František Sušil's collection of Moravian folksongs (1835) and the *Kytice z pověstí národních* [A Garland of National Tales] by Karel Jaromír Erben (1842). In common with the beginnings of German nationalism, it can be seen that folksong and dance is also at the heart of a national style in the Czech lands.¹⁴ However, the way in which an essentially regional and social phenomenon came to symbolise the collective consciousness of a nation has to be investigated, and this is the process by which the national became the nationalistic, moving from something cosmopolitan and inclusive to something politicised, competitive, and exclusive. Indeed, the way in which the features of German folksong came to constitute the universal style of romanticism can be seen as part of the same process. As Taruskin states 'nationalism is a political movement with cultural ramifications',¹⁵

¹³More information on this can be found in Tyrrell (1988), pp. 1–3 and in Bužka, Simpson and Slavíková (2001), pp. 266–275.

¹⁴See Bužka, Simpson, and Slavíková (2001), p. 270 for further details.

¹⁵Taruskin (2001), p. 683.

and important changes in the movement mid-century intensified its power. Political events in the Czech lands during 1848 led to a stifling atmosphere of centralisation and Germanisation in the 1850s, which in turn further stimulated the Czech nationalist movement.¹⁶

Once nationalism became overtly politicised mid-century, questions of what constituted a national style became complicated. The movement is essentially a bourgeois phenomenon and thus demonstrates the move from the ‘bottom-up’ process mentioned previously to a ‘top-down’ trajectory, from national characteristics being intrinsic to the music to being externally imposed.¹⁷ The bourgeois classes appropriated folk music for the purpose of representing the nation, demonstrating that what counts as national is to do with reception and definition, matters decided upon by the political and intellectual elite. Folk music moves from national to nationalistic through recontextualisation (from rural to urban – what Bohlman terms the ‘national journey’)¹⁸ and politicisation.

With the correlation of folk music and nationalism a further question is provoked: can nationalism be modern? If composers are essentially restricted to using pre-existing material (from what could be defined as ‘less sophisticated’ musical cultures) does this create a conflict between nationalism and modernity? Bohlman notes that in order to be modern, music requires freedom and autonomy, and the demand for composers to use folksong restricts and taints this element. Nationalistic music based upon folk music thus has to ‘undergo a process of aesthetic levelling, in which it speaks in the language shared by the broadest cross-section of a nation’s population.’¹⁹

The correlation between nationalism and modernism is central to understanding Czech nationalism and in establishing a cultural context for the works of Bedřich Smetana (1824–84). Smetana has been defined as the ‘founding father of Czech nationalism’, a definition derived from his operatic output (most significantly *Braniboři v Čechách* [The Brandenburgers in

¹⁶For details of this, see Taruskin (2005), p.443 and Samson (1991), pp.205–239.

¹⁷These terms are used by Bohlman (2004), pp.43–8.

¹⁸Bohlman (2004), p.86.

¹⁹Bohlman (2004), p.20.

Bohemia] (1862–3), *Prodaná nevěsta* [The Bartered Bride] (1863–70), *Dalibor* (1865–70) and *Libuše* (1869–72)) and the cycle of symphonic poems *Má vlast* [My Fatherland] (1872–9). This definition sits alongside that of Smetana the modernist and enthusiast of Liszt and the ‘New German School’²⁰ expressed in his earlier symphonic poems *Richard III* (1857–8), *Valdštyňův tábor* [Wallenstein’s Camp] (1858–9), and *Hakon Jarl* (1860–1), the piano tone poem *Macbeth a čarodějnice* [Macbeth and the Witches] (1859), and the concert studies from the period 1858–61. As a way of understanding how these two definitions can exist simultaneously, the notion of how modernism existed in the Czech lands in general and Prague in particular has to be explored.

The musical culture of Prague in the nineteenth century was one of cosmopolitanism and eclecticism. The city embodied a fully Germanised culture whose predominant musical activity was opera-going. The importance of opera as a genre had been established through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and was a reflection of Prague’s enthusiasm for all things foreign.²¹ During the early part of the nineteenth century, the city began to develop further as a musical centre, with opera theatres established, the Conservatory and Organ School opened (in 1811 and 1830 respectively), and many music societies were formed which sponsored regular concerts and encouraged the work of foreign composers.²² Although an orchestral tradition was not as established as that of opera, there was still clearly an enthusiasm in Prague for all things modern in this medium. The establishment of the Cecilieverein and the Žofin Akademie in 1840 meant that orchestral music was put on a more professional basis, and the Wagner concerts at the Žofin Akademie between 1854 and 1856, along with other concerts promoting the latest musical works of Liszt and Berlioz, demonstrate that the Prague concert-going public was receptive to the most modern musical styles of the time.

²⁰A term first used by Franz Brendel in 1859 to refer to the music of Wagner, Liszt and Berlioz, composers who were linked by the notion of a German spirit. This is discussed in Beard and Gloag (2005), p. 119.

²¹For further information on this, see Bužga, Simpson, and Slavíková (2001), pp. 267–275.

²²More details of these developments can be found in Bužka, Simpson, and Slavíková (2001), pp. 267–70.

By 1860, Prague was a cosmopolitan musical centre presenting modern music in all genres, and the subsequent decade (often defined as the zenith of the *Národní obrození* [National Revival]) is crucial in understanding the development of a Czech style. The opening of the Provisional Theatre in 1862 meant that opera became defined as the fundamental genre of nationalism, one that had the ability to express the notion of a collective consciousness through the use of stage and chorus (the latter providing the audience with a reflection of themselves, and the former framing the nation with the proscenium arch).²³ Opera's strength within a nationalistic environment is its ability to carry nationalistic sentiments through the creation of a network of symbols and allusions to the myths and stories of a collective past and, as Bohlman states, this genre is part of the process by which nationalism 'rescues the nation for history'.²⁴

The definition of Smetana as a nationalist is therefore the result of a 'top-down trajectory'. The subject matter of his operas, their performance at the Provisional and National Theatres (with both buildings providing a focus for nationalist sentiments), and the historical timing all meant that, whatever his musical style, Smetana's operas would be perceived and received as nationalist. The reception of his operas demonstrates clearly the way in which nationalism is imposed externally, as Smetana consciously rejected what was established as the primary necessity of any nationalist style, namely the incorporation of folk music into his works. In rejecting folksong as backward-looking, Smetana was trying to create a Czech style linked to the wider movements of European romanticism, believing that Czech music should be able to compete with the rest of Europe in terms of being modern and forward-looking. Smetana was 'recreating the past with the techniques of the future',²⁵ and the way in which his operas create a canon of Czech nationalism reflects the cultural and socio-political environment of the time more than any musical elements intrinsic to Smetana's style.

The height of the nationalist movement in Prague was in the decades between 1860 and 1890 when, in addition to the opening of the Provisional and National Theatres (in 1862 and

²³Discussed by Bohlman (2004), p.97.

²⁴Bohlman (2004), p.86.

²⁵Taruskin (2005), p.448.

1881 respectively), there were many political organisations developing and gaining strength.²⁶ However, what the claiming of Smetana's operas and symphonic poems by a nationalist ideology demonstrates is that the essentially cosmopolitan musical environment of Prague pre-1860 had continued, and the performances at the Provisional and National Theatres during subsequent decades reinforces this point.²⁷ The creation of a specifically Czech style by Smetana had in no way affected the appetite of the Czech public for foreign music, and the co-existence of foreign and national further supports the notion that it was context and reception, as opposed to musical style, that defined Smetana as a nationalist. As Taruskin states 'neither Czechness nor any other artistic character is an essence waiting to be tapped by genius [...] Czechness is a construction in which producer and consumer must collaborate'.²⁸ Once this notion of a national style had been established, Czech musical culture became more closely connected with wider European movements at the end of the nineteenth century, but this was followed by an increase in nationalistic fervour in the first decade of the twentieth century (a time when conflict within the Habsburg Empire was intensifying, culminating in the independence and establishment of an independent Czechoslovakia in 1918).

The resurgence of nationalist feeling in the first decade of the new century takes us to the other end of the dissertation, demonstrating that nationalism is significant at both ends of the period in question. The framing figures of this dissertation, Smetana and Leoš Janáček (1854–1928), can both be seen as Czech nationalists, but how does this nationalism differ and to what extent can the differences be explained by the change in historical and cultural context? A way of answering this question is to examine how the idea of nationalism is expressed by the individual composers; Smetana rejected folksong as being backward-looking, whereas Janáček saw the music of his native Moravia as containing the seeds of modern Czech music (and speaks of the same notions of authenticity and truth expressed by earlier nationalists). The distinct and individual origins of Bohemian and Moravian folk music have a significant part to play in how

²⁶For details, see Samson (1991), p.230.

²⁷For evidence of how this is reflected in opera performance, see Tyrrell (1988), p.40.

²⁸Taruskin (2005), p.456

they were used by composers, and these issues will be examined in subsequent chapters. Both composers saw the idea of nationalism as coming from different sources, yet they have essentially the same aim: to create a specifically Czech music.

Janáček's use of folk music is essentially different to that of his nineteenth century counterparts in that he actively collected music 'on site' as opposed to working from collected editions. This reflects a more scientific, positivistic approach on the part of the composer, and one more in tune with twentieth-century thinking. As Janáček began his collecting activities in the 1880s, his approach can be seen as an illustration of the dominant aesthetic of the age. However, as his career spans such a large period, his compositional development can be seen in the light of the movements of romanticism, positivism, and modernism. In terms of his use of folksong, the point made previously about folk music being regional and social as opposed to national was fully appreciated by Janáček, who took the features of a particular area and transformed them through their combination with other facets of his musical personality to create a truly individual style. What is clear is that the duality of national and foreign is still very much in attendance in Janáček's music, creating a further connection with the beginning of the period in question.

This dissertation explores the development of Czech music from Smetana, through Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904), Josef Bohuslav Foerster (1859–1951), Zdeněk Fibich (1850–1900), Vítězslav Novák (1870–1949), and Josef Suk (1874–1935) to Janáček. It is worth noting at this point the way in which this view of the development of Czech music differs from that created by writers such as Otakar Hostinský (1847–1910) and Zdeněk Nejedlý (1878–1962). The former, whose significant writings occur during the latter part of the nineteenth century,²⁹ enthusiastically championed Smetana as the voice of Czech modern music and, through his writings, created important dualities which are influential throughout this dissertation, namely national versus universal (or Czech versus foreign styles) and modern versus conservative. These issues were to become central to the ideological opposition of Smetana and Dvořák and the

²⁹For a full list of his writings, see Fukač (2001), p. 749.

creation of separate ‘camps’ in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The contrast between Smetana and Dvořák was essentially that of modern and conservative (the former’s modernity being derived from his connection with the New German School and the latter’s conservatism from his absorption of the style of Brahms)³⁰ and, as progressive and modern were the keywords in relation to the creation of a Czech style, Smetana was seen as being the dominant figure in Czech nationalism. In his writings on Smetana, Hostinský makes explicit the connection between the Czech composer and the most modern movements in wider European romanticism, and emphasises his instrumental works as key to understanding the development of his language.

Hostinský’s definition of Smetana as a progressive modernist is continued in the writings of Nejedlý (throughout the first part of the twentieth century)³¹ who believed that the line of development in Czech music should run from Smetana through Fibich and Foerster to Otakar Ostrčil (1879–1935). In creating this map of Czech music, Nejedlý both emphasises the importance of opera in the development of Czech music and betrays his own backward-looking assumptions. Nejedlý was brought up in the atmosphere of German late romanticism and saw the future of Czech music as essentially a continuation of this (hence his enthusiasm for Fibich and Foerster). The connection of Czech music with wider European movements was crucial to Nejedlý, and he always connected the notion of Czechness with a modernity intrinsically linked with the most progressive tendencies of the rest of Europe. As such, Czech music would only be meaningful when combined with foreign influences.

History has refuted the hypothesis of Nejedlý, most significantly in the international fame of both Dvořák and Janáček. Nejedlý marginalised these figures in his vision of Czech music, denegrating the approach of Dvořák (a conservative (initially) unconcerned with opera) and all those connected with him (Novák and Suk as his pupils, Janáček as a close associate). Janáček was defined by Nejedlý as a ‘Moravian separatist’, whose dependence upon the incorporation of features of Moravian folk music was regressive and inhibited the development of a modern

³⁰A further issue here is Dvořák’s move from his early ‘Wagnerian’ style to a more conservative language modelled upon that of Brahms. This will be examined in more detail in the subsequent chapters.

³¹For a full list of his writings, see Tyrrell (2001), p.748.

Czech style. This dissertation attempts to provide a more complete picture and, through a consideration of a wider range of composers and focusing on their piano works, another perspective is provided, one that highlights new possibilities and ways of understanding the development of Czech music.

The subsequent chapters consider the output of Smetana, Dvořák, Fibich, Foerster, Novák, Suk, and Janáček against both the changing musical environment of the Czech lands and the background of wider European romanticism. The main criteria for the inclusion of composers in this dissertation is an assessment of how important they were in the development of Czech music and how significant writing for the piano was to them. In this context, significance is judged both in terms of volume and the ways in which the writing for piano may have foreshadowed developments in orchestral and operatic genres. On the basis of this criteria, the inclusion of Dvořák may be questioned: however, he is considered as the ‘stepping stone’ to the later generation of Novák, Suk, and Janáček (who has to be seen as part of this later generation, despite him being born a generation earlier). Relatively little weight is given to Dvořák as his piano music is not a significant part of his output, but selected examples allow for a comparison with Smetana, and with that of his pupils Novák and Suk, thus demonstrating further Smetana’s importance as a piano composer and the individuality of the later developments of Novák and Suk. The works of this later generation have to be understood against the changing cultural context of the 1890s, when a lessening of nationalistic fervour led to a greater connection and absorption of ideas from the wider European musical atmosphere. Throughout the works of this decade there is a sense of Czech music becoming more multi-faceted and fully receptive to the dominant movements of the beginnings of modernism.

By the end of the nineteenth century there were established different musical centres espousing different musical ideas. In 1890, commonly defined as the beginning of modernism,³² the key figures were Gustav Mahler (1860–1911), Richard Strauss (1864–1949), and Claude Debussy (1862–1918), and the dominant ideologies of the time were focused upon the urban

³²Beard and Gloag (2005), p.109.

centres of Paris and Vienna. The former was concerned with Impressionism (which began as a movement in the 1870s) and the related literary movement of Symbolism, and both of these movements have further connections. Impressionism can be linked with positivism in its emphasis upon perception and reality and Symbolism, in its concern with individual perception and the human subconscious, shares aesthetic concerns with the Expressionism dominant in the *fin-de-siècle* culture of Vienna. Expressionism can also be linked in some way with the ideas of Decadence, and both movements are dominated by feelings of crisis and alienation, with art being a refuge from the mundane everyday world. Artists and musicians looked inwards, leading to the linking of music and art with the newly developed psychoanalytic movement pioneered by Freud, and this atmosphere of introspection and the revelation of a subconscious inner world is significant in understanding the context behind the piano writing of Fibich, Suk, and Janáček.

In the first decade of the twentieth century (a particularly important time in Czech piano music, in which the major works of Novák, Suk, and Janáček were produced) the music of Debussy is a important influence, and his form of 'musical Impressionism' was hugely influential upon Czech composers. If Debussy provided the connection with French musical thought, then Strauss and Mahler provided the link with Vienna, and these twin influences further demonstrate the connections Czech culture had with wider European centres at the end of the nineteenth century. The duality of Czech and foreign influences is present throughout this dissertation, and the different ways in which this is explored within the output of each composer is central to the argument. The works of Janáček demonstrate this perfectly and provide a summary of the issues under investigation and, despite his eventual position as a member of the twentieth-century avant-garde (a position afforded to him through the international recognition of his operas, and so chronologically beyond the realm of this dissertation), he still remained a Romantic in his connection to programmaticism and an ardent nationalist in his commitment to making Moravian folk music the heart of a modern Czech style. Thus, the previous dualities outlined remain present against the changing backdrop of the wider musical movements of the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. The piano works of the

composers under consideration are important in enabling both a full understanding of how Czech composers reacted to wider contemporary movements, and how ideas initially explored in the piano works are later transferred onto the larger musical canvasses of the orchestral and operatic works, thereby illustrating the significance of the piano in creating a specifically Czech form of musical expression.

Any study of this kind obviously builds upon a pre-existing body of knowledge. There is little literature on the piano works of the composers under scrutiny and, in the most substantial Smetana biography in English (Large 1970), the works for piano are not discussed in any depth or related to the stage and orchestral works in any way. Various articles by Czech writers have been useful in both discussing specific aspects of the piano music and in demonstrating the composers' fundamental connection to the wider movements of European romanticism, and publications by Kundera (1949),³³ Gabrielová (1979, 1983), and Trkowská-Volkmerová (1974) have proved indispensable in gaining a picture of how Smetana's piano works demonstrate his connections to other major figures of the period, such as Liszt and Chopin. However, although the works of these authors are enlightening and provide a starting point for a full consideration of Smetana's piano works, they tend to be selective and focus upon one particular work or collection of pieces, meaning that macroscopic relationships, tendencies, and directions of development tend to be undermined and neglected.

As many of these articles were written some time ago, there is also the fact that much modern scholarship is not taken into account – an example of this is Kundera's (1949) article on the relationship between Smetana and Chopin. Although this essay is revealing of the extent of the similarities between these two men, it can be extended and enriched by absorbing some of the contemporary thinking on Chopin by writers such as Samson (1988, 1992, 1996) and, combining an application of Schenkerian thinking to Chopin's long-range harmonic organisation with the information on Smetana's piano works provided by Kundera, a fuller and richer account of the composer's development within his piano works is provided.

³³Full details of these articles can be found in the bibliography.

Whereas the relationship between Chopin and Smetana seems to be relatively well-documented (at least in Czech scholarship), that of the connection between the piano music of Smetana and Liszt is neglected and this dissertation hopes to rectify this, highlighting similarities in technique between the two men through an examination of Liszt's early piano works, similarities which reach their ultimate conclusion in Smetana's taking of Liszt's symphonic poems as a model for both orchestral and piano works.

In the case of Zdeněk Fibich, there is little literature on the piano works. An article by Gerald Abraham (in Abraham 1968) takes as its source Nejedlý's writings (1925) on the intimate programmatic background of the *Nálady, dojmy a upomínky* [Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences]. This emphasises the way in which these small-scale pieces are programmatic and highlight elements of the composer's personal life (this emphasis on the personal and programmatic in scholarly writing on the piano works is something that continues in the literature on Suk and Janáček in particular), rather than a study of how these pieces may be influential on a wider scale. There is also little written on the two significant piano cycles, *Z hor* [From the Mountains] and the *Malířské studie* [Studies of Paintings]. An examination of these works reveals how Fibich responded to the prominent musical models of Smetana and Dvořák and, consequently, how his musical language differs from and develops their individual aesthetic ideas.

In considering the piano output of Novák, much of the literature can be found in the journal *Zprávy Společnosti Vítězslava Nováka* [Reports of the Vítězslav Novák Society], where several writers (Trojan 1989, Doubravová 1990, Vacková 1991) examine the piano works from various viewpoints, thereby providing a useful introduction to this significant corpus of works. However, in common with Czech writing on Smetana's piano works, these articles tend to concentrate upon single works rather than creating connections between both different works by the same composer and contemporary works by other composers. Connections between Novák and his contemporaries are explored in *Novák a Suk* [Novák and Suk] (Štěpán 1945), which not only highlights points of contact and conflict between these two composers, but also situates

their work within the context of *fin-de-siècle* cultural thought. One area that has been neglected is the relationship between Novák and Janáček, particularly in terms of the connection between them in their individual responses to the folk music of Moravia. This has wide-ranging consequences for understanding the position of these two composers in the development of modern Czech music and this dissertation aims to explore this previously neglected area of study.

The piano music of Suk has tended to be neglected in favour of his orchestral works and the definition of him as a performer (as a member of the Czech Quartet). There exists in Czech a comprehensive book on Suk's piano music (Filipovský 1947) yet, although this text is useful in providing detailed studies of individual works, it is limited by isolating these works and concentrating on details rather than taking a more macroscopic view and situating the piano works within Suk's output as a whole.

The music of Janáček has attracted considerable scholarly interest, but because of the dominance of his operatic output it tends to be these works (along with associated concepts such as speech melody) that have benefited the most from this interest and, consequently, there is a limited amount of literature dealing purely with the piano works. The most up-to-date biography of the composer (Tyrrell 2006, 2007) is useful in outlining the importance of the piano in Janáček's transference of the features of Moravian folk music to western instruments (but does not demonstrate the fundamental significance of the piano in defining the composer's highly individual form of expression), Beckerman's volume on the composer's theoretical concepts (1994) provides an alternative perspective from which to examine the piano works, whilst Adès's article on Janáček's long-range harmonic thinking (1999) in the piano works does much to rectify the reliance on the programmatic and the personal in understanding the composer's piano style. This is supported in Czech scholarship by the work of Jiránek (1978) and Jiraský (2004), which has done much to highlight the technical elements of the composer's musical language. Janáček's piano works are highly dramatic and, in recognition of this, one aim of this dissertation is to explore the significant connections between the piano works and the operas, as

the same impetus essentially underpins both genres. In terms of situating Janáček within the contemporary musical environment the work of Miloš Štědron (1998) has been invaluable, and these links also provide a different context for the piano works, enabling a consideration of Janáček's attitude towards, and absorption of, the contemporary ideas of the early twentieth century.

As a whole, this dissertation aims to enrich the literature fundamentally in the areas of language and context, bringing much Czech scholarship to an English-speaking audience and thereby increasing and enriching existing knowledge on the subject. In using the work of Czech scholars, it aims to build upon their foundations by exploring in greater detail connections between individual composers, and between composers and the surrounding contemporary artistic movements, thereby allowing the development of Czech music a wider context than it is normally given. It also offers a counterbalance to the literature on opera which has dominated scholarly discourse for decades, and the situation of the piano works in the context of the composer's overall output provides a new perspective. This viewpoint allows a greater understanding of both the individual development of the composers in question, and the way in which they reacted to their contemporaries, both Czech and foreign.

CHAPTER 2

Smetana, Dvořák and the birth of Czech nationalism

The figures of Bedřich Smetana (1824–84) and Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904) are synonymous with the creation and development of a Czech national school within music, and a full exploration of the contribution of each to the nationalist debate during the second half of the nineteenth century is essential for both an understanding of their individual courses of development and the effect that each had on subsequent Czech composers. The latter part of the nineteenth century became a ‘polemical battleground’ in Czech culture, with Smetana and Dvořák being placed against one another. Writers such as Otakar Hostinský (1847–1910) and his pupil Zdeněk Nejedlý (1878–1962) dominated Czech writing on music until the latter’s death and promoted Smetana as the ultimate Czech national composer, often at the expense of other figures. Dvořák particularly suffered at the hands of these writers, and their opinions of him and his work also had an effect on those composers (amongst them Leoš Janáček, Vítězslav Novák, and Josef Suk) who aligned themselves with him.

A fundamental question is to what extent foreign influences played a part in the creation of a Czech national school in the 1860s, which can be seen as the key decade in the growth of Czech nationalism. Prague in the 1850s and 60s was an active musical centre, with many German, French, and Italian operas being performed (Wagner’s *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* were performed at the Estates Theatre in 1854 and 1856 respectively)¹ in addition to orchestral concerts of the music of Liszt, Wagner, and Berlioz (with the establishment of the *Cecilská Jednota* and the *Žofínská Akademie* in 1840 putting orchestral music on a more professional basis) and, within this musical environment, the Czech public were made aware of, and became familiar with, the most progressive musical developments of the nineteenth century. The acceptance of Smetana upon his return to Prague in 1861 confirms this as, at

¹Bužka, Simpson, and Slavíková (2001), p.270.

this time, the Czech composer had just spent five years in Sweden during which his musical language had been completely redefined through intensive contact with Liszt and his circle in Weimar. His emergence onto the Prague concert scene was initially through the symphonic poems (with *Richard III* (JB 1.70, 1857–8) and *Wallenstein's Lager* [Wallenstein's Camp] (JB 1.72, 1858–9) both performed in a concert on the Žofin Island in 1862)² he completed whilst in Sweden, all of which display Lisztian stylistic influences. Through these works, Smetana associated himself with contemporary European musical developments and, through his subsequent definition as a nationalist composer (a status attributed as a result of his operatic production), a connection between Czech national music and contemporary and progressive European developments was created.

For the Czech public, opera was the highest, most significant, and most widely attended form of artistic expression. As Nejedlý states, the theatre was 'not a place of entertainment, but a hallowed place, a shrine, a school, where the nation had to speak with the highest form of its own language about its feelings and its dearest aims'.³ The Provisional and National Theatres (established in 1862 and 1881 respectively) provided a focus for the development of Czech opera, and genres such as operetta or ballet were dismissed as 'merely social phenomena symptomatic of the frivolous and decadent societies in Paris and Vienna.'⁴ In documenting the creation of a specifically 'Czech' operatic style, both Hostinský and Nejedlý looked positively upon Smetana's connection with contemporary and progressive foreign influences. Hostinský acknowledged Smetana's importance as a national figure alongside his absorption of the ideas of Wagner and Liszt, believed this to be desirable, and stated that 'sooner or later, it is inevitable for Czech opera to move in a Wagnerian direction'.⁵ Nejedlý reinforces this and, in 1901, he wrote that:

²Ottlová, Pospíšil, and Tyrrell (2001), p.540.

³From *Dějiny opery Národního divadla* [The history of opera at the National Theatre] (1935), quoted in Tyrrell (1988), p.9.

⁴Tyrrell (1988), p.9.

⁵Hostinský, in his book *Bedřich Smetana a jeho boj o moderní českou hudbu* [Smetana and his struggle for modern Czech music] (1901), quoted in Burghauser (1995), p.10.

Smetana's slogan was modernity and Czechness, so he sided enthusiastically with the progressive Weimar school, with Berlioz, Liszt, and Wagner. He was the founder of Czech music by virtue of the fact that he based our national opera on modern Wagnerian music drama [...] and our symphonic literature with his first symphonic poems culminating in the cycle *Má vlast*.⁶

Smetana's absorption of progressive and innovative contemporary musical influences was therefore seen as being beneficial to the development of Czech music, and his commitment to raising Czech opera to a standard comparable with that of contemporary European works was subsequently to become set against the efforts of Dvořák, who became associated with a more conservative style.

Dvořák emerged as a composer at the beginning of the 1870s, a time when a Czech national school of opera was in the process of being established by Smetana. The younger Czech composer's formative musical experiences were defined by performing (as a member of the Provisional Theatre orchestra) Smetana's 'Swedish' symphonic poems alongside works by Liszt and Wagner, and Dvořák's earliest compositions fully absorbed this progressive musical style. However, after his opera *Král a uhlíř* [King and Charcoal Burner] (first version, B21, 1871) was renounced by the Provisional Theatre (in 1873, after it was realised that the performers could not cope with the difficulties involved),⁷ the composer turned away from progressive contemporary influences towards a more conservative and Classically-orientated approach and, simultaneously, also began investigating Czech folksong through the collections of František Sušil (1804–1868).⁸ Through the adoption of this style in works such as the *Moravské dvojzpěvy* [Moravian Duets] (B50 and 60, 1875 and 1876), *Slovanské tance* [Slavonic Dances] (piano duet version (B78) in 1878, orchestrated (B83) in the same year), and *Slavonic Rhapsodies* (B86, 1878), Dvořák secured his international reputation and, by 1880, these works had been received with great success around the world.

⁶Quoted in Tyrrell (1988), p.10.

⁷Clapham (1966), p.269.

⁸His collections of *Moravské národní písně s nápěvy do textu vřaděnými* [Moravian folksongs with tunes included with the text] were published in Brno between 1835 and 1860 – see Vysloužil (2001) for more details.

In simultaneously turning to Czech folk sources and away from a more progressive, Wagnerian style, Dvořák created a link between nationalism and a more conservative style which directly contrasts with the approach of Smetana. Dvořák's involvement with foreign publishers in order to secure an international reputation (with the German firm Simrock publishing the *Moravian Dances*, *Slavonic Dances*, and *Slavonic Rhapsodies* in Berlin)⁹ which was not based upon opera (the highest form of national expression in the eyes of contemporary Czech commentators) but upon orchestral works was also a sensitive issue, with Nejedlý stating that 'Smetana was a thousand times the more potent artist since he never sold off his art, in which nationality was a basic element, in return for a little success abroad'.¹⁰

For all of the above reasons the figures of Smetana and Dvořák came, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, to symbolise a conflict between progressive and conservative forces, in many ways a reflection of that being experienced within wider European Romanticism, namely that between the Liszt-Wagner and Brahms camps. In Czech terms, this was translated into the 'progressive' Lisztian Smetana and the 'conservative' Brahmsian Dvořák (whose early Wagnerian influences were soon played down), and these definitions became locked into political debates between the *staročech* [Old Czech] and *mladočech* [Young Czech] parties.¹¹ These definitions of Smetana and Dvořák have held a great deal of power in Czech writing and have affected both how the development of Czech music has been perceived, and how certain composers have been evaluated. However, these judgements and evaluations have been made on the basis of an examination of composers' operatic and orchestral works and, in neglecting other genres, many areas are left unexplored. By focusing on the piano music of Smetana and Dvořák, this chapter yields new and interesting areas of study which will serve to provide a more multifaceted approach to both their compositional

⁹For details of Simrock's early involvement with Dvořák, see Clapham (1979), pp.43–5.

¹⁰Quoted in Tyrrell (1988), p.11.

¹¹Details of these political parties and their association with Smetana and Dvořák can be found in Tyrrell (1988), pp.10–11.

development and what part each has to play in creating and developing a Czech style.

The status of the piano in the development of Smetana's musical language

The writing of piano music was an important activity in Smetana's compositional life, yet relevant to the investigation of the status of piano music in the development of a Czech nationalist debate is the fact that there are significant 'gaps' in his output for the piano. Between 1863 and 1874, and 1877 and 1884 he produced no works for the instrument, an unusual situation considering its previous dominance in the composer's output. Table 1¹² illustrates that during the first of these periods Smetana's focus was upon producing operas, revealing that his reputation as the creator of a specifically Czech opera was established at a time when composing for the piano receded into the background, and this sudden neglect of the instrument can be linked to a number of different elements in the composer's life. Between 1856 and 1861 Smetana was in Sweden and, upon his return, the increased significance of the Czech National Revival movement during the 1860s would have encouraged the composer to become involved with both the nationalist debate and writing for the newly-built Provisional Theatre. The composer's move towards opera upon his return to Prague demonstrates both his awareness of an increasing nationalist consciousness and his recognition that opera was the principal genre for the expression of these sentiments. The definition of Smetana as the 'founding father' of Czech nationalism rests upon his operas and the cycle of symphonic poems *Má vlast* [My Fatherland, JB 1.112, 1872–9] and often neglects to consider the type of musical personality that Smetana had developed prior to the 1860s, developments that occurred primarily within his piano works. From Smetana's period of apprenticeship (which ended in 1846) to 1862, the composer wrote almost exclusively for the piano, only diversifying to include orchestral symphonic poems following his contact

¹²JB numbers are from Jiří Berkovec's *Tematický katalog skladeb Bedřicha Smetany* [Thematic Catalogue of the works of Bedřich Smetana] (1999), used in Ottlová, Pospíšil, and Tyrrell (2001), pp.537–58.

with Liszt during 1856–61, and the presence of such a large corpus of works for the instrument points us towards a deeper understanding of the image of Smetana as a nationalist. At the beginning of the 1860s the increasing strength of the National Revival and the concentration upon creating operas for the newly-opened Provisional Theatre existed alongside the fact that the Czech public were used to being exposed to a whole range of foreign influences (the operas programmed at the Provisional Theatre during the 1860s indicate that, although this was a key period in the development of a specific Czech style, there was still enthusiasm for foreign composers and their operas),¹³ meaning that the definition of Smetana as a nationalist did not necessarily coincide with a change in his musical style. An understanding of the composer's development and absorption of influences before 1860 can help in an appreciation of how the definition of nationalist was applied, and an examination of Smetana's piano works is useful in revealing what foreign models and influences the composer had previously responded to. As Yeomans states 'Smetana absorbed the compositional techniques and pianistic idiom of Schumann, Chopin, and Liszt [...] and successfully made them his own. His vast piano repertory gives a far better picture of his compositional evolution than his more popular orchestral and operatic works'.¹⁴

Table 1: Smetana's piano works in the context of his vocal and orchestral output

YEAR	PIANO WORKS	STAGE WORKS	VOCAL/<u>CHORAL</u> AND INSTRUMENTAL/ CHAMBER WORKS
1840	<i>Louisa Polka</i> (JB 1.1) <i>Georgina Polka</i> (JB 1.2)		
1842	<i>From A Student's Life</i> (JB 1.9)		
1843	<i>Memories of Plzeň</i> (JB 1.17)		

¹³For details of performances at the Provisional Theatre during the 1860s, see Tyrrell (1988), p.39.

¹⁴Yeomans (2006), p.63.

1844	<i>Bagatelles and Impromptus</i> (JB 1.19) Studies in harmony, counterpoint, and melody – song forms, marches, fugues, and canons (JB 3.1–17) (1844–5)		
1846	Two Studies (JB 3.18) Studies in variation, rondo, and sonata form (JB 3.20–3) Sonata in G minor (JB 3.24)		
1847	<i>Six Characteristic Pieces</i> op.1 (JB 1.35) (1847–8)		
1848	<i>March for the Prague Student Legion</i> (JB 1.36) <i>March for the National Guard</i> (JB 1.37) <i>Albumleaves</i> op.3 (JB 1.65) (1848–56) <i>Three Salon Polkas</i> , op.7 (JB 1.60) (1848–54) <i>Three Poetic Polkas</i> (JB 1.61) (1848–54) <i>Sketches</i> opp.4–5 (JB 1.66–7) (1848–57)		<i>Song of Freedom</i> (JB 1.38) Ceremonial Overture, op.4 (JB 1.39)
1849	<i>Albumleaves</i> op.2 (JB 1.51) (1849–50)		
1850	Polkas in E major, G minor, A major (JB 1:55-7) (1850–3)		
1853			Triumphal Symphony (JB 1.59) (1853–4)
1857			<i>Richard III</i> , op.11 (JB 1.70) (1857–8)
1858	<i>Concert Study in C</i> (JB 1.73)		<i>Wallenstein's Camp</i> , op.14 (JB 1.72) (1858–9)

1859	<i>Sketch to the Scene of Macbeth and the Witches</i> (JB 1.75) <i>Souvenir of Bohemia in the form of polkas opp.12–13</i> (JB 1.76–7) (1859–60)		
1860			<i>Czech Song</i> (JB 1.78) <i>Hakon Jarl, op.16</i> (JB 1.79) (1860–1)
1861	<i>Concert study 'On the Seashore'</i> (JB 1.80)		
1862	<i>Fantasy on Czech Folksongs</i> (JB 1.83)	<i>The Brandenburgers in Bohemia</i> (JB 1.87) (1862–3)	<i>The Three Riders</i> (JB 1.84)
1863		<i>The Bartered Bride</i> (JB 1.100) (1863–70)	
1865		<i>Dalibor</i> (JB 1.101) (1865–70)	
1868			<i>Czech Song</i> (JB 1.96)
1869		<i>Libuše</i> (JB 1.102) (1869–72)	
1870			<i>Ceremonial Chorus</i> (JB 1.99)
1872			<i>My Fatherland</i> (JB 1.112/i–iv) (1872–9)
1873		<i>The Two Widows</i> (JB 1.108) (1873–7)	
1875	<i>Dreams</i> (JB 1.103)	<i>The Kiss</i> (JB 1.104) (1875–6)	
1876			String Quartet no.1 <i>From My Life</i> (JB 1.105)
1877	<i>Czech Dances – 1st series</i> (JB 1.107)	<i>The Secret</i> (JB 1.110) (1877–8)	
1878			<u>Three-part choruses for women's voices</u> (JB 1.109) <i>Czech Song</i> (JB 1.111)
1879	<i>Czech Dances – 2nd series</i> (JB 114)	<i>The Devil's Wall</i> (JB 1.122) (1879–82)	<i>Evening Songs</i> (JB 1.116)
1880			<i>The Dowry</i> (JB 1.119) <i>Prayer</i> (JB 1.120)

1882			<u>Motto</u> (JB 1.123) String Quartet no.2 (JB 1.124) (1882–3)
1883			<u>Our Song</u> (JB 1.125)

During the two decades between 1840 and 1860 there are two clear directions that can be observed in Smetana's piano music. The first is his experience of local music-making in Bohemia, resulting in the composition of polkas, and the second is his connection with European Romanticism, leading to the creation of small-scale character pieces (such as the *albumleaf* and *sketch*) during the 1840s and 50s but, rather than being distinct, these two directions were clearly connected. The concentration upon writing for the piano during these decades can be partly explained by the fact that Smetana was proficient upon the instrument and, until his time in Sweden, he worked towards a career as a touring virtuoso. This accounts for the importance of the instrument to him and, through his performance of Romantic repertoire,¹⁵ he would have gained a knowledge of major figures of the period such as Chopin and Liszt, something which was reinforced in his compositional training during 1843–6.

Smetana's works from the 1840s and 50s demonstrate his appreciation of foreign models such as Chopin and Schumann, and show him writing for the piano primarily as a salon instrument. Alongside these works is the composition of polkas and, although this could be interpreted as a vein of nationalism running through the composer's output right from the start, it has to be appreciated that, during these decades, the polka was transformed from its functional origins to a genre that reinforced his connection with European Romanticism as opposed to being an assertion of national sentiments. Smetana's development of the polka parallels that of the mazurka in the work of Chopin, and the ways in which these two composers develop dance forms to the level of abstract, stylised pieces

¹⁵The composers Smetana performed as a pianist in the period before and during his apprenticeship were Bertini, Schubert, Liszt, and Chopin. Details can be found in Large (1970), pp.9–10.

independent of their original functions have many similarities. During the early part of Smetana's career, the polka was not invested with the political and nationalistic significance with which it became associated at a later stage, but this is not to suggest that Smetana was unaware of the rising nationalistic feeling in the Czech lands or the political climate in which he was working, and the *Píseň svobody* [Song of Freedom] (JB 1:38, 1848), the *Slavostní ouvertura* [Ceremonial overture] (JB 1:39, 1848–9), and the *Triumfální symphonie* [Triumphal Symphony] (JB 1:59, 1853–4) all demonstrate his reaction to the significant political events of 1848. However, in terms of his musical development through the piano works, the connection with wider Romanticism and foreign models is the most significant during the 1840s and 50s.

In 1840 Smetana heard Liszt perform in Prague and, through the Hungarian, Smetana became aware of a great deal of Romantic piano repertoire, particularly that of Chopin. This event will be given full consideration subsequently, suffice to say here that the experience of hearing Liszt play affected the young Smetana deeply. Although the works produced between 1840 and 1856 do not show the effect of this, Liszt became central to Smetana's development following their intensive contact during the period 1856–1861. From 1857, Smetana responded to Liszt's symphonic poems with his own experiments in the genre (*Richard III*, *Wallenstein's Camp*, and *Hakon Jarl* (JB 1:79, 1860–1)) and the increase in scale and timbral possibilities offered by working with an orchestral palette had a significant effect on his piano writing. The continued importance of the piano is demonstrated through the concert studies (JB 1:73 and 1:80 from 1858 and 1861) and the piano tone poem *Macbeth a čarodějnice* [Macbeth and the Witches] (JB 1:75, 1859), works which demonstrate increased scale, textural variety, and virtuosic elements common in the piano works of Liszt, but which had no precedent in Czech piano repertoire. The contact with Liszt during this period reinforced Smetana's connection with the most innovative and modern musical developments of the nineteenth century, something that was to become more significant in the subsequent decade.

The 1860s were fundamental in redefining Smetana's position within Czech culture. Prior to this, he had not established himself as a major figure in Prague musical society, and the lack of success he had experienced in his aims to become a major touring virtuoso almost certainly played a part in his relocation to Sweden in 1856.¹⁶ However, upon the composer's return to Prague in 1861 the piano became less significant, and only three significant solo works exist from this time, namely the *Fantasia na české národní písně* [Fantasia on Czech Folksongs] (JB 1:83, 1862), *Rêves* [Dreams] (JB 1:103, 1875), and the two series of *České tance* [Czech Dances] (JB 1:107 and 114, 1877 and 1879). Although the piano plays a less important role in Smetana's compositional output from 1860 onwards, the composer's new role at the centre of the creation of a national school affected his output for the instrument, and both the *Fantasia on Czech Folksongs* and the second series of *Czech Dances* focus upon creating compositions from original Czech folk sources.¹⁷ There is no one unifying direction in Smetana's writing for the piano from 1860 and, although the *Fantasia* and *Czech Dances* reinforce the composer's involvement with nationalist debate, the remaining work for solo piano, *Dreams*, recalls the style of earlier 'salon' compositions for the instrument in the 1840s and 50s.

The dominant perception of Smetana as the founding father of Czech nationalism is derived fundamentally from the operas and symphonic poems produced in the final two decades of his life and, as a result of this, the early part of his development is often neglected. Through an examination of his works for solo piano other facets of Smetana's musical personality are revealed, and an understanding of how the composer's musical language developed before the key decade of the 1860s enables both a more thorough understanding of Smetana's musical personality and of how Czech nationalism developed during the second half of the nineteenth century.

¹⁶Smetana wrote in a letter to his parents (dated 23 December 1856) 'Prague did not wish to acknowledge me, so I left it' (see Ottlová, Pospíšil, and Tyrrell (2001), p.539 for further details).

¹⁷These sources will be considered in more detail subsequently.

Dvořák and the piano: a comparison with Smetana

The piano never occupied a central position in Dvořák's development, as table 2 demonstrates. Whereas Smetana was an accomplished pianist who had ambitions for a career as a soloist, Dvořák was competent on the instrument but, in terms of his role as a performer, his focus was the viola. During his studies at the Prague Organ School (1857–9) he played viola in the concerts of the Cecilia Society taking part in programmes of Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Wagner, as well as hearing Liszt conduct his own works (March 1858) and Clara Schumann performing (March 1859). After graduating in 1859, he was principally an orchestral musician (playing in the Provisional Theatre orchestra), an activity fundamentally important in this formative period of his development as, through his orchestral playing, he would have been fully submerged in the contemporary musical environment of Prague.

Dvořák participated in concerts on the Žofín Island conducted by Wagner in November 1863 (where works included the *Faust* overture, the Prelude to *Tristan and Isolde*, and extracts from *Siegfried* and *Die Walküre*), and was also involved in performances of all of Smetana's 'Swedish' symphonic poems (in 1862) and works by Berlioz in 1864.¹⁸ During the late 1850s and 1860s the composer was exposed to a whole range of contemporary foreign influences, all of which had an effect on his own compositional development, and his experiences with contemporary music at this time can be seen as parallel to Smetana's with Liszt during the latter part of the 1850s.

Through playing in the Provisional Theatre orchestra, Dvořák would have become aware of the role Smetana had in developing Czech music through his operas. The younger composer's recognition of the importance of composing in this genre in order to gain a foothold in Prague society can be seen in the fact that the first work through which he

¹⁸See Döge (2001), p.778 for further details of these concerts.

announced his activities as a composer was the opera *Král a uhlíř* [King and Charcoal Burner] (B21, 1871).¹⁹

Table 2: Dvořák's piano works in the context of his output as a whole

YEAR	PIANO WORKS	STAGE WORKS	VOCAL/CHORAL AND ORCHESTRAL/CHAMBER WORKS
1862			String Quartet no.1, op.2 (B8)
1865			Symphony no.1 <i>The Bells of Zlonice</i> (B9) Symphony no.2, op.4 (B12) Cello concerto in A (B10) <i>Cypresses</i> (B11)
1868			String Quartet no.2 (B17) (1868–70)
1869			String Quartet no.3 (B18) (1869–70)
1870		<i>Alfred</i> (B16)	String Quartet no.4 (B19) <i>Dramatic Overture</i> (overture to <i>Alfred</i>), op.1 (B16a)
1871	<i>Themes from 'King and Charcoal Burner'</i> (B22) (1871–3)	<i>King and Charcoal Burner</i> – 1st version (B21)	
1872			<i>Heirs of White Mountain</i> , op.30 (B27) <i>Serbian folk poems</i> , op.6 (B29) <i>Songs from the Dvůr Králové Manuscript</i> , op.7 (B30)

¹⁹The numbers used to identify Dvořák's works are derived from Jarmil Burghauser's *Antonín Dvořák: Thematický katalog, bibliografie přehled života a díla* [Thematic catalogue, bibliography, survey of life and work] (Prague 1996).

1873			Symphony no.3, op.10 (B34) String Quartet no.5, op.9 (B37) String Quartet no.6, op.12 (B40)
1874	Potpourri from 'King and Charcoal Burner' (B43) (1874-5)	<i>King and Charcoal Burner</i> – 2nd version (B42) <i>The Stubborn Lovers</i> , op.17 (B46)	Symphony no.4, op.13 (B41) String Quartet no.7, op.16 (B45)
1875		<i>Vanda</i> , op.25 (B55)	Symphony no.5, op.76 (B54) <i>Moravian Duets</i> , op.20 (B50)
1876	Theme and Variations, op.36 (B65) (1876 or 1878)		<i>Moravian Duets</i> , op.29/32 (B60) Piano Concerto in G minor, op.33 (B63) String Quartet no.8, op.80 (B57) <i>Stabat Mater</i> , op.58 (B71) (1876-7)
1877	Scottish Dances, op.41 (B74)	<i>The Cunning Peasant</i> , op.37 (B67)	<i>Moravian Duets</i> , op.38 (B69) Symphonic Variations, op.78 (B70) String Quartet no.9, op.34 (B75) <i>Bouquet of Czech Folksongs</i> , op.41 (B72)
1878	Slavonic Dances – 1st series, op.46 (B78)		<i>Slavonic Dances – 1st series</i> , op.46 (B83)
1879	Silhouettes, op.8 (B98) (1875-9)		<i>Slavonic Rhapsodies</i> , op.45 (B86) Festival March, op.54 (B88) Czech Suite, op.39 (B93)

			Prague Waltzes (B99) String Quartet no.10, op.51 (B92)
1880	<i>Eclogues</i> , op.56 (B103) <i>Albumleaves</i> (B109) Piano pieces op.52 (B110)		Symphony no.6, op.60 (B112) Violin Concerto in A minor, op.53 (B96/108 – revised version) <i>Gypsy Melodies</i> , op.55 (B104)
1881		<i>Dimitrij</i> – 1st version, op.64 (B125)	<i>My Homeland</i> , op.62 (B125a)
1883			<i>Hussite Overture</i> , op.67 (B132) Piano trio, op.65 (B130)
1884			<i>The Spectre's Bride</i> , op.69 (B135) Symphony no.7, op.70 (B141) (1884–5)
1886	<i>Slavonic Dances</i> – 2nd series, op.72 (B145)		<i>St.Ludmilla</i> , op.71 (B144) <i>In Folk Tone</i> , op.73 (B146)
1887		<i>King and Charcoal Burner</i> – 3rd version, op.14 (B151) <i>The Jakobin</i> – 1st version, op.84 (B159) (1887–8)	<i>Slavonic Dances</i> – 2nd series, op.72 (B147) <i>Mass</i> , op.86 (B153) Piano Quintet, op.81 (B155)
1888			<i>Love Songs</i> , op.83 (B160)
1889	<i>Poetic Tone Pictures</i> , op.85 (B161)		Symphony no.8, op.88 (B163)
1890			<i>Requiem</i> , op.89 (B165)
1891			<i>In Nature's Realm</i> , op.91 (B168) <i>Carnival</i> , op.92 (B169) <i>Othello</i> , op.93 (B174) (1891–2)
1892			<i>Te Deum</i> , op.103 (B176)

1893			Symphony no.9, op.95 (B178) String Quartet no.12, op.96 (B179) <i>The American Flag</i> , op.102 (B177)
1894	Suite in A, op.98 (B184) <i>Humoresques</i> , op.101 (B187)	<i>Dimitrij</i> – 2nd version, op.64 (B186)	<i>Biblical Songs</i> , op.99 (B185)
1895			String Quartet no.13, op.106 (B192) String Quartet no.14, op.105 (B193) Cello Concerto in B minor, op.104 (B191)
1896			<i>The Water Goblin</i> , op.107 (B195) <i>The Noon Witch</i> , op.108 (B196) <i>The Golden Spinning Wheel</i> , op.109 (B197) <i>The Wild Dove</i> , op.110 (B198)
1897		<i>The Jakobin</i> – 2nd version, op.84 (B200)	<i>A Hero's Song</i> , op.111 (B199)
1899		<i>The Devil and Kate</i> , op.112 (B201)	
1900		<i>Rusalka</i> , op.114 (B203)	
1902		<i>Armida</i> , op.115 (B206) (1902–3)	

Table 2 illustrates that many works were composed before this opera (including symphonies, string quartets, a concerto, and the song cycle *Cypresses*), but it was with *King and Charcoal Burner* that Dvořák resigned from his position in the opera orchestra and focused his energies

on composition. The work initially met with success and recognition, and its overture was conducted by Smetana on 14 April 1872.²⁰ The launching of his compositional career with an opera demonstrates both the composer's awareness of Czech nationalism and an understanding of the genres valued within the cultural environment in which he found himself. At this point in his life, Dvořák wanted to go and study with Liszt in Weimar,²¹ and his commitment to the most innovative contemporary European influences can be seen in the opera *King and Charcoal Burner*, the Wagnerian traits of which are evident in the declamation, harmony, and orchestral treatment. However, it may have been this 'over-ambitious'²² innovative modern approach which caused problems in the planned mounting of the work, with Smetana (who was, in 1873, the conductor at the Provisional Theatre) stating that 'it is a serious work, full of ideas and genius, but I don't believe it can be performed.'²³ This was a serious blow for Dvořák, and it led to a complete change in direction and a renunciation of this early period of experimentation.

Following the lack of success of *King and Charcoal Burner*, Dvořák turned to folk sources for inspiration. Simultaneously, he began to take a more Classical approach to composition and, between 1877 and 1881, Dvořák took Brahms as a model, combining this 'new Classicism' with Slavonic folklore. This period is particularly significant as, during this time, Dvořák's international reputation was formed and, fundamental in the creation of this was the submission of a selection of his work for the Austrian State Stipend in 1877 (after being awarded the grant several times before).²⁴ Amongst those pieces submitted were the *Moravian Duets* of 1876 (B60 and 62), which gained the attention of both Brahms and Eduard Hanslick (who were on the awarding panel). Brahms immediately recommended the pieces to his German publisher Simrock, who published them and subsequently commissioned the *Slavonic Dances*. Simrock's enthusiasm for these 'national' works was in

²⁰Clapham (1979), p.26.

²¹Döge (2001), p.779.

²²Clapham (1979), p.31.

²³Clapham (1979), p.29.

²⁴Döge (2001), p.779.

line with Dvořák's own compositional interests at the end of the 1870s and, in addition to the *Moravian Duets* and the *Slavonic Dances*, the composer also produced the *Slavonic Rhapsodies* (B86, 1878). These works gained instant international success and, throughout 1879–80, the *Slavonic Rhapsodies* were performed around the world, achieving success in Dresden, Berlin, Budapest, Vienna, and London. Indeed, George Freemantle wrote in the *Manchester Guardian* on 20 Nov 1880 that 'these semi-barbaric themes possess a freshness and charm which do not always accompany more classic forms',²⁵ suggesting that it was the combination of folk features and elements of Classicism that made them stand out from contemporary Romantic repertoire, with the quasi-folk melodies enlivening the essentially conservative musical language.

Dvořák's international success was mirrored in Bohemia and, in 1878, he was made an honorary member of the Prague *Hlahol*, the chairman of the musician's section of the *Umělecká beseda* [Artist's Society], and was commissioned to write music for special occasions (the works of 1879, namely the *Slavostní pochod* [Festival March] (B88), *Česká suita* [Czech Suite] (B93), and the *Pražské valčíky* [Prague Waltzes] (B99), are all examples of this). This suggests that Dvořák's fame rested upon the definition of him as a nationalist composer, yet his style was significantly different to that of Smetana. From an initial appreciation of contemporary innovation and the music of Liszt and Wagner, Dvořák moved onto the Classically-orientated, conservative style which guaranteed his international reputation. Whereas Smetana's status as a composer rested upon the genres of opera and symphonic poem, for Dvořák it was orchestral and chamber works that were at the heart of his oeuvre.

The piano was a peripheral force in Dvořák's musical development and his first works for it were not independent works specifically written for the instrument, but were derived from his opera *King and Charcoal Burner*, with the *Motivy* [Themes] and *Směs* [Potpourri] from *King and Charcoal Burner* (B22 and 43) composed in 1871–3 and 1874–5

²⁵Quoted in Clapham (1979), p.46.

respectively. The connection of the piano with other genres continues in the *Silhouetty* [Silhouettes] (B98, 1879), a work which brings together fragments of many earlier compositions. The first independent work for solo piano is the *Tema con variazioni* [Theme and Variations] (B65, 1876 or 1878)²⁶ which demonstrates Dvořák's change of direction from modern contemporary models to more Brahmsian Classical formal structures. Although the focus of this study is the solo works of the composers in question, the significance of the *Slavonic Dances* (which were originally in piano duet format (in 1878) before being orchestrated later in the same year) has to be considered and, through these two formats, the composer ensured the widest possible dissemination of the work, with the orchestral version being performed in concert halls throughout the world, and the duet version in amateur, middle-class, household music-making.

The fact that Dvořák's reputation had been created through the efforts of foreign publishers, conductors, and orchestras was significant in the way the composer was perceived in his homeland. Although both Brahms and Hanslick had made it clear that if Dvořák was going to be successful he would have to think beyond the 'provincial backwater'²⁷ of his native Prague, during the 1880s the political tensions and anti-Czech feeling in Vienna meant that Dvořák's works were given less prominence abroad, leading to an increased awareness on the composer's part of how he was perceived in his homeland.²⁸ After 1880, he requested that all of his title pages were printed in German and Czech translations, and it would seem that the amount of time he spent abroad during the 1880s served to intensify his need to be seen as Czech. In 1886 he stated that 'twenty years ago we Slavs were nothing. Now we feel that our national life is once more awakening [...] the powerful Czechs, the Slavs, the Bohemians, to whom I belong and to whom I am proud to belong.'²⁹

²⁶The confusion over the actual date of composition of this work is presented in Döge (2001), p.803.

²⁷In a letter dated 11 June 1882, Hanslick states that 'I feel that it would be a great advantage if you were to live one or two years away from Prague [...] after such great initial successes your art requires a wider horizon, a German environment, a bigger, non-Czech public' (Clapham (1971), p.249).

²⁸These issues are discussed in greater detail in Clapham (1966), pp.10–11.

²⁹Interview for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, 13 Oct 1886, quoted in Clapham (1979), p.81.

Table 2 suggests that the 1880s were a period of some confusion for Dvořák, and the lack of a clear direction in his compositional development is demonstrated in the concentration on the revision of *King and Charcoal Burner* (B151, revisions occurring in 1887) and the song cycle *Cypřiše* [Cypresses] (with the original (B11) 1865 version revised as the *Písně milostné* [Love Songs] (B160) in 1888). However, the 1880s is the most significant decade in terms of understanding the role of the piano in Dvořák's output. The piano works produced in this period are small-scale, technically undemanding collections (the *Eklogy* [Eclogues] (B103, 1880) and op.52 Piano Pieces (B110, 1880)) which show the composer writing predominantly for the amateur pianist. It is not until the *Poetické nálady* [Poetic Tone Pictures] (B161, 1889) that the piano instigates a change in overall compositional direction, and the emphasis upon programme within this work continued subsequently in the orchestral concert overtures from 1891–2. In these works, Dvořák stated 'here I am a poet as well as a musician'³⁰ and this connection with programmatic writing creates parallels with both Smetana's earlier symphonic poems and those of his Czech contemporaries Josef Bohuslav Foerster (1859–1951) and Zdeněk Fibich (1850–1900) (whose piano cycle *Z hor* [In the Mountains] was written two years earlier than Dvořák's *Poetic Tone Pictures*), as well as with the general musical environment at the end of the nineteenth century.

This change of direction in Dvořák's writing was interrupted by the time he spent in America (1892–5), and the offer of a teaching position across the Atlantic demonstrates further the importance of Dvořák's international reputation as a 'national' composer, as he was engaged in America primarily in order to facilitate the creation of a national style. These demands can be seen in the change of direction in Dvořák's output, which now becomes dominated by 'American' works (the *American Flag* (B177, 1892–3) and the symphony *Z nového světa* [From the New World] (B178, 1893)). The piano works completed during this period (the Suite in A and the *Humoresky* [Humoresques], B187 and 188, both 1894) reflect

³⁰Döge (2001), p. 782.

this concern with creating an ‘American’ style, and demonstrate Dvořák’s contact with Negro spirituals within a return to the more abstract, technically undemanding style explored in the earlier *Eclogues* and op.52 pieces. The way in which the composer’s time in America disrupted his exploration of a new period is demonstrated by the way in which Dvořák returned to programmatic composition in 1896–7 with the creation of five symphonic poems (B195–199, 1896–7) and, in these works, the composer infuses the form with Czech national sources (with many of the works using the romantic ballads of Karel Jaromír Erben’s *Kytice z pověstí národních* [Bouquet of Folk Tales] as a source).³¹

Dvořák focused on opera in his final years, stating that ‘over the last few years, I have written nothing but operas. Not out of vanity or the desire for fame, but because I consider opera the most advantageous of genres for the nation too. Large sections of society hear such music, and hear it very often.’³² These operas came at the beginning of the twentieth century, when Czech opera had gone through a number of significant changes which will be discussed subsequently. The focus upon opera at this stage of his career can be seen as a demonstration of the fact that Dvořák appreciated the fact that composing for the stage was still essential in order to be recognised as a specifically ‘Czech’ composer and to have a significant place in the national consciousness.

The previous sections have provided an overview of the piano works in the outputs of both Smetana and Dvořák and, in addition to giving an outline of the most important directions in their compositional development, have given consideration to the significance of the instrument within their compositional output. Although both composers played a crucial part in creating a canon of specifically Czech works, in being the older of the two, Smetana was responsible for the foundation of a Czech national school meaning that, in many ways, Dvořák responded to the directions and styles explored by the older composer. As a reflection of this, the following chapters will consider firstly Smetana’s piano works in

³¹See Clapham (1979), pp. 144–7 for further details of Dvořák’s incorporation of Erben into the symphonic poems.

³²Döge (2001), p. 785.

detail and then use a comparison of his *Czech Dances* and Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances* as a springboard for a detailed exploration of the instrument's role in the younger composer's output.

CHAPTER 3

The place of the piano in Smetana's output

The significance of the piano in Smetana's early development has already been outlined, but what needs to be explored further in the early part of his life are the two significant facets of his musical personality, namely performer and composer, and the extent to which each impacts on his output for the piano. Throughout the first part of Smetana's compositional career, the two figures that loom the largest in both of these areas are Fryderyk Chopin (1810–49) and Franz Liszt (1811–86).

The beginning of Liszt's influence upon Smetana came when the young Czech composer went to Prague to study in 1839–40, with his attention focused upon becoming a concert pianist. During this year, he attended a concert given by Liszt in 1840 and the Hungarian's playing had a profound effect on Smetana, both as a performer and as a composer.³³ Indeed, the experience of hearing Liszt possibly provided the impetus for Smetana's intended sets of variations on themes from the Bellini opera *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* (1839–40, JB 2:2). These works are incomplete, but the fragments that do exist contain brilliant cadenzas and passagework, both of which point to Smetana having a formidable technique at the time.³⁴ The experience of hearing Liszt was, however, somewhat negated by the fact that Smetana left Prague and continued his schooling in Plzeň in the latter part of this year.³⁵ This change in musical environment, from the diverse musical experiences of Prague to the limited activities of Plzeň (where music existed almost solely as an accompaniment for dancing), led to a change in Smetana's compositional focus, defined by a move from virtuosic variation sets to the creation of polkas (see JB 1:1, 1:2, and 1:9).

It was only during 1840–1 that Smetana began to consider composition as an important activity, and he received no formal training in it until 1843. Aside from the

³³Details of what Liszt may have played in his Prague recitals can be deduced through a study of Walker (1983), pp.445–8, where a list of repertoire performed by Liszt during the years 1838–48 is given.

³⁴Large (1970), p.10.

³⁵Smetana's lack of educational success in Prague is examined in more detail by Large (1970), pp.10–12.

unfinished variation sets mentioned above, Smetana's early compositions were small-scale dances for the piano, including three *Impromptus* (JB 1.4–6, 1841–2), which he regarded highly, stating in 1841 'these are the first of my pieces to be written in a decent way: that is not in a style. Only gnomes and ghosts could dance to them. I hope to see them in print and at this time begin real composition.'³⁶ In 1843 he returned to Prague to engage in a systematic course of training in music theory,³⁷ yet despite this quest for theoretical knowledge, Smetana was still focused upon a performing career, stating that he wanted 'to become a real virtuoso and not just a pianist'.³⁸

Smetana began his studies with Josef Proksch (1794–1864)³⁹ in August 1843, who provided him with a reinforcement of his previous musical experiences, championing Chopin, Schumann, Berlioz, and Liszt, composers whom Smetana would already have known through performing their works.⁴⁰ Proksch based Smetana's course of tuition on A.B. Marx's *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition*⁴¹ and he also subjected him to a systematic study of harmony and composition by the theorist Antoine Reicha (1770–1836)⁴² which, with its concentration upon melodic and thematic construction, would have reinforced the principles outlined by Marx. The exercises completed by Smetana (JB 3.1–17, 1844–5) illustrate that he was given a thorough grounding in the fundamentals of harmony, counterpoint, canon, and fugue by Proksch, as well as being taught to write in a number of different styles (including songs, marches, and variations), something that becomes significant in his early writing for the piano. His period of apprenticeship culminated with the

³⁶Large (1970), p. 14

³⁷Smetana's comment to Liszt in a letter of 23 March 1848 stating that (at the age of seventeen) he was 'unable to distinguish one note from another' reinforces this lack of knowledge, and is discussed in Large (1970), pp. 23–6.

³⁸Large (1970), p. 23.

³⁹Proksch was an outstanding pianist, clarinetist, theorist, and teacher, respected and defined as one of the finest musicians in Prague. He studied with Johann Logier in Berlin, and on his return to Prague in the 1830s, he set up an institute based upon Logier's methods, creating an institute that was thought to be more progressive than the Prague conservatoire.

⁴⁰See Large (1970), pp. 9–10 for details of the pieces Smetana worked on as a performer.

⁴¹Published in Leipzig in 1837—details given in Bent and Pople (2001), pp. 539–540.

⁴²Published works include *Traité de mélodie* (1814), *Cours de composition musicale, ou complet et raisonné d'harmonie pratique* (1816–8), and *Traité de haute composition musicale* (1824–5).

composition of the Sonata in G minor (JB 3:24, 1846), but his first important piano composition from his period of apprenticeship was the *Bagatelles et impromptus* (*Bagately a impromptus*) [Bagatelles and Impromptus] (JB 1:19, 1844), a collection of small pieces significant in locating Smetana within the framework of wider European Romanticism. The effect of hearing Liszt in 1840 can be seen as two-fold and, in addition to encouraging the desire to become a virtuoso performer, Liszt also provided a connection with a composer who would be hugely important in Smetana's *Bagatelles and Impromptus*: Fryderyk Chopin.

Through Liszt, Smetana came to know the music of Chopin, and his admiration for the op.10 studies (composed between 1830 and 1832) was such that it led him to state that 'from the moment that I understood these pieces I saw what my future task would be'.⁴³ This statement was made by the composer on 12 November 1879, demonstrating that Chopin was a figure whose significance continued to the end of Smetana's life (an issue which will be explored subsequently in a consideration of the links between Smetana's polkas and Chopin's mazurkas). It also reinforces the Czech composer's admiration of Liszt's interpretation of the op.10 studies, and the Hungarian composer can be seen as a 'vessel' through which the music of Chopin passed. Although Liszt was clearly an important figure to Smetana during his early development, in terms of his compositional style, Chopin was more significant. Smetana's writing for the piano throughout the 1840s and 50s is dominated by small-scale salon pieces and, in writing in genres such as *albumleaf* and *sketch*, his style is far removed from the virtuosic, large-scale, concert works of Liszt. The connection between the *Bagatelles and Impromptus* (1844) with Chopin's op.28 Preludes (1838–9) demonstrates Smetana's knowledge and appreciation of the Polish composer, his attachment to the piano as a salon instrument, and his connection to the wider European Romantic tradition of small-scale character pieces for the instrument.

⁴³Kundera (1949), p.11.

A comparison of the *Bagatelles and Impromptus* and Chopin's Preludes op.28

Smetana was an enthusiastic performer of Chopin's works and, as Jan Neruda states, 'Smetana regards himself as Chopin's second interpreter and maintains that he learnt to play these compositions only from Liszt who had heard Chopin himself play them.'⁴⁴ Kundera asserts that the *Bagatelles and Impromptus* are Smetana's own version of Chopin's op.28 Preludes⁴⁵ and there seem to be many points of connection between the two collections which demonstrate both Smetana's enthusiasm for Chopin and his connection to wider European Romanticism.

Chopin's op.28 Preludes are significant in the context of the development of the piano miniature in the first half of the nineteenth century. Composers such as Chopin and Schumann built upon the previous exploration of small-scale genres such as the *impromptu* and *bagatelle* by Schubert and Beethoven respectively, and created a form of expression that contrasts with the contemporaneous extrovert, large-scale, virtuosic arrangements of Liszt. However, in creating the op.28 Preludes, Chopin challenged his audience to accept the genre on new terms. The prelude was traditionally a Baroque form which acted as an improvisatory introduction to a larger piece and, in terms of his own performance of the works, Chopin often used them in this way, but he also played them as individual pieces in their own right, independent of any other work, creating the new genre of the *concert prelude*.⁴⁶

The problem of how the Preludes should be understood can be perceived as the 'problem of the miniature' in nineteenth century piano music. Jeffrey Kallberg⁴⁷ discusses the status of the miniature and explores how there existed a 'hierarchy of genres' in nineteenth century music, with smaller forms being considered 'coquettish, feminine' and more suited to the amateur pianist, whereas the genres considered of real value were the

⁴⁴Bartoš (1955), p.129.

⁴⁵Kundera (1949), p.18.

⁴⁶The development of this genre, along with a discussion of how Chopin programmed the Preludes, is outlined in Kallberg (1992), pp.138–9.

⁴⁷In his article 'Small forms: in defence of the prelude', included in Samson (1992), pp.124–44.

sonatas and symphonies. Kallberg suggests that this value system meant that Chopin's compositional voice was limited, with even Schumann stating that 'his effectiveness is limited to the narrow sphere of piano music, whereas with his powers he might climb to far greater heights.'⁴⁸

A further challenge posed by the Preludes is whether or not they should be considered as a cycle. This reinforces the point made above about larger forms being valued more highly, and the fact that many contemporary performers will only perform the whole set (rather than extracting individual numbers) demonstrates 'a continuing distrust of the small, a refusal to accept [the preludes] at face value'.⁴⁹ Difficulties in perceiving these miniatures are compounded by the fact that they use a historical genre (and thus one loaded with conventions and expectations) to create small-scale fragments lacking in any programmatic explanation, and it would appear that even Schumann (whose own piano cycles from the 1830s created similar perceptual difficulties, as will be examined subsequently) was disturbed by the notions of brevity and disorder that characterise the set.⁵⁰ In creating the *Bagatelles and Impromptus*, a collection of piano works that connect with the Preludes, Smetana simultaneously became involved in a fundamental debate within nineteenth century piano music.

The individual preludes in Chopin's op.28 are generally monothematic and lacking in development, and this connects them with Smetana's *Bagatelles and Impromptus*, within which each piece tends towards being based around one idea. The cyclical tonal plan of the Preludes (with its pairing of relative majors and minors) further demonstrates Chopin's relationship with the Baroque, and Smetana's *Bagatelles and Impromptus* begin with Chopin's major-relative minor pairings, but in the end restrict the keys used to eight, stopping the pairings at three sharps (C major–A minor, G major–E minor, D major–B minor, A major–F# minor).

⁴⁸Writing in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* on 2 Nov 1841– quoted in Kallberg (1992) p.132.

⁴⁹Kallberg (1992), p.136.

⁵⁰Kallberg (1992), p.133.

In terms of musical language, there are many elements of connection between Chopin's op.28 and his op.10 Studies, and this perhaps further explains Smetana's enthusiasm to create a piano work so closely related to that of his Polish counterpart.⁵¹ A number of the Preludes are extremely virtuosic, with good examples being nos 16 and 19, both of which build on the consistent textures and *moto perpetuo* figuration so prevalent in the op.10 studies. A further characteristic of the op.28 set (and one which would have compounded difficulties in perceiving the set as a cycle) is the changeability of styles between individual preludes. This is demonstrated by the change of mood between no.15 (with its delicate, quasi-nocturne textures) and no.16 (a *presto con fuoco* étude), with the abrupt change between the two heightened by the fact that no.16 begins with declamatory triplets, a statement that seems unconnected to either the previous piece or the subsequent musical utterance (see music examples 1a and 1b). These abrupt changes are emphasised by the brevity of some of the Preludes, a good example of this being the 'whirlwind' of sound presented in no.5 that disrupts the cantabile style of both nos 4 and 6. The brevity of the pieces means that the musical argument often feels incomplete and the endings 'seldom give comfort',⁵² often feeling incredibly sudden and more than a little incongruous when juxtaposed with the preceding material. In nos 2 and 4, the endings consist of cadences which disrupt the textural constancy of the remainder of the piece, whilst in no.4 the cadence is further separated by a rest, underlining the abrupt closure (see music example 1c).

⁵¹Smetana's enthusiasm for the op.10 studies is discussed in Large (1970), p.10.

⁵²Kalberg (1992), p.139.

Ex.1a: Chopin; the final 14 bars of op.28 no.15

p
poco rit.
p a tempo
smorzando
slentando f
riten.

Ex.1b: Chopin; the opening of op.28 no.16

Presto con fuoco.

f
rubato
 8
 5

Ex.1c: Chopin; the final 14 bars of op.28 no.4

smorz.
pp

Although there are many connections between the *Bagatelles and Impromptus* and the op.28 Preludes, obviously the differences in individual situation and status between the two composers at the time of composition has to be considered. When writing the Preludes, Chopin was going into the final decade of his life and had already achieved a good deal of international fame as both a pianist and a composer, and this contrasts with Smetana's position at the beginning of his musical career and just starting to explore the piano as an instrument. However, these differences withstanding, Smetana's musical language does contain many Chopinesque elements. Throughout the op.28 collection, Chopin uses a good deal of linear chromaticism in order to create a complex surface texture supported by structural vertical harmonies.⁵³ This approach can be seen in both op.28 no.1 (which is essentially a decoration of I and V) and no.4 (a I-V-I cadential progression expanded through linear chromaticism), and these examples correspond with Smetana's no.1 *Nevinmost* [Innocence] and no.4 *Touha* [Longing], where the Czech composer expands basic tonal harmonies with linear chromatic progressions (see music examples 2a and 2b).

Ex.2a: Chopin; op.28 no.1, illustrating a complex surface texture

Agitato.

The musical score for Chopin's Op. 28 No. 1, 'Agitato', is presented in two systems. The first system shows the right hand with a melodic line and the left hand with a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system continues the piece, ending with a 'cresc.' marking. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (mf), articulation (accents), and fingerings.

⁵³The development of this harmonic language is explored by John Rink in his article 'Tonal architecture in the early music' in Samson (1992), pp. 78–97.

comparison of Smetana's piece with Chopin's Nocturne op.9 no.1) and he also states that *Longing* (no.4) is the most Chopinesque piece in the set, noting the similarity between its accompanimental pattern and that of Chopin's op.10 no.9 and op.28 no.24. However, the observation of such microscopic surface similarities would seem to neglect the main issues raised within Smetana's connection with Chopin at this stage of his career. In the *Bagatelles and Impromptus*, Smetana created a collection of small-scale individual pieces that depict various different moods and characters and, in doing so, he explored the same notions of contrast and changeability used by Chopin. In addition, Smetana's harmonic language demonstrates the linear chromaticism of the Polish composer, and the idea of virtuosity (which plays an important part in the op.28 collection) is also an emerging part of his musical language.

Smetana's use of the op.28 Preludes as a model demonstrates the enthusiasm for Chopin which had been created through hearing Liszt perform the op.10 studies. However, it is reasonable to suggest that the op.28 Preludes were a more appropriate model for Smetana (as an apprentice composer) than the large-scale and virtuosic op.10 collection, yet they still contain the exploitation of piano texture and create the kind of technical demands that may have impressed Smetana in the studies. The connection with Chopin and the Romantic tradition of the piano miniature is also significant in a consideration of the subsequent development of Smetana's piano writing which, for the next decade, focused upon the piano as a salon instrument through the creation of collections of character pieces for the instrument. In the *Bagatelles and Impromptus*, Smetana's first significant piano work, he both created a work which had no equal in Bohemia at the time and cemented his relationship with wider European Romanticism.

Smetana's compositional exercises: the final step towards the Sonata in G minor

After the completion of the *Bagatelles and Impromptus* in July 1844, Smetana turned to producing exercises in a range of different forms and styles as part of his apprenticeship with Proksch. This set of exercises (JB 3:1–17) includes examples in song form, marches, fugues, and canons, and perhaps what is most significant about these studies is the way in which they allow Smetana further opportunities to build up and experiment in a range of different styles, textures, and harmonic approaches, a process which began in the *Bagatelles and Impromptus*. Good examples of the range of Smetana's activities in the exercises are the *Notturmo* [Nocturne] from February 1845 (reinforcing the connection with Chopin in its texture created through flowing arpeggiation and cantabile lines) and the *Skladba C moll* [Piece in C minor] which explores an imitative texture, perhaps demonstrating Smetana's relationship with Baroque models, a connection which may also be attributed to his experience of hearing, playing, and studying the opp. 10 and 28 collections of Chopin, with their emphasis on linear motions and Baroque forms and figuration (music examples 4a and 4b).

Ex.4a: Smetana; the *Nocturne* from the 1845 compositional exercises

Andante

The musical score for Smetana's *Nocturne* (Op. 10, No. 1) is presented in four systems. The first system is marked 'Andante'. The music is in G minor (two flats) and 3/4 time. It features a flowing, arpeggiated texture in both hands, characteristic of Chopin's nocturnes. The first system shows the initial measures, including a trill in the right hand. The second system continues the arpeggiated pattern. The third system shows the continuation of the piece, and the fourth system, starting at measure 10, shows the final measures of the excerpt.

Ex.4b: Smetana; *Piece in C minor* from the 1845 compositional exercises

The image displays three systems of musical notation for a piano piece. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is written in C minor, indicated by two flats in the key signature. The notation includes various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The piece features a complex, virtuosic texture with rapid passages and intricate harmonic structures.

There is also evidence of an extrovert, virtuosic style developing within these exercises, and both the *Pochod válečníků* [Soldiers' March] and *Pochod triumfální* [Triumphal March] (from October and December 1845 respectively) are dramatic, and challenge the pianist with greater technical demands, such as rapid octaves and scalic figuration, combined with the 'signature' elements of a march (dotted rhythms and repeated rhythmic cells). This style is also present in the *Charakteristické variace na thema české národní písně* [Characteristic Variations on a Czech National Song] (February 1846) and the association of an extrovert, virtuosic style with a Czech folksong makes this work a precursor of the nationalistic works for chorus and orchestra (the *Song of Freedom* and *March for the National Guard*) that followed in 1846 and 1848, thus signifying a musical response to the socio-political turbulence that defines this period in the Czech lands. Smetana rarely based his works on Czech folksong sources and, following these variations in his apprenticeship, the next piano work to do so is the *Fantasia on Czech Folksongs* from 1862, by which time Smetana's relationship with Czech nationalism had been completely redefined.

The creation of a technically demanding style of piano writing continues in the two studies (JB 3:18) completed in January 1846. The first study (*ve formě preludia* [in the form

of a prelude]) cements the connection with Chopin explored in the earlier *Bagatelles and Impromptus*, and has clear surface similarities with the Polish composer's op.10 no.1 in its consistent, widely spaced figuration based on arpeggios and linear chromaticism decorating basic harmonic progressions (see music examples 5a and 5b for a direct comparison). The use of the genre of a prelude reinforces the connection made previously with both Chopin's studies and preludes and Baroque conventions and models. Both studies show Smetana's continuing concern with exploring virtuosity, demonstrating his own abilities and aspirations as a performer at this stage in his life, and also providing a precursor to the later concert studies, the piano tone poem *Macbeth*, and the *Czech Dances*, all of which place the composer's writing for piano on the concert platform as opposed to the salon.

Ex.5a: Chopin; op.10 no.1

Allegro. (♩ = 176.)
legato

f

ritardando

ritardando

Ex.5b: Smetana; opening of the *Etude in the form of a prelude*

The Sonata in G minor (JB 3:24) marks the end of Smetana's apprenticeship period and was composed between July and October 1846. The fact that Smetana ended his period of training with a work in sonata form is significant, and reinforces the argument presented earlier that the sonata was seen as a more valued genre, one which demanded more thought, control, and planning on the part of the composer than the creation of sets of miniatures. It also demonstrates an attachment to tradition and, indeed, was a genre that Smetana never used again in his writing for the instrument. Subsequently, the composer returned to the creation of miniatures, demonstrating his commitment to Romantic innovations as opposed to the more traditional and conventional approach implied through the use of older forms. Prior to the Sonata in G minor, Smetana's experiments with sonata form are illustrated by the *Skladba C dur* [Piece in C major] and *Skladba B dur* [Piece in B flat major], both from March 1846. In these pieces the composer shows both an appreciation and understanding of the conventional functions of tonal and textural contrast inherent in sonata form, and a willingness to deviate from them and move towards a more through-composed form which emphasises a greater sense of connection between ideas.

The Piece in C major begins with a lack of clearly defined first subject material and, rather than reinforcing the tonic, the first section of this exercise is more transitional in terms of its deviation from the tonic and its introductory, dramatic character (music example 6a). The second subject is clearly outlined in terms of a change in texture and its presentation of the dominant, yet Smetana also explores the second subject more thoroughly, presenting it twice in different 'characterisations' (music example 6b). The creation of a more through-composed form is demonstrated in the lack of a closed exposition area, the musical argument progressing through to the development section without the clear perfect cadence in the dominant that traditionally defines the exposition. A similar sense of continuation can be felt in the Piece in B flat major, where Smetana breaks down the divisions between exposition and development by exploring the two subjects more extensively in the 'exposition', meaning that

the development area has less purpose. As with the previous exercise, there is no clearly defined cadence at the end of the exposition section, meaning that the musical argument seems to 'flow' into the development section. What these exercises demonstrate is Smetana looking towards a form which, whilst exploring some of the conventional characteristics of sonata form, aims to create something more unified and through-composed, with a greater sense of connection between ideas.

Ex.6a: Smetana; *Piece in C major*, first subject area bars 1–11

Ex.6b: Smetana; *Piece in C major*, second subject material bars 25–41

The image displays four staves of musical notation, likely representing the first movement of the Sonata in G minor. The notation is dense and complex, featuring rapid semiquaver figuration and intricate textures. The first staff shows a melodic line in the right hand and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The second and third staves continue this complex texture, with the right hand often playing chords and the left hand playing rapid semiquaver patterns. The fourth staff shows a more melodic passage in the right hand, with a fermata over a measure, and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The notation includes various accidentals, such as sharps and naturals, and dynamic markings like 'f' and 'p'.

The Sonata in G minor brings together all of Smetana's developments under Proksch and presents them within a four-movement structure, the scale of which is unparalleled in the composer's output up to this point. The first movement is an example of Smetana writing monothematically, with the material for the whole movement being derived from the opening bars. These present a melodic cell (a turn) combined with harmonic diversity, providing a dramatic opening characterised by harmonic changeability. The first movement lacks a clearly defined first subject and, subsequently, the 'turn' figure of the opening bars becomes the basis for an introductory section which creates drama through rapid semiquaver figuration exploiting the whole range of the keyboard and preparing the arrival of the tonic through the repetition of diminished seventh harmonies and increasingly fragmented textures (music example 7a). The arrival of the tonic in bar 22 restates the basic thematic material of the opening but then becomes more transitional in its move towards the relative major. The material at bar 29 is the first clearly defined thematic area, but is in the key traditionally reserved for second subject material (music example 7b).

Ex.7a: Smetana; first 21 bars of the first movement of the Sonata in G minor

Musical score for Ex.7a, Smetana's first 21 bars of the first movement of the Sonata in G minor. The score is in G minor and 3/4 time. It features a piano introduction marked *Sostenuto* and *p*, followed by a section marked *Allegro* with *poco a poco* dynamics. The score includes various performance instructions such as *ritard.*, *cresc.*, *acceler.*, *loco*, and *1*.

Ex.7b: Smetana; first movement of the Sonata in G minor, bars 29–37

Musical score for Ex.7b, Smetana's first movement of the Sonata in G minor, bars 29–37. The score is in G minor and 3/4 time. It features a section marked *pesante* and *dolce* with dynamics *f* and *p*. The score includes various performance instructions such as *f*, *p*, and *dolce*.



The second subject of the Sonata has some similarities with Beethoven's *Pathétique* sonata, in the rhythmic constancy of the accompanimental figuration and the registral shifting of the melodic line (music example 7c). This connection with Beethoven's piano sonata continues at the beginning of the development, where the opening bars are presented again in a contracted form. In the creation of a highly dramatic work in sonata form, Smetana may have been responding to Beethoven, as he was a figure studied under Proksch and, as one of Smetana's pupils recalls 'although Smetana revered Liszt deeply, for him Beethoven stood out far above everybody else'.⁵⁶

Ex.7c: Smetana; second subject of the Sonata in G minor, bars 54–61

⁵⁶The recollection of Countess Elizabeth Thun (a subsequent pupil of Smetana), quoted in Large (1970), p.27.

In the first movement, Smetana explores a range of textures (the development section includes complex stretto entries based around the rhythm of the second subject) and aims for a dramatic intensity and scale not evident in his previous piano writing. Before the coda at the end of the exposition, dramatic unison chords in both hands drive down towards the leading note of G minor, followed by a bar of silence, creating tension between keys and through the lack of resolution of implied harmonies (music example 7d).

Ex.7d: Smetana; first movement of the Sonata in G minor, bars 76–85

The musical score for Smetana's first movement of the Sonata in G minor, bars 76–85, is presented in three systems. The first system (bars 76–85) shows a complex texture with unison chords in both hands, marked *ff*. The second system (bars 86–95) features a *loco* section with triplets and a first ending marked *1* and *p*. The third system (bars 96–105) concludes with a *dim. - - - smorzando* marking and a final cadence marked *a*.

The recapitulation is interesting tonally, as it contains shifts between the tonic major and minor. The dramatic writing that characterised the exposition continues here, and Smetana adds a coda which presents the opening bars in different harmonic settings, providing a dramatic disruption to the musical argument (music example 7e). The sense of drama continues in the return to the B flat major of the second subject in bar 266, and there is a tension here between this key and the original G minor, with the latter eventually gaining prominence, the heightened tension created through the use of Neapolitan harmonies and rests highlighting the return of G minor at the end of the movement.

Ex.7e: Smetana; first movement of the Sonata in G minor, bars 252–269

The musical score for Ex. 7e consists of three systems of piano music. The first system is marked 'Sostenuto' and includes dynamics 'din.', 'smorz.', and 'p'. The second system is marked 'Più allegro' and 'Sostenuto', with a measure number '260' and the instruction 'sotto voce'. The third system is marked 'Allegro' and includes the dynamic 'pp'.

The second movement continues to demonstrate Smetana's dramatic writing, and opens with harmonically ambiguous detached semiquavers which build up to create a quasi-improvisatory, cadenza passage leading into the presentation of the main thematic material at bar 15. The movement exemplifies what Smetana had learnt as a result of the experimentation in his apprenticeship exercises, as it consists of two ideas and proceeds through the continual recharacterisation of the main thematic idea, with the secondary idea being transitional in its presentation of a sequence of chromatic harmonies (music example 7f).

Ex.7f: Smetana; the 'secondary idea' from the second movement of the Sonata in G minor, bars 33–41

The musical score for Ex. 7f shows a single system of piano music with chromatic harmonies. The dynamic 'pp' is indicated.

The initial statement of the main thematic idea consists of a melodic line accompanied by syncopated chords and a bass line defined by dotted rhythms. There is a sense of culmination in the way Smetana develops this idea, as the second presentation includes arpeggiated figuration as an accompaniment, and the third incorporates demisemiquaver triplets. This rhythmic diminution provides a sense of direction towards the climactic final presentation, which further reinforces Smetana's concern with virtuosity in its widely spaced textures (exploiting the whole of the keyboard) and dramatic repeated triplet chords (music example 7g). The texture here recalls Liszt and, the treatment of material (in its changing characterisation) also demonstrates Smetana's use of the Hungarian's technique of thematic transformation.

Ex.7g: Smetana; (i) initial presentation of the main melodic idea from the second movement of the Sonata in G minor (bars 15–23)

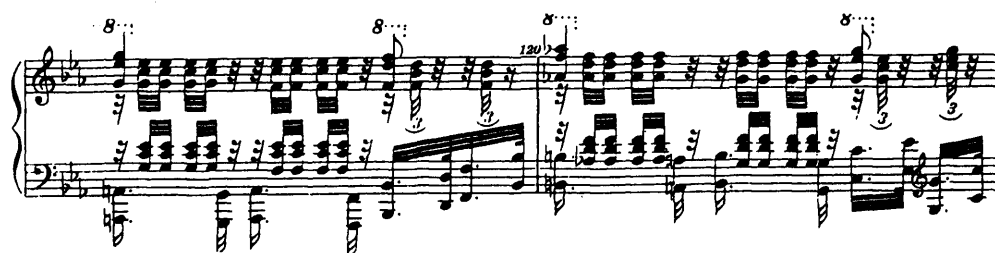
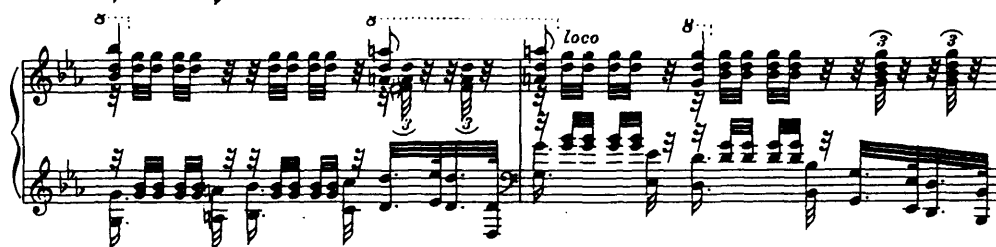
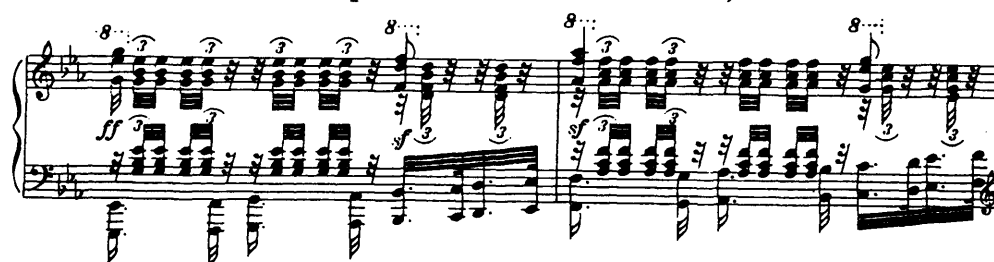
(ii) the second presentation of thematic material bars 48–55

(iii) the third presentation of thematic material, bars 83–90

(Tempo I)



(iv) the climax of the development of thematic material, bars 115–120



The third movement uses a conventional scherzo and trio structure, and the writing is much simpler and more regular than that of previous movements. The final movement is unusual in that the expected rondo structure is replaced by the abrupt juxtaposition of two different ideas. The lack of connection between these ideas, along with a good deal of ‘transitional’ material and repetition means that this last movement lacks the sense of drama, intensity, and forward impetus that defines the first two movements. However, despite this, there is still evidence in this movement of Smetana’s exploitation of the instrument, and the presentation

evidence in this movement of Smetana's exploitation of the instrument, and the presentation of technically demanding, virtuosic textures. The final section of this last movement also illustrates Smetana's continuing concern with creating connections between movements, and the juxtaposition of G major and minor recalls the first movement, as does the use of dramatic rests before the final *ff* chordal perfect cadence, which provides a fittingly extrovert ending to the culmination of Smetana's achievements during his apprenticeship (music example 7h). As Large states, in this work Smetana 'throws off his student fetters and comes of age',⁵⁶ and with it he completed his apprenticeship and emerged technically proficient in his trade.

Ex.7h: Smetana; final part of the fourth movement of the Sonata in G minor, bars

435–453

The continuing development of Smetana's language in his works for the piano

Smetana's writing for piano after the end of his apprenticeship continued in the same vein as the *Bagatelles and Impromptus*, and he returned to the descriptive, programmatic small-scale pieces from this first collection and went against the large-scale sonata structure with which he ended his period of training. From this point until 1856 (when Smetana went to Sweden)

⁵⁶Large (1970), p.36.

the composer's writing for piano concentrated on this 'salon' style of composition, developing through the *Six morceaux caractéristiques* (*Šest charakteristických skladeb*) [Six Characteristic Pieces] (1847–8, JB 1:35), *Stammbuch-Blätter* (*Lístky do památníku*) [Albumleaves] op.2 (1851, JB 1:51), *3 Stücke* (*Tři skladby/lístky do památníku*) [Three pieces/Albumleaves] op.3 (1849–50, 1:65), and *Skizzen* (*Črty*) [Sketches] opp.4 and 5 (1848–57, JB 1:66 and 1:67 respectively), and an examination of these genres demonstrates Smetana's continuing relationship with the wider context of European piano music.

The *Six Characteristic Pieces* are defined as opus 1, showing the importance that the composer attached to them, and they essentially extend the scale and emotional range of the *Bagatelles and Impromptus*. The pieces have descriptive titles and the cycle is important in its beginning of Smetana's personal contact with Liszt (he dedicated this op.1 collection to the Hungarian), something that was to become significant in his development during his time in Sweden. Through the correspondence that exists between the two men, it can be seen that Liszt admired the collection, and this letter dated 30 March 1848 demonstrates his enthusiasm:

I would like to express my warm thanks for the dedication which I accept with all the more pleasure since the pieces are the most outstanding, finely felt, and most finished that recently have come to my note. I might perhaps permit myself one criticism namely with regard to the title of the first one *Gretel in the woods*. The canon seems to me too scientific a form for Gretel. The simple title *In the woods* would, in my opinion, be preferable.⁵⁷

The main development that can be felt in the *Six Characteristic Pieces* is the way in which Smetana explores the capabilities of the instrument in pieces of extended length and emotional range. However, although the individual pieces exploit contrast and changeability, many commentators have focused upon the need to find connections between the pieces, reinforcing the previous point about the status of the miniature and its associated perceptual

⁵⁷Bartoš (1955) p.27.

problems (and perhaps resulting from imposing the same analytical techniques as were relevant in the Sonata). Although connections between pieces seem tenuous, Large states that the collection is monothematic⁵⁹ and that the pieces are all related to the descending scale presented in the first piece. This proposal is further supported by Séquardtová, who states that ‘the composer decided upon one single unifying idea. An *idée fixe* became the common expressive denominator which is brought out with greater or lesser clarity in the musical structure of the individual compositions.’⁶⁰

A contrasting approach to the cycle is provided by Gabrielová.⁶¹ In agreement with Large, she notes that the cycle of individual pieces is united, but the basis for this unity is not similarity of thematic construction but ‘organised contrast’. The first instance of this is in the tonal organisation, and the pieces are arranged through the juxtaposition of tonic major and minor through a cycle of fifths (with no. 1 in C major, no. 2 in C minor, no. 3 in G major, no. 4 in G minor, and continuing until the D minor of the final piece). In addition to the tonal plan, Gabrielová notes the mathematical balance in the cycle between different moods, tempi, dynamics, and methods of construction.⁶²

In response to the above comments, it would seem clear that Smetana works to an overall tonal plan yet, thematically, there would appear to be no obvious motivic connections. A reason why commentators may have looked for connections is perhaps that the opening of no. 1 *V lese* [In the Woods] appears as a kind of ‘subject’, in its role as the basis of an initial imitative texture. No. 1 demonstrates the extension in Smetana’s descriptive writing in the multi-faceted approach he takes to creating a musical depiction of the woods. The first section, in its chromatically shifting chords and imitative upper voices, depicts the depths of the forest, full of darkness and shadows, whereas the middle section continues the imitation but in a scherzo, dance-like style, with a simpler harmonic structure, providing a release of the tension created in the first section (music examples 8a, (i) and (ii)).

⁵⁹ Large (1970), p. 31.

⁶⁰ *Klavírní dílo* [Piano works], volume I, Prague (1982), p. XLII.

⁶¹ Gabrielová (1974), pp. 330–3.

⁶² Gabrielová (1974), p. 330.

Ex.8a: Smetana; no.1 of the *Six Characteristic Pieces* (i) first section, bars 1–18

Moderato ($\text{♩} = 84$)

p il Canone bene pronunz.

(ii) contrasting middle section of no.1, bars 31–39

Più allegro

poco a poco accelerando

p

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a melody in the right hand and accompaniment in the left hand. Performance markings include 'rallent.' (ritardando), 'a tempo', and 'accelerando'. The second system continues the piece, with markings for 'dim.' (diminuendo), 'rallent.', and 'a tempo'. The notation includes various rhythmic values, slurs, and dynamic markings.

The way in which different aspects of the same image are explored continues in many of the other pieces. No.3 *Pastýřka* [Shepherdess] starts with an introductory idea (thereby connecting it to the first piece) before commencing with a pastoral theme in a melody and accompaniment texture with simple harmonic support. A further facet of the pastoral image is then explored in the subsequent section, which uses arpeggiation to suggest ‘horn-calls’ before a reprise of the opening idea. This piece builds on the idea used in no.3 (*Idyll*) from the *Bagatelles and Impromptus*, with similarities in key, texture, and the interaction of two ideas.

The *Six Characteristic Pieces* therefore juxtapose notions of unity and contrast. The harmonic plan for the pieces provides an element of overall organisation, as does the way in which the individual pieces are organised (generally exploring two contrasting areas, both relating to the overall depiction of the title). This can be demonstrated in a piece that shares its title with one of the *Bagatelles and Impromptus*, namely no.4 *Touha* [Longing], and a comparison of these two settings illustrates Smetana’s developments in the later cycle. No.4 of the *Bagatelles and Impromptus* presents a consistent texture dominated by shifting chromatic harmonies beneath a simple, *cantabile* melody (music example 8b).

Ex.8b: Smetana; *Longing*, no.4 of the *Bagatelles and Impromptus*, bars 1–6

The image shows the beginning of the piece 'Longing' (no.4 of the Bagatelles and Impromptus) by Smetana. It is marked 'Appassionato'. The score is in 6/8 time and one sharp (F#). The right hand features a simple, cantabile melody, while the left hand provides a consistent texture of shifting chromatic harmonies. The notation includes a treble clef, a bass clef, and various rhythmic values.



In contrast, no.4 of the *Six Characteristic Pieces* is a more extended structure. The piece is based upon a theme built around descending intervals, and this develops through a series of different variations, with the accompaniment being subjected to decoration through syncopation and the addition of triplets (music examples 8c). The middle section depicts a more turbulent facet of the title, presenting a contrast between spread diminished seventh chords and improvisatory, staccato ‘horn-call’ figuration, which eventually develops into a *ff* dramatic chordal climax (music example 8d), before the return of the opening theme in a final variation. Kundera maintains that this piece is the principal source of Chopin’s influence in the set,⁶³ and he makes a direct comparison between *Longing* and Chopin’s Nocturne in G minor op. 15 no 3. However, as with Kundera’s comments about the Smetana/Chopin connection within the *Bagatelles and Impromptus*, such partial and surface comparisons reveal little about either the development of Smetana’s piano writing or the significance of the instrument within his overall output.

⁶³Kundera (1949), p.22.

Ex.8c: Smetana; opening of op.1 no.4 (i) bars 1–9, the initial presentation of the theme

Andantino più moto (♩ = 76)

p *cresc.* *dim.*

(ii) the first variation of the theme, bars 18–25

mf *dim.* *come sopra*

(iii) the second variation of the theme, bars 34–41

pp *m.d.* *m.s.* *m.d.* *m.s.* *m.s.* *m.s.* *dim.* *cresc.*

Ex.8d: Smetana; the middle section of no.4, bars 49–59

ff *quasi senza tempo* *p* *ff* *p*

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system begins at measure 35 and features a dynamic marking of *ff*. The second system includes dynamic markings of *rit.*, *ff*, and *p*. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of two flats, and various rhythmic values and articulations.

What the *Six Characteristic Pieces* illustrate is the duality of unity and contrast, with Smetana using certain recurring elements (the exploration of contrasting settings of an idea within each piece, the overall tonal plan) to connect pieces, whilst the surface effect is one of contrast, both within and between pieces. A good example of this is between nos 1 and 2, where the imitative texture of *In the Woods* is disrupted by the driving semiquavers of *Vznikající vášně* [Arising Passion]. The first section of no.2 is lacking in any clear thematic idea and, harmonically, tension is created through the continual use of appoggiaturas. The initially tense, aggressive character is transformed in the middle section into a *dolce* melody, with the dissolution of the appoggiaturas leaving flowing, legato semiquavers as an accompaniment. The final section of this piece also reinforces the importance of virtuosity in Smetana's language, being marked *con bravura*, the hands crossing in rapid changes of register, and the distance between the hands exploring the whole of the keyboard before a final powerful unison statement brings the piece to a close (music examples 8e).

Ex.8e: Smetana; no.2 from the *Six Characteristic Pieces*, (i) bars 1–6

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano, labeled Ex.8e. The tempo is marked *Vivace* (♩ = 100). The first system includes dynamic markings of *f* and *ben marcato la melodia*. The second system includes a measure number 5. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of two flats, and various rhythmic values and articulations.

(ii) the transformation of starting material from no.2, bars 28–37

Musical score for piano, bars 28–37. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of two flats. The music is characterized by a delicate, flowing texture.

- Bar 28:** Treble clef begins with a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *dim.*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).
- Bar 29:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *dim.*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).
- Bar 30:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *dim.*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).
- Bar 31:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *dim.*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).
- Bar 32:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *dim.*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).
- Bar 33:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *dim.*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).
- Bar 34:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *dim.*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).
- Bar 35:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *dim.*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).
- Bar 36:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *dim.*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).
- Bar 37:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *dim.*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).

Performance markings include *dim.* (diminuendo), *dolce* (dolce), *pp* (pianissimo), *m.s.* (mezzo-soprano), *m.d.* (mezzo-dolce), and *f* (forte).

(iii) the final section of no.2, bars 112–124

Musical score for piano, bars 112–124. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of two flats. The music is characterized by a strong, rhythmic texture.

- Bar 112:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *f con bravura*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).
- Bar 113:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *f con bravura*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).
- Bar 114:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *f con bravura*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).
- Bar 115:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *f con bravura*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).
- Bar 116:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *f con bravura*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).
- Bar 117:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *f con bravura*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).
- Bar 118:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *f con bravura*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).
- Bar 119:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *f con bravura*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).
- Bar 120:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *f con bravura*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).
- Bar 121:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *f con bravura*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).
- Bar 122:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *f con bravura*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).
- Bar 123:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *f con bravura*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).
- Bar 124:** Treble clef has a half note chord (F4, A4, C5) marked *f con bravura*. Bass clef has a half note chord (F3, A2, C3).

Performance markings include *f con bravura* (forte con bravura), *m.s.* (mezzo-soprano), and *m.d.* (mezzo-dolce).

Virtuosity is also present in no.6, *Zoufalství* [Despair], where drama is created through sudden and abrupt changes of texture and register and, as in many of the other pieces, the composer explores two different facets of the character of the title, with the frustration and tension of the first section contrasted with the sense of emptiness and isolation depicted in the second (music examples 8f). Smetana's exploration of unusual textures and registral extremes is also demonstrated in no.5 *Válečník* [Soldier], which illustrates the composer writing in a very unpianistic way, with thick spread bass chords accompanying a triadic, fanfare-like melody.

Ex.8f: Smetana; no.6 of the *Six Characteristic Pieces*, (i) bars 1–12

Presto rubato (♩ = 152)

(ii) the second thematic idea of no.6, bars 49–58

*pp dolcissimo
sotto voce*

The *Six Characteristic Pieces* show Smetana extending his musical language to create a variety of characters and support a wealth of different associations and programmatic depictions. The composer also explores the way in which material can be ‘recharacterised’ and transformed (creating both contrast and unity within a piece), and this is a technique that would become significant at a later stage, when Smetana began to absorb the musical language of Liszt’s symphonic poems. Despite the fact that commentators have looked to find connections and unifying elements, it would seem to be in the exploration and exploitation of contrast that Smetana makes the biggest developments, and his experimentation with the piano’s capabilities was to continue through the subsequent works for piano, namely the *Albumleaves* opp.2 and 3, and the *Sketches* opp.4 and 5.

~~In working with the genre of the albumleaf, Smetana reinforced his relationship with contemporary European Romanticism. Nejedlý asserts that the pieces are a ‘perfect expression of the contemporary bourgeois society in which Smetana then moved’ and that the pieces have a ‘richness of shapes and individual formations.’⁶³ Helfert describes the pieces in a far less positive way, seeing them as evidence that Smetana was losing his musical independence and imitating Schumann’s style and, as he states, in these pieces ‘the notes of Smetana exist parallel to the notes of Schumann.’⁶⁴ A final, and most convincing, argument comes from Séquardtová⁶⁵ who sees the *Albumleaves* as being a series of ‘study sketches’ that enabled Smetana to progress to the musical language demonstrated in his later piano works.~~

At this point in his career, Smetana was still committed to a career as a soloist, stating that ‘I want to travel the world as a virtuoso, accumulating money and gaining a public position as choirmaster, conductor, or teacher’.⁶⁶ However, his concert tours were unsuccessful (he was relatively unknown, and his concert programmes were extremely

⁶³Nejedlý (1924), p.30.

⁶⁴Quoted in Gabrielová (1979), p.246.

⁶⁵Séquardtová, Hana; *Předmluva k edici klavírního díla Bedřicha Smetany* [Introduction to the edition of piano works of Bedřich Smetana], vol.4, Prague (1968), pp.VIII and XII.

⁶⁶Ottlová, Pospíšil, and Tyrrell (2001), p.538.

demanding)⁶⁷ and in 1848 he created a music institute in Prague, using the evening concerts he established there as a vehicle for displaying his own pianistic talents and imprinting himself on the consciousness of the Czech public.⁶⁸ In addition, he gave piano lessons to aristocratic families and played as a chamber musician in concerts he organised in the city, and the music that he was writing for the piano at this stage therefore reflects the musical environment he was working in rather than his ambitions as a piano virtuoso. Alongside the composition of the *Albumleaves* and *Sketches*, Smetana was also working on the *Three Poetic Polkas* and *Three Salon Polkas* (both 1848–54), reinforcing his previous connection with Chopin in the creation of stylised pieces which go far beyond their dance origin.

The genre of the albumleaf: connections between Smetana and Schumann

Smetana's writing of albumleaves provides further connections with European Romanticism in the form of Schumann's *Bunte Blätter* op.99 (1838–49) and *Albumblätter* op.124 (1832–45), and a comparison of these pieces with Smetana's opp.2–5 highlights both the Czech composer's creative debt to, and independence from, the models of his contemporaries, with commentators noting the existence of various stylistic similarities between the two.⁶⁹ Smetana had a considerable knowledge of and respect for Robert Schumann (1810–56), and the Czech composer showed the Piano Sonata in G minor to Robert and Clara Schumann whilst they were in Prague giving concerts during January 1847, in addition dedicating his opp.2–5 to Clara.⁷⁰ In order to assess the relationship between Smetana's *albumleaves* and Schumann's opp.99 and 124 collections, the way in which the latter approached the genre has to be understood and, despite many similarities between the two composers, Schumann's development and use of the genre is somewhat different to that of his Czech contemporary.

⁶⁷Evidence of the type of concert programme Smetana performed can be found in Large (1970), p.40.

⁶⁸For further details of Smetana's performance at these concerts, see Large (1970), pp.50–1.

⁶⁹See the comments of Nejedlý in footnote 64.

⁷⁰Large (1970), pp.53–4.

Throughout the 1830s Schumann focused on writing for the piano, producing major piano cycles such as *Papillons* (1830–1), *Carneval* (1834–5), and *Kreisleriana* (1838). Like Smetana, for Schumann the piano was a significant medium in his compositional development, and his status as a pianist-composer provides a further connection between the two figures. Literature was a major influence upon Schumann's artistic development, and his fascination with the writers Jean-Paul (1763–1825) and E.T.A. Hoffmann (1776–1822) exerted a major influence upon his compositions from the 1830s. The idea of the 'fragment' was dominant within the literary output of these figures, with Jean-Paul stating that 'life is a constellation of fragments',⁷¹ and this notion of an incomplete, fragmentary utterance can be found in Schumann's musical output, linking his explorations to those of Chopin, and notions of incompleteness and the miniature discussed previously in relation to the op. 28 Preludes.

The notion of the fragment explored by Schumann in his piano cycles is bound up with what John Daverio defines as 'the discontinuity mode of utterance'.⁷² This fragmentary means of expression was crucial to the whole Romantic worldview, and 'fantastic poetry, sentimental poetry [...] can only be presented in fragmentary form; Romantic fragment form'.⁷³ Schumann utilised principles derived from Romantic literature to create cycles that are both unified, coherent wholes on one hand, and chaotic jumbles of fragments on the other. These cycles present a kaleidoscope of contrasting ideas and yet hang together as a coherent whole through various means of connection employed by the composer. Daverio identifies several elements of Schumann's technique derived from literature, namely quotation (of himself, other composers, or popular tunes), interleaving (a technique derived from E.T.A. Hoffmann's novel *Kater Murr* which combines two narratives, creating a sense of discontinuity and 'an organisational mode based entirely on the principle of incompleteness'),⁷⁴ and *Humour* (a stylistic duality, using 'high' and 'low' styles to create an

⁷¹Daverio (2001), p.763.

⁷²In Daverio (1993), p.53.

⁷³Daverio (1993), p.53

⁷⁴Daverio (1993), p.61.

element of satire and comedy through their collision).⁷⁵ Schumann's aim is to 'poeticise the fragment',⁷⁶ setting out to disturb listeners, who are continually challenged through the creation of fragment complexes and associative chains of discontinuous musical ideas, and this emphasis on disruption, contrast, and discontinuity makes explicit the connection with Chopin's Preludes previously noted.

Schumann's works within the genre of the albumleaf are linked with the exploration of the fragment, yet the pieces of the *Bunte Blätter* and the *Albumblätter* are collections of individual pieces coming from different parts of Schumann's life, and can be seen as 'cast-offs' from the composer's piano cycles.⁷⁷ The opp.99 and 124 collections therefore exploit notions of change and contrast without the need for connection, coherence, and unification demanded within a cycle. Smetana, in the *Six Characteristic Pieces*, experimented with change, contrast, and the depiction of different moods and characters, so the works of Schumann would have provided an ideal model for him, and would have reinforced some of the ideas that Chopin's Preludes had introduced Smetana to previously.

Schumann's op.99 presents a variety of different forms, styles, and textures. Nos 4, 5, and 6 exploit this changeability by contrasting the simple chordal style of no.4 with the rapid triplets of no.5 (presented within a *moto perpetuo* 'étude' texture) and the delicate waltz of no.6 (with accompanying chromatic harmonies). This juxtaposition of contrasting styles can also be found in nos 10 and 11, the first of which is modelled upon the improvisatory style of a Baroque prelude, the energy and movement of which contrasts with the intensity of the thick chords of the 'march' of no.11 (music examples 9a).

⁷⁵This collision is termed the 'dialectic of triviality and sublimity' in Daverio (1993), p.66.

⁷⁶Daverio (1993), p.88.

⁷⁷Details of the chronological development of opp.99 and 124 can be found in Daverio (2001), pp.809–10.

Ex.9a: Schumann (i) the beginning of op.99 no.10

(ii) the beginning of op.99 no.11

Both opp.99 and 124 illustrate the combination of ‘high’ and ‘low’ styles, with op.99 no.14 presenting a quasi-polka texture and op.124 no.7 a ‘ländler’, the traditional simplicity of which is disrupted by Schumann’s addition of chromatic harmonies, providing a demonstration of the kind of stylistic duality explored within these collections. Op.124 also provides an illustration of Schumann’s use of self-quotation, and no.3 consists of two ideas that are completely unrelated, the latter of which appears to quote material from the composer’s *Aufschwung* [Soaring] from the collection of *Phantasiestücke* op.12 (1837), creating an abrupt collision of ideas (music example 9b).

Ex.9b: Schumann; op.124 no.3, demonstrating the idea of self-quotation

As a foil to the almost continual contrast, Schumann also occasionally creates musical connections between numbers, as demonstrated by op.124 nos 13 and 14, where the final cadence of the former completes in the latter, an element which creates a duality of continuity and contrast (music examples 9c), and Schumann still exploits the idea of change, with the pieces contrasting in speed, mood, and texture. These rapid changes of mood, in addition to the constant textures and lack of development that characterise many of the pieces (e.g. op.124 no.17) connect opp.99 and 124 even more closely with Chopin's op.28 Preludes.

Ex.9c: Schumann op.124; demonstration of the connection between nos 13 (i) and 14 (ii)

(i)

(ii)

Sehr rasch



A further similarity between the Schumann and Chopin collections is the way in which some of the individual numbers end abruptly and seem unconnected to the rest of the musical argument and, in op.99 no.8, the sudden appearance of the cadence after rapid semiquaver movement has similarities with some of the final cadences in Chopin's op.28 (compare previous music example 1c with music example 9d below).

Ex.9d: Schumann; final 5 bars of op.99 no.8



Schumann's opp.99 and 124 sets are collections of pieces lacking a unifying element, and they exist as individual fragments rather than cycles, exploiting contrast and change in the juxtaposition of different textures and styles. Smetana's *Albumleaves* opp.2 and 3 and *Sketches* opp.4 and 5 constitute the Czech composer's musical response to this and, in many ways, build upon the ideas explored in the previous *Bagatelles and Impromptus* and *Six Characteristic Pieces*. Whereas Schumann's opp.99 and 124 were derived from the piano cycles from the 1830s which absorbed ideas from Romantic literature to create forms which juxtaposed contrast and unity within coherent cycles, Smetana's intention was never to create unified cycles. Despite this difference, the opp.2 and 3 *Albumleaves* demonstrate Smetana's

absorption of the idea of the musical fragment, and op.2 no.1 illustrates the type of fragmentary utterance that Smetana explores within this genre. The musical argument lacks a clear starting point, and the listener feels as though they have been ‘dropped’ into the middle of a piece, with the constant texture and lack of development providing a connection with both Schumann and Chopin in the op.28 Preludes (music example 10a).

Ex.10a: Smetana; op.2 no.1, bars 1–6

Smetana orders the numbers to maximise contrast, with the lack of clear melodic definition and syncopation in no.1 giving way to the cantabile singing line of no.2, and the sense of movement and animation in no.5 being followed by the static chords of no.6. The abruptness observed in many of the Schumann examples can be found in op.2 no.3, which ends with a quasi-improvisatory *dim ed accel.* (in which the musical idea ‘evaporates’ rather than having a defined conclusion – see music example 10b).

Ex.10b: Smetana; op.2 no.3, bars 73–end



Op.2 no.6 creates connections with both Schumann and Chopin as Smetana focuses upon the harmonic perspective, beginning with a Chopinesque non-tonic opening and progressing through linear chromaticism (music example 10c). Harmony is the primary directional force and any melodic development is restricted and minimised. Kundera notes the influence of Chopin here, comparing Smetana's op.2 no.6 to the Polish composer's op.28 no.4 and stating that in both pieces 'a simple monotonous melody receives constantly new colouration from changing harmonies'.⁷⁹ However, whereas Chopin uses linear chromaticism to extend and decorate a basic harmonic structure (I–V–I), Smetana's harmonic approach is less unified and focuses upon exploring remote tonal areas, thereby emphasising change and contrast over structural unity.

Ex.10c: Smetana; op.2 no.6, bars 1–21

⁷⁹Kundera (1949), p.24.

Smetana's acknowledgement of the influence of Schumann comes in op.3 no. 1, entitled *Roberto Schumannovi* [To Robert Schumann]. The piece is extrovert in style and more extended than many pieces in the set, and the inclusion of syncopation, chromaticism, and changes of mood betrays the influence of the dedicatee. The op.3 collection further exploits the juxtaposition of contrasting styles, with no.2 being an example of a simple strophic song, and the final piece of the set (no.3) being extrovert and quasi-étude in style, using the *moto perpetuo* figuration of Baroque models (music example 10d (i)). The extended scale and virtuosic element of this final number perhaps demonstrates Smetana's consideration of the individual numbers as a unified whole and, in placing such a piece at the end of a collection, provides the set with a sense of closure. However, the way in which Smetana uses a gradual descent in pitch and fragmentation of texture creates a less definite ending, as the musical argument seems to literally 'evaporate' (an element noted previously in conjunction with op.2 no.3) (music example 10d (ii)).

Ex.10d: Smetana; op.3 no.3 (i) bars 1–10

(ii) the final section of op.3 no.3, bars 43–end

The *Sketches* opp.4 and 5 continue in much the same vein as the preceding *Albumleaves* in exploring different styles, from the constant triplets of no.1 to the imitative opening of the *Idyla* [Idyll] (no.2) (whose ending and decorative melodic line recalls some of Chopin's *Nocturnes*) and the Mendelssohnian 'song without words' texture of *Vzpomínka* [Reminiscence] (no.3). As in the op.2 *Albumleaves*, Smetana creates a fitting conclusion to

the op.4 collection with an extrovert, dramatic piece which makes significant technical demands upon the pianist, combining fugal textures with chromaticism, and complex textures with virtuosic triplet figuration (music example 10e). This piece demonstrates Smetana reaching beyond the boundaries of the piano miniature and aiming towards the concert pieces produced in the following decade.

Ex.10e: Smetana; op.4 no.4, bars 27–34

The musical score for Smetana's op.4 no.4, bars 27–34, is presented in four systems. The first system begins with a forte (*ff*) dynamic and includes the instruction *assai marcato*. The second system features a *cresc.* (crescendo) and a *rit.* (ritardando) marking. The third system is marked *(a tempo)* and *f assai marcato*. The fourth system includes *rit.*, *f*, *dim.* (diminuendo), and *f* markings. The score is heavily annotated with fingering numbers (1-5) and articulation marks like asterisks and slurs.

The final set of *Sketches* op.5 shows a similar range of styles, textures, and moods, and the collection also has connections with the *Poetic* and *Salon* polkas which the composer would have been working on at the same time. Although op.5 no.3 is not a polka, the opening idea has a close relationship with the first of the *Trois polkas de salon* (*Tři salonní polky*) [Three Salon Polkas] op.7 (1848–54, JB 1:60) (music examples 10f), showing that the composer was exploring the same approach within all of his compositions from this period.

Ex.10f: Smetana; (i) op.5 no.3, bars 1–7 and (ii) no.1 of the *Three Salon Polkas*, bars 1–8

(i)

Moderato [♩ = 60]
p dolcissimo
 [pp]
 [mp]
 [pp]
espress.

(ii)

p espress. il canto
 P.

The *Albumleaves* and *Sketches* demonstrate Smetana's extension and development of the descriptive and varied musical language explored in the *Bagatelles and Impromptus* and

Six Characteristic Pieces, and the composer exploits the resources of the instrument to create different moods and characters, experimenting with styles and genres from a range of historical periods. Smetana responds to a range of models from wider European Romanticism and, in doing so, creates collections of piano miniatures without precedent in the Czech piano repertoire. That this originality was appreciated at the time is demonstrated by the journalist František Ulm's review in the journal *Bohemia*, where he stated that the sets were 'most accessible. Full of unusual poetry, short but expressive, with unexpected harmonies which are unforced and spontaneous'.⁷⁹ Clara Schumann's reactions were less positive, and she stated that 'it does not seem right to seek the romantic in the bizarre. In other pieces, too, I could wish to find a bar here or there harmonically pleasing'.⁸⁰ Her comments here concur with those she made about the piano works of Schumann,⁸¹ and this reinforces the connections between the fragmentary musical utterances found in both composers' works.

The *Sketches* and *Albumleaves* constitute a period of experimentation for Smetana, and his piano writing subsequently changed significantly as a result of his experiences with Liszt. His experimentation with different textures and styles within these smaller-scale pieces led him to a fuller understanding of the piano's resources and capabilities, all of which were exploited in the concert studies, *Fantasia on Czech Folksongs*, and the *Czech Dances*. Gabrielová concludes that the *Sketches* and *Albumleaves* are a kind of 'author's test work', in which Smetana addresses the problem of finding a confident, unified compositional language.⁸² After the *Sketches* there were many important developments in Smetana's musical language, connected with his increased contact with a figure who had played an important part in his life right from the start: Franz Liszt.

⁷⁹Large (1970), p.53.

⁸⁰Letter from Clara Schumann, dated May 18 1852; reproduced in Bartoš (1955), pp.30–1.

⁸¹See Daverio (1993), p.50.

⁸²Gabrielová (1979), p.251.

Liszt's continuing influence on Smetana's development: the 'Swedish' period

Smetana spent 1856–60 in Göteborg, and it was during this 'Swedish period' that the influence of Liszt, already pervasive as a performer in the Czech composer's early compositional career, became even more intense, resulting in both a change of direction and a new artistic momentum in Smetana's life. At this point, Smetana was still pursuing a career as a concert pianist, and it is perhaps the combination of this indecision about a career path and the relocation to an unknown country, together with the renewed contact with Liszt, that facilitated the development of a new stage in Smetana's compositional career.

The musical environment in Göteborg contrasted with Smetana's own progressive musical outlook, and the composer wrote to Liszt on 10 April 1857 that 'people are here continually firmly trapped in antediluvian artistic opinions [...] they are unaware of more recent composers'.⁸³ One of Smetana's roles whilst in Sweden was to promote a more contemporary and adventurous musical culture, and his programming of Liszt and Wagner in his capacity as director of the music society *Harmoniská Sällskap* demonstrates his awareness and enthusiasm for the most progressive strands of European Romanticism.⁸⁴

Liszt played a key role in drawing Smetana out from this atmosphere of isolation. The Hungarian had been resident in Weimar from 1848 (remaining there until 1861) and formed the *Neue-Weimar Verein*, an association of about 30 musicians promoting concerts of new music and heightening awareness of contemporary innovations and aesthetic concerns. In 1859 the Verein became the focus for the 'New German School'⁸⁵ and Franz Brendel turned the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* into a mouthpiece for Liszt and his ideas on contemporary music. Whilst in Weimar, Liszt organised Wagner and Berlioz celebrations (in 1852 and 1855 respectively) and championed Wagner, premiering *Lohengrin* in 1850 and

⁸³Ottlová, Pospíšil, and Tyrrell (2001), p.539.

⁸⁴For details of works performed, see Ottlová, Pospíšil, and Tyrrell (2001), p.539.

⁸⁵Large (1970) provides the following definition: 'the new German school of composers centred around Weimar and had Liszt and Wagner at its head. The term was coined to distinguish the work of these composers from others who drew their inspiration from classical models.' (p.69)

mounting *Der fliegende Holländer* and *Tannhäuser* regularly.⁸⁶ During this period, Liszt was concerned with the creation of symphonic poems, and defined progressive music as being inherently linked with a programme, stating that ‘in programme music [...] the return, change, modification, and modulation of the motifs are conditioned by their relation to the poetic idea [...]. All exclusively musical considerations, though they should not be neglected, have to be subordinated to the action of the given subject’.⁸⁷ By aligning himself with Liszt, Smetana was defining himself as a progressive composer whose ideals and compositional development were in tune with the most innovative and forward-looking of his European contemporaries.

8 August 1856 is the first documented meeting between Smetana and Liszt at a banquet given by Liszt for the Czech pianist and composer Alexander Dreyschok (1818–69), and this was followed up by a series of meetings between the two composers when Liszt came to Prague for ten days between 20 and 30 September 1856. It is known that Liszt also gave Smetana copies of some of his recently published symphonic poems (including *Tasso* (1847–54) and *Mazeppa* (1851–4))⁸⁸ and the Czech composer’s study of these would surely have had an effect upon his subsequent musical development.

During his time in Sweden, Smetana became immersed in the ‘Liszt circle’ and made two particularly important trips to Weimar during this period. The first was in September 1857 for the Goethe-Schiller celebrations (during this visit he heard Liszt’s *Der Ideale* (1856–7) and *Faust Symphony* (1854–7)), and the second was in June 1859 when he heard the Prelude to Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*.⁸⁹ The hearing of these new works would have stimulated Smetana’s creative ideas and pointed the way towards his formulation of a new musical language, and his letters⁹⁰ point to him seeing Liszt as a major figure of musical innovation at this time.

⁸⁶Further details of these activities can be found in Walker (2001), p. 770

⁸⁷Liszt, writing in *Schriften*, quoted in Scruton (2001) p.398.

⁸⁸Saffle (1993), p.299.

⁸⁹Ottlová, Pospíšil, and Tyrrell (2001), p. 539.

⁹⁰Bartoš (1955), pp.47–8.

The musical products of these meetings with Liszt are the three symphonic poems *Richard III* (1857–8, JB:1:70), *Valdštyňův tábor* [Wallenstein's Camp] (1858–9, JB 1:72), and *Hakon Jarl* (1860–1, JB 1:79), and the work for solo piano *Macbeth a čarodějnice ze Shakespeara* [Macbeth and the Witches from Shakespeare]⁹² (1859, JB 1:75). The creation of orchestral symphonic poems demonstrates both the connection with Liszt and an expansion of the range of timbres and textures available to the composer, and these aspects were to redefine his approach to the piano when he returned to it in *Macbeth*⁹³ and the concert studies.

The Czech press reacted to the symphonic poems positively, acknowledging Smetana's debt to Liszt but more importantly recognising that, in embracing Lisztian compositional techniques, Smetana was defining himself as a progressive involved with the most innovative musical techniques. The following review was written in 1862 (at the height of the National Revival) and betrays clear enthusiasm for Smetana's progressive tendencies:

The overall architecture in general, the character of the motives which were clearly inspired by something other than musical compositions, the thematic arrangement of them into a massive construction, the sharp, glaring contrasts in the widely differing effects [...] the unrestrained arbitrariness in his use of harmony and modulations [...] if one can judge by only one hearing, *Richard III* and *Wallenstein's Camp* seem to out-Liszt their predecessors.⁹³

Following the symphonic poems, *Macbeth and the Witches* (1859) is defined as a 'sketch' and was never published in Smetana's lifetime. Large notes that, although the pencil sketch made by the composer is complete, no fair copy was ever made in his lifetime. The manuscript is also marked with the words 'will be accepted', which presumably indicates that the composer felt it fit for publication.⁹⁴ It is likely that the sketch was to form the basis of an orchestral symphonic poem that the composer never completed, and there have been

⁹²This title will hereafter be shortened to the more commonly used *Macbeth and the Witches*.

⁹³Review written by F.B.Ulm in *Bohemia* 6 Jan 1862, quoted in Saffle (1993), p.325.

⁹⁴Large (1970), pp.91–2.

attempts to orchestrate the work,⁹⁵ but it has remained an independent piano work, with the few ‘gaps’ left by Smetana filled in by Roman Veselý and Václav Štěpán.⁹⁶ The work demonstrates the composer extending and expanding his writing for the piano (as a result of his experience with orchestral timbres and textures in the symphonic poems), creating a large-scale virtuosic work more suitable for the concert platform than the previous salon-orientated collections.

Macbeth and the Witches is a musical depiction of the first scene of Act IV of Shakespeare’s play, a scene which explores both Macbeth’s inner turmoil at his own evil acts and the fragility of his power, with the appearance of ghosts bringing prophecies from the sphere of the supernatural. The drama of the interaction between the supernatural and the worldly clearly provided a stimulus for Smetana’s musical imagination, and the opening of *Macbeth* depicts effectively the wealth of images and emotions inherent in the literary source in the Lisztian *quasi-cadenza* sections. These create tension with their harmonic ambiguity and lack of clearly defined tonal centre, and the *ffferoce* idea reinforces this with the repetition of seventh harmonies (diminished and dominant), depicting musically the presence of supernatural powers (in the ‘whirl’ of sound in the cadenzas) (music example 11a).

Ex.11a: Smetana; opening of *Macbeth and the Witches*, bars 1–7

The musical score for the opening of *Macbeth and the Witches*, bars 1–7, is presented in two systems. The first system is labeled 'Quasi cadenza (Vivo)' and begins with a forte (*ff*) dynamic. The music is characterized by rapid, repetitive eighth-note patterns in both hands, creating a whirlwind effect. The score includes fingering numbers (1-5) and dynamic markings (*P*, *P simile*, *meno f precipitato*). The second system continues the rapid eighth-note patterns, ending with a *m.f.* marking. The score is marked with 'x' at the end of each system.

⁹⁵Large (1970) notes the orchestral version made by O. Jeremáš, p.94.

⁹⁶This information is provided in the introduction to the Supraphon version edited by Jan Novotný, published in Prague (1989), p.3.



The subsequent *più moderato* idea (at bar 12) is ‘marked’⁹⁷ in the way in which it stands out from the surrounding musical argument and, in its register, clear major harmonies, *pp* dynamic, the idea is associated with Macbeth’s uncertainty at this point in the narrative. The association of these repeated chords with the figure of Macbeth is demonstrated from bar 26, where they are recharacterised to become a fanfare figure combined with a tremolando bass (reinforcing the sense of foreboding and instability inherent in the narrative), depicting the sense of majesty and ceremony linked with Macbeth’s monarchical status (music example 11b). The way in which Smetana maintains tension throughout this first section demonstrates the expansion in his musical language and, through the juxtaposition of various musical ideas, he not only provides an effective depiction of the literary source, but exploits the resources of the instrument to create a dramatic, extrovert, and virtuosic introduction.

Ex.11b: Smetana; *Macbeth and the Witches*, bars 23–31

⁹⁷The concept of ‘markedness’ (or ‘the valuation given to difference’) within musical discourse is borrowed from Hatten (1994). He provides further definitions and discussion on pp.34–8.

The *tempo di marcia* section (from bar 49) builds on the previous fanfare idea and depicts Macbeth by combining various associated ‘topics’ (regular march-like rhythms, huge majestic chordal textures) to create a musical depiction of the external narrative.⁹⁸ The writing is less pianistic and the *maestoso* chords (from bar 55) seem suitable for orchestration, but the juxtaposition of this material with the previous cadenza material effectively depicts the narrative (which contrasts the human fallibility of Macbeth with the supernatural powers of the Witches) (music example 11c). Smetana also draws on his previous musical experiences of dance genres, and the setting of the witches dance as a chromatically distorted polka demonstrates this (music example 11d).

Ex.11c: Smetana; *Macbeth and the Witches*, bars 49–61

Tempo di marcia, moderato

(una corda)
P x P x P x

(tre corde)
P x P x P P P P

Maestoso
55
P P P P P P P P

⁹⁸The term ‘topic’ and the concept of topical analysis is derived from Leonard Ratner’s *Classic Music* (1980). Discussion can be found within this text on pp. 1–32.

Ex.11d: Smetana, *Macbeth and the Witches*, bars 103–114

Allegretto (♩ ca 90)

The musical score for Ex.11d is in 2/4 time, marked Allegretto (♩ ca 90). It consists of three systems of piano and bass staves. The first system (bars 103-105) features a piano (p) dynamic and a crescendo (cresc.) marking. The second system (bars 106-110) includes a forte (f) dynamic and a dotted line indicating a continuation of a figure. The third system (bars 111-114) also features a piano (p) dynamic and a crescendo (cresc.) marking. The score includes various articulation marks, including 'x' and '8'.

The composer builds upon Liszt's technique of thematic transformation throughout, with the repeated chords changing from their initial tentative presentation, through the anticipation of being associated with the *tranquillo* figuration, to their part in the majestic, march-like theme of Macbeth. The constant reappearance of material from the opening section creates a sense of developing narrative and effectively reveals the changing emotional framework. A good example of this is the way in which the *allegro non tanto* chords from the opening are presented alongside contrapuntal *sostenuto* material later in the work, depicting the conflict between Macbeth's exterior status and his inner turmoil. The way in which Smetana recharacterises the inner melodic line of the *sostenuto* in the subsequent section (from bar 175) creates tension through the juxtaposition of sudden *pesante* outbursts within increasingly chromatic harmony, with the dotted, 'march-like' bass line constituting a constant reminder of Macbeth's monarchical status (music example 11e).

Ex.11e: Smetana; *Macbeth and the Witches*, bars 153–178

Allegro non tanto

The musical score for Ex.11e is in 2/4 time, marked Allegro non tanto. It consists of two systems of piano and bass staves. The first system (bars 155-158) features a fortissimo (ff) dynamic and a piano (p) dynamic. The second system (bars 159-162) includes a forte (f) dynamic and a piano (p) dynamic. The score includes various articulation marks, including 'x' and 'v'.



160

Sostenuto

165

molto espressivo

P

sempre con Ped.

dim.

175

Allegro non tanto (♩ = ca 104)

pp

sempre pp

mp espress.

The final pages of *Macbeth and the Witches* demonstrate Smetana's capacity for writing in a dramatic, extrovert, and virtuosic style, and the rapid octaves, chords encompassing the entire keyboard, tranquillo figuration, and rapid arpeggiation, all presented within a large scale programmatic work, illustrate the composer building on his previous (smaller-scale) explorations of the instrument's capabilities (music example 11f). The connection between Liszt and Smetana continues in the Czech composer's experiments in the genre of concert study which, coming both before and after *Macbeth* (the *Concert Study in C* and *On the Seashore* are from 1858 and 1861 respectively), both inform and are influenced by the style of writing explored in this piano tone poem.

Ex.11f: Smetana; *Macbeth and the Witches*, bar 298–end

298

fz

P

fz

P

fz

P

300

Largamente e molto maestoso

cresc.

fff

P

P

P

P

305

The image displays three staves of musical notation for piano, likely from a concert study by Smetana. The first staff (measures 310-315) features a treble and bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It includes dynamic markings such as *f*, *rapido*, *ff*, and *p*. The second staff (measures 315-320) is marked *pesante* and *Stesso tempo (♩ = ♩)*, with dynamics including *fff*, *m.f.*, and *p*. The third staff (measures 320-325) is marked *molto pesante* and includes dynamics like *f*, *fff*, and *ff*. The notation is dense with chords and complex rhythmic patterns.

Between 1858 and 62, Smetana composed two concert studies which further extend the piano writing observed in *Macbeth*, namely the *Konzert Etüde (Koncertní etuda)* [Concert Study] in C (1858, JB 1:73), and *Am Seegestade – eine Erinnerung (Na břehu morškém – Vzpomínka)* [On the Seashore – a Reminiscence] (1861, JB 1:80). The earlier piano works demonstrate that the Czech composer had always had a leaning towards more virtuosic, extrovert writing and, with his renewed contact with Liszt and his experimentation with orchestral textures, Smetana embarked on the creation of large-scale, virtuosic works for the instrument that parallel those of his Hungarian contemporary. Smetana had explored the genre of the concert study at an earlier stage in his development, completing the *Etuda A moll* [Study in A minor] in 1846, during his period of apprenticeship. This early study lacks the imaginative and diverse textures of the later studies, but it does demonstrate Smetana's outstanding pianistic abilities and his early enthusiasm for using the piano as a vehicle for dramatic virtuosic display. These features are developed both in the *Concert Study* in C and *On the Seashore*, the latter of which combines virtuosic writing and technical demands with an external programme, reinforcing the link with *Macbeth*.

The *Concert Study* begins with quasi-toccata figuration, with the interlocking patterns formed reminiscent of Liszt. As in *Macbeth*, Smetana creates tension through harmonic ambiguity, and the bar of silence following the final arrival on a dominant seventh intensifies the sense of expectation (music example 12a). The whole of the opening section has little melodic definition, and creates momentum through percussive interlocking chordal patterns which challenge the pianist through both their continual presence and the way in which they explore the whole range of the keyboard (music example 12b). The study juxtaposes contrasting characters, illustrated by the way in which the opening toccata accelerates towards the subsequent *Volante* with its high register and flowing *pp* arpeggiation (which reminds of the figuration used in the opening of Liszt's concert study *Waldenrauschen*, composed four years later in 1862).

Ex.12a: Smetana; *Concert study in C major*, bars 1–20

Vivacissimo (♩. ca. 100)

The musical score consists of five systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef).
 System 1 (bars 1-4): Treble clef has a series of chords. Bass clef has a series of chords with fingering (1, 2, 3, 4, 5). Markings: *f martellato*, *m.d.*, *m.s.*
 System 2 (bars 5-8): Treble clef has a series of chords. Bass clef has a series of chords with fingering. Marking: *accelerando*
 System 3 (bars 9-12): Treble clef has a series of chords. Bass clef has a series of chords with fingering. Marking: *m.d.*, *m.s.*
 System 4 (bars 13-16): Treble clef has a series of chords. Bass clef has a series of chords with fingering. Marking: *cresc. e rinfz*
 System 5 (bars 17-20): Treble clef has a series of chords. Bass clef has a series of chords with fingering. Marking: *rinfz*. The piece ends with a fermata on a dominant seventh chord.

Ex.12b: Smetana; *Concert study in C major*, bars 21–32

Tempo I
sempre staccatissimo

Smetana's fundamental concern in this study is with exploring contrasting textures and characters and, despite its initial gentle character, the *Volante* section continues with virtuosic writing, including rapid figuration that forms mini-cadenza areas (music examples 12c). The composer also explores the idea of thematic transformation and material from the *Volante* forms the basis of a virtuosic final section, recharacterised through the addition of a chordal accompaniment and the exploitation of widely spaced registers (music example 12d).

Ex.12c: Smetana; *Concert study in C major*, (i) beginning of *Volante* section, bars 129–131

Volante (♩ ♩)

(ii) the combination of *Volante* thematic material with cadenza material, bars 147–150

Ex.12d: Smetana; *Concert study in C major* – combination of ideas in the *risoluto* section, bars 220–234

The opening of *On the Seashore* has parallels with *Macbeth*, with the opening quasi-cadenza section creating drama through harmonic ambiguity, and a sense of tension and expectation reinforced through the abrupt rest following the rapid ascending figuration (music example 13a). The emphasis is on the exploration of texture and character more than thematic development and, in this work, Smetana has the added impetus of a visual image to focus upon, the continuous ascending and descending arpeggio figuration creating ‘waves’ of sound (music example 13b).

Ex.13a: Smetana; *On the Seashore*, bars 1–3

Ex.13a: Smetana; *On the Seashore*, bars 1–3. The score is in G major, 2/4 time, and consists of three systems. The first system (bars 1-2) is marked *leggierissimo e precipitato* and *f*. The second system (bars 3-4) is marked *cresc.* and *ff*. The third system (bars 5-6) is marked *Vivo* and *p*. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics, articulation marks, and fingerings.

Ex.13b: Smetana; *On the Seashore*, beginning of the main thematic idea, bars 4–5

Ex.13b: Smetana; *On the Seashore*, beginning of the main thematic idea, bars 4–5. The score is in G major, 2/4 time, and consists of two systems. The first system (bars 4-5) is marked *Moderato ma non troppo* and *p*. The second system (bars 6-7) is marked *leggiero e sempre vivacissimo* and *p*. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics, articulation marks, and fingerings.

The sense of momentum in this study is created through the harmony, which is characterised by enharmonic reinterpretation and rising chromaticism leading into the subsequent *allegro* idea. Smetana creates a connection with the opening tonality (enharmonically reinterpreting G sharp minor as A flat major) and uses interlocking octaves and a high dynamic in his exploration of the whole range of the keyboard to create a ‘stormier’ interpretation of the waves of the initial section (music example 13c).

Ex.13c: Smetana; *On the Seashore*, beginning of *allegro* idea, bars 52–55

What this second concert study demonstrates is the composer’s greater awareness of the need for connection between sections in the creation of a unified and coherent large-scale structure, and these concerns had clearly been at the heart of his endeavour in *Macbeth*, which also uses thematic transformation and recharacterisation of material to create a musical depiction of a literary narrative. Although *On the Seashore* lacks the detailed programme of the piano tone poem, it still uses the illustrative element to provide a backbone for the extrovert, technically demanding, large-scale study.

In 1860, Smetana left Sweden, returning to his homeland to re-establish himself in Prague, and an appreciation of the atmosphere in the Bohemian capital at the beginning of the 1860s is crucial to our understanding of the changes in the composer’s output throughout this decade. The Prague Smetana would have experienced was at the height of the National

Revival and, being relatively unknown in his homeland as a result of his absence in Sweden for the past four years, the composer became fully engaged in the nationalistic elements of Czech cultural life. He worked as choirmaster of the *Hlahol* choral society (1863–5), as music critic of the journal *Národní listy* (1864–5), chairman of the music division of the *Umělecká beseda* (1863), and conductor of the Provisional Theatre (from 1866). Opera was the dominant genre within Czech cultural life and, through his work in this genre in the 1860s and 70s, Smetana became the ‘founding father’ of Czech nationalism, a definition that has to be considered alongside the composer’s works from his ‘Swedish’ period which created connections with the most progressive musical directions of the second half of the nineteenth century.

During the 1860s, the piano receded into the background as opera became the dominant genre for Smetana, and one important in gaining him significance and status within a Prague focused on the development of a Czech national style. However, before Smetana began to focus on opera, he completed a piano work which demonstrates both his need to continue writing for the instrument and to respond to the cultural environment within which he found himself at the beginning of the 1860s: the *Fantasie na české národní písně* [Fantasia on Czech Folksongs, JB 1:83, 1862).

Before considering the musical language of this work, it is necessary to understand the context of its creation, and in particular the significance of the use of Czech folksong in the creation of a national style. At this point, it is significant to note the remarks of Count Harrach,⁹⁸ who stated in 1861 that ‘as far as music and singing is concerned, I lay down as the first and the chief requirement, dependent on the assiduous study of Czecho-Slavonic folksongs and the music pertaining to them, that it should have a truly national character’.⁹⁹ In stating this, Harrach created a link between composers’ use of folksong and the development of a specifically Czech style and, as Tyrrell states, ‘folksong proved to be an

⁹⁸Count Jan Harrach (1828–99) offered a prize for the best opera and libretto on a Czech theme in 1861, and was thus a significant figure within the increasing Czech nationalist consciousness.

⁹⁹Quoted in Tyrrell (1988), p.209.

easy slogan, one taken up enthusiastically by the conservative camp'.¹⁰⁰ Through the performance of his symphonic poems and explicit connections with Liszt, Smetana had already asserted his alignment with the progressive directions of Romanticism, and his comments on the use of folksong within composition make clear his distance from Harrach. Smetana stated that 'imitating the melodic curves and rhythm of our folksongs will not create a natural style let alone any dramatic truth – at the most only a pale imitation of the songs'¹⁰¹ and Hostinský (in his 1901 publication *Bedřich Smetana a jeho boj o moderní českou hudbu* [Bedřich Smetana and his struggle for modern Czech music] notes that the composer explicitly uses folksong in only three works, namely the *Fantasia sur un air bohémien* (1843, JB 1:12) for violin and piano, the *Characteristic variations* (1846) for piano, and the *Fantasia on Czech Folksongs* from 1862.¹⁰² Therefore, it can be suggested that the composer was against the 'simplistic' incorporation of pre-existing folk melodies into independent works, and it can be seen that two of the above three works were produced in Smetana's period of apprenticeship, which raises the question as to why the composer turned to the incorporation of folk melodies in the *Fantasia* nearly thirty years later in 1862.

The beginning of the 1860s saw an intensification of the National Revival in Prague, and this can be observed in the definitive publication of two enormous collections of folk texts and music, namely František Sušil's *Moravské národní písně s nápěvy do textu vřaděnými* [Moravian Folksongs with Tunes Included with the Text] (which completed its seven-year serial publication in 1860) and, more importantly for Smetana's piano work, Karel Jaromír Erben's *Prostonárodní české písně a říkadla* [Czech Folksongs and Nursery Rhymes], the melodies of which were published in 1862 and followed subsequently by the texts in 1864. This latter collection was also dedicated to Count Harrach, which may provide further explanation of why Smetana chose to quote melodic material this collection in his piano *Fantasia*. A consideration of Smetana's situation in 1862 reveals a composer very little

¹⁰⁰Tyrrell (1988), p.209.

¹⁰¹Quoted in Tyrrell (1988), p.217.

¹⁰²Quoted in Tyrrell (1988), p.218.

known in Prague (having just returned from Sweden) and, following the success of his symphonic poems (which presented a progressive musical language), he would surely have recognised the need to establish himself both within Prague musical life in general and, more specifically, within the growing national consciousness. With the *Fantasia* Smetana could satisfy both of these needs, as the work was flamboyant and virtuosic enough to provide an effective platform for his own performing skills and, through the combination of this style with the Erben folksong melodies, it provided an extrovert, large-scale musical statement of his nationalist intentions.

There are many parallels between the *Fantasia* and some of Liszt's transcriptions of opera, song, and orchestral repertoire.¹⁰³ Smetana's work demonstrates a variety of different textures and the focus is upon contrast, with little attention given to creating a coherent and unified large-scale structure. Smetana's aim is a celebration of Czech national song (he wrote the work to be performed by himself in concerts mounted to raise funds for the building of the National Theatre),¹⁰⁴ and the *Fantasia* fuses national sources with a musical language influenced by Smetana's experiences of Liszt's compositional style. Both the composer's prior experience of writing for the instrument and his exploration of different techniques is fully exploited here, though what is significant is the way in which Smetana 'marks' the original folksong sources, their simple harmonies and textures contrasted with the extended cadenza figuration with which they are framed and juxtaposed.

The quotation of original folksong material is unusual in Smetana's piano output and can be found both in this work and in the second series of *Czech Dances* from 1879, and the circumstances surrounding the creation of this work will be examined subsequently.

Within the *Fantasia* Smetana makes clear the difference (and distance) between pre-existing and original material, and applies many of the techniques found previously in the symphonic

¹⁰³Many of these transcriptions (e.g. the *Reminiscences de Lucia di Lammermoor* of 1835–6, and *Lieder von Schubert* of 1837–8) were made early in Liszt's career as a touring virtuoso pianist, so it is likely that Smetana may have experienced these works when he heard Liszt perform in Prague in 1840.

¹⁰⁴Ottlová, Pospíšil, and Tyrrell (2001), p.548.

poems, *Macbeth*, and the concert studies. The composer subjects no.351 from the Erben collection to extensive transformations and, in doing this, the connection with Liszt's early piano transcriptions is further reinforced (music examples 14a).

Ex.14a: Smetana; *Fantasia on Czech folksongs* (i) initial statement of no.351 from Erben

Moderato ma con passione (♩. ca 84)

(ii) first transformation of this material, bars 38–41

(iii) further transformation of this material, bars 59–61

[poco sostenuto]

The concentration on contrasting styles is exemplified through the juxtaposition of the virtuosic and technically demanding cadenza sections which are involved in the transformation of no.351 with the simplicity of the following example, which shows the composer's incorporation of no.392 from Erben (music example 14b).

Ex.14b: Smetana; *Fantasia on Czech Folksongs*, quotation of Erben no.392, bars 80–90

What this work represents is both Smetana's recognition of the contrast between the highly developed, progressive musical language with which he had been surrounded and the expectations of a national style based upon folksong, and the need to create for his previously favoured instrument a work which celebrated his homeland and demonstrated his enthusiasm at being present in Prague at such an important time in the country's cultural development. Although the work is not Smetana's most technically advanced and innovative, it illustrates the way in which, at the beginning of his time back in Prague, the composer connected the piano with the expression of nationalistic sentiments. Following the composition of the *Fantasia*, Smetana neglected the instrument for thirteen years, and when he returned to it with the collection of *Rêves* in 1875 his status as a composer had changed significantly.

In the years between 1862 and 1875 Smetana established himself as the focus of Czech nationalism through his operas, and *Braniboři v Čechách* [The Brandenburgers in

Bohemia] (JB 1:87, 1862–3), *Prodaná nevěsta* [The Bartered Bride] (JB 1:100, 1863–70), *Dalibor* (JB 1:101, 1865–70), and *Libuše* (JB 1:102, 1869–72) were all completed during this period, demonstrating Smetana's awareness of the centrality of opera in the Czech consciousness, an element which led to the piano receding into the background of his compositional life. In 1874 Smetana began to go deaf, and this led to him having to give up his conducting position at the Provisional Theatre, as a result of which he became increasingly isolated. Whilst in the early stages of his illness, Smetana underwent several treatments, many of them paid for by his aristocratic pupils. These pupils also came to visit him a good deal during this illness, and the composer dedicated the piano cycle *Rêves* to them.

~~The use of French titles in this work creates a link with many earlier piano works.~~

The titles of the *Bagatelles and Impromptus*, *Six Characteristic Pieces*, and *Salon and Poetic polkas* were all given in French, and this illustrates that, in *Rêves*, Smetana was returning to the treatment of the piano as a salon instrument distinct from its extrovert and virtuosic status in *Macbeth*, the concert studies, and the *Fantasia*. The titles of the individual numbers suggest the composer's exploration of subjective emotions (in *Le bonheur éteint* [Faded Happiness] (no. 1) and *La consolation* [The Consolation] (no. 2)), reminiscences of his teaching and performing career (in *Au salon* [In the Salon] (no. 4)), and elements of Czech nationalism (*En Bohême: scene champêtre* [In Bohemia: a country scene] (no. 3), *Près du château* [By the Castle] (no. 5), and *La fête des paysans bohémiens* [The Festival of the Bohemian Rustics] (no. 6)).

The use of nationalistic 'symbols' is significant here. Whilst producing *Rêves*, Smetana was also working on the cycle of symphonic poems *My Fatherland*, and the movements *Šárka* and *Z českých luhů a hájů* [From Bohemian Fields and Groves] were both completed in 1875 (with the composer having already written the *Vyšehrad* and *Vltava* movements by 1874). Through associations made explicit in the operas, various symbols

became invested with a huge amount of nationalist power and images such as the castle, the Vltava river, the legend of Šárka, and the peasant rituals and folksongs of the countryside became connected with the expression of nationalist sentiments. During the 1860s, Smetana's operas presented an explicit collection of images that were imprinted upon the Czech national consciousness,¹⁰⁶ and this can be seen as having an influence upon his piano writing in the cycle *Rêves*, which combines different elements of his musical language in the depiction of internal emotions, reminiscences, and national symbols. Therefore, even though the piano was marginalised at this point in Smetana's career, the employment of the same symbols and points of reference found in the operas and symphonic poems can still be observed.

The musical language of *Rêves* is a fusion of the many different strands that Smetana explored throughout his previous output for the instrument. Both nos 1 and 2 (*Faded Happiness* and *The Consolation* respectively) use the type of quasi-cadenza figuration found in *Macbeth* and the *Fantasia* and, in both pieces, this figuration acts as both a mood-setting introduction (in no.1, music example 15a) and an outburst of personal emotion (in the fragments at the beginning and end of no.2). *Faded Happiness* illustrates Smetana's use of the Lisztian technique of thematic transformation to depict a variety of emotions, from the dramatic waltz of the first presentation, through the more extrovert virtuosity of the *appassionato*, to the delicate *scherzando* of the final transformation (music examples 15b). Interspersed with these transformations are sections which contrast with the main theme, areas marked by the change in register, 'filigree' decoration of triplet semiquavers and the way in which they frame the main material.

¹⁰⁶This nationalistic reference system is discussed in Tyrrell (1988), pp.6–8.

The image displays a musical score for piano, organized into four systems. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The first system features a 'S' marking above the treble staff and dynamics of *p* and *ff* in the bass staff. The second system includes dynamics of *p*, *f*, and *p delicato (scherzando)*. The third system has a '(stacc.)' marking. The fourth system continues the musical notation with various dynamics and articulations.

The first two pieces of *Rêves* explore many different facets of the emotion indicated in the titles and, because of this, there are many contrasts within them. No.2 begins with an expressive, chromatic, and contrapuntal texture, the intertwining of parts creating an atmosphere of introspection (music example 15c). However, the tension latent in this opening is realised in the subsequent *più mosso* section (from bar 31), and its agitated triplet figuration provides a similar contrast between introvert and extrovert styles as that found in the first piece. The chromatic harmonic language and intensity of the first two pieces is contrasted with the simplicity of the writing in the third piece, *In Bohemia*, demonstrating the composer's juxtaposition of a more complex musical language with a simpler style associated with peasant music-making and Czech folk music (music example 15d).

Ex.15c: Smetana; opening of no.2 of *Rêves* – cadenza material followed by main theme

Moderato

mf *p* *p* *f rit.*

non troppo veloce *m.d.* *m.d.* *dim.* *Moderato assai* ($\downarrow = 72-80$) *p dolce espressivo*

*con p**

sf

The cycle as a whole combines many different styles. No.4 (*In the Salon*) presents a waltz which, although initially simple and written for the salon, is transformed through the addition of dramatic octaves and virtuosic accompanimental figuration, making the piece more a stylised dance in the manner of Chopin than a functional composition. The exploration of contrasting styles is made clear through a comparison of *In the Salon* with the pieces that frame it. No.3, *In Bohemia*, begins with a simple unison statement that develops into a dance-style texture with a regular melody and accompaniment texture supported by

simple harmonies. Smetana creates a multi-sectional piece by employing many other compositional techniques, and the opening dance is disrupted by dramatic, quasi-cadenza figuration which brings the section to an abrupt close. The initial material returns in the final section, this time in a *rubato* setting in a low register, with thick spread chords giving the light-hearted opening theme a sense of gravity, which could be perceived as Smetana taking a style associated with folk and peasant music-making and investing it with drama and intensity (music examples 15d).

Ex.15d: Smetana; no.3 of *Rêves* (i) opening material, bars 1–9

Moderato e rubato

The musical score for the opening material of Smetana's no. 3 of *Rêves* (i), bars 1–9, is presented in two systems. The tempo is marked "Moderato e rubato" and the dynamic is piano (*p*). The music is in 3/4 time. The right hand features a melodic line with triplets and slurs, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with triplets and slurs. The score is divided into two systems of four bars each.

(ii) second section of no.3; *più allegro* material, bars 21–30

Più allegro [♩ = ca. 160]

più dolce

meno allegro

The musical score for the second section of Smetana's no. 3 of *Rêves* (ii), bars 21–30, is presented in two systems. The tempo is marked "Più allegro [♩ = ca. 160]" and the dynamic is piano (*p*). The music is in 3/4 time. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs and accents. The score is divided into two systems of four bars each. The second system is marked "meno allegro".

(iii) subsequent 'quasi-cadenza' material, bars 37–46

Musical score for bars 37–46, showing piano and bass staves. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p dolce*, *sf cresc. sf*, *ff sf*, and *cresc. molto ed acceler.*. The piano part features complex rhythmic patterns and fingerings, while the bass part provides a steady accompaniment. The score is marked with *p* and *x* below the notes.

(iv) reprise of the opening thematic material, bars 153–160

Musical score for bars 153–160, showing piano and bass staves. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff sempre rubato*, *sf*, *Più vivo*, *sf*, and *dim.*. The piano part features complex rhythmic patterns and fingerings, while the bass part provides a steady accompaniment. The score is marked with *p* and *x* below the notes.

No.5, *By the Castle*, takes a symbol invested with nationalist significance and underlines its majesty and power through the musical setting. The dramatic intensity of the unison opening is reinforced through the whole first section, dominated by powerful octaves and exploiting the whole range of the keyboard, and the fanfare figures incorporated into the accompaniment provide further references to the celebration of the nation. The middle

section of Smetana's ternary design explores a more personal, intimate response, and the *dolce amoroso ma con espressione* quasi-nocturne texture provides an indication of the depth of emotion felt towards the nation (music examples 15e). The piece ends peacefully, in quiet contemplation of the previous expression of the grandeur of the nation, and the final *più lento* and *subito p* markings demonstrating the composer's creation of a more intimate expression through chromatic shifts before the final cadence.

Ex.15e: Smetana; no.5 of *Rêves* (i) climax of the first section, with 'fanfare' accompaniment, bars 15–22

Più moderato

(ii) middle section of no.5 of *Rêves*, bars 27–33

[♩ = ca 52]
dolce amoroso ma con espressione

Two systems of piano music. The first system consists of five measures. The first four measures are marked *p*. The fifth measure has a fermata. The second system also consists of five measures. The first four measures are marked *p*. The fifth measure is marked *cresc.*. Pedal markings include "Ped. come sopra" and "x".

A different view of nationalism is found in the final number *The Festival of the Bohemian Rustics*. This piece has similarities with both the polkas and other dances from the subsequent two series of *Czech Dances* and the earlier works for piano such as the concert studies and the *Fantasy*. The opening of *The Festival of the Bohemian Rustics* recalls the quasi-cadenza figuration found in previous piano works in its *martellato* octaves, constant semiquavers, and rhythmic syncopation (music example 15f).

Ex.15f: Smetana, no.6 of *Rêves*; opening material, bars 1–13

Three systems of piano music. The first system is marked *Molto vivace* and *ff martellato*. It consists of five measures. The second system consists of five measures, with the first four marked *p*. The third system consists of five measures, with the first four marked *vii. acutissimo e marcato*. Pedal markings include "x" and "x senza P".

The subsequent *Vivo ed energico* section recalls a polka texture which is subsequently subjected to Lisztian thematic transformation, creating similarities with the sectional, virtuosic writing found in the *Fantasia* (music examples 15g). This piece therefore represents a collision between the presentation of a folk dance (in the use of the polka, a genre invested with national power through its use in operas such as *The Bartered Bride*, as will be discussed subsequently in relation to Smetana's development of the polka) and the types of writing influenced by Liszt that Smetana had explored in his previous piano works.

Ex.15g: Smetana, no.6 of *Rêves*; (i) *vivo ed energico* polka material, bars 30–41

Vivo ed energico (♩ = ca 112)

(ii) subsequent *più lento* section, bars 102–109

Più lento (♩ = ca 60)

p dolce cantando

The *Rêves* therefore present Smetana's writing for the piano in microcosm. *In the Salon* looks back to the collections of *Albumleaves* and *Sketches*, whereas the more extrovert, virtuosic figuration found in many of the pieces can be seen as originating in the concert studies, *Macbeth*, and the *Fantasia on Czech Folksongs*. *Rêves* is also a fusion of personal and national elements. The first two pieces explore the composer's personal interior world at this difficult time in his career, when his health was in question and his future seemed unstable, forcing a sense of reminiscence and recollection. In contrast, pieces such as *By the Castle* and *The Festival of the Bohemian Rustics* illustrate Smetana's use of symbols invested with national power through their use in the operas and symphonic poems, and their transference onto the piano works. In doing this, the collection of *Rêves* leads directly onto the final piano works of Smetana's life, the two series of *Czech Dances* which are the culmination of the composer's previous exploration of the genre of the polka, and these works both reassert the previous connection with Chopin and provide a point of comparison between Smetana and Dvořák, in particular the expression of nationalistic sentiments in their works.

CHAPTER 4

The reassertion of Chopin's influence: a comparison of the mazurkas with Smetana's polkas

The development of the polka in Smetana's output connects the composer with both wider European Romanticism and Czech nationalism, and the relationship between Smetana and Chopin becomes significant again here, with many illuminating comparisons being present between Chopin's development of the mazurka and Smetana's parallel advances in the field of polka composition.

Chopin began using the genre of the mazurka in 1825 (with the completion of the first version of op.7 no.4) and followed this in 1826 with the composition of the op.5 *Rondo à la mazur*. The first of the 'sets' of mazurkas was the op.68 collection, which was started in 1827 (with op.68 no.2) and quickly followed by the nine mazurkas of opp.6 and 7 (1830–2). Chopin continued composing in this genre throughout his life, and the last mazurka he ever wrote was completed in 1848–9 (op.67 no.2). Smetana began composing polkas in 1840, with his first works being the *Louisen Polka (Louisina Polka)* [Louisa Polka] (JB 1.1, 1840) and the *Georginen Polka (Jiřinková Polka)* [Georgina Polka] (JB 1.2, 1840), and his work in the genre culminates with the polkas of the first series of *České tance* [Czech Dances] (1877, JB 1:107).¹⁰⁶ However, whereas Chopin's work with the mazurka is continuous (from 1830), Smetana's use of the polka is more sporadic, and there is a distinct gap between the *Souvenir de Bohême en forme de polkas (Vzpomínky na Čechy ve formě polek)* [Memories of Bohemia in the form of polkas] (JB 1:76–7, 1859–60) and the first series of *Czech Dances* from 1877 which has to be considered when investigating the place that the mazurka and the polka had in the musical development of the respective composers.

Chopin began working with the mazurka in 1825, and it is revealing to consider both the type of musical language the composer was exploring and his personal situation at this

¹⁰⁶This is the Berkovec number for the first series only, which contains the polkas.

point. In 1826, Chopin began formal composition classes at the Warsaw Conservatory, but between the years 1817 and 1830, the composer focused upon producing virtuoso piano music for the concert platform, and was involved in Warsaw society giving numerous salon and concert performances. Many of these ‘bravura’ concert pieces were inspired by Polish music, consisting of dances such as the mazurka, polonaise, and krakowiak (examples of Chopin’s use of these genres can be seen in the *Fantasy on Polish Airs* op.13 and the *Rondo à la krakowiak* op.14, both from 1828). These were defined as ‘social pieces’, written for the society in which he engaged as a pianist, and he defined these works as being ‘nothing but glitter, for the drawing room, for the ladies’.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, in the period up to 1830 (when Chopin left Warsaw for Vienna and, subsequently, Paris), it would seem that the composer, in utilising these national dances, was primarily concerned with responding to the musical and social environment in which he found himself, and that the expression of nationalistic sentiments was a more peripheral issue. The question that needs to be explored is when the use and development of dance genres became explicitly connected with nationalistic sentiment for Chopin, why this occurred at a specific point in time, and what sources the composer may have responded to.

During the early part of the nineteenth century, Polish writers played a part in connecting dances with an expression of nationalism. As Adrian Thomas notes, when the exiled poet Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855) closed his epic poem *Pan Tadeusz* [Master Thaddeus] (1834) with a vivid description of a polonaise, he was not only evoking romantic images of Poland, but also investing the dance with Polish history.¹⁰⁸ In the latter years of the eighteenth century, the polonaise had been established as the symbol of Polish nationalism through the work of composers such as Jan Stefani (1746–1829), Michał Kleofas Ogiński (1765–1833), and Karol Kurpiński (1785–1857), yet it is revealing to examine the way in which various dance forms assumed a political and cultural significance, as the history of

¹⁰⁷Samson (1996), p.27.

¹⁰⁸Thomas (1992), p.145.

many of these dances lies outside Poland. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the polonaise gradually became associated with Poland and, through the works of the composers outlined above, became invested with national significance¹¹⁰ as a response to the turbulent political situation in Poland during the latter part of the eighteenth century.¹¹¹ The fact that it was explicitly the polonaise that was imbued with national significance raises the question as to the process by which the mazurka became associated with nationalistic sentiments in Chopin's output. The polonaise and the mazurka were both genres that Chopin worked with throughout his life and, although his output in the former was more sporadic (with opp.26, 40, 53, and 61 occurring in 1835, 1838–9, 1842–3, and 1846 respectively), it is the dance that dominates his piano output in the years before 1830. From 1829, he neglected the polonaise in favour of the mazurka, returning to the former only in the mid 1830s when it had been transformed into a powerful, defiant expression of national identity, creating the genre anew as a carrier of patriotic sentiments put into the public domain.¹¹² The polonaise became for Chopin a more extrovert expression of nationalism in comparison to the more private, salon-orientated mazurka, a genre in which he was able to be more experimental in combining features of the original dance model with characteristics of contemporary Romanticism, perhaps as a result of the dance's less established position as a symbol of Polish nationalism.

A consideration of Chopin's personal situation is important in exploring his development of the mazurka. Despite the fact that he had composed mazurkas between 1826 and 1829,¹¹³ his continuous work in the genre (and the production of 'cycles' of mazurkas) began only when the composer left his native country. During his time in Vienna in 1830,

¹¹⁰The process by which this occurred is outlined in Thomas (1992), pp.145–9.

¹¹¹The key events in Poland's history being the First Partition of Poland (1772), which involved Poland losing a great deal of territory to foreign lands. This was followed by the Second Partition in 1793, and the Third in 1795, with which the remaining territory was divided between Russia, Prussia, and Austria. (NG2 article on 'Poland, volume XX, pp.8–26.)

¹¹²This process can be seen as beginning with the op.26 polonaises of 1835 and culminating in the *Polonaise-Fantasy* in 1846.

¹¹³Op.IIa nos 2 and 3 (1826), op.68 no.2 (1827), op.7 no.2a (1829), and op.IVa no.7 (1829). See Michalowski/Samson (2001) p.725 for details.

Chopin's attitude to his expression of 'Polishness' changed and became invested with a new seriousness, and the creation of dance forms became imbued with cultural nationalism, with the genres being defined as a significant force in bolstering the national spirit.

This attitude continued when the composer left Vienna for Paris in 1831, and established himself in a city where many Poles had settled after the Polish uprising of November 1830, meaning that polonaises, mazurkas, and other indigenous dances were very much a part of the culture there.¹¹⁴ In the French capital, Chopin would have been surrounded by Poles and Polish sympathisers, an element which surely would have reinforced his own nationalist feelings.¹¹⁵ Whilst in Paris, the composer was involved with performances in the salons, and this led to him composing for this venue as opposed to the concert hall, with his work within the genre of the mazurka being an important part of this. The definition of the mazurka as a symbol of nationalism for Chopin was a combination of the intensification of his own personal sense of 'Polishness' due to his distance from his native country at a time of political unrest (and hence his need to move away from the grandiose statements associated with the polonaise), and his move from concert hall to salon, with the smaller-scale, more private form of expression being a suitable vehicle for the expression of Chopin's nationalistic sentiments.

The composer's life in Paris was thus a collision of Polish nationalism and cultural Romanticism, and key to understanding how the composer developed the dance is the exploration of how original elements of the folk dance are assimilated and alluded to whilst being overlaid with the harmonic and expressive aspects of Romanticism. In order to appreciate how Chopin developed the mazurka, an understanding of his own perception and knowledge of the original folk dance is important. It is difficult to say how much the composer absorbed directly from rural models and how much came indirectly from the salon dance pieces he would have been surrounded by in Paris, although Chopin spent much of his

¹¹⁴Thomas (1992), p.145.

¹¹⁵For details of this, see Samson (1996), p.85.

childhood in the Mazovia region of Poland (from where the mazurka originates) and also had contact with folk music during youthful visits to Szafarnia.¹¹⁶ However, it is doubtful whether Chopin was primarily concerned with examining and investigating ‘authentic’ dance models. As Samson states ‘undoubtedly the raw energy of peasant music had an input to his own mazurkas, but so too did the urbanised ‘salon dances’[...] familiar to Chopin’ and ‘his contribution to musical nationalism was real and important, but it did not in the end hinge solely or even principally on the recovery of some notionally ‘authentic’ peasant music.’¹¹⁷ Chopin was aware of the folk collections of Oskar Kolberg (1814–90)¹¹⁸ and, although he was dismissive of his work (stating that he had ‘good intentions, but too narrow shoulders’),¹¹⁹ his comment betrays a knowledge of the features of folk dances, information which is essential in appreciating the way in which Chopin invests the elements of the original folk model with the features of nineteenth century Romanticism in creating an abstract, stylised, and highly personal form of nationalistic expression.

The mazurka’s roots reach back to the seventeenth century, when it began to spread from rural to other social regions, and it has its origins in the folk music of the Mazovian plains of central Poland.¹²⁰ Rather than being seen as one specific dance, it can be understood as a fusion of different genres, namely the *oberek* (a rapid, whirling round dance for couples with refrains, cries, and heel-clicking leaps), the *mazur* (slower than the oberek, but still of a lively character), and the *kujawiak* (a spirited and syncopated dance in duple metre).¹²¹ The combination of these individual dances within the mazurka means that it contains varied expressive states, tempi, and characters, all elements that Chopin extended and exploited within the process of stylisation.

¹¹⁶Samson (1996), p.17.

¹¹⁷Samson (1996), p.17.

¹¹⁸Details of Kolberg’s principal collections can be found in the *NG2* article on ‘Poland’, volume XX, pp.8–26.

¹¹⁹Thomas (1992), p.154.

¹²⁰Information from the *NG2* article on ‘Mazurka’, volume XVI, pp.189–90.

¹²¹These definitions come from both Thomas (1992), p.315, and the *NG2* article on ‘Mazurka’, volume XVI, pp.189–90.

Rhythm is a defining element of the mazurka and its basic triple metre is often dominated by the rhythmic cell of two quavers followed by two crotchets. This basic cell is enlivened by off-beat accents which emphasise the gestures of the dancers (heel-clicks and stamps). The original dance would have been performed by the traditional folk ensemble of central Poland, which consisted of a melody instrument (the *fujarka* (pipe) or violin), an accompanimental drone (provided by the *dudy/gajdy*, the Polish bagpipe), and a rhythmic pulse (provided by the *basy*, a stringed bass instrument).¹²¹ Windakiewiczowa¹²² outlines further features of the mazurka as the presence of a prominent RH melody, short-breathed motivic work (with patterns of varied one- and two- bar cells), call and response patterns, melodic structures which revolve around up to three ideas, the use of a bass drone against a high melody, varied accentual patterns, and the frequent use of modal resources. Chopin's intentions to stylise the genre can be seen right from the start, as the composer stated that the pieces were 'not intended for dancing', and elements of peasant music and 'advanced' techniques of contemporary art music are combined 'in a cross-fertilisation which would set the tone for Slavonic nationalists generally in the later nineteenth century.'¹²³

What is particularly revealing about Chopin's mazurkas is that, although from his time of exile the composer never considered them functional works, 'they do themselves dance, and part of their fascination lies in their compositional appropriation of dance gestures'.¹²⁴ Chopin takes these and develops them in a myriad of diverse and interesting ways, clothing the conventional folk dance features with elements of contemporary Romanticism, and this fusion of styles can be seen at its earliest stage in the op.6 collection. Op.6 no.1 has a conventional texture (RH melody with LH bass note and chord combination) with typical mazurka accentual patterns (with the accent upon the third beat), and uses many one- and two- bar cells, with the exact reprise of the opening section creating a *da capo*

¹²¹Details taken from Thomas (1992), p.154.

¹²²Outlined in Thomas (1992), p.158.

¹²³Samson (1996), p.96.

¹²⁴Thomas (1992), pp.155-6.

ternary structure. Op.6 no.2 has an opening drone which contains modally altered degrees and changing rhythmic accentual patterns typical of the folk dance but, throughout the set, dance elements are combined with elements of contemporary Romanticism in the form of the sequential chromatic harmonies of op.6 no.1, the varied textures of op.6 no.3, and the decoration of a tonic pedal drone with two-part counterpoint in op.6 no.4. This elaboration of a drone can also be found at the beginning of op.7 no.3, where the fifth is divided into two melodic parts, distancing the LH from its conventional role of providing rhythmic and harmonic stability. The creation of a melodic bass part continues from bar 57 reinforces the sense of distance from the dance model, and the LH has an expressive melody against chromatically changing linear RH chords. These more expressive sections are balanced against the more conventional elements of the opening *con anima* (off-beat accents, spread LH chords, rubato) and the call and response patterns from bar 41 (music examples 1a).

Ex.1a: Chopin, op.7 no.3; (i) opening drone followed by *con anima* main thematic material, bars 1–10

The musical score for Chopin's Op. 7 No. 3, bars 1-10, is presented in two systems. The first system (bars 1-5) shows the opening drone, marked *pp sotto voce*. The right hand plays a melodic line with a fermata over the first five notes, while the left hand provides a bass line with a tonic pedal point. The second system (bars 6-10) shows the main thematic material, marked *con anima* and *smorzando*. The right hand plays a melodic line with a fermata over the first five notes, and the left hand provides a bass line with a tonic pedal point. The score includes fingering numbers and articulation marks like 'ten.' and 'smorzando'.

(ii) call and response patterns, bars 40–50

The musical score for Chopin's Op. 7 No. 3, bars 40-50, is presented in two systems. The first system (bars 40-45) shows call and response patterns, marked *f*. The right hand plays a melodic line with a fermata over the first five notes, and the left hand provides a bass line with a tonic pedal point. The second system (bars 46-50) shows call and response patterns, marked *p*. The right hand plays a melodic line with a fermata over the first five notes, and the left hand provides a bass line with a tonic pedal point. The score includes fingering numbers and articulation marks like 'ten.' and 'smorzando'.

(iii) disruption of the standard mazurka texture, bars 56–66

Through the op.17 set (and subsequently) the composer creates a more linear, through-composed structure that avoids the repetition inherent in the earlier examples. In op.17 no.1 Chopin presents the same melodic idea in several different harmonisations, creating both greater variety of harmony and texture and an emphasis on development as opposed to repetition (music example 1b).

Ex.1b: Chopin op.17 no.1 (i) initial presentation of thematic material, bars 1–10

(ii) second presentation in a reharmonised form, bars 17–28

In op.17 no.4 there is a contrast between the material of the outer sections and that of the central episode, and the outer sections have much in common with some of Chopin's nocturnes or impromptus, with the inclusion of decorative, filigree RH ornamentation and sequential chromatic harmonies. This *genre interpenetration* is a significant way in which the composer developed the mazurka (a further example is op.56 no.1, the *poco più mosso* section of which has waltz characteristics) yet, despite the similarities with Chopin's other piano works, there are still dance gestures present (the opening drone is one of these, though it is extended through linear part movement, providing both melodic interest and harmonic ambiguity – see music example 1c). A later example of genre interpenetration is op.41 no.3 which, in its *animato* character, dominance of scalic, decorative passages, and more extrovert nature, seems closer to the sentiments expressed by Chopin in his polonaises than the introspective, more personal character usually reserved for the mazurkas. However, the off-beat accents, repetition of one-bar thematic cells, and call and response nature of the musical discourse present elements of the original folk dance as a 'model in the background'.

Ex.1c: Chopin op.17 no.4; opening section, bars 1–20

Lento, ma non troppo $\text{♩} = 152$ *espressivo*

1 *pp sotto voce* *espressivo*

6 *ten.* *p*

11 *delicatissimo*

16 *ten.*

(♩) *

(♩ . simile)

Later mazurkas become ‘chains’ of ideas and fusions of styles, presenting rhapsodic and poetic structures that are closer to a Romantic fantasy than a folk dance. In op.50 no.3 the opening creates distance from the original dance model with the *mezza voce* solo line and polyphonic texture, yet this is immediately contrasted with the *f* A major section which, in its call and response structure, is typical of the folk dance (music examples 1d).

Ex.1d: Chopin op.50 no.3 (i) contrapuntal opening, bars 1–10

Moderato

mezza voce

(ii) conventional 'call and response' formation, bars 17–26

What becomes more evident through the later mazurkas is the way in which Chopin contrasts conventional dance gestures against textures, ideas, and harmonies derived from contemporary art music by 'marking' the former. This occurs in op.50 no.3, where, at bar 45, a repetitive rhythmic idea is introduced, accompanied by typical bass note-chord patterns derived from the folk mazurka. The change in dynamic, texture, and tonality alerts the listener to the shift in style and origin, which is highlighted through the contrast created with the surrounding material (music example 1e). This mazurka is also an example of how Chopin creates a more linear, developmental structure by presenting material in a recharacterised form, and the opening solo line idea is the melodic source of a complex, chromatic, polyphonic texture that constitutes the climax of the piece, the sequence building towards a dramatic *f* presentation of a solo line (in a contrasting texture), before the fragmented reprise of the original material signifies the fact material has been fully developed, and the final *ff* simplicity of the perfect cadence emphasises this point (music example 1f).

Ex.1e: Chopin op.50 no.3; contrasting material, bars 43–56

Ex.1f: Chopin op.50 no.3; climax of the piece, bars 168–180

In many mazurkas, Chopin creates multi-sectional forms that contain many different ideas, expressive states and harmonic areas, and yet are tonally unified. The opening of op.33 no.4 is a good example of this, and the opening melody is a typical mazurka theme, with ornaments substituting the usual off-beat accents. There is a sense of disruption and discontinuity provided by the change in texture at the end of bar 6, from melody and accompaniment, through solo *forte* line, to the subsequent parallel movement between voices which is typical of the original dance. This discontinuity is also expressed harmonically, with Chopin marking a C major *sotto voce* area with a change in texture and dynamic, and the way in which this area is Neapolitan in relation to the tonic of B minor means that the material

does not perform functionally at this point, as it is continually interrupted by further musical ideas, a chromatic shift leading subsequently to a B flat major area using typically cellular mazurka ideas (music examples 1g).

Ex.1g: Chopin op.33 no.4; (i) opening material and change in texture, bars 1–11

Mesto
p
1
6
11

(ii) first presentation of C major *sotto voce* area, bars 16–24

12
sotto voce
18
dim. - - - - -
24

(iii) subsequent chromatic shift to B flat major area, bars 110–122

110
sf > >
117
sf > >

The C major section finally performs its functional role (as chromatic dominant preparation) in the unusual final cadence, which emphasises the Neapolitan harmony through bare fifths, before a sudden and abrupt closure (see music example 1g (iv)). The way in which this harmony stands out expressively in the opening section demonstrates Chopin's use of 'tonal parentheses', areas which provide harmonic variety by seeming to stand apart from the rest of the musical argument, and an earlier example of this can be found in op.7 no.4, where D flat is enharmonically reinterpreted as the C sharp in an A major area, its *sotto voce* and *smorzando* markings creating a feeling of separation and disruption.

Ex.1g: Chopin op.33 no.4; (iv) final cadential section, bars 211–end

Op.59 no.1 illustrates how far Chopin travelled in his processes of stylisation and abstraction. The opening idea subordinates the mazurka elements, the off-beat ornaments and dotted rhythm being the only remnants, and the tonal ambiguity and chromatic harmony characteristic of contemporary Romanticism are predominant. There is a sense of connection between ideas as, following a sequential chromatic passage, the opening idea re-appears in the LH, before a decorated version is transferred back to the RH, illustrating Chopin's exploitation of textural and registral possibilities (music examples 1h).

Ex.1h: Chopin op.59 no.1; (i) bars 1–33

The textures throughout are dominated by polyphony, with the composer creating a variety of voice-leading patterns. As in many previous examples, there are areas which seem to be marked, recalling the original model before being distorted. This process occurs in the A major area from bar 37, whose accompanimental fifths and plagal harmonies provide a connection with conventional dance elements, yet are soon absorbed into a chromatic, polyphonic texture (music example 1h (ii)).

Ex.1h: Chopin no.59 no.1; (ii) bars 34–50

Chopin's approach to continual development can also be observed in the lack of exact reprise, with the composer instead presenting opening material a semitone lower, in G sharp minor. This demonstrates Chopin's concern with large-scale structure, as this altered reprise fits in with pre-existent material, with the subsequent chromatic sequence being compressed to accommodate the change (music example 1h (iii)). The final fragmentation of the opening idea in the coda provides a fitting conclusion to the through-composed, developmental form.

Ex.1h: Chopin op.59 no.1; (iii) reprise of original material, bars 79–95

In the mazurkas Chopin fuses gestures from the original dance genre with techniques from contemporary art music to create an intensely personal expression of his commitment to his native land. This element was present almost right from the start of his work in the genre, and his distance from Poland for most of his life, along with the social and cultural world in which he found himself, were all significant influences upon the way he developed the mazurka.

In comparison to the polka, the mazurka had a well-established position in Polish culture when Chopin began to work with it. The polka originated only in the 1830s in Bohemia, becoming one of the most popular ballroom dances of the nineteenth century. The first mention of the genre came in Langer's *České krakovačky* (published in *Časopis Českého muzea* in 1835), which discusses the dancing of the 'Polish krakowiak' in Bohemia and mentions the combination of the local dances *strašak* and *břitva* which, in East Bohemia, was referred to as the 'polka'.¹²⁵ Joseph Jungmann's dictionary (also from 1835) defines it as a 'Polish dance', and this is supported by comments from Nejedlý, who defined it as the adoption and adaptation of a Polish dance which was connected to the wave of sympathy felt for the Poles after the aborted insurrection of 1830.¹²⁶ From Berra's collection *Prager Lieblings Galoppen für Pianoforte* (1837) it can be seen that the polka was introduced to Prague society only in the 1830s and, subsequently, examples of the genre were produced by František Hilmar, Joseph Labitzky, and Josef Neruda.¹²⁷ The polka quickly gained an international reputation, being 'toured' to Vienna and St. Petersburg in 1839, and Paris (in 1840) and, by 1843–4, it had become a favourite dance of Parisian and London societies, with a correspondent in *The Times* noting that 'politics is for the moment suspended in public regard by the new and all-absorbing pursuit, the polka'.¹²⁸ Throughout the 1840s, the polka became an international phenomenon and was quite often accompanied by the Czech dances

¹²⁵The origins of the polka are discussed in Černušák/Tyrrell (2001), pp.34–6.

¹²⁶Tyrrell (1988), p.216.

¹²⁷Information derived from Černušák and Tyrrell (2001), p.34.

¹²⁸Černušák/Tyrrell (2001), p.34.

of *trašák*, *skočná*, and *rejdivák*, combining elements of the mazurka to create the ‘polka-mazurka’. What is clear from the above information is that the polka was an urban, town-based phenomenon rather than being in any way inherently linked with native Czech folk heritage.

Although its nationalist connections were initially with Poland rather than the Czech lands and, since its beginnings in the 1830s, its reputation and popularity had made it an essential part of the international salon scene, ‘its Czech origins were universally acknowledged and it became a symbol of growing national pride’.¹²⁹ This process was intensified in the 1850s (which was the key decade in the National Revival) and the part which Smetana played in making the polka an emblem of Czech nationalism requires examination, as the dance underwent a process of redefinition in his output. The polka is considered as the dance that most commonly denotes notions of ‘Czechness’, and one explanation for this is that the rhythmic accentuation of the dance (with its strong down beats and duple time) mirrors that of the Czech language (with its trochaic and dactylic patterns). The libretto for *The Bartered Bride* is mostly in trochees and this sense of a ‘polka in the background’ may have made it sound unconsciously Czech to an emerging nationalist population anxious for artistic endorsement of its national identity.¹³⁰ The emergence within Smetana’s output of the previously inert polka as a national symbol can be seen as a recontextualisation and redefinition of the original salon dance, and Smetana’s developments within this genre document how this process occurred.

The polka has the tempo of a military march, is in duple time, and has a ternary *da capo* structure. It uses characteristic rhythmic patterns of quavers and semiquavers, with a texture reminiscent of the mazurka, the LH outlining basic harmonies through bass note and chord patterns. Trkovská-Volkmerová notes the dance’s rhythmic regularity, ‘mechanical’ repetition of one- or half-bar motifs, and constancy of texture,¹³¹ all features that can be

¹²⁹Tyrrell (1988), p.216.

¹³⁰Černušák/Tyrrell (2001), p.36.

¹³¹Trkovská-Volkmerová (1974), p. 170

observed in Smetana's earliest polkas. He began composing in the genre in 1840 (producing the *Louisa* and *Georgina* polkas in this year, followed subsequently by the polka *Aus dem Studentenleben* (*Ze studentského života*) [From Student Life] in 1842 and *Erinnerung an Pilsen* (*Vzpomínka na Plzeň*) [Memories of Plzeň] in 1843) and, at this stage, his polkas can be seen as a reflection of the environment in which he found himself. In 1840 Smetana left the cosmopolitan environment of Prague to study in Plzeň, whose musical environment was far more limited, with music seen primarily as an accompaniment for dancing. Smetana's composition of polkas at this time can be seen as a response to this environment, and the dances produced in Plzeň do not move beyond a functional purpose. In contrast to Chopin marking his early opp.6 and 7 sets of mazurkas as expressly not for dancing, Smetana's earliest piano polkas were purely functional, and the following example from the *Louisa* polka illustrates the constant texture, motivically structured melody, rhythmic patterning, and simple harmonic structure used by Smetana at this stage (music example 2a):

Ex.2a: Smetana *Louisa* polka, bars 1–9

The musical score for Smetana's *Louisa* polka, bars 1–9, is presented in two systems. The first system (bars 1–4) is marked *Allegro moderato* and *p dolce*. The second system (bars 5–9) includes a dynamic change to *f* and a fermata over bar 9. The score is in 2/4 time, E-flat major, and features a piano accompaniment with a constant texture of chords and a melody with rhythmic patterning.

Smetana's writing of piano polkas continues in the 1840s and 50s with the production of polkas both individually and in cycles. The individual polkas in E major, G minor, and A major (JB 1:55–7) were written between 1850–3, at the same time as the cycles of polkas (*Trois polkas de salon* (*Tři salonní polky*) [Three Salon Polkas] and *Trois polkas*

poétiques (Tři poetické polky) [Three Poetic Polkas]) were being produced (1848–54).

Smetana's focus during the period 1848–1854 was with the production of *albumleaves* and *sketches*, and the features of these works find their way into the polkas indicating that, at this stage, the Czech composer's concern was primarily upon producing characteristic piano miniatures in line with contemporary trends as opposed to any notions of nationalistic expression. The fact that these elements can be found in the polkas demonstrates the same kind of genre interpenetration that was found in Chopin's mazurkas.

Throughout the 1850s the distance from the original dance becomes greater, and Trkovská-Volkmerová notes that there is a more colourful harmonic element which, combined with the greater value placed upon the horizontal working-out of material, leads to the gradual disintegration of the previously rigorously defined formal parts.¹³³ This process of abstraction leads Kundera to note that the Czech composer's work with the polka parallels that undertaken by Chopin in the mazurkas,¹³⁴ as many of the elements observed in Chopin's later mazurkas can be found in Smetana's polkas from the years 1848–54. The opening of the *Polka in E major* demonstrates the greater emphasis placed on a contrapuntal texture, with the LH playing a melodic part and being liberated from its conventional harmonic and rhythmic function, and this is combined with the use of chromatic and sequential harmonies. Despite the addition of these elements, typical polka rhythms are still present and, as was observed in many Chopin mazurkas, Smetana contrasts the elements derived from contemporary Romanticism with more conventional polka features, and the harmonic stability of the A major section contrasts with the relative complexity of the first section (music examples 2b).

¹³³Trkovská-Volkmerová (1974), p.171.

¹³⁴Kundera (1949), p.29.

Ex.2b: Smetana, *Polka in E major*; (i) opening material, bars 1–8

(ii) contrasting material presented in bars 34–45

The definition of the cycles of polkas under titles of ‘salon’ and ‘poetic’ makes clear the process of abstraction being undertaken by Smetana in these works, with the original dance model being marginalised in order to accentuate the expressive aspects more commonly found in the genre of the expressive piano miniature. The first of the *Three Salon Polkas* (op.7 no.1) provides an illustration of how Smetana creates this distance from the original dance. The opening section uses syncopation in the LH (undermining its conventional rhythmic regularity) and the composer creates a contrapuntal texture, with the bass line taking on a more melodic function. There is also greater textural variety throughout this polka, with fragmentation and rests used to create dramatic interest (music examples 2c). Harmonically, in addition to enharmonic reinterpretation creating colour, there is also

evidence of Smetana using the same kind of tonal parentheses found in Chopin's mazurkas, with dramatic harmonic shifts marked by a change of speed and texture, highlighting the contrast through discontinuity, and this dramatic juxtaposition of ideas and textures can also be found in op.7 no.2 (where a *ff* paused chord gives way to a solo line with an ornamented paused chord, disrupting the consistent texture typical of the dance model).

Ex.2c: Smetana, op.7 no.1; (i) opening section, bars 1–8

The musical score for the opening section (bars 1–8) of Smetana's op.7 no.1 is presented in two systems. The first system includes the tempo marking *leggeriss.* and the dynamic marking *p espress. il canto*. The score shows a complex texture with rapid sixteenth-note passages in the right hand and a more melodic line in the left hand. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#).

(ii) later examples of changes in texture, bars 25–40

The musical score for later examples of changes in texture (bars 25–40) of Smetana's op.7 no.1 is presented in three systems. The first system shows a transition from a lighter texture to a more dramatic one, marked with *pp*. The second system includes the dynamic marking *cresc. subito*. The third system shows a further transition, marked with *cresc. sf*, *sf*, *ff*, *sf*, *sf*, *secc.*, and *dim.*. The tempo is marked *30* and *40*. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#).

The *Three Poetic Polkas* op.8 provide similar examples of this process of abstraction. The opening of op.8 no.2 is reminiscent of many previous examples found in Chopin's mazurkas, with the *meno allegro* solo line being developed contrapuntally, creating an introspective and sentimental initial statement. This provides an effective contrast with the subsequent idea which is defined tonally (shifting to B flat major as opposed to the opening G minor), texturally, and dynamically as closer to the original dance model. Smetana immediately distances himself from the traditional dance elements with rapidly changing dynamics and speed, and uses chromatic harmony to distort the 'joyful' brief return to the dance. There is further exploitation of chromatically shifting harmony in a subsequent G major section, which uses a decorative, ornamented RH line to create a sense of personal expression, the *sotto voce* designation furthering the sense of removal from the model of the polka (see music examples 2d).

Ex.2d: Smetana op.8 no.2; (i) introduction and opening thematic material, bars 1–16

The musical score for Smetana's *Three Poetic Polkas*, op.8 no.2, bars 1–16, is presented in three systems. The first system (bars 1–4) begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system (bars 5–8) features a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes a repeat sign with a first ending. The third system (bars 9–16) shows a dynamic progression from forte (*f*) to *dim.*, *p*, *pp*, and *mf*, with a *rall.* (rallentando) marking and a *(in tempo)* marking.

(ii) G major *sotto voce* section, bars 43–56

Through the *Salon* and *Poetic* polkas, Smetana combines the conventional elements of the dance model with elements of contemporary Romanticism, treating the polka as another type of character piece for piano and making it similar to the *Albumleaves* and *Sketches* he was completing simultaneously. However, what is noticeable at this stage is the lack of a link between the Czech composer's polkas and any idea of nationalism. That is not to say that Smetana was unmoved by any notions of national consciousness during this period (from Table 1 it can be observed that, between 1848 and 1854, Smetana completed three works that could be defined as 'nationalistic', namely the *Song of Freedom*, and the orchestral works *Ceremonial overture* and *Triumphal symphony*), merely that the composer's writing for piano at this point (and the polka within it) was more concerned with the connection with wider European Romanticism than any expression of Czech nationalism.

The all-pervasive influence of Liszt during the years 1856–60 makes the appearance of the opp. 12 and 13 sets of polkas (subtitled *Vzpomínky na Čechy ve formě polek* [Memories of Bohemia in the form of polkas]) unusual within an output dominated by concert studies and tone poems for both piano and orchestra. During these years, Smetana found himself in the position of Chopin when the latter was in Vienna and Paris producing his early sets of mazurkas, and using the dance genre was perhaps a way of connecting with his distant homeland. During 1859–60 Smetana was considering his move back to Prague, and it is

possible that he used these compositions as a way of expressing his fondness for his homeland and his wish to return.¹³⁵

The polkas of opp.12 and 13 are a ‘collision’ of styles, with the essential simplicity of the features of the original dance being juxtaposed with a musical language closer to that previously developed by Smetana in the his *Albumleaves* and *Sketches*. The composer here marks contrasts texturally and harmonically, highlighting his renewed awareness of the polka in its original dance form, and the functional connections that it had in his output from the 1840s. Op.12 no.1 illustrates this contrast in material with its harmonically ambiguous and chromatic opening statement, and its moderate speed and contrapuntal texture reinforces the distance from the dance model. Smetana retains the standard *da capo* ternary structure of the polka but provides a decorative ending, writing *velocissimo, quasi glissando* passages for the RH, bringing to mind both the genre interpenetration in Chopin’s mazurkas and the cadenza passages in the tone poem *Macbeth*. This is contrasted with the B section, which restores the rhythmic regularity, textural constancy, and harmonic simplicity of the original dance. However, the ‘salon’ style of the framing A sections is never far in the background, and there are dynamic changes and chromatic shifts which disrupt the overall simplicity of this middle section (music examples 2e).

Ex.2e: Smetana op.12 no.1; (i) opening section, bars 1–10

Molto moderato

¹³⁵Smetana’s need to return to his homeland at this time can be seen in his statement that ‘I cannot bury myself in Göteborg [...] I must attempt finally to publish my compositions and create opportunities to gain new ideas’ in Ottlová, Pospíšil, and Tyrrell (2001), p. 539).

(ii) final two bars of the polka, illustrating the decorative cadence figuration

(iii) contrasting B section material, bars 20–33

Similar contrast can be found in op.13 no.2 where the *moderato* opening is created from typical polka elements, namely simple harmonies and characteristic polka rhythms. This follows an introductory passage which, despite using polka rhythmic figures, is imitative in texture and reminiscent of an opening cadenza on a smaller scale. The *moderato* material is juxtaposed with *quasi andante* material, and this section combines folk features (simple tonic and dominant harmonies, drone figures, and ornamentation recalling folk ‘pipes’) with a more introspective expressive state, thereby combining original dance features with the ‘salon’ type of expression found previously (music examples 2f).

Ex.2f: Smetana op.13 no.2; (i) opening section bars 1–15



(ii) subsequent *quasi andante* section, bars 42–55

Quasi andante

pp sotto voce

sempre pp

In a further connection with his Lisztian piano studies and tone poem, this material is then recharacterised to create a more virtuosic, *forte* chordal ending. The coda provides a sense of contrast and drama, alternating dynamics and expressive states to create a more extrovert style that anticipates that of the later *Czech Dances* (music example 2f (iii)). However, during the seventeen-year gap between the opp.12 and 13 sets and the first series of *Czech Dances*, Smetana's status as a composer was completely redefined through the composition of his operas, a process which in turn was to redefine the status of the polka within his output.

Ex.2f: Smetana op.13 no.2; (iii) final section, bars 175–end

pp

cresc. *molto precipitato* *f* *ff*

Through the use of dances in his operatic and orchestral works, Smetana created an association with Czech nationalism which he had not previously exploited, and the revisions to *The Bartered Bride* show that the most significant change that the composer made was the reinforcement of the pre-existing dances with the addition of a furiant at the beginning of Act II and two further polka-type dances.¹³⁵ *The Bartered Bride* (premiered in 1870) is significant in the way a connection is made between dance genres and the nationalistic sentiments of the Czech people. The furiant¹³⁶ is used in both the overture to Act I and in the ‘ode to beer’ of Act II Scene I, whereas the polka makes many appearances, including Act I Scene I (linking the dance with ‘a village inn on a feast day in Spring’) which is an explicit dance scene (with the libretto stating ‘take your partners, now your places! Kick your heels and show your paces’) and Act I Scene II and Act III Scene VI, both of which contain polka rhythms and textures. There are many other places where the metrical element of the polka underpins the score, and this creates a subconscious association between the expression of village life and the polka. By the early 1870s, *The Bartered Bride* was established as the most popular and most performed opera by any Czech composer, and it can be suggested that the ‘dance-based’ structure played an important part in the work being universally accepted as ‘Czech’. Proof of this association can be found in the fact that many stylistic developments in Smetana’s subsequent operas (particularly *Dalibor*) caused a good deal of disappointment amongst audiences (for example, the ‘richer harmonic idiom, absence of short strophic numbers, and declamatory discourse’),¹³⁷ and the composer clearly recognised this as, in *The Kiss* (1876), he created an opera with a folk setting in which he could integrate many examples of folk dance. In addition to the ‘Allegro à la polka’ marked in the overture, ‘polka’ is marked in Act II Scene VIII and is used to depict village life and reinforce the rural setting. There are

¹³⁵The named polka at the end of Act I and the Circus-people’s ‘ballet’, which is a fast *skočna* – details are provided in Tyrrell (1988), pp.228–9.

¹³⁶The furiant is a Czech couple dance, of moderate to fast tempo, in triple time with hemiola-like syncopations. It became associated with statements of nationalism through both Smetana and Dvořák (who used it in place of a scherzo in his Seventh Symphony and in the *Slavonic Dances*).

¹³⁷Tyrrell (1988), p.229.

many other points in the opera that refer to the polka,¹³⁹ reinforcing a link between the dance and the Czech people and landscape, an element which surely contributed to the opera finding much favour with Czech audiences.

The use of the polka within an operatic context led to its explicit presentation and perception as a nationalist symbol, and Smetana continued to reinforce this through the use of dance elements in his series of symphonic poems *My Fatherland* where, in the movements entitled *Vltava* and *From Bohemian Woods and Fields*, the polka is used as a model in the background. In *Vltava*, the third section depicts a 'country wedding', and is made distinct from previous material through changes in texture, instrumentation, and rhythm, providing a snapshot of village life which associates the dance with the Czech country people, providing it with the authentic native folk origin it lacked in reality. *From Bohemia's Woods and Fields* emphasises the simple aspects of the dance in the *Allegro* (marked 'quasi-polka'), evoking the Czech landscape through homophonic textures, repeated rhythmic figures, and an enlivening percussion accompaniment. What both of these examples demonstrate is Smetana creating connections between the polka and established symbols of Czech nationalism (including the river Vltava), and this heightened nationalistic element affected Smetana's writing of polkas for the piano, as can be observed in the two series of *Czech Dances*.

The first series of *Czech Dances* was produced in 1877 and consists entirely of polkas, allowing a direct comparison with the composer's previous piano works in the genre. Smetana's recontextualisation of the polka in his operas, symphonic poems, and string quartets meant that the dance now had an explicit connection with nationalism that it had lacked in the composer's 'salon' works of the 1850s. This is reflected in the style of the first series of *Czech Dances* and, although they contain elements found in earlier polkas, the presentation of dance elements is more obvious, and the composer exploits a more virtuosic and extrovert type of expression. In the A minor polka (no.2), Smetana recharacterises the opening motivic idea by adding decorative RH triplet figuration, *glissandi* scalic passages,

¹³⁹See Act I Scene III, the opening of Act II, and Act III Scene VI for further examples.

and *veloce* quasi-cadenza material, all of which can be seen as being transferred from the musical language of *Macbeth* and the concert studies, demonstrating the continuing connection between Smetana and Liszt (music examples 3a). A similar kind of technically demanding figuration can be found in the *Polka in F major* (no.3) which uses rapid staccato chromatic figuration and interlocking material between the hands, creating passagework that would not be out of place in a Liszt study. The use of these techniques creates a virtuosic language more suited to the concert platform than the salon and, as a response to the redefinition of the polka as a nationalist symbol, the genre here exudes an extrovert confidence in contrast to the more introspective earlier examples.

Ex.3a: Smetana, no.2 from the first series of *Czech Dances*; (i) opening idea, bars 1–9

Moderato (♩ = 80)

(ii) decoration and recharacterisation of opening idea, bars 43–52

(iii) addition of 'quasi-cadenza' passagework, bars 60–69

The musical score for the 'quasi-cadenza' passagework (bars 60–69) is presented in four systems. The first system (bars 60–62) features a treble clef staff with a complex melodic line marked 'ppp possibile' and 'accelerando', and a bass clef staff with accompaniment. The second system (bars 63–65) continues the melodic development, marked 'sempre espressivo'. The third system (bars 66–68) is marked 'veloce' and 'ppp sempre', showing a more rapid melodic passage. The fourth system (bar 69) concludes the passage, also marked 'veloce'. The score includes various ornaments, slurs, and dynamic markings such as 'Red.', 'P', and '*'.

The second series of *Czech Dances* was completed in 1879, and is somewhat different to the first both in construction and in motivation. Rather than focusing on one dance (the polka), the second series consists of individually named dances, from the reasonably well-known (*furiant*, *sousedská*)¹⁴⁰ to those almost unheard outside the Czech lands (including the *obkročák*).¹⁴¹ The second series includes many quotations of national songs (taken from Erben's *Czech Folksongs and Nursery Rhymes*, something Smetana had resisted in his previous polkas, although he had made use of this collection in the *Fantasia on*

¹⁴⁰The *sousedská* is a slow couple dance in triple time, and is believed to have a folk origin, first occurring in the 1830s in the Czech countryside, though it was soon taken into the town dance entertainments.

¹⁴¹The *obkročák* was a dance in duple time that conformed to the tempo and style of the polka, and was used by Smetana in *The Bartered Bride* (for details see Tyrrell (1988), pp.226–8).

Czech Folksongs in 1862. The addition of folk tunes (perceived as an essential expression of the Czech national consciousness) would seem to underline the composer's nationalistic intentions in these dances, and the use of the Erben source accentuates this through the connection of the dances with authentic folk sources. However, despite this clearly defined nationalist perspective, Smetana continues to use many stylistic elements that recall the piano works inspired by Liszt, namely the concert studies and *Macbeth*. A good demonstration of this is in no.4 *Medvěd* [The Bear], which begins with a virtuosic introductory passage combining double octaves and chromatic scales, the fragmentary nature of the utterance (intensified through the addition of rests) creating a dramatic opening statement, with the virtuosic octaves then continuing as an accompaniment to the Erben melody presented in the RH (music example 4a).

Ex.4a: Smetana, no.4 from series II of the *Czech Dances*, bars 1–16

Allegro ($\text{♩} = 144$)

Moderato ($\text{♩} = 120$) (Národní melodie)^{*)} ($\text{♩} = \text{♩}$)

The dances of this second series quite often have a 'patchwork' character, with each section presenting a different dance. This can be seen in no.4, where the *più mosso* section uses the *furiant*, and this contrasts with the chromatic interjections derived from the opening. A *dudácká* is marked later, and this is subjected to Lisztian recharacterisation, with the work ending with a reprise of the opening material and virtuosic elements intensified through the *accelerando* marking and the interlocking octaves of the closing bars. The idea of Lisztian recharacterisation of ideas can be seen clearly in no.3, *Oves* [Oats] where the quotation of five bars of an Erben melody provides the springboard for a number of developments, including a waltz setting, a quasi-nocturne texture with triplet accompaniment (the triplets eventually taking over as quasi-cadenza figuration), and a powerful *ff* thick-textured chordal passage, creating individual numbers that explore a whole range of expressive states and moods (music examples 4b).

Ex.4b: Smetana, no.3 from series II of the *Czech Dances*; (i) initial quotation of Erben, bars 6–15

1 2 3 4 2 2 1 3 4 2 1 2 3 4 5 3 2 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

[a tempo] *p dolce* *mf* *(poco marc.)*

(ii) transformation of this material into a waltz, bars 41–48

[Poco più tranquillo] (♩ = 92) *p dolce, ma poco espressivo* *cantando*

41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48

Ex.4c: Smetana, no.6 from series II of the *Czech Dances*; (i) combination of interlocking octaves, passagework, and chromatic scherzo in bars 9–37

(ii) contrasting *dudácká* material, bars 81–94

A catalyst for Smetana's creation of a second series of *Czech Dances* in 1879 was Dvořák's collection of *Slavonic Dances*, published in piano duet form in 1878. The younger Czech composer gained success with these duets and, in their orchestrated form, they brought Dvořák international fame that was to be reinforced with subsequent 'national' compositions (such as the *Slavonic Rhapsodies*). The 1860s and 70s had been immensely important in

building a national style and a canon of works that spoke directly to the Czech nationalist consciousness and Smetana, having played a significant part in that process, would not have wanted to be undermined by the younger composer. Dvořák's increasing significance in the minds of the Czech public corresponded with Smetana's self-perceived lack of importance, as he was experiencing a good deal of marginalisation due to his deafness, which led to somewhat of a retreat from the central position in Czech public life that he had occupied throughout the previous decade. The older Czech composer would almost certainly have felt undermined and threatened by Dvořák's ascendance and, although he was passionately interested in the younger composer and praised much of his work, the fact that he regarded him with rivalry and suspicion cannot be refuted.¹⁴² The fact that the second series of *Czech Dances* was planned as a reassertion of Smetana's nationalistic credentials can be surmised by considering the statement that he made to the publishers Urbánek about his plan to create a second set of dances:

I think this would be a good idea, for every Czech should know these dances. When Dvořák calls his pieces by the general title *Slavonic Dances*, no-one knows which particular dance forms they are, or if they really exist. Instead, I shall show the special names we Czechs give our national dances, so please tell me if you like this idea so I can begin work.¹⁴³

The way in which Smetana emphasises the folk origin of his planned dances makes plain the element of competition between himself and the younger composer, and this is accentuated by the fact that Smetana also suggested to Urbánek that he might write the collection for two pianos or orchestra (the forces used in Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances*).¹⁴⁴ The need to create a more explicitly nationalistic collection than Dvořák accounts for Smetana's use of such a range of different (and lesser-known) dances and, through using Erben as a framework, the

¹⁴²Smetana had been given a copy of Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances* in 1878, as soon as they were published by Simrock (details are given in Large (1970), p.339).

¹⁴³Letter from Smetana to Urbánek dated April 22 1879, quoted in Large (1970), p.340.

¹⁴⁴See Large (1970), p.340.

nationalist angle is emphasised further. A comparison of the *Slavonic Dances* and *Czech Dances* makes clear both the different approach taken to folk sources by the two composers and reveals much about the role the piano played in the compositional development of each. Before considering the different musical languages of these works it is necessary to understand the origins of these folk melodies, as an appreciation of this will aid an understanding of how the composers respond to these sources.

The folk sources of Sušil and Erben that were published at the beginning of the 1860s build upon earlier collections, namely Sušil's preparatory volumes from 1835 and 1840 and Erben's first volumes of Czech folksong from 1842, 1843, and 1845. Pre-dating these were František Čelakovský's three volumes of *Slovanské národní písně* [Slavonic Folksongs] created between 1822 and 1827, and the author of these was a leading poet of the Czech National Revival, a fact which brings into play a significant fact about these collections, namely that their focus was specifically the regeneration of the Czech language in an environment where it was being marginalised by the status afforded to German within urban society. These collections of folksong therefore concentrated upon the texts rather than the music and, indeed, the tunes for Erben's collections from the 1840s were provided by Jan Pavel Martinovský and issued separately (this can also be observed in Erben's collection from the beginning of the 1860s). This separation of texts and tunes has led many commentators¹⁴⁵ to investigate the relationship between the numbers of tunes and texts, with the finding that the number of texts far outnumber the tunes (with the statistics of the Erben being 2583 texts to 811 tunes).¹⁴⁶ These statistics lead to the inference that Czech folk texts were generally fitted to pre-existing tunes, the features of which can be outlined as being predominantly major, in triple time, and with a melodic inventiveness which reflects that of Baroque and Classical music.¹⁴⁷ The coincidences between the construction of Baroque and Classical melodies and Bohemian folksong lead to the questioning of to what extent this

¹⁴⁵See Horák (1937) and Karbusický (1958), both quoted in Tyrrell (1988), p.211.

¹⁴⁶Statistics reproduced in Tyrrell (1988), p.211.

¹⁴⁷These features are outlined by Václavěk (1950) and discussed in Tyrrell (1988), p.212.

music is actually 'Czech', and also undermines Harrach's association of folksong with the expression of nationalistic statements. As Tyrrell states:

By recommending the assiduous study of Bohemian folksong, Harrach was unknowingly advocating the study of music whose melodic and harmonic idiom had much in common with that of the mainstream of art music of a couple of generations earlier.¹⁴⁸

These Baroque and Classical elements of melodic construction and harmonic idiom can be seen clearly in both Smetana's second series of *Czech Dances* and Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances*, but significant differences can be found in the way each composer incorporates these features. In Smetana's work the folk quotations are quite clearly 'marked' within each piece, and the clear tonality, repeated rhythmic cells and regular periodisation contrast with the virtuosic textures and Lisztian technique of thematic transformation to which these folk quotations are then subjected.

Smetana's musical language in the second series of *Czech Dances* combines both progressive and nationalistic elements but, in contrast, Dvořák's approach is more conservative, and the Classical elements embodied in the folk tunes are prominent in the *Slavonic Dances*. Although the purpose of this dissertation is to focus upon works for solo piano, a brief consideration of these duets illustrates the distance between Smetana and Dvořák's individual use of folk sources in their works. Whereas the older composer quotes pre-existing folk melodies, Dvořák creates melodies which, in their rhythmic regularity, symmetry, tonal clarity, and Classical periodisation imitate those of the principal folk collections. The opening of op.46 no.6 illustrates many important elements of Dvořák's 'folk' style, and the textural constancy, harmonic simplicity, and melodic symmetry all combine in a style which both aligns with the perceived structure of Czech folk tunes and creates a technically undemanding pianism which would appeal to the increasing body of

¹⁴⁸Tyrrell (1988), p.212.

amateur musicians (in contrast to Smetana's more demanding and virtuosic exploitation of the instrument's resources) (music example 5a).

Ex.5a: Dvořák no.6 of the *Slavonic Dances*, op.46

(i) primo part, bars 1–17

Poco Allegro.
p legato
ritard.

(ii) secondo part, bars 1–16

Poco Allegro.
p

The above examples demonstrate the distance between Smetana and Dvořák's response to Czech folk sources, and a further significant difference is the designation of the older composer's collection as 'Czech' dances (paying particular attention to dances that were relatively unknown) as opposed to Dvořák's more generalised 'Slavonic' definition. Whereas Smetana's sources were specifically Czech, the younger composer's approach was

more Pan-Slavic, and this had an effect both on how Dvořák was perceived and how he influenced subsequent Czech composers. Pan Slavism is defined as a movement striving for the union of all Slav peoples¹⁴⁹ and its beginnings can be found in the writings of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) who proclaimed that the ‘artlessness and backwardness’ of the Slavs in comparison to the more ‘advanced’ Germans was their ‘passport to a glorious future’ as the leaders of Europe.¹⁵⁰ The movement was given further impetus by the revolutionary events of 1848 and, subsequently, the first Pan-Slavonic Congress was held in Prague, an event which proclaimed the solidarity of the Slavonic peoples.

Dvořák can be seen as an important Czech Pan-Slavist and, despite the perception of him as a composer who had sold out to foreigners through commissions and publications abroad by Smetana’s supporters (this will be explored further in the subsequent sections), the inspiration behind much of his music is ‘essentially Czech but within the context of the wider Slavonic world’.¹⁵¹ This appreciation of a wider context can be seen in Dvořák’s choice of subjects, from specifically ‘Czech’ works (such as the *Czech Suite* and *Hussite Overture*) through those with a more generally Slavonic inspiration (such as the *Slavonic Dances* and *Rhapsodies*) to those which take as their starting point Polish and Russian sources (examples being the operas *Vanda* and *Dimitrij* respectively). In addition to this, Dvořák also expressed himself in ‘the most Slav of all genres’,¹⁵² the *dumka*, which is a genre characteristic of Polish and Ukrainian music, and is typically a mournful, lamenting, and heroic song, capturing the essence of the subjugation and lack of independence experienced by the Slavs throughout the nineteenth century.¹⁵³

A further expression of Dvořák’s Pan-Slavism can be found in his song cycles from the 1870s, which illustrate the composer responding to a diverse range of texts, from the aforementioned *Moravian Duets* to the *Ctyři písně* [Four Songs] based on Serbian folk poetry

¹⁴⁹See Tyrrell (2006), p. 77.

¹⁵⁰Quoted in Tyrrell (2006), pp. 77–8.

¹⁵¹Tyrrell (2006), p. 80.

¹⁵²Tyrrell (2006), p. 80.

¹⁵³Tyrrell (2006), p. 81.

(B29, 1872), but what comes through most clearly is that, even though the composer responds to varied national sources, the musical language remains consistent with that previously illustrated through the examples from the *Slavonic Dances*. What this demonstrates is that Dvořák's approach to folk sources is what Tyrrell defines as *ohlasový*, consisting of 'echoes' of folksong, and constituting a response to what was perceived as genuine folk music in the 1870s as opposed to a 'first hand' study of native folk traditions.¹⁵⁴ Dvořák's approach can be contrasted with the later activities of Leoš Janáček who, although sharing in the older composer's Pan-Slavic aspirations, completely absorbed himself in the music of his native Moravia, an activity that was to completely redefine his musical language.

In the *Slavonic Dances* Dvořák was building on the success of the *Moravian Duets* and, in creating a work suitable for the amateur musician, the composer provides an illustration of the place that the piano occupied, and was to occupy for many years, in his output, and it also demonstrates the different approaches to writing for the piano taken by both Dvořák and Smetana. For the latter, it was an instrument central in his formative development and, even when opera and orchestral tone poems dominated from the 1860s, the piano still played a role in his definition as a nationalist (with the *Fantasia on Czech Folksongs* and the *Czech Dances*). From the start, the piano was less significant to Dvořák, and it is to his output for the instrument that we now turn.

¹⁵⁴The term *ohlasový* is used and explained in Tyrrell (1988), pp.236–7.

CHAPTER 5

Dvořák's output for piano: a comparison with Smetana

A comparison of Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances* and Smetana's second series of *Czech Dances* demonstrates the distance between the two composers in terms of their production for the piano. For Smetana, the *Czech Dances* were a culmination of a lifetime's work with the instrument, and combine elements of the 'salon' writing that dominated the composer's output in the period of 1848–56 with the virtuosity and extrovert writing that was the result of his contact with Liszt in the late 1850s. However, whereas the piano was fundamental to Smetana's early development, for Dvořák, symphonic and chamber works occupied his early output, and his style in these works was based upon the modern German style of Liszt and Wagner. However, Dvořák's writing for the piano did not begin until the composer had experienced a change of direction and moved towards a new kind of Classicism influenced by the writing of Brahms.

Although the piano is not dominant in Dvořák's early output, many of the works that do exist are adaptations of larger works, such as orchestral or operatic works. The only two works for piano that exist in the composer's 'modern German' period are the *Themes from King and Charcoal Burner* (B22, 1871–3) and the *Potpourri from King and Charcoal Burner* (B43, 1874–5). The first independent work for solo piano is the *Theme and Variations* (B65, 1876 or 1878),¹⁵⁴ composed at the beginning of the period of Dvořák's contact with Brahms, and this work demonstrates the beginning of a Classically-orientated language in the composer's output. The theme itself demonstrates a Classical periodicity combined with counterpoint and chromaticism decorating simple harmonic progressions, yet many of the variations illustrate Dvořák's concern with exploring the piano's textural and sonic capabilities, and the use of more virtuosic and extrovert gestures contrasts with much of the

¹⁵⁴Date given in Döge (2001), p. 803.

composer's subsequent output for the instrument. Although there is a great deal of contrast contained in the variations (the virtuosic variation V is followed by a *molto tranquillo* variation which exploits the chromaticism of the opening theme), Dvořák also appears concerned with creating a large-scale structure aimed towards the climax in the final variations. Variation VII builds on the virtuosity of V by creating an *étude*-like texture which demands much from the pianist in terms of nimble fingerwork, whereas the final variation (VIII) creates an effective extrovert climax, with the original theme presented in between powerful chordal statements, scalic passages, and interlocking octaves (music examples 1).

Ex.1: Dvořák, *Theme and Variations*; (i) theme, bars 1–15

Tempo di Minuetto

(legato)

(ii) beginning of variation V, bars 1–5

Tempo I.

marcatissimo

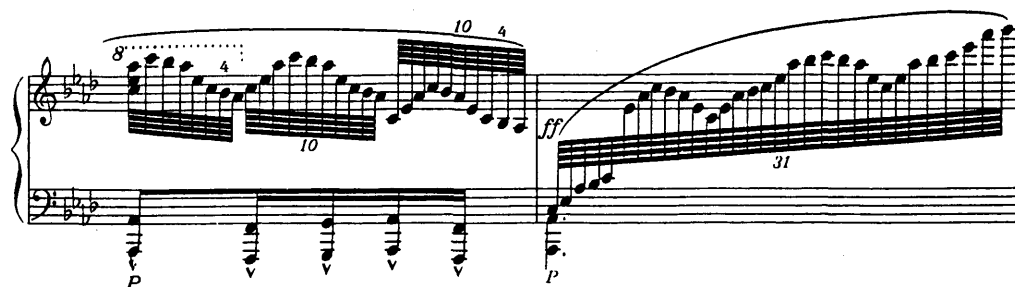
(iii) beginning of variation VII, bars 1–11

Più mosso

p stacc.

sempre leggiero

(iv) virtuosic elements of variation VIII, bars 97–8



The *Theme and Variations* is Dvořák's first real exploration of the piano as an independent instrument, and it would seem that his concern with the instrument continued for the remainder of 1876, during which he produced a Piano Concerto and a Piano Trio. His next solo work for the instrument, the *Silhouetty* [Silhouettes] (B98, 1879), returns to the thinking of the earlier *Motifs* and *Potpourri* from the opera *King and Charcoal Burner*, in that it uses material from Dvořák's first two symphonies and the song cycle *Cypresses* (all works written in 1865). These works were unpublished in their original state, and it would seem that Dvořák's motivation for including them in a cycle of piano pieces was to rework and revise old 'Wagnerian' material into something more akin to the Classical approach taken by the composer in the *Theme and Variations*. In addition to this purely musical impetus, Dvořák's status as a composer at this point is revealing of the impetus behind the work. He had achieved international success through the publication of the *Moravian Duets* and *Slavonic Dances* by Brahms' German publisher Simrock, and this led to Dvořák receiving a number of demands from other German publishers. One of these was Hoffmeister of Leipzig, and their publication of the *Silhouettes* in 1880 created a conflict between Dvořák and Simrock, who believed that they should have the rights to any new works produced by the composer. Dvořák's diffusion of this potential conflict was to argue that the cycle of *Silhouettes* consisted of old compositions, and that Simrock would always have the right to anything *new* produced.¹⁵⁶ The use of pre-existing material can thus be seen to have both musical and practical origins.

¹⁵⁶Details of this can be found in Clapham (1979), p.50.

Despite the 'patchwork' origins of the work, Dvořák creates connections between individual movements to create a piano cycle. The opening theme of no.1 (*allegro feroce*) provides a unifying factor throughout the work, reappearing in no.5 (as a *presto f* chordal statement), and being reprised in the final number, where it is developed in a number of ways (appearing in staccato octaves, *sempre legato* flowing quavers, and culminating in powerful double octaves which invert the original ascending idea), providing a fitting climax to the cycle (music examples 2a).

Ex.2a: Dvořák, *Silhouettes*; (i) presentation of theme in no.1, bars 1–3

(ii) recharacterisation of theme in no.5, bars 1–5

(iii) further recharacterisation of theme in the final number (no.12), bars 53–62

Dvořák creates further musical connections between individual numbers, and the main part of no.1 (the compound time *allegretto grazioso* – see bars 5–7 of music example 2 (i)) can be seen as having similarities with the elegant cantilena and compound time of no.6, which in turn connects with no.10 (music examples 2b), demonstrating that, rather than having a definite motivic connection between individual numbers, Dvořák relies more on the Schumannesque technique of creating connections between types of texture and metre.¹⁵⁷

Ex.2b: Dvořák, *Silhouettes*; (i) opening of no.6, bars 1–4

Poco sostenuto

pp

con ped.

(ii) opening of no.10, bars 1–4, demonstrating similarities with no.6

Allegretto grazioso

p

However, it could be argued that there is also some degree of motivic connection between the individual pieces, with the ascending scale from no.1 providing a reference point for many other numbers (it is present in 4, 5, 7, as well as the first and final numbers). Dvořák also exploits contrast in this cycle, and a good example of this is between nos 2 and 3, where the chromaticism and counterpoint of no.2 is suddenly interrupted by the *ff* syncopated chords of no.3. The opening of the third piece of the cycle also recalls the Schumannesque technique of -----

¹⁵⁷A full discussion of Schumann's techniques of creating unity can be found in Daverio (1993).

juxtaposing high and low styles and the Jean-Paulian notion of *Humor*, creating drama through the opening chords which then dissipate into a 'quasi-polka' section. Indeed, elements of this dance can also be found in no.8, where the opening *allegretto* contains all of the rhythmic and textural 'fingerprints' of the polka.

The way in which Dvořák shapes pre-existing material with original ideas into a piano cycle (juxtaposing both unity and contrast) illustrates his concern with creating a musically unified whole which exploits the capabilities of the instrument, rather than just a collection of pieces to satisfy publishers. Although the instrument was never dominant in Dvořák's output, the cycle of *Silhouettes* shows not only the composer's awareness of the marketability of the instrument, but also that he invested creative energy in writing for the instrument, and the musical style of the work demonstrates his awareness of the cycles of Schumann and Smetana.

In the *Theme and Variations* demands of virtuosity are often considerable, whereas they are toned down in the *Silhouettes*, showing Dvořák's awareness of the need to write for the market of the amateur pianist. This vein continues in the *Eclogues* and the Four Pieces op.52, although these pieces received varying degrees of success. The four *Eclogues* were not published until 1921, and the op.52 pieces received much revision from the composer, demonstrating perhaps that writing for piano was not something that came naturally to Dvořák.

The *Eclogues* are simpler and of a smaller-scale than the *Silhouettes* and, in this, they correspond with some of Smetana's *albumleaves* and *sketches*. Dvořák makes use of predominantly ternary structures (apart from the rondo of the final piece), and there are a number of similarities between these pieces and the *Slavonic Dances*. No.1 is marked 'quasi-polka', no.3 begins with a simple melody over a drone bass, and the opening of no.4 is also a simple melody accompanied by basic harmonies. In both nos 3 and 4, the 'folk' elements from the opening are contrasted with 'quasi-scherzo' material, demonstrating the

juxtaposition of different styles (music examples 3). Each piece embodies a similar kind of contrast between A and B sections, and this is illustrated in no.2, where the syncopated opening (which recalls Smetana's *albumleaf* op.2 no.1 in its syncopation and lack of melodic definition) gives way to scherzo-like material.

Ex.3: Dvořák, no 3 of the *Eclogues*; (i) opening, bars 1–4

(ii) presentation of contrasting *presto* material, bars 20–27

The Four Piano Pieces op.52 to some extent continue in the same vein as the *Eclogues*. The first piece (*Impromptu*) uses ternary form, creating contrast between the lyrical, more chromatic middle section and the opening, which is rhythmically derived from the furiant. The influence of folk models can also be felt in no.4 (*Eclogue*), with the spread chords and drones of the LH accompanying an ornamented melody in the RH. In contrast, no.2 (the *Intermezzo*) recalls Smetana's *albumleaves* with its constant texture, expressive chromatic harmony, and tonal ambiguity (music examples 4).

Ex.4: Dvořák, op.52 pieces; (i) no.2, *Intermezzo*, bars 13–16

(ii) contrasting musical style presented in no.4, *Eclogue*, bars 1–3

(iii) no.4, *Eclogue*, bars 47–50

The op.52 pieces are thus a collection of individual, contrasting pieces as opposed to a unified whole (as in the *Theme and Variations* and *Silhouettes*). Through these pieces and the *Eclogues* the composer combines features of folk dances with Romantic genres such as the *impromptu* and the *intermezzo* in individual pieces of a moderate level of technical difficulty, making them suitable for the amateur pianist. However, an indication of Dvořák's awareness of his market can be seen through the pieces he rejected for the op.52 collection. The set was initially meant to have six pieces, and the original no.6 demonstrates the

simplicity and small-scale that the composer rejected (music example 4 (iv)).¹⁵⁸ It would seem that, in his writing for the piano, that Dvořák was caught between his own creative desires and the need to respond to the requirements of the market.

Ex.4: Dvořák, op.52 pieces; (iv) original no.6 of the collection

The musical score consists of five systems of piano notation. The first system is marked 'Presto' and 'mf', with the instruction 'po druhé slabě - ins 2te mal p'. The second system is marked 'f' and 'p', with the instruction 'po druhé slabě'. The third system is marked 'mf'. The fourth system is marked 'Andante' and 'p', with the instruction 'cresc.'. The fifth system is marked 'p'.

It was to be another nine years before Dvořák was to write for the piano as a solo instrument. Between the op.52 pieces in 1880 and the *Poetické nálady* [Poetic Tone Pictures] (B161, 1889), he completed two collections for piano duet, namely *Ze Šumavy* [From the Bohemian Forest] (B133, 1883–4) and a second set of *Slavonic Dances* (B145 and B147, piano duet and orchestral arrangement respectively, 1886 and 1887). These collections need to be considered against the context of events in the composer's life in order to understand what part they play in his overall development. The second set of *Slavonic Dances* was

¹⁵⁸This can be found in the Supplement section of the Artia (1961) edition of the work.

written in response to a demand from Simrock and, from Dvořák's correspondence with them (in which he states 'I haven't the slightest inclination to think about such light music at present'),¹⁵⁹ his lack of enthusiasm at the prospect of creating a second set can be felt. Dvořák clearly recognised that his own personal circumstances had changed greatly since the composition of the first set in 1876, and he was now wishing to pursue a new direction. This new direction can be felt in the collection of musical pictures *From the Bohemian Forest*. In the summer of 1883, Dvořák went on a walking tour of the Bohemian countryside with his close friend Leoš Janáček¹⁶¹ and, during this time, it would appear that he experienced a strong connection with, and reaction to, the landscape of his native country. In creating this set of musical pictures for piano duet, Dvořák began a new stage in his creative development, one connected with the creation of programme music.

This new direction in Dvořák's development connects him with another Czech composer, Zdeněk Fibich. During the 1870s and 80s, Fibich had created a number of symphonic poems, as well as the piano cycle *Z hor* [From the Mountains] (1887). Dvořák may well have been aware of Fibich's piano cycle, and it can be suggested that the older composer's change of direction may have been influenced to some extent by his awareness of contemporary developments in Czech music.

What is significant about this new stage in Dvořák's creative output is the fact that it was through the medium of solo piano that he first expressed his concern with programme music. With the *Poetic Tone Pictures*, the piano instigated a change in direction which was then reinforced by the creation of concert overtures and symphonic poems. During the years 1891–2, Dvořák produced the concert overtures *V přírodě* [In Nature's Realm] (B168, 1891), *Karneval* [Carnival] (B169, 1891), and *Othello* (B174, 1891–2) demonstrating a diverse approach to selecting sources (the choice of Shakespeare in *Othello* is perhaps significant, as Fibich had composed a symphonic poem on the same subject in 1873, and Smetana had used

¹⁶⁰Clapham (1979), p. 80.

¹⁶¹For further details, see Tyrrell (2006), p. 261.

Shakespeare in the both the symphonic poem *Richard III* and the piano tone poem *Macbeth*), and these works were followed up by the composition of a number of symphonic poems during the years 1896–7. *Vodník* [The Water Goblin] (B195), *Polednice* [The Noon Witch] (B196), *Zlatý kolovrat* [The Golden Spinning Wheel] (B197), and *Holoubek* [The Wild Dove] (B198) were all composed in 1896, and *Píseň bohatýrská* [A Hero's Song] (B199) followed in 1897. The choice of texts by Erben is perhaps significant in maintaining the connection with Czech nationalism even in a genre that had a greater connection with the developments in wider European Romanticism and, in creating symphonic poems, Dvořák was building upon a tradition established by Smetana and continued by Fibich.

The *Poetic Tone Pictures* thus herald both a new stage in the composer's output and led to a reconsideration of the status of the piano. The creation of programme music is a significant and progressive element of the Romantic period, and Dvořák acknowledged his connection with contemporary European thinking in his creation of the pieces. In a letter to his publishers Simrock, dated 19 May 1889, he states 'you will like the compositions. Each piece has a title and is meant to describe something, and so is programme music of a kind, but in the Schumann conception. But I must add at once that they do not sound Schumannesque'.¹⁶¹ However, despite the composer's confidence that Simrock would approve of his change in style, his publishers would seem to have been unimpressed, thinking that the pieces would be musically inaccessible, and possibly quite unpopular.¹⁶² and their reaction is reflected in Dvořák's change of tone in a later letter, where he states 'I have just finished writing thirteen compositions for piano solo. An ominous number, but that was the number of the *Moravian Duets*, too, and yet they have gone round the world a bit. Perhaps it will come off again'.¹⁶³

Dvořák's publishers clearly had a fixed 'image' of what kind of composer he was, and the works that had achieved success through their publication included the *Moravian*

¹⁶¹Quoted in the introductory section to the Bärenreiter edition (1955) by Otakar Šourek, pp.IV–V.

¹⁶²Šourek (1955), pp.125–6.

¹⁶³Clapham (1979), p.100

Duets, Slavonic Dances, and Slavonic Rhapsodies, all works defined by their national flavour rather than their absorption of contemporary trends. In addition to the use of a programme in the *Poetic Tone Pictures*, a further reason why Simrock may have reacted negatively to the set is the increased scale and level of technical difficulty in the pieces. The *Poetic Tone Pictures* go against the trend for simplicity and accessibility established in the *Eclogues* and op.52 pieces, utilising instead a variety of styles used to depict poetic images (*Noční cesta* [Twilight Way], *Vzpomínání* [Reverie]), dances (*Rej skřítků* [Goblin's Dance], *Bakchanale* [Bacchanalia]), and various 'national' images (*Na starém hradě* [In the Old Castle], *U mohyly* [At a Hero's Grave]) in a more virtuosic, extrovert manner.

No.1 (*Twilight Way*) depicts the title through the stillness of *pp* chords and the presentation of the theme in a high register. As a contrast to the 'nocturne-like' textures of the first section, from bar 37 Dvořák explores the idea of activity within the night environment, creating an area defined by staccato, 'scherzo-like' figuration, using *stringendo* and *fz* chords to create a sense of climax and emphasis the contrast between sections. Dvořák also explores the piano's sonic and textural capabilities and, from bar 102, he creates a section that depicts the mood of twilight through arpeggiation, register, texture, and chromatic shifts of harmony. The subsequent *Allegro moderato* presents the pianist with technical challenges in the form of a multi-layered texture combining a trill, repeated notes, and staccato figuration (music examples 5a).

Ex.5a: Dvořák, *Poetic Tone Pictures*; (i) beginning of no.1, bars 1–18

Allegro moderato

The musical score for the beginning of No. 1, *Poetic Tone Pictures*, consists of two systems of music. The first system covers bars 1 to 10, and the second system covers bars 11 to 18. The tempo is marked 'Allegro moderato'. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 2/4. The score features a multi-layered texture with staccato chords and repeated notes. Dynamics include 'pp' and 'sempre pp'. There are asterisks under bars 5 and 18, and a '20.' marking under bar 18.



(ii) 'scherzando' figuration, bars 37–48

A musical score for a piano piece, labeled as a 'scherzando' figuration. It consists of three systems of music. The first system (bars 37-40) features a right-hand melody with slurs and a left-hand accompaniment of chords. The second system (bars 41-44) shows a right-hand melody with a 'molto cresc.' marking and a left-hand accompaniment of chords. The third system (bars 45-48) features a right-hand melody with 'fz' and 'fz marcato' markings and a left-hand accompaniment of chords. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4.

(iii) exploration of textural variety, bars 102–110

A musical score for a piano piece, labeled as an exploration of textural variety. It consists of three systems of music. The first system (bars 102-104) features a right-hand melody with a 'p' marking and a left-hand accompaniment of chords. The second system (bars 105-107) features a right-hand melody with a 'p' marking and a left-hand accompaniment of chords. The third system (bars 108-110) features a right-hand melody with a 'cresc.' marking and a left-hand accompaniment of chords. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4.

(iv) exploration of a multi-layered texture, bars 124–127

Allegro moderato (Tempo I.)

sf

molto cresc.

marc.

Red.

Many aspects of the piano writing in *Twilight Way* can be found in other pieces. *Jarní* [Spring] creates mood primarily through texture and harmony (decorated by many chromatic inflections), whereas the same kind of arpeggiation and concentration upon texture can be found in *Žertem* [Toying]. *Toying* also demonstrates the more virtuosic approach to pianism in this collection, in its interlocking octave and chord patterns and quasi-cadenza passages (music example 5b).

Ex.5b: Dvořák, *Poetic Tone Pictures; Toying*, bars 11–24

poco a poco ritard.

a tempo

ff

cresc.

Red.

The use of dance models in the *Poetic Tone Pictures* brings into play a comparison with Smetana's *Czech Dances*, and the *Selská balada* [Peasant's Ballad], *Furiant*, and *Bacchanalia* all present a similarly extrovert, virtuosic type of writing. In these pieces the distance from the earlier *Slavonic Dances* is clear, and parts of the *Peasant's Ballad* recall the style of a Chopin waltz, combining this with the virtuosic interlocking octaves and cadenza figuration found in Smetana's *Czech Dances*. Similar aspects of virtuosity and extrovert writing can be found in the *Furiant* and the *Bacchanale*, the former in its dramatic *ff* octaves contrasted with a more lyrical *mp dolce* section (mirroring the conflict of two against three inherent in the furiant rhythm in its use of 3/4 in the RH against 6/8 in the LH) and the latter in its rapid figuration and interlocking chordal patterns (music examples 5c).

Ex.5c: Dvořák, *Poetic Tone Pictures*; (i) *Peasant's ballad*, bars 119–130

The musical score for Ex.5c (i) *Peasant's ballad*, bars 119–130, is presented in two systems. The first system covers bars 119 to 128, marked with a tempo of 8. The second system covers bars 129 to 130, marked with a tempo of 130. The score is written for piano and features complex rhythmic patterns, including interlocking octaves and cadenza figuration. Dynamic markings include *fff*, *poco a poco ritard.*, and *pesante*.

(ii) *Furiant*, bars 58–68

The musical score for Ex.5c (ii) *Furiant*, bars 58–68, is presented in two systems. The first system covers bars 58 to 64, marked with a tempo of 60. The second system covers bars 65 to 68, marked with a tempo of 65. The score is written for piano and features complex rhythmic patterns, including interlocking octaves and cadenza figuration. Dynamic markings include *mp dolce* and *p*.

(iii) *Bacchanalia*, bars 148–160

The connection with Smetana continues in the creation of pieces which have a nationalistic colour, namely *In the Old Castle* and *At a Hero's Grave*. The image of a castle is one previously invested with nationalistic significance by Smetana in the cycle of symphonic poems *My Fatherland*, and Dvořák builds on this through the use of unison, chorale-like material which builds to *ff* spread chords decorated with cascades of arpeggiation. This mood of solemnity is also present in *At a Hero's Grave*, and Dvořák creates the image of a 'national' hero through the use of a *f* melody defined by accents and dotted rhythms (bringing to mind a march, and hence emphasising the idea of the depiction of a military hero), and accompanied by thick staccato chords. The opening melody is decorated with different accompanimental figuration as the piece progresses, through staccato semiquavers in the LH to *ad lib.* demisemiquaver figuration in the RH, recalling the extrovert virtuosity present in much of Liszt's piano writing (music examples 5d).

Ex.5d: Dvořák, *Poetic Tone Pictures*; (i) opening of *At A Hero's Grave*, bars 1–6

Grave, tempo di marcia

(ii) recharacterisation of material, bars 13–16

(iii) further decoration of material, bars 46–51

With the last two pieces of the *Poetic Tone Pictures* Dvořák creates a sense of continuity, with the solemn contemplation of a national hero in *At a Hero's Grave* followed with the spiritual contemplation of *On the Holy Mount*. Just as the implication in *At a Hero's Grave* was that of a national hero defending their country, *On the Holy Mount* seems to glorify these actions, depicting the noble element of dying in national service. The 5/4 chorale theme, gradually increasing in dynamic as the piece progresses, is accompanied by

rapid, quasi-cadenza arpeggiac figuration (making reference to the idea of a fanfare), and the use of a thick texture, exploiting the full range of the keyboard gives a sense of culmination (the *pp*, contemplative ending all the more effective after the drama of the preceding pages), making the piece a fitting end to the collection as a whole (music examples 5e).

Ex.5d: Dvořák, *Poetic Tone Pictures*; (i) *On the Holy Mount*, bars 20–21

(ii) contrasting material within the coda section, bars 31–end

The change of direction instigated in the *Poetic Tone Pictures* was subsequently explored through the genre of the symphonic poem, and the piano was to receive no further attention until the composition of the Suite in A in 1894 and, during this period, there were many changes in the composer's life. From 1891, he began teaching at the Prague Conservatory (having an important influence upon many future Czech composers, including

Vítězslav Novák and Josef Suk) and from 1892–5 he took up a teaching post in America. Being abroad was the catalyst for another change of focus for Dvořák. His international reputation was based upon his ‘national’ works, and he was well aware that he had been employed in America to help them in the creation of their own national style, stating ‘the Americans expect great things of me. I am to show them the way into the Promised Land, the realm of a new, independent art, in short, a national style of music’.¹⁶⁵ This concentration upon the absorption of elements that the Americans could use in their creation of a national style meant that Dvořák turned away from the poetic imagery and programmatic inspiration of the concert overtures and the *Poetic Tone Pictures*, a style he was not to return to until the symphonic poems of 1896–7 (composed upon his return from America), and turned towards Classical forms (the use of symphony and suite) and choral works. The works surrounding the piano Suite are the Symphony no.9 (*From the New World*), String Quartet no.12 (a genre he had not worked in since 1881), and the choral work *The American Flag*, all composed in 1893. The Suite constitutes five loosely strung together movements all of which seem to draw inspiration from Dvořák’s study of American Negro spirituals. The opening of no.1 presents a pentatonic melody, whilst elements of the Baroque origin of the title are betrayed in the ornamentation used (a further Baroque element is the use of a Bachian two-part invention texture in the final movement). Movements two and three both use melodic constructions which seem to betray the Negro spiritual influence, presenting characteristic syncopated rhythms that are marked from surrounding material through dynamic and textural changes (music examples 6). The Suite is closer to the op.52 collection and *Eclogues* than the *Poetic Tone Pictures*, being on a smaller scale and less virtuosic, as well as taking abstract forms, rather than poetic and visual images, as their basis.

¹⁶⁵Döge (2001), p.783.

Ex.6: Dvořák, Suite in A; (i) no.1, pentatonic opening and syncopation, bars 1–5

Moderato

The musical score for Ex.6 (i) consists of two systems of piano music. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a pentatonic melody in the right hand and a syncopated bass line in the left hand. The tempo is marked 'Moderato'. The second system continues the piece, showing further development of the pentatonic melody and syncopated rhythms. Dynamic markings include 'f' and 'mp', and fingering numbers like 3, 5, 6, 7 are present.

(ii) virtuosic material in no.2, bars 54–60

The musical score for Ex.6 (ii) shows a virtuosic passage in the second movement. It features rapid sixteenth-note passages in the right hand and a strong bass line in the left hand. The tempo is marked 'ff' (fortissimo) and 'dim.' (diminuendo). The score includes dynamic markings like 'ff', 'dim.', and 'p'.

(iii) 'marked' folksong material in no.2, bars 61–70

The musical score for Ex.6 (iii) shows 'marked' folksong material in the second movement. It features a simple, folk-like melody in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand. The tempo is marked 'pp dolce' (pianissimo dolce). The score includes dynamic markings like 'pp dolce' and 'ff'.

Dvořák did not return to writing for the piano after 1894, concentrating instead on symphonic poems during 1896–7 and then on opera for the remainder of his life. For most of his compositional life, writing for the piano was a marginal activity through which his connection with small-scale, Romantic character pieces from earlier in the century and commitment to writing technically unchallenging works for the amateur pianist is reinforced.

The *Poetic Tone Pictures* present a different approach to the instrument and, in terms of virtuosity, the use of dances and national symbols, the work can be seen as connecting with Smetana's late works for the instrument. In terms of the exploitation of the piano's textural and sonic capabilities in creating visual and poetic images through sound, these pieces lead onto the programmatic piano works of Fibich and Foerster discussed in the subsequent chapter.

The figures of Smetana and Dvořák formed the foundations of Czech music in the second half of the nineteenth century and, in terms of the significance of the piano to their individual developments, many contrasts can be observed. For Smetana, the piano was central to his early development and, until the beginning of the 1860s, his works for the instrument demonstrate his connection with wider European Romanticism, firstly with Schumann and Chopin (through the *albumleaves* and *sketches*) and then Liszt (through the concert studies and *Macbeth*). During the 1860s, Smetana's direction changed, and his status as a nationalist composer was built upon his operas, meaning that the piano receded into the background. Although opera was his focus until the end of his life, it would be wrong to say that the piano played no part in reinforcing his role in the nationalist debate. Through the *Fantasia on Czech Folksongs* and the *Czech Dances* Smetana combined the virtuosic, extrovert style of writing for the piano that he had gained from his contact with Liszt with folk songs and dances derived from his native land. Through the creation of large-scale works for the concert platform, Smetana created powerful images imbued with a sense of national pride.

For Dvořák, the piano was never as significant. In his early development it is notable through its absence and, indeed, the only time the piano instigates a change in the composer's style is with the *Poetic Tone Pictures* which, as a collection, demonstrate Dvořák's connection with contemporary European Romanticism at the end of the nineteenth century. The latter part of the nineteenth century saw Czech musical life becoming more diverse and

the links with wider Romanticism became stronger (an issue which will be explored in more detail in the subsequent chapter). Dvořák's position in the 1890s is in line with this, and his creation of the *Poetic Tone Pictures* can be seen, to some extent, as being influenced by both the output of Fibich and the surrounding cultural environment. The creation of programmatic works for the piano was something continued in the work of both Fibich and Foester, two figures significant in Czech musical life towards the end of the nineteenth century, and it is to their output that we now turn.

CHAPTER 6:

Foerster and Fibich: Czech connections with the atmosphere of the *fin-de-siècle*

Dvořák's *Poetic Tone Pictures* connect with the piano works of both Zdeněk Fibich (1850–1900) and Josef Bohuslav Foerster (1859–1951) in their concern for programmatic depiction. Indeed, by the time of Dvořák's responses to Erben's poetry in his symphonic poems from the 1890s, Fibich had composed numerous symphonic poems of his own and developed Czech stage works through his exploration of a greater diversity of subject matter in his final operas, many of which were influenced by his own personal experiences and relationships. In the piano works of both Foerster and Fibich the connection with contemporary European Romanticism becomes intensified yet, although their sources of inspiration are more diverse and the emphasis is on programmatic description, the relationship between these composers and their native land is also crucial.

The formative influences of both composers are remarkably similar. Fibich, through his international education, was exposed to a variety of musical, visual, and literary influences and, although Foerster's education was entirely in Prague, his early interests in literature and visual art remained significant throughout his life. Both composers would have been exposed to the political and cultural environment of Prague in the 1870s and early 1880s and, in terms of the divide between progressive (Smetana) and conservative (Dvořák), both Foerster and Fibich aligned themselves with the former, Fibich through his symphonic poems and operas and Foerster through his writings for, amongst other journals, *Dalibor* (a pro-Smetana journal to which Fibich also contributed during the 1870s). Foerster was at the centre of Czech criticism during the 1880s and, within this role, he supported and promoted both Smetana and Fibich, seeing the latter's melodramas and operas as being the natural continuation of Smetana's stage works. His opinions were echoed by Zdeněk Nejedlý who (writing in 1901) stated that 'Fibich continued in the progressive endeavours of Smetana. Having taken over Smetana's watchword, he led Czech music to greater glory, ever higher'.¹ Although Foerster's compositional activities began at a later stage (his first significant works

¹Quoted in Tyrrell (1988), p. 11.

being a Piano Trio in 1883 and the orchestral suite *V horách* [In The Mountains] in 1884 – see table 4 for more details), he wrote in the same genres, and concentrated (initially) on symphonic poem, opera, and concert melodrama. In the writing of symphonic poems, both composers were responding to the influence of the Romantic programme pervasive in the latter part of the nineteenth century, as well as connecting with the progressive tendencies of Smetana established in his works in the genre.

Location is significant in the development and reputation of the two composers. Aside from the international elements of his early education, Fibich remained in Prague for the rest of his life whereas, in contrast, Foerster spent a good deal of time away from Prague, being in Hamburg (1893–1903) and Vienna (1903–1918) for significant periods. Whereas Fibich's career in Prague led him away from national sources and towards a more personal inspiration influenced by autobiography, Foerster's move away from his native land initially reinforced his sense of nationalism, and his opera *Eva* (1895–7) was viewed by Nejedlý as the next logical step from Fibich's *Nevěsta messinská* [Bride of Messina] (1882–3).² However, Foerster's Moravian subject matter clearly contrasts with the range of subject matter that Fibich was exploring in his operas at the same time, and much of Foerster's output whilst living abroad can be seen as intensifying connections with his homeland.

A point of convergence between the two composers is the exploration of subjectivity and personal experience. Just as Fibich's personal experiences in the final decade of his life led him to look inward rather than respond to external models, Foerster's life in Hamburg and Vienna led him to experience a sense of isolation. Much of his life abroad was connected with maintaining contact with his homeland and his musical development was not significantly influenced by contemporary ideas in Vienna in the first decade of the twentieth century, a city that can be seen as a crucible of musical modernism during that period. Foerster's musical language remained connected with Romanticism, which led to a creative distancing of himself from the works of composers that were prominent in progressive Viennese circles at the start of the new century. However, despite the differences in location

²In his *Česká moderní zpěvohra po Smetanovi* [Czech modern opera after Smetana] (1911), quoted in Tyrrell (1988), p. 11.

and experience between the two composers, their piano music encourages comparison as they both explore programmatic description and autobiography, elements which, in turn, connect their output with the piano works of later Czech composers such as Josef Suk and Leoš Janáček.

The connection with European Romanticism: the piano music of Zdeněk Fibich

As a way into exploring the piano music of Fibich and its relationship with the rest of his output, a consideration of the way in which the composer was considered by commentators at different points in music history is revealing. Josef Bartoš (writing in 1914) emphasises Fibich's position as a Romantic composer:

Smetana and Dvořák are characterised by a stubborn struggle for Czechness [...] to create music as an expression [distinctly Slavic] [...] and they did not know of any task bigger or brighter than this. Fibich [...] did not accept such [concerns] even for a moment. He was [...] a cosmopolitan, for whom 'patriotism' is expressed in an attempt to be one's own and to expose his own self in its innermost manifestation.'³

Bartoš focuses upon the connection with Romanticism in Fibich's expressive language and concludes that the idea of Czech nationalism was not significant to his musical development. However, as a counter-argument to this, Oldřich Pukl writes of the 'nationalist trinity of Smetana, Dvořák, and Fibich',⁴ implying that Fibich also had an important role to play in the nationalist debate established by Smetana and Dvořák. The subsequent discussion will reveal some validity in both quotes. The works of Fibich can be seen as a kind of 'transition' between the beginnings of Czech nationalism and the later approaches of Novák and Suk, and his works are revealing of the changes occurring in Czech nationalism in the 1880s and 90s.

³Quoted in Yeomans (2006), p.95.

⁴Pukl (2001), p.52.

Fibich was born in Všebořice in Bohemia and had an early interest in literature, particularly that of the German poet and musician E.T.A. Hoffmann (1776–1822), whose metaphysical and supernatural tales provided stimulation for his developing Romantic imagination (and created an early connection with literary Romanticism). His formative musical experiences were in hearing Weber, Wagner, and Schumann, and he is likely to have played many of these composers' works on the piano (he was a good pianist from an early age, having begun piano lessons with his mother in 1857). His early formal education (1859–62) took place in Vienna but, in 1863, he transferred to the Czech Gymnasium in Prague and was a pupil there until 1865. In Prague he also attended the private music institute of Zikmund Kolečovský, who was a church organist and theoretician, and also part of the *mladočech* movement and *Slavoj*, a progressive circle of artists. His early training was therefore geared towards the progressive thinking and development of Czech music headed by the central figure of the time, Bedřich Smetana.⁵

Table 3: Fibich's piano works in the context of his output as a whole⁶

YEAR	PIANO WORKS	STAGE WORKS (including concert <u>melodramas</u>)	ORCHESTRAL, AND CHAMBER WORKS
1870		<i>Bukovín</i> (1870–1) (H149)	
1871			
1872			Piano Trio in F minor (H174)
1873			<i>Othello</i> , op.6 (H177) <i>Záboj, Slavoj, and Luděk</i> , op.37 (H179)

⁵Jiránek (1963), p.12.

⁶The catalogue numbers used in this table are those used in Vladimír Hudec: *Zdeněk Fibich: tematický katalog* [Zdeněk Fibich: thematic catalogue] (Prague, 2001).

1874		<i>Blaník</i> , op.50 (1874–7) (H216)	<i>Toman and the Wood Nymph</i> , op.49 (1874–5) (H197) Piano Quartet in E minor, op.11 (H188) String Quartet in A (H189) Violin Sonata in C (H193)
1875		<i>Christmas Day</i> op.9 (H198)	Violin Sonata in D (H199)
1877		<i>Revenge of the Flowers</i> (H226)	<i>Wallenstein's Camp</i> (H914) Symphony no.1, op.17 (1877–83) (H270)
1878		<i>Eternity</i> op.14 (H240)	String Quartet in G, op.8 (H252)
1880			<i>The Tempest</i> , op.46 (H259)
1881			<i>Spring</i> , op.13 (H262)
1882		<i>The Bride of Messina</i> , op.18 (1882–3) (H268)	
1883		<i>The Water Sprite</i> op.15 (H267) <i>Queen Emma</i> (H271)	
1886			<i>A Night at Karlštejn Castle – overture</i> , op.26 (H284)
1887	<i>From the Mountains</i> , op.29 (H290)		
1888		<i>Hakon</i> op.30 (H293) <i>Hippodamie</i> , opp.31–3 (1888–91) (H298)	
1892	<i>Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences</i> , opp.41, 44, 47, and 57 (1892–8) (H311, 315, 319, and 327)		<i>Comenius</i> op.34 (H302) Symphony no.2, op.38 (1892–3) (H304)
1893		<i>The Tempest</i> , op.40 (1893–4) (H309)	<i>At Twilight</i> , op.39 (H306)
1894		<i>Hedy</i> , op.43 (1894–5) (H314)	
1896		<i>Šárka</i> , op.51 (1896–7) (H321)	

1898	<i>Studies of Paintings</i> , op.56 (1898-9) (H328)	<i>The Fall of Arkona</i> , opp.55 and 60 (H325 and 326)	Symphony no.3, op.53 (H324)

By 1865, even though Fibich was only 15 years old, he had completed a number of compositions, and there exist from this period many songs (mostly German settings by Romantic poets such as Rückert, Heine, Eichendorff, and Goethe) and some small piano works (*Le printemps* op.1 (1865, H3) and five *Albumblätter* op.2 (1865–6, H66)). By 1866 his compositions numbered 64, mostly songs and small piano pieces, but also orchestral works, including an overture (part of the incidental music written for Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* from 1865, numbered H7 and H8)⁷ and a whole four-movement Symphony in G minor (1866, H69).⁸ These early works already point towards Fibich's relationship with wider Romanticism, with the literary connection evident in the use of Shakespeare, and his association with Romantic keyboard genres in the use of the albumleaf.

In the years 1865–7 Fibich continued his training at the Leipzig conservatory, where he studied the piano with the Bohemian pianist and composer Ignaz Moscheles (1794–1870) and theory with the German theorist and composer Ernst Ferdinand Richter (1808–79). The musical environment of Leipzig at the time of Fibich's stay there was active but somewhat conservative, revolving around the Gewandhaus concerts conducted by Carl Reinecke (1824–1910), who was a representative and guardian of tradition, and a champion of the Classical masters and the music of Bach. When in Leipzig, Fibich would have encountered the music of Schumann and Mendelssohn, in addition to the counterpoint of Bach (he would also have been aware of Schumann through the significant role he had in Leipzig as music journalist and founder of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*). Fibich's connection with the wider atmosphere of European Romanticism has been noted by Nejedlý, who compared Fibich to Schumann.⁹ Although referring to him as the 'Czech Schumann', Nejedlý notes that Fibich is a different kind of Romantic personality, and whereas Schumann's Romanticism was

⁷Hudec (2001), pp.110–111.

⁸Jiránek (1963), p.14.

⁹Quoted in Jiránek (1963), p.17.

predominantly literary, Fibich's ranged from literature and nature to the later influence of folk culture (folk fables and ballads rather than folk music), with the more prominent dramatic element in Fibich's work being opposed to the more lyrical, poetic nature of Schumann's creations. Whilst in Leipzig, Fibich wrote three operas (*Kapelník v Benátkách* [The Bandmaster in Venice] (1866, H72), *Gutta von Guttenfels* (1868, H864), and *Loreley* (1867, H853), all lost) and continued to write songs to German texts.

Fibich's international education continued in 1868 when he spent time in Paris, working as a piano teacher and devoting time to viewing art and sculpture. Whilst in Paris, he was introduced to aristocratic circles and made part of the musical life of the Parisian salon as a pianist. During this period his compositional output was not substantial, and this was a time of work and absorption of artistic influences. As Jiránek notes, musical Paris was a disappointment for Fibich, and his main focus whilst there were his almost daily visits to the Louvre.¹⁰ His time in Paris was brief, and in 1869 he went to Mannheim to study with the conductor Vincent Lachner (1811–93), who staged a performance of Wagner's *Meistersingers* during Fibich's stay, which meant that the young composer would have been exposed to modern music drama at this early stage of his career. Fibich's study in Mannheim ended his period of apprenticeship and from this time 230 pieces exist, mostly small piano pieces and songs that have the character of apprenticeship work. The predominant lyricism of these works illustrate the importance of Schumann in this formative period, as well as the connection with wider Romanticism and foreign models.¹¹ Fibich's output before his return to Prague in 1870 can thus be usefully compared to that of Smetana during the 1840s and 50s in its connection to wider European Romanticism.

Fibich's early education provided him with a plethora of influences and styles and, unlike that of Smetana and Dvořák, his training was international, allowing him access to a diverse range of artistic experiences. Because of his physical distance from the Czech lands during his education, Fibich would have been disengaged from the socio-political and cultural issues of the time and, as a result, less concerned with Czech nationalism. However,

¹⁰Jiránek (1963), p.18.

¹¹Jiránek (1963), p.18.

this was to change upon his return to Prague in 1870 at a time of political and cultural turbulence which had begun at least ten years earlier, and Fibich quickly adjusted to this atmosphere, becoming firmly implanted in Smetana's progressive camp.¹² This alignment with the progressive ideas of the time can be seen as a continuation of the influence of Kolečovský, whose teaching Fibich had experienced in his early teens. He cemented his position as a progressive further by forming connections with both Otakar Hostinský and Ludevít Procházka, and became part of the propagation of new Czech music.

Fibich's reaction to his arrival in this new musical, political, and cultural environment brought about changes in his compositional output. Prior to 1870 the composer had focused upon writing solo piano pieces and songs but, on arriving in Prague, his attention turned to the production of operas and symphonic poems. These were both genres associated with Smetana and, in working with these forms, Fibich strengthened his alignment with the progressive Smetana camp. These genres were also at the centre of nationalist debate and, with these works, Fibich registered his involvement with the development of a Czech national school.

The movement away from writing songs and piano music from 1870 also marks a difference between Fibich's piano music and that of Smetana. The piano was an important instrument for both of them in their years of apprenticeship but, following this initial period, the instrument is not as significant in Fibich's output. For Smetana, the piano works of his apprenticeship were immediately followed up with the *Six Characteristic Pieces*, *Albumleaves*, and *Sketches*, all of which cemented his relationship with Romanticism. For Fibich the situation was very different and, following his few early solo piano works from the 1860s,¹³ the next significant piano work is the cycle *Z hor* [From the Mountains] op.29 (1887, H290) meaning that, in the intervening twenty years, his writing for piano is confined to individual pieces from the 1870s, a Suite in G minor and Variations in B flat major (both from 1877), and several works for piano duet.

¹²Jiránek (1963), p.24.

¹³See Tyrrell /Mabary (2001) worklist for details of Fibich's early works for solo piano (p.764).

During the period of 1870–80, Fibich's compositional output is focused on the genres of opera and symphonic poem and, in working in these, he entered into the Czech nationalist debate. The symphonic poems illustrate both Fibich the nationalist (in *Záboj, Slavoj, and Luděk* (1873)) and Fibich the Romantic (in *Toman a lesní panna* [Toman and the Wood Nymph] (1874–5) and *Vesna* [Spring] (1881)), and are works which depict a variety of moods and images. In terms of his operatic output, Fibich's career began properly with *Blaník* (1881), by which time the influences of both Wagner and Smetana can be felt. It can also be suggested that Fibich's experiences conducting at the Provisional Theatre (1875–81) would have gained him a greater awareness of the Czech operatic scene.

In the period 1870–80 Fibich's career was varied and diverse. In addition to composing and conducting at the Provisional Theatre, he was a choirmaster at the Russian Orthodox church (1878–1881), and wrote reviews for the musical journal *Dalibor*. Fibich also began to experiment within the genre of the melodrama during this period, and this can be understood as both an exploration of a different kind of stage composition and the reintroduction of a genre explored by Czech composers in the past, including Georg Benda (1722–95), whose *Medea* (1775) and *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1775) Fibich had conducted in 1875 at the Provisional Theatre.¹⁴ Fibich's greatest achievement in this genre was the trilogy of stage melodramas *Hippodamie* (1888–91) but, prior to this, he produced a series of concert melodramas (between 1875 and 1888) setting ballads of Erben. From 1880 Fibich began to explore new directions in opera which move away from national subjects and sources. *Blaník* and *Šárka* (1896–7) are the only operas in his output that have specifically Czech settings, and from *The Bride of Messina* (1882–3) his sources become more varied and, as Tyrrell states 'bear witness to his own cosmopolitan leanings and to those of highly cultured literary friends such as Hostinský and the poet and dramatist Jaroslav Vrchlický'.¹⁵ Throughout the 1880s, Fibich became less concerned with fulfilling nationalistic expectations and more involved with exploring the poetic and literary concerns that had been present from early in his career. His two most substantial and significant piano cycles *From the Mountains* and the

¹⁴Tyrrell/Mabary (2001), p. 761.

¹⁵Tyrrell (1988), p. 84.

Malířské studie [Studies of Paintings] op.56 (1898–9, H328) are both related to these concerns, the first being a cycle depicting the images of the Alps captured in the poetry of Vrchlický, and the second responding to a range of visual images from various artists.

In addition to these two piano cycles, there is also the collection of 376 *Nálady, dojmy a upomínky* [Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences] opp.41, 44, 47, and 57 (1892–9, H311, H315, H319, H327)¹⁶ which chronicle the composer's relationship with Anežka Schulzová. Her influence lasted for the remainder of his life and dictated much of his later operatic output, and *Bouře* [The Tempest] op.40 (1893–4, H309), *Hedy* op.43 (1894–5, H314), *Šárka* op.51 (1896–7, H321), and *Pád Arkuna* op.55 and 60 [The Fall of Arkona] (1898–1900, H325–6) are all based upon libretti provided by Anežka. The *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences* have a relationship with these operas and, in addition to being important as independent piano works, there exist many correspondences between material in the operas and the piano works, creating a clear connection between the personal and the musical in the composer's output.

Fibich's works show him as a kind of 'renaissance man' and his inspiration has many sources (nature, literature, visual art, sculpture) yet, at the end of his life, the most important source was his own internal world of emotional responses to personal relationships. Despite the wide-ranging nature of these influences, the unifying element in Fibich's musical language is the depiction of a programme, be it visual, literary, or emotional, and this element makes him perhaps the most Romantic Czech composer of his period. Although his work has connections with that of Smetana and Dvořák, it is to contemporary European Romanticism that Fibich relates most.

The piano music of Josef Bohuslav Foerster: further connections with Romanticism

Although Foerster shares many characteristics with Fibich, as a result of the significant part of his career that he spent abroad, he was exposed to a number of different influences.

¹⁶There is a further set of *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences* which has no opus number – these pieces were composed in 1897 and have the catalogue number H520.

However, despite this connection with other countries and foreign influences, the development of music in his native country was always of importance to Foerster and continually had an effect on his compositional life. Unlike Fibich, he enjoyed a long life, and so had experience of his country achieving independence in 1918. Although a discussion of the effect of this on his compositional activities is beyond the scope of this study, it is revealing to consider Foerster's activities upon his return to Prague in 1918 and how he was perceived by commentators there.

Table 4 places Foerster's piano music in the context of his oeuvre as a whole, and this reveals much about the composer's approach to the instrument. Like Fibich, his compositions for the piano are neither numerous nor a continuous part of his output, suggesting that the piano was not fundamental in defining his style. Composition was not an activity in which Foerster was engaged until relatively late in his career, and this contrasts with the early compositional activity of Fibich. Indeed, Foerster was occupied by many other activities before he began composing in any serious way, and these had a fundamental effect on his musical development.

Unlike Fibich, Foerster's education took place entirely in Prague. He was brought up within a musical environment dominated by church music, and his father (Josef Förster (1833–1907)) was the organist at St. Vitus' cathedral in Prague, as well as teaching at the Prague Organ School (from 1857, when Dvořák was a pupil) and eventually taking up a position of professor of theory at the Prague Conservatoire in the 1860s. Josef Bohuslav was thus brought up in an environment affected by the fundamental changes and developments occurring in Czech society through the 1860s. Foerster would have been made aware of the importance of dramatic art in Czech culture at a very young age, as his father was fully involved in the musical life of Prague (frequently going to the Provisional Theatre)¹⁷ and attended the laying of the foundation stone for the National Theatre with Foerster in 1868.¹⁸ The composer's formative influences are similar to those of Fibich, and from the time he entered secondary school (in 1871) he appreciated the music of Smetana, was interested in

¹⁷Bartoš (1923) notes his attendance at performances of *The Brandenburgers in Bohemia* and *The Bartered Bride*, p.49.

¹⁸Bartoš (1923), p.49.

world literature (Goethe, Schiller, and Shakespeare), and developed an interest in art and drawing that was to last throughout his life. His interest in the many different facets of artistic expression can also be seen in his interest in *Lumír* (the journal of the contemporary arts) as a teenager (in 1875–6).¹⁹

After graduating from secondary school in 1878, Foerster studied chemistry and biology before embarking on a musical career with study at the Prague Organ School from 1879. Here, he experienced the teaching of František Skuherský (1830–92), an innovative thinker who had also been responsible for the teaching of Leoš Janáček a few years earlier and, upon graduating in November 1882, he was certified ‘excellently able’ to teach in secondary schools.²⁰

Table 4: Foerster’s piano music in the context of his output as a whole

YEAR	PIANO WORKS	STAGE WORKS AND <u>MELODRAMAS</u>	VOCAL/<u>CHORAL</u> AND INSTRUMENTAL WORKS
1883			Piano Trio no.1, op.8
1884			<i>In The Mountains</i> suite, op.7
1885	<i>Miniatures</i> op.17		
1887	<i>Spring Moods</i> op.4		Symphony no.1, op.9 (1887–8)
1888			String Quartet no.1, op.15
1889		<i>Three Riders</i> , op.21	<i>Three Village Songs</i> , op.19 <i>Hymn of the Angels</i> , op.13 Violin Sonata, op.45
1890	<i>Leaves from my Diary</i> op.18	<i>Debora</i> , op.41 (1890–1)	<i>Czech Song</i> , op.30
1891			<i>Stabat mater</i> , op.56 (1891-2)

¹⁹Bartoš (1923), pp.46–7.

²⁰Bartoš (1923), pp.48–9.

1892			Symphony no.2, op.29 (1892-3)
1893			String Quartet no.2, op.39
1894			Symphony no.3 <i>Life</i> , op.36 Piano Trio no.2, op.38 <i>Nine choruses</i> , op.37 (1894-7)
1895		<i>Eva</i> , op.50 (1895-7)	
1897		<i>Amarus</i> , op.30a	
1898	<i>Dreaming</i> op.47		
1900			<i>My Youth</i> sym.poem, op.44 <i>Prayer to the Sea</i> , op.71 <i>Gethsemane</i> , op.121/4
1902	<i>Rose of Memories</i> op.49	<i>Jessika</i> , op.60 (1902-4)	
1903			<i>Cyrano de Bergerac</i> sym.poem, op.55
1905			Symphony no.4 <i>Easter</i> , op.54
1906		<i>The Invincible Ones</i> , op.100 (1906-17)	
1907			String Quartet no.3, op.61 (1907-13) <i>Hymnus</i> , op.63/3
1908	<i>Compositions for my little boy</i> op.72 <i>Impressions</i> op.73 (1908-9)		<i>From Shakespeare</i> sym poem, op.76 (1908-09)
1909			<i>Legend of Happiness</i> sym poem, op.83 Wind Quintet, op.95
1910			Violin Concerto, op.88 (1910-11) <i>Oh, St Wenceslas!</i> , op.86
1912	<i>Eros' Masks</i> op.98		<i>Spring and Longing</i> sym poem, op.93

1913			<i>Four Heroes</i> , op.117
1918			<i>To the Dead Brothers</i> , op.108
1919			Piano Trio no.3, op.105 (1919–21)
1920			<i>Male voice choruses</i> , op.102 (1920–1)
1921		<i>The Heart</i> , op.102 (1921–2)	
1923			<i>Glagolitic Mass</i> , op.123 Jičín Suite, op.124
1924			Symphony no.5, op.141 (1924–9)
1925			Violin concerto no.2, op.104 (1925–6) <i>Twelve Choruses</i> , op.171
1926	<i>Charcoal Sketches</i> op.136 (1926–8)		
1928			<i>St. Wenceslas</i> , op.140
1935		<i>The Simpleton</i> , op.158 (1935–6)	
1936			<i>To My Heart</i> , op.151b <i>Maj</i> , op.159

From 1884, Foerster began his activities as a music critic and reviewer and wrote for journals such as *Dalibor*, *Hudební revue*, and *Národní listy*. In doing this, his career mirrors that of Janáček, and the Moravian composer soon approached Foerster to write for his journal *Hudební listy* (which Foerster contributed to in 1885–6).²¹ Through examining Foerster's journalistic output, a relatively detailed knowledge of what music the composer was exposed to and what he valued musically can be gained. His fundamental concern was for reviewing opera, and his writings illustrate his enthusiasm for both Smetana and Fibich (mirroring the line of development for Czech opera outlined by Nejedlý).²² Therefore, through his writings,

²¹See Štědroň (1947), pp.7–8 for details of Foerster's involvement with Janáček's *Hudební listy*.

²²Štědroň (1947), pp.8–9.

Foerster aligns himself with the *mladočech* in his opinions of Czech opera, and documents the significant role of both Smetana and Fibich in the reformation of dramatic music following Wagner.

In the early part of Foerster's career (before 1893) there exists a dichotomy between the works that the composer wrote about (operas and melodramas) and his own compositions (instrumental and chamber works). Although in his writing the composer aligns himself with Smetana and Fibich (and hence progressive ideas), his musical output was closer to that of Dvořák. Foerster's work with Janáček's *Hudební listy* would also have involved him in the 'Dvořák cult' that existed in Moravia in the 1880s and 90s (with Janáček's promotion of Dvořák within the Brno Beseda).²³ The closeness of Foerster's orchestral and chamber output to Dvořák during the 1880s can be inferred by the fact that Janáček was enthusiastic about performing Foerster's orchestral suite *In The Mountains* (1884).²⁴ However, this performance never occurred, and eventually the composer became known throughout Moravia as a composer of choruses. Foerster's choral works *Hymnus andělů* [Hymn of Angels] (1889) and the *Česká píseň* [Czech Song] (1890) were received with great success and, in writing for choral societies (societies with an important nationalist agenda) using nationalistic texts (the *Hymn of Angels* uses a text by Svatopluk Čech), the composer was expressing an important attachment to his native land, a connection that continued throughout his time abroad. Table 4 illustrates that whilst Foerster was abroad in Hamburg and Vienna (between 1893 and 1918) he composed many choruses. These were written for Ferdinand Vach and Moravian Teachers' choral societies, and Vach maintained contact with Foerster whilst he was resident in foreign countries, demonstrating a way in which Foerster remained connected to his homeland whilst he was abroad.²⁵

Several facets of Foerster's creative personality unfold in the time before he left for Hamburg in 1893. As a composer, he had written a number of orchestral and chamber works, and male-voice choruses, yet these activities placed him on the periphery of a Czech culture fundamentally concerned with opera and stage works. However, in his role as a critic, Foerster

²³See the final chapter of this dissertation for further details of Janáček's relationship with Dvořák.

²⁴Štědroň (1947), pp.9–10.

²⁵Details of Foerster's connections with Moravian choral societies can be found in Štědroň (1947), pp.14–16.

was at the centre of Czech criticism, writing extensively on the most progressive developments of Czech opera. His connection with the theatre was reinforced in 1888 when he married Berta Lautererová (1869–1936), a singer at the National Theatre, and this intensified Foerster's role as a mouthpiece for the needs of Czech music. He supported the melodramas of Fibich (also composing in the genre himself, the earliest being the *Tři jezdci* [Three Riders] in 1889, contemporaneous with Fibich's work on *Hippodamia*) and began to establish a reputation for himself as an opera composer with *Dehora* (1890–1). Although the opera was only performed four times (following its premiere in 1893) it was seen as being a promising start to an operatic career, with the subject of a serious village opera being both innovative and a continuation of a line of development instigated by Smetana's *Bartered Bride*.

Foerster left Prague for Hamburg in 1893 (the result of Berta gaining a singing position at the Stadttheater) and continued his writing career (working for the *Neue Hamburger Zeitung* and the *Hamburger Nachrichten* among other publications) whilst, compositionally, a huge influence was his interaction with Gustav Mahler (1860–1911). Foerster came to know Mahler through Berta's employment at the Stadttheater (where Mahler conducted), and it would seem that there was a mutual appreciation and admiration between the two men, with Foerster writing of a 'mythical closeness of souls [...] souls that recognise one another'.²⁶ When the two men met in 1893 Mahler was extremely well-known as a conductor but much less so as a composer, and needed the support of someone like Foerster, who promoted Mahler both through his writings and the organisation of concerts of the Austrian's works.²⁷ During their many meetings, Foerster and Mahler discussed the importance of Bach's counterpoint (with Mahler expressing disappointment in the fact that Bach was almost unknown) and the works of Beethoven, as well as becoming well acquainted with contemporary progressive figures such as Richard Strauss (1864–1949).²⁸ Foerster notes that Mahler saw himself as competing with Strauss, whom he valued greatly

²⁶Foerster (1947), p.23.

²⁷Foerster wrote articles in *Národní listy* and the *Blatte für Musik* supporting Mahler after he had received negative reviews in Berlin newspapers. He also organised a concert of Mahler's music in March 1896 which consisted of the first movement of Symphony no.2 and Symphony no.1 (Foerster (1947), p.101).

²⁸Lebrecht (1987), pp.75–6.

and studied carefully, admiring particularly the enrichment of the orchestral palette in Strauss' works.²⁹ Through his appreciation of Mahler, Foerster expressed his enthusiasm for a new generation of composers, and aligned himself with the progressive musical figures of the *fin-de-siècle*. Mahler's appreciation of Smetana provided a further connection between them (he put on *The Bartered Bride* in Hamburg, and later introduced *The Two Widows*, *The Kiss*, and *Dalibor*).³⁰ In his writings, Foerster promoted and defended Mahler (who was, in the 1890s, isolated as a result of his innovative and forward-looking compositional approach) alongside an active promotion of Smetana, and this can be seen as further reinforcement of the fact the Smetana was seen as a modern and progressive figure by foreign composers.³¹

Being away from his native land had a significant effect on Foerster's compositional output. His connections with Smetana and Fibich continued with the creation of an orchestral symphonic poem *Mé mládí* [My Youth] (1900), and his concern with the development of Czech opera and melodrama can be seen in *Eva* (1895–7) and *Amarus* (1897). *Eva* reinforces Foerster's connection with Moravia (with the opera being based upon a text by Gabriela Preissová), and it is known that the composer had travelled through Moravia and experienced Preissová's play by 1890.³² The fact that it took a further five years to complete the opera (and that he did so whilst living and working in a foreign country) says much about Foerster's need to still be connected to his homeland, and his continued awareness of what genres carried value there.

Although many elements in Foerster's writing (both musical and literary) are concerned with the development of a national style and his place within that, there is also a significant subjective strand in his writing, and it is within this that the piano emerges as an important instrument. Both of the orchestral works from the Hamburg period (the third symphony, subtitled *Život* [Life] and the symphonic poem *My Youth*) are, in a sense, autobiographical, and the piano cycle *Snění* [Dreaming] (1898) reinforces this approach.

²⁹Foerster (1947), pp.26–7, which is further quoted and discussed in De la Grange (1974), pp.287–8.

³⁰De la Grange (1974), p.317.

³¹Foerster's enthusiasm for Mahler's compositional approach and his awareness of the Austrian's isolation is discussed in De la Grange (1974) p.287 and pp.315–6, and Lebrecht (1987), pp.76–8.

³²There is evidence that Foerster met Preissová in Velká at some point in the 1890s. Details can be found in Štědroň (1947), p.13.

Foerster's piano writing stands apart from his concerns with Czech opera and melodrama, and is closer to Fibich's cycles (*Dreaming* is contemporaneous with the *Studies of Paintings*) and the collections of *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences*.

Dreaming is the only piano work that exists from Foerster's time in Hamburg, and was followed with two cycles completed in Vienna (1903–1918), the *Imprese* [Impressions] (1908–09) and *Erotovy masky* [Eros's Masks] (1912), both of which provide further illustration of Foerster's use of the piano as an intimate instrument through which to depict subjective states. The concern with music as a descriptive force continues in the three symphonic poems of this period (*Ze Shakespeara* [From Shakespeare] (1908–09), *Legenda o štěstí* [Legend of Happiness] (1909), and *Jaro a touha* [Spring and Longing] (1912)) and these works demonstrate both a connection with Smetana and Fibich (in the use of Shakespeare and the genre of symphonic poem) and the contemporary Vienna in which he was living and working (with connections being created with the symphonic poems of Strauss). However, in his musical language Foerster was far removed from contemporary models, and this is highlighted if comparisons are made between his piano cycles and the contemporaneous piano music of Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951) and Alban Berg (1885–1935).³³ This sense of isolation and introspection can also be seen in his operatic output and, in considering Foerster's last three operas, Tyrrell suggests that the composer, in still using a harmonic and musical language little changed from his youth, was out of touch with the times.³⁴ The exploration of an increasingly personal vein of opera, with the focus being on the psychological depiction of the main characters, corresponds with the subjective concerns explored in the piano music.

Despite the distance between his own musical language and that of his Viennese contemporaries, Foerster had a great deal of experience of contemporary music at the beginning of the twentieth century and, through his writings, it would appear that his reaction to it was mostly positive. In the article *Schönberg a jeho škola* [Schoenberg and his school],³⁵

³³Berg's Piano Sonata was written in 1908–09, whilst Schoenberg's *Drei Klavierstücke* op.11 and *Sechs kleine Klavierstücke* op.19 were written in 1909 and 1911 respectively, and thus are contemporaneous with Foerster's *Impressions* and *Eros's Masks*.

³⁴Tyrrell (1988), p.93.

³⁵In Foerster (1947), pp.301–312.

Foerster documents his hearing of Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder* (1900–01) (in which he notes the 'delightful and enchanting sounds' from the orchestra, the 'captivating choral singing', and his appreciation of this music 'from the deepest depths of the heart'),³⁶ *Pelleas und Melisande* op.5 (1902–3), and the *Kammersymphonie* op.9 (1906), Berg's *Fünf Orchesterlieder von Peter Altenberg* op.4 (1912), and Webern's *Fünf Lieder* op.4 (1908–09). Despite his enthusiastic reaction to *Gurrelieder*, Foerster was less than entirely positive about the other works (noting the 'harmonic oddities' in the *Kammersymphonie* which led to the piece being 'totally incomprehensible in places')³⁷ yet, on the whole, his article focuses more on the opinions of others (he notes Mahler's request of 'gentleman please, a C major chord') and he writes of the scandalous reactions that the pieces produced at the performance (detailing the 'hissing, shouting, and violence' that the works produced in the audience).³⁸ These remarks make clear the fact that Foerster was aware of the innovations of the Second Viennese School without being fully in tune with their aims, and the composers that Foerster focuses upon within the above article (Franz Schreker (1878–1934) and Hans Pfitzner (1869–1949)) reveal much about where his musical enthusiasms lay. With both Schreker and Pfitzner, Foerster notes their relationship with the mood of Romanticism, discussing their poetic qualities, their relationship with Nature, and the sense of 'truthfulness' in their music and its being 'felt from the heart [...] lived, felt, and suffered'.³⁹ These remarks suggest that, despite his knowledge and experience of the most progressive and innovative musical styles, Foerster's commitment was always with Romanticism, and this can be felt clearly in his own musical language throughout his time in Vienna, which demonstrates his distance from his Viennese contemporaries.

Foerster's isolation in Vienna and the need to maintain connections with his homeland can be demonstrated by the fact that he was closely involved with the Czech Viennese minority throughout his time there. During 1909–10 he gave lectures to the *Lumír* society about harmony, and continued this in 1910 with lectures dedicated both to

³⁶Foerster (1947), p.303.

³⁷Foerster (1947), p.305.

³⁸Foerster (1947), pp.305–6.

³⁹Foerster (1947), pp.308–10.

contemporary music and the importance of Fibich.⁴⁰ Although Foerster was aware of contemporary music and the innovations occurring in Vienna at the beginning of the twentieth century,⁴¹ compositionally he was fundamentally more connected to a Romantic form of expression, and remained attached to the figures that loomed large in his earlier writing career (namely Smetana and Fibich).

Following the composition of *Eros's Masks* in 1912, Foerster produced no piano music until the *Črty uhlím* [Charcoal Sketches] (1926–8). By this time, the composer had returned to Prague and was faced with a public that knew very little about him, having had no experience of his orchestral, chamber, and piano works, and knowing only *Eva* and the songs and choruses (which had been promoted in Moravia through Vach). There was also an element of prejudice against him on his return and, after many years abroad, he was perceived as lacking a 'national consciousness'.⁴² Throughout the 1920s, Foerster assumed an institutional position, being the principal of the Prague Conservatoire in 1922–3, 1927–8, and 1928–9, and this in many ways is a reflection of his conservatism and lack of connection with contemporary Czech music through the 1920s, a time of great change in the musical life of Prague.⁴³ Essentially, Foerster's music was outdated, and other figures had come to the forefront of Czech culture during his time abroad, with Leoš Janáček assuming his position as the focus of Czech opera in the twentieth century.

What becomes clear through an examination of Foerster's career is that his literary career was often more significant than his compositional activities. Whereas his writing (in Brno, Prague, Hamburg, and Vienna) saw him connecting with progressive composers and works, his own musical language (particularly during his time in Vienna) never absorbed contemporary influences to any significant degree. Although living abroad for so much of his career, Foerster maintained a connection with his homeland (through his literary articles,

⁴⁰Bartoš (1923), pp.70–1.

⁴¹In his article on 'Vienna', Foerster demonstrates a knowledge and appreciation of the most modern developments in all art forms in Vienna at the beginning of the twentieth century, discussing the Vienna Secession, Art Nouveau, and the enthusiasm of Schoenberg and his school for the innovations of Mahler. He also discusses the concerts given by the Orchesterverein and the Singverein (see Foerster (1947), pp.160–3).

⁴²Bartoš (1923), p.71.

⁴³Further information on Foerster's institutional activities can be found in Bartoš (1923), pp.74–80. It can also be noted here that Foerster's institutional position in the newly created independent Czechoslovakia can be compared with that of the younger Vítězslav Novák, and this will be explored further in the subsequent chapter.

choruses, and stage works), and yet many of his works stand outside any national concerns, becoming increasingly subjective and personal as a result of his isolation. In this, Foerster's approach has similarities with much of Fibich's later output (with its emphasis on the subjective) and, through an examination of their piano music, a fuller appreciation of their connections can be reached.

Fibich and the piano

The piano played a different role in Fibich's output than it did in either Smetana's or Dvořák's. Like Smetana, Fibich was an accomplished pianist and the instrument was immediately attractive to write for. A further similarity with the older Czech composer can be seen in his early attraction to the works of Schumann, which encouraged the writing of piano miniatures, and the earliest pieces in Fibich's output for piano (those produced in the 1860s) can be compared with the early connection with Romanticism that Smetana experienced in his *Sketches and Albumleaves*. However, whereas writing for the piano was a constant for Smetana until the 1860s, during his exposure to the social and cultural life of Prague during the 1870s, Fibich's writing for the piano receded into the background whilst other genres became prominent. What his later piano cycles (*From the Mountains* and the *Studies of Paintings*) demonstrate is that the piano remained important to Fibich, and the variety and diversity of his programmatic sources is illustrated through his works for the instrument, which illustrate everything that was important to Fibich as a Romantic composer; literature, art, nature, and personal and subjective expression.

Although Fibich's most important contribution to the development of Czech music at the end of the nineteenth century is seen as being his stage works, the piano cycles are a complement to this as they further demonstrate the composer's increasingly diverse sources of inspiration. Therefore, although *From the Mountains* (1887) and the *Studies of Paintings* (1898) are not directly connected with his stage works, they still play a part in diversifying Fibich's programmatic writing. In contrast, the *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences* (1892–7) demonstrate both the use of the piano as a more intimate means of expression (in

(1892–7) demonstrate both the use of the piano as a more intimate means of expression (in the creation of an ‘erotic diary’ of his relationship with Anežka) and the greater connection of the piano writing with the stage works, as many of these small pieces form the basis of parts of the last four operas.

Fibich’s piano music is always linked with an external programme, and the greatest connection between Fibich and his predecessors can be felt through Smetana’s piano tone poem *Macbeth and the Witches* and Dvořák’s *Poetic Tone Pictures*. Where Fibich creates something completely new is in the use of the piano as a vehicle of intimate expression, and this is significant both in the influence it had on subsequent Czech composers (such as Suk and Janáček) and in demonstrating Fibich’s connection with the atmosphere of the *fin-de-siècle* dominant in wider contemporary European Romanticism.

A comparison with the piano music of Foerster

Fibich’s first significant piano cycle is *From the Mountains* (1887) and Foerster’s first work for the instrument, the *Jarní nálady* [Spring Moods], comes from the same year. However, the works differ in terms of scale and their significance in terms of the composer’s later output. The *Spring Moods* are three individual pieces exploring different types of dance and, along with the earlier *Miniatury* [Miniatures] (1885) and later *Listy z mého deníku* [Leaves from my Diary] (1890), can be considered as sketches that show Foerster experimenting with the creation of different moods and colours.⁴⁴ Because of this, the cycle *Snění* [Dreaming] (1898) can be considered as Foerster’s first piano cycle and indeed, its designation as a cycle is on the basis of the individual pieces being considered as a unified whole, an aspect which encourages comparison with Fibich’s first cycle, *From The Mountains*.

From the Mountains is a musical depiction of the poetry of Jaroslav Vrchlický (1853–1912), and is one of the first pieces in which the composer responds to the Czech writer. In addition to this piano cycle Fibich used Vrchlický’s texts for his concert

⁴⁴These early piano works of Foerster are not listed in the Pukl/Tyrrell (2001) worklist for Foerster, but are outlined and discussed by Václav Holzkněcht on pp.85–94 in Bartoš (1923) along with works prior to 1887, namely the *Allegro and Scherzo* (1885) and the *Vzpomínku z mládi* [Memories of Youth] (1886).

the symphonic poem *Noc na Karlštejně* [A Night at Karlštejn Castle] (from 1886) and Vrchlický was, following the composition of the above piano cycle, to become the adaptor of texts for the melodramatic trilogy *Hippodamia* (after Sophocles and Euripides) and the opera *Bouře* [The Tempest] (after Shakespeare). Fibich also set many of Vrchlický's texts as songs,⁴⁵ further suggesting the importance of his poetic language in stimulating the composer's creative imagination.

For the piano cycle *From the Mountains* Fibich selects three specific texts, namely *Nocleh v klášteře* [A Night's Stay in the Monastery], *Notturmo* [Nocturne], and *Cesta v Alpách* [A Journey in the Alps]. These three texts form the basis for seven individual pieces; no.1 uses *A Night's Stay in the Monastery*, nos.2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 use *A Journey in the Alps* and no.4 is based on the *Nocturne*. The use of specific parts of the poetic sources has been outlined by Nejedlý,⁴⁶ and Fibich's careful process of selection points to him being a 'painter in music',⁴⁷ creating different moods and responding to individual images and symbols as opposed to simplistically setting whole texts. Fibich creates a unified whole through the functioning of the first piece as an introduction, with the next six pieces forming a continuous musical setting, following on from one another *attacca*. The pieces are connected to one another in various ways, with the most obvious being the use of Vrchlický's poetry as a 'motto' which precedes each piece. In addition to this, Fibich creates musical connections between the pieces which emphasise the cyclic element.

The first piece in the cycle demonstrates Fibich's approach to his poetic programme, and the full translation of the extract from *A Night's Stay at the Monastery* is given below:

The night was bowing with its starry sky over mountain peaks....

Below that, a blossoming valley of cliffs sits in its lap.

Listen! From a distance, a stream in the gorge is rippling.

See now, a star has fallen from the sky....

something wept and again there is the scented silence.

⁴⁵See Pukl/Tyrrell (2001) worklist, p. 763.

⁴⁶Nejedlý (1901), p.67.

⁴⁷Nejedlý (1901), p.68.

something wept and again there is the scented silence.

From the walls of the monastery our light had diminished,

and the night laid its black shadows everywhere.

Fibich selects images from this text that are reinforced and presented again in the other extracts from Vrchlický, namely the night, the mountains, and the stream and, in doing this, he creates poetic connections between individual pieces. In the first piece, the grandeur of the mountains is depicted through a thick textured, chordal melody, which builds up registrally and dynamically. The chordal element of the opening connects with the spread chords that occur both at b.29 and at the end of the piece, thereby invoking both the majesty of the mountains and the spiritual, religious nature of the monastery depicted in the text (music examples 1a).

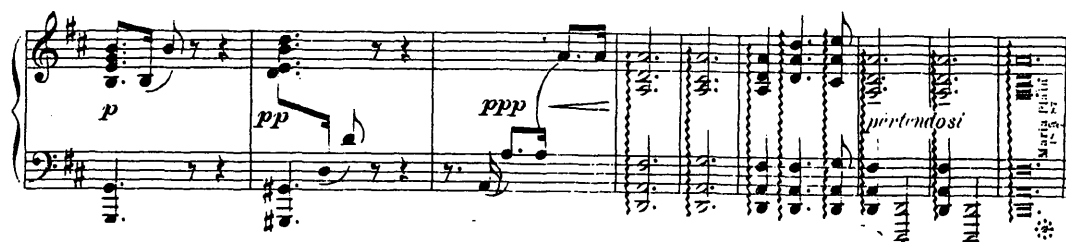
Ex.1a: Fibich, *From the Mountains*, no.1; (i) opening of the piece, bars 1–10

(ii) spread chords from bars 38–47

Fibich succeeds in creating a contrast between the height and power of the mountains and the fragility of the surrounding stars by using contrasting textures and registers throughout the first section (see previous music example 1a (i)). The composer continues to exploit register through the section beginning at b.41, where the spread chords of the 'chorale' theme are accompanied by a constant rhythm in the bass register (see previous music example 1a (ii)). The grandeur of the mountains is further reinforced in the final section, which is dominated by spread chords, thick textures (which, in their unpianistic arrangement, suggest the composer's previous experience of orchestral writing) and a high dynamic level. This is immediately contrasted with the *pp*, *una corda* semiquaver sextuplets, which lead into a final presentation of the initial chordal idea before the 'chorale' theme provides a contemplative end to the piece (music example 1a (iii)).

Ex.1a: Fibich, *From the Mountains*, no.1; (iii) bars 67–end

The musical score for Ex.1a consists of four systems of piano and bass staves. The first system (bars 67-71) features a 'chorale' theme with dynamics *f*, *mf*, *p*, and *pp*. The second system (bars 72-76) includes a semiquaver sextuplet in the right hand and a constant bass line, with dynamics *p* and *pp*, and the instruction *una corda*. The third system (bars 77-81) continues the sextuplet with dynamics *ppp*. The final system (bars 82-86) shows a return of the initial chordal idea with dynamics *f* and *ff*, and the instruction *tutte corde*.



The first piece provides an effective introduction by depicting a number of different images through the use of contrasting textures, dynamics, and registral space. What Fibich achieves in this cycle of pieces is the balance between contrast and continuity so essential for an effective large-scale structure. In this, he responds to Schumann's piano cycles (discussed previously with regard to Smetana's early development), reinforcing his connection with the Romantic imagination. In terms of contrast, Fibich is selective in his use of poetic extracts, constantly juxtaposing powerful images (the eagle from no.2, the 'stormy surges' of the mountain brook in nos 6 and 7) with more delicate elements (the 'song of nature' in no.3, the 'magical night' and 'flowery slope' of no.4), and the composer's musical approach to this contrast can be demonstrated by comparing the end of the fourth piece with the beginning of no.5.

The whole of no.4 (based on Vrchlický's *Nocturne*) is a depiction of the calmness of the natural environment at night, and its initial fragmentary gestures develop into a gentle waltz, which then breaks up to end as it began. This sense of calm is broken up by the beginning of no.5 whose driving D minor triplet theme (accompanied by accented crotchets) disrupts the stillness of the night with the 'wild, foamy dance' of the brook and the 'embrace of the abyss' (music examples 1b).

Ex.1b: Fibich, *From the Mountains*, no.4; (i) final 13 bars

A musical score for the final 13 bars of 'From the Mountains, no.4'. The score is written for piano and features a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The dynamics range from piano (*p*) to pianissimo (*pp*). The tempo is marked 'tempo'. The score includes various musical notations such as chords, single notes, and rests. The piece concludes with a 'riten.' marking and an 'attacca' instruction.

(ii) no.5, bars 1–6

Molto Allegro e precipitato.

f sempre

sfz

Such dramatic contrast can also be found within individual numbers, and the text of no.3 revolves around two elements, namely the ‘poetic song’ of the narrator and the ‘solitude of the ice and snow’. The opening of no.3 is a slow, gentle waltz (creating unity with no.4) which is disrupted by accented, *f* octaves, forming an accented passage which builds up to a *sfz* climax, before the initial melody returns accompanied by filigree passagework (music examples 1c).

Ex.1c: Fibich, *From the Mountains*, no.3; (i) bars 1–6

Poco Lento.

p

sfz

(ii) contrasting material, bars 20–26

Più mosso.

pp

f

sfz

The sense of contrast inherent in the source enables Fibich to exploit the dramatic, pictorial elements of his chosen text. However, in order to create a unified composition, these contrasting elements need to be balanced by aspects which encourage unity and continuity. As can be observed in many of Schumann’s piano cycles (a good example being *Papillons*), the use of a specific genre as a musical focus point is an effective way of achieving this, and

Fibich uses triple metre and the waltz associated with it as a way of connecting the individual pieces (which, despite their contrasting characters, are all in 3/4, although no.2 creates a sense of variety with its initial distortion into 6/8). The composer also encourages the notion of a cycle by cross-referencing motifs and ideas, an example of this being the recurrence of the opening of no.2 in the final section of no.7, which also quotes the 'chorale' element of no.1 and the *veloce* chromatic scale first presented in no.6. The *sfz* trill figuration which is also presented in no.7 has its origins in no.1 (and was also used in no.6 and, to some extent, as the opening of no.3) and a comparison of the two illustrates how Fibich creates a sense of development through the cycle by characterising them differently (music examples 1d).

Ex.1d: Fibich, *From the Mountains*; (i) no.2, bars 1–5

Con fuoco.

f *mf*

(ii) no.6, *veloce* chromatic scale, bars 32–4

ff veloce *pp lunga Fermate* *f ten.*

(iii) 'quotation' of these previous elements in no.7, bar 35–40

ff veloce *pp lunga Fermate pp dolce* *a tempo*

rit.

Fibich's selection of the three poetic sources encourages a varied and changeable musical language, with the descriptive programme providing the composer with the opportunity to both fully explore the piano's textural and registral capabilities and to structure the individual numbers in a cycle through the use of recurrent poetic images. In this cycle, Fibich goes beyond the descriptive musical language used in Dvořák's *Poetic Tone Pictures* as he creates connections which give the cycle a bigger sense of scale, bringing it closer to Smetana's tone poem *Macbeth* in both its exploitation of the piano's resources and in the elements of virtuosity incorporated, creating a work more suited to the concert platform than the salon.

Foerster's *Dreaming* was composed whilst he was in Hamburg, and his compositional activities there can be understood in terms of two directions. On the one hand, his continued attachment to his native country was expressed through the opera *Eva* and the choruses he was writing for Moravian choral societies and, on the other, his purely instrumental output was exploring a more descriptive and subjective atmosphere. Like Fibich, the importance of a poetic or descriptive programme can be felt early in his career with the orchestral suite *In the Mountains* (which, written in 1884, is almost contemporaneous with Fibich's piano cycle). Foerster also responded musically to the texts of Vrchlický (in his concert melodramas *Three Riders* and *Amarus* (from 1889 and 1897 respectively) and in several songs) and took the same diverse approach to programmatic sources (from literary sources such as Vrchlický and Shakespeare, to images of the natural environment).

Despite the many parallels between Foerster and Fibich, the musical language of *Dreaming* is somewhat different to that of *From the Mountains*. Unlike Fibich, Foerster does not respond to a specific poetic programme, meaning that the five pieces hang together in a kind of 'stream of consciousness' and, in doing so, create musical depictions more akin to the changeability of the human imagination rather than the depiction of specific poetic images. Whereas Fibich's cycle is defined by connection and culmination as musical ideas are repeated and cross-referenced, Foerster's work, whilst containing connecting and unifying elements, focuses more upon contrast and the juxtaposition of different moods. The result is more a collection of fragmentary ideas than a cohesive and unified cycle. Foerster's musical

language is simpler than Fibich's, and his textures are less virtuosic and demanding on the pianist, meaning that *Dreaming* is more suited to the salon than the concert platform.

The piano pieces that Foerster completed before *Dreaming* (the *Spring Moods*, *Miniatures*, and *Leaves from my Diary*) all impact upon his writing in this first significant cycle. The earlier works concentrate upon the depiction of different moods in a relatively simple, naive style and, particularly in the *Spring Moods*, the composer explores the potential of writing in different dance forms. The idea of the waltz is important in the cycle *Dreaming* as it forms a kind of 'genre in the background', and each of the pieces (with the exception of the first) use triple metre and present different waltz 'characters'. This is demonstrated at the beginning of both nos. 2 and 4, which present simple, sparse textures (no.2 also incorporates a distortion of triple metre at first which has connections with the *furiant*) accompanied by basic tonic and dominant harmonies (music examples 2a).

Ex.2a: Foerster, *Dreaming*; (i) opening of no.2, bars 1–5

Tempo di Valse.

The musical score for the opening of piece no. 2, bars 1-5, is in 3/4 time and marked 'Tempo di Valse' and 'pp'. The right hand features a melody of eighth notes, while the left hand provides a simple bass line of eighth notes. The texture is sparse and characteristic of a waltz.

(ii) opening of no.4, bars 1–5

Alléretto grazioso.

The musical score for the opening of piece no. 4, bars 1-5, is in 3/4 time and marked 'Alléretto grazioso'. The right hand features a melody with some chromaticism and grace notes, while the left hand provides a bass line with some harmonic complexity. The texture is more intricate than in piece no. 2.

The freshness and simplicity of these examples can be contrasted with the darker, more melancholy opening of no.3 (with its chromaticism, thicker texture, use of bass register, and

rapid dynamic changes) and the fragmentary emergence of a *giocos*o waltz from *pp* tremelando figuration at the start of the final piece (music examples 2b).

Ex.2b: Foerster, *Dreaming*; (i) opening of no.3, bars 1–11

Andante con moto.

The musical score for the opening of piece no. 3 consists of two systems of piano notation. The first system shows the right hand with a tremelando effect (indicated by a wavy line) and a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The left hand plays a steady accompaniment. The second system continues the piece, showing a change in dynamics to *p* and a more melodic line in the right hand.

(ii) opening of no.5, bars 1–12

Allegro.

The musical score for the opening of piece no. 5 consists of two systems of piano notation. The first system shows the right hand with a piano (*pp*) dynamic and a 'dolce espressivo' marking. The left hand has a simple accompaniment. The second system continues the piece, showing a more active right hand with sixteenth-note patterns and a change in dynamics to *p*.

Foerster thus presents both a unifying element (in the constancy of metre and genre between pieces) and a source of contrast (with the presentation of different characterisations). Most of the individual pieces are multi-sectional, providing the opportunity for many changes of mood and character within one piece. A good example of this is the second piece, where the opening waltz/furiant idea is disrupted by *sfz* chords, the subsequent stillness provided by the chords of the *poco più mosso* eventually leading into an E flat major sentimental waltz section, which builds to a dramatic *ff* climax before the initial waltz idea returns, its

simplicity and naivety emphasised through the contrast with previous material (music examples 2c).

Ex.2c: Foerster, *Dreaming*; (i) no.2, bars 6–10

(ii) no.2, bars 21–36

(iii) presentation of *tranquillo* waltz theme, bars 47–57

In *From the Mountains* Fibich creates a sense of cohesion through repeating material and cross-referencing ideas yet, in *Dreaming*, Foerster is less concerned with creating unity in this way. There is one example of this, where the opening of no.2 reappears in no.5, but essentially the composer creates a feeling of continuity and cohesion solely through the use of similar waltz textures and ideas in each piece. This element of similarity can be seen

through a comparison of the E flat *tranquillo* section of no.2 (see previous music example 2c (iii)), the E flat *un poco più mosso* idea of no.3 (the use of the same key is also significant in creating a sense of cohesion between movements), and the E major *un poco meno mosso* sections of the final piece (music examples 2d). By using the waltz as a structural framework, Foerster combines notions of contrast and continuity similar to those employed by Schumann (and demonstrated in early piano cycles, such as *Papillons*), and the grouping of pieces under a common title but lacking in a concrete programme is a further point of convergence between the Czech composer and his Romantic predecessor.

Ex.2d: Foerster, *Dreaming*; (i) no.3, *un poco più mosso*, bars 56–67

(ii) no.5, bars 74–84

In *Dreaming*, even though individual pieces comprise many changes of mood, idea, and texture, there are elements of recurrence between pieces that create a sense of a sudden ‘flashback’ to an earlier thought, emotion, or experience. *Dreaming* is therefore an effective musical depiction of the sudden, incongruous changes that characterise the human subconscious and, as such, provides an illustration of Foerster’s exploration of the subjective in his early piano writing.

A comparison of *From the Mountains* and *Dreaming* underlines various contrasts between the piano writing of Fibich and Foerster, despite their similarities in terms of programmatic writing within a multi-movement cycle. Foerster's writing treats the piano as a salon instrument and, in his lack of a specific programme and creation of a cycle containing many changes of mood yet still coherent as a set, shows the influence of Romantic composers from earlier in the nineteenth century. In contrast, Fibich's writing is more technically demanding and virtuosic, and his cycle responds more to the programmatic piano writing of Smetana in his treatment of the piano as a concert instrument. However, Foerster's writing for the piano was to become closer to Fibich's in his later cycle *Erotovy masky* [Eros's Masks] (1912). Like *Dreaming*, this work continues to focus upon personal emotions (in this case, love in its many different guises), yet the scale of this work is far greater than the previous cycle and shows a clear progression in terms of Foerster's exploitation of the piano's sonic, timbral, and textural capacities.

Eros's Masks takes a more adventurous approach to harmony in the presentation of the theme upon which the rest of the cycle is based, and the structure of this work builds on that used by Foerster in *Dreaming*. In this previous cycle there is a juxtaposition of contrast and unity, with the individual pieces being connected through use of common metre and genre. In *Eros's Masks* Foerster creates a continuous, multi-sectional musical argument based upon a theme developed through numerous variations. The cycle thus applies a Classical formal structure as a way of organising and unifying the composer's exploration of a range of moods and characters within one work (suggesting Foerster's need to have a firmer structural basis than the changeable fragments he created in *Dreaming*). A connection with the previous cycle can be found in the important role that triple time and the genre of a waltz play here, being the basis of the theme and almost all of the variations (the only exceptions being the occasional use of 6/8 and a single variation in 4/4). The connection with the genre of the waltz can also be seen as a reflection of the Viennese environment in which Foerster was working during the composition of this cycle.

From the initial presentation of the theme, Foerster's increasingly complex harmonic approach can be observed. The harmonic background for the first statement of the theme

adds chromatic tones to the basic E flat major tonality, and the harmonic framework becomes more complex with each presentation. The statement of the theme at the end of the work makes clear both the textural and harmonic changes that the theme has undergone, giving a feeling of culmination similar to that at the end of *From the Mountains* (music examples 3a).

Ex.3a: Foerster, *Eros's Masks*; (i) opening 16-bar theme

Andante semplice.

p

cresc.

p subito

(ii) presentation of the theme at the end of the work – final 28 bars

Moderato.
m. a. A.

dolce

mp

p

cresc. poco a poco

pp

dolciss.

pp

dim. poco a poco

ppp

The theme and variation structure allows Foerster to incorporate many different kinds of texture and character within the work, and examples of this are the first variation scherzo, the imitative *andante con moto*, and the quasi-étude character of the *allegro grazioso* (music examples 3b). As in *Dreaming*, the emphasis within the work is upon change and contrast, and the security of having a foundation theme allows Foerster to explore this to a greater extent than he did in the previous cycle, and to incorporate more virtuosic and demanding textures.

Ex.3b: Foerster, *Eros's Masks*; (i) *allegro scherzando* variation, bars 1–8

Allegro scherzando.

(ii) opening bars of the *andante con moto* variation

Andante con moto.

(iii) opening seven bars of the *allegro grazioso* variation

Allegro grazioso.



The creation of piano textures recalling those of Serge Rachmaninoff (1873–1943) can be felt in the *andante funesto* variation, and the way in which the opening bass texture (in a melancholy C sharp minor) develops into a thick chordal texture spread over three staves which recalls the Russian pianist-composer's *Études-tableaux* (the op.33 collection of which is contemporaneous with Foerster's piano work). The dramatic climax of this variation (*fff* chords and the use of extreme registers) and the way in which it leads into a *pp grazioso* variation with a sparser texture demonstrates the way in which Foerster exploits contrast within this work (music example 3c).

Ex.3c: Foerster, *Eros's Masks*; *andante funesto* variation

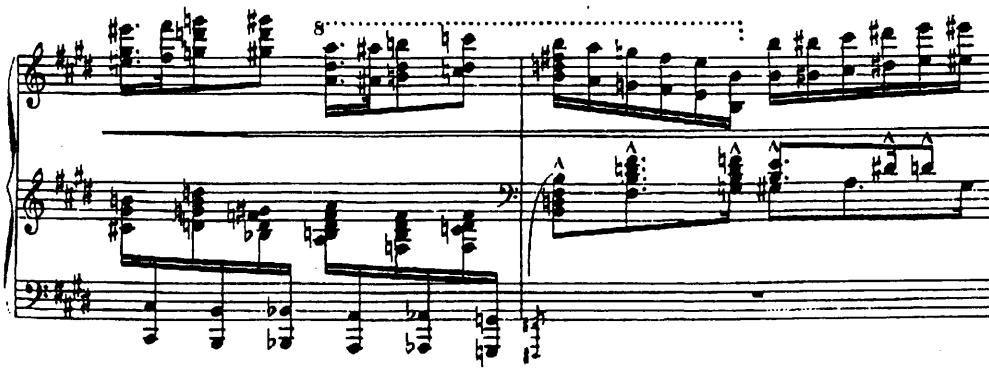
Andante funesto.

sotto voce, ma pesante
p

p cresco. poco a poco

ff pesante

p



As well as juxtaposing different styles from Romantic piano repertoire (in addition to the Rachmaninoff-inspired example above, there is also Chopinesque writing in the extended arpeggios of the *adagio* variation), Foerster employs the contrast in ‘high’ and ‘low’ styles so characteristic of the piano cycles of Schumann and the symphonic writing of Mahler (with whom the composer felt such an affinity during his time in Hamburg). This contrast is demonstrated in the internal contrast of the dance-like compound time and harmonic simplicity of the *allegro comodo* variation (whose simplicity gradually becomes distorted through added chromaticism) which is then followed by the *andante funesto* section, the heaviness of the thick textures and slow speed here contrasting with the syncopation and staccato articulation of the preceding *allegro* variation (compare music example 3d below with 3c above).

Ex.3d: Foerster, *Eros's Masks*; *allegro comodo* variation, first five bars

 A musical score for piano, consisting of two systems of staves. The top system has a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The bottom system has a bass clef staff and a treble clef staff. The key signature has three sharps. The score includes dynamic markings: *riten.*, *p*, *pp*, and *f marcato il basso*. The tempo is marked *Allegro comodo*.

As in *Dreaming*, Foerster uses the genre of the waltz throughout and explores different characters through this unifying element. The final section illustrates this, with

simple F and A flat major sections being marked out from a melancholy B flat minor idea exploring the bass register and developing into a dramatic statement incorporating virtuosic pianistic figuration. The sense of drama and contrast inherent throughout is demonstrated by the juxtaposition of the graceful, naive simplicity of the F major idea and the *allegro energico* which precedes the final statement of the theme (music examples 3e). This variation combines a fugal element with a highly chromatic approach to harmony which moves further away from a tonal centre as it develops dynamically and texturally, ending with accented *fff* D flat, A, and F major chords which emerge from the almost atonal environment of the last variation. The use of this more advanced harmonic language alongside the quasi-Viennese waltz style within the personal and subjective environment of *Eros's Masks* creates a further connection with the contrasting musical directions present in the Vienna of the 1890s and, alongside Fibich's *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences*, suggests a connection between these Czech composers and the works of Wolf and Mahler. An exploration of Fibich's collection of miniatures provides the ideal base from which to consider this in more detail.

Ex.3e: Foerster, *Eros's Masks*; (i) penultimate variation, *allegro grazioso*



(ii) opening of the final variation, *allegro energico*, bars 1–10

Allegro energico.

(iii) climax of the *allegro energico* variation, final nine bars

An exploration into the realm of the personal: *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences*

This collection of 376 piano miniatures was written between 1892 and 1898, spanning the final creative period of Fibich's life. The 1890s brought a change of direction in Fibich's work and found him seeking more diverse sources of inspiration. The operatic works of this decade (*The Tempest* (1895), *Hedy* (1894–5), *Šárka* (1896–7), and *Pád Arkona* [The Fall of Arkona] (1898–9)) reflect this new viewpoint which can be traced back to the personal changes in Fibich's life that fundamentally affected his view of his art and his own creative purpose.

Fibich's personal life had within it its fair share of tragic elements. The death of his first wife in 1874 led to a hasty remarriage (in 1875) to her sister Betty Hanušová (1846–1901), and this second union was largely practical (with Fibich's young children needing care) and artistic (Betty was a contralto at the Provisional and National Theatres). It could be suggested that Fibich's life was, until his association with Anežka Schulzová (1868–1905) in 1892, emotionally barren. He first met Anežka in the 1880s (when she was his piano student), but it was only when she became his composition student in 1892 that her influence became all-pervasive. Anežka's changing role has to be understood within the context of both Fibich's need for new inspiration after rising to the dramatic challenges of the

1880s and the changes in herself. When she had first met Fibich she was just a young girl but now, in 1892, she was a 24-year-old young woman and, as Jiránek notes, ‘a true daughter of her time’.⁴⁸ Her family background (she was the daughter of Ferdinand Schulz (1835–1905), a well-known historian, writer, and literary critic) meant that she was an intelligent, artistic woman who had a great deal of literary knowledge, an emotional and intellectual equal to Fibich, and perfect for the task of providing him with new sources of inspiration.

The collection of *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences* is unique in its significance on many different levels and embodiment of different types of musical thought. It operates on a much larger scale than would at first be realised, and motivic repetitions, quotations, cross references, and the combination and development of motifs means that the pieces tend to have multiple meanings and operate on a larger scale, often being grouped in cycles. There is a relationship between these pieces and larger operatic and orchestral works, but rather than the piano miniatures being simple ‘sketches’ for larger works, often an understanding of the meaning of a particular theme or motif within an opera can provide the meaning intended in the piano piece (as not all pieces in the collection have explicit descriptions), creating a reciprocal relationship between these pieces and the larger works.

The role of these miniatures changed over their six-year span. The pieces began life as a kind of ‘erotic diary’, and at this stage it has to be noted the different ways in which the listener interprets the meaning of the pieces. Many pieces have a printed programme attached to them, and these are the depictions that Fibich wanted to be made public. The next layer of meaning was revealed by Nejedlý, in whose work private annotations from the autograph manuscripts are discussed and meanings alluded to.⁴⁹ The annotations on the manuscripts are somewhat cryptic and clearly these markings (made by both Fibich and Anežka) were not intended for public consumption. Through time the work became more objective, and by the end of the collection there is an air of the retrospective, as earlier pieces become incorporated and the depictions become more distant from the original source of inspiration.

⁴⁸Jiránek (1963), p.142.

⁴⁹Zdeněk Nejedlý’s publication *Zdeňka Fibicha milostný deník: Nálady, dojmy a upomínky* [Fibich’s erotic diary: *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences*] (Prague, 1925) has been summarised in English in Gerald Abraham’s ‘An Erotic Diary for Piano’ in *Slavonic and Romantic Music* (London, 1968).

The *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences* consist of four series, namely op.41, op.44, op.47, and op.57 (published posthumously).⁵⁰ Within each opus there exist sets of moods, impressions, and reminiscences (e.g. op.41 consists of one book of moods, two books of impressions, and one book of reminiscences). The reminiscences form the chronological backbone to the diary, the impressions are the most erotic part (being musical depictions of Anežka's physical characteristics), and the moods were begun later (in 1894), and contrast with the other two categories in their lack of an exact description. The dates are useful in a study of the moods, as they are often a reaction to a particular impression or reminiscence. Jiránek outlines the way in which the composer groups individual pieces into larger scale sections,⁵¹ and Fibich's thinking on a larger architectural scale can be seen most clearly in the second series, op.44, also known as the *Novella*. Here, the composer borrows terminology from literature to structure the work, and it consists of an introduction, a preface, four chapters, and an epilogue, all of which depict musically Fibich's recollection of a holiday taken with Anežka and her parents.

The status of the *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences* changed over the six years of its production, and Jiránek defines the first set as being the most subjective and intimate (describing the events of the first years of love and Anežka's physical appearance), the *Novella* as the most objective programmatic work (describing mostly external events), whilst the third series (op.47) is a crystallisation of poetry and dramatic tone painting. The last series (published posthumously) is defined by lyricism.⁵² From 1896 little is known of the pieces' programmatic content, as any marks by Fibich on the manuscript are minimal and largely incomprehensible, consisting mainly of abbreviations (for example no.329, from 29 May 1896 is marked POL.S).⁵³ These later pieces are also more objective, and this period sees Fibich beginning to use older pieces to create new *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences* – for example, no.292 uses an old piece for mixed chorus (*Ruhetal* [The Quiet

⁵⁰Exact details of the structure of the individual series can be found in Abraham (1968), p.71.

⁵¹Jiránek (1963), p.160.

⁵²Jiránek (1963), p.161.

⁵³Hudec (1971), p.148.

Valley], 1877, H232), no.294 uses a women's choral piece (*Ticho kolem* [The Calmness Around], 1875, H202), and no.296 is a transcription of a song *Schilflied*.⁵⁴

The *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences* are also important in the way in which their creation challenged and expanded Fibich's musical language, and the range of moods, emotions, and events to which the composer responds musically required a multi-faceted and varied language, combined with a complex internal referential system. The multiplicity of musical styles developed by Fibich can be seen clearly in the numerous pieces in the collection that depict Anežka's physical appearance (the impressions), and it is here that the growth and development of Fibich as a 'painter in music' can be seen. No.112 illustrates both Fibich's humour and his creation of points of reference between pieces. It is a depiction of Anežka's toes (written on 31 Jan 1894) and contains a quotation at the start from op.41 no.111 (which was a depiction of Anežka's feet, and is also referred to in *Don Juan* when the hero thinks of Haidée's 'gentle little foot').⁵⁵ The rest of the piece is humorously built upon the repetition and transposition of a five-note motif (one note for each toe!) (music example 4a).

Ex.4a: Fibich, *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences*, op.41 no.112

The musical score for Ex.4a is presented in three systems. The first system starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. It begins with the tempo marking 'Andante.' and a piano dynamic 'p'. The melody is characterized by a five-note motif (G-A-B-A-G) which is repeated and transposed. The second system continues the piece, marked 'Con moto.' and 'pp'. The third system concludes the piece with a final cadence. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and fingerings.

⁵⁴Two songs exist under this title: H137 and 137, composed 26–7 April 1871. See Hudec (2001), pp.185–6.

⁵⁵Abraham (1968), p.75.

The simplicity and humour of settings such as this is highlighted when they are placed next to pieces with a more dramatic and emotionally intense content, and Fibich often juxtaposes these different styles to intensify the contrast. Good examples of this are op.41 nos 26 and 27, which are marked ‘prayer for forgiveness at causing Anežka pain’ and ‘Anežka in playful mood’ respectively. The latter is dominated by staccato semiquaver figures, simple harmonies, and depicts a lightness of mood through dynamic, articulation, and register (music examples 4b).

Ex.4b: Fibich, *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences* (i) op.41 no.26, first 13 bars

(ii) op.41 no.27, first 6 bars

Op.41 no.26 presents Fibich’s forward thinking and modern approach to harmony (at times the harmonic colours appear almost Impressionistic – see nos 180 and 189),⁵⁶ and significant in this is the period in September 1894 that was dominated by Fibich’s jealousy at Anežka’s contact with the Danish theatre critic Georg Brandes. This emotional experience, recalled in many pieces, is characterised by a highly dissonant chromatic language and a terse, motivic approach to composition. The fragmentary nature of op.41 no.26 is combined with chromatic voice leading and sudden outbreaks of sound at a higher dynamic to create an

⁵⁶These pieces are discussed in more detail in Hudec (1971), p.146.

emotionally intense and dramatic piece. In other pieces concerned with the expression of Fibich's jealousy, the composer presents other facets of this emotion. Op.41 no.20 contains the same terse, fragmentary form of expression, but it is this time combined with a powerful chordal texture which vacillates between *pp* and *ff*, depicting the contrasting emotions of anger and desolation experienced by the composer. Op.41 nos 22 and 23 are further depictions of this emotion, with the former depicting anger and confusion in its rapid semiquaver movement and rising chromaticism, and the latter a sense of sadness and isolation in its thick chords in the bass and the intensity of the *ff* outburst, which is underlined by the repressed dynamics of the surrounding musical argument (music examples 4c).

Ex.4c: Fibich, *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences*; (i) op.41 no.22, first five bars

(ii) op.41 no.23, first twelve bars

The importance of a fragmentary form of utterance in this collection can be seen in op.41 no.6, composed on the same day as no.24 (the end of the 'period of jealousy' 29 Sept 1894). The material here is restricted to a minimum, with the piece consisting mostly of one-bar cells and repeated notes. The harmonic sphere is colourful, and is defined by sevenths, ninths, appoggiaturas, and chromatic modulation. The modulation to the unrelated key of B major is achieved through linear chromaticism, the F of chord I₆ in bar 6 being

enharmonically reinterpreted as E sharp which descends to an E forming V₇ of B major (music example 4d). Abraham has noted that this piece is harmonically and structurally forward thinking, noting that it looks ahead to the style of Janáček in his piano works.⁵⁷ This combination of the introspective and erotic within the *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences* creates a connection with the atmosphere in Europe during the *fin-de-siècle*, and an examination of this is revealing of Fibich's place within it.

Ex.4d; Fibich, *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences*; op.41 no.6, first twelve bars

Interlude: a consideration of the connection with the Viennese *fin-de-siècle*

The *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences* can be explored further within a socio-political and cultural framework. The political situation in Prague was changing during the 1890s to become more directed towards capitalism, and Jiránek contends that the creation of a culture dictated by the bourgeoisie brought with it a diminishment of the role of art and music in everyday life, with 'the grandiose ideals of the past [being] compared with the present ordinariness of life'.⁵⁸ The 1890s saw the rise of a cultural movement known as Decadence, a form of expression that is 'self-centred; it [...] expresses an awareness or even a philosophy of decay [...] of existing in a period of transition; [it] may strive to mock or shock or provoke the bourgeois or the Establishment.'⁵⁹ Decadence brought with it an emphasis upon the hedonistic, erotic, and sensual, and the *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences* see Fibich aligning himself with this in his distance from wider society and retreat into subjective

⁵⁷Abraham (1968), p. 73.

⁵⁸Jiránek (1963), p. 139.

⁵⁹Robert Pynsent, in ed. Pynsent (1989), p. 142.

experiences. Fibich becomes engaged in a world of subjective emotion, embarking upon a whole new chapter of his life, and the effect of these experiences on his musical language is illustrated in the harmonic language of the miniatures previously considered. In looking for connections between Fibich and his Viennese contemporaries, the figure of Hugo Wolf (1860–1903) is significant. The similarities in harmonic language between the two composers will be explored subsequently but, in addition, the cultural environment of Vienna in which Wolf was situated at the end of the nineteenth century corresponds with the Czech Decadence movement so influential upon Fibich.

The cultural crisis experienced by composers during the 1890s had its origins in the changes that Viennese society experienced in the 1870s. At this time, physical changes in Vienna led to a growth in the range and character of musical life in the city.⁶⁰ There was a contrast between the Classicism of Brahms and Bruckner (which was dominant in the 1870s and continued for two further decades) and the rise of Viennese operetta and ‘lighter’ dance music (in the works of Johann Strauss (1825–99) and Jacques Offenbach (1819–80)) defined by parody, irony, and sentimentality. These two conflicting strands provided the background to the crisis experienced by composers coming to the fore in the 1890s, namely Wolf, Mahler, and Richard Strauss, progressive figures whose task it was to take music into the new century, and these composers felt isolated in a society that emphasised and valued the superficial and sensationalist elements of Viennese dance and operetta.⁶¹ In addition, Viennese publishers focused upon this music rather than the increasingly complex concert music produced by progressive composers, meaning that ‘although music was increasingly available to consumers, it was beginning to lose ground as a spare time activity’.⁶² This time in Vienna can therefore be seen as a conflict between mass culture and the development of musical modernism.

Adding to the conflicting musical strands in Vienna in the 1890s were the political struggles between Czechs and Germans that had characterised political life for many decades, but which intensified at the end of the nineteenth century. Paul Banks defines

⁶⁰See Botstein (2001), p. 564.

⁶¹Botstein (2001), pp. 568–9.

⁶²Banks (1991), p. 379.

nationalism as ‘the cancer at the heart of the monarchy’s structure’⁶³ and, in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, the distaste and distrust in the inability of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy to govern effectively led to artistic individuals feeling isolated and turning to art as a means of escape from external socio-political issues. Art thus became a means of regeneration, and the alienated avant-garde of the 1890s, inspired by the philosophical writings of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, began an exploration of their subconscious interior worlds.

The 1890s saw both the deaths of Brahms and Bruckner and the corresponding rise of a generation questioning the values of Viennese society, and this sense of alienation was not just felt by composers, but by artists from all disciplines. The rise of the Vienna Secession in visual art presents a both a turning away from tradition and a focus upon introspection and the sensual and erotic as an escape from external reality (as demonstrated in the work of one of its principal exponents Gustav Klimt (1862–1918)).⁶⁴ The rise of Sigmund Freud’s school of psychoanalysis during this time provides further reinforcement of the need individuals felt to look inwards and explore their own imaginations and subconscious processes as a source of inspiration. The Vienna of the 1890s can therefore be seen as a crucible of modernism in which traditional artistic, political, and cultural values were being questioned by an emerging avant-garde.

Notions of introspection and the emphasis upon the sensual and erotic clearly play an important part in Fibich’s output in the 1890s, and the Decadence movement in Czech society provides a connection with the environment of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. In the earlier discussion of the *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences* Fibich’s use of contrasting musical languages was observed, and the contrast of a highly advanced chromatic language with more simple, ‘lower’ styles is an important feature of the collection. A similar contrast can be found in the work of both Wolf and Mahler, with the latter’s symphonic output utilising ‘low’ genres such as Alpine songs and Viennese waltzes to create a sense of irony and, as a

⁶³Banks (1991), p.363.

⁶⁴The Vienna Secession was an artistic movement founded in 1897 which included painters, architects, and sculptors. The group’s first exhibition was held in 1898, and their works represent an objection to tradition and a need to develop and extend artistic expression outside of any notion of academic tradition. In addition to Klimt, significant members were Koloman Moser and Josef Hoffmann. A later figure of importance in the development of the ideas of the Secession was Egon Schiele, who followed Klimt and absorbed many of his artistic principles.

result, intensify the dramatic and emotional effect of his own, more advanced, musical language.⁶⁵ Whereas this sense of contrast is felt within Mahler's symphonic works, a closer connection with Fibich's piano miniatures can be felt in Wolf's songs, and examples can be found in both the *Gedichte von Eduard Mörike* (1888–89) and his final collection, the *Drei Gedichte von Michelangelo* (1897). In his vocal output, Wolf increasingly explores elements of hopelessness, isolation, and introspection, and links these with aspects of eroticism and intimacy. No.12 of the first volume of the *Gedichte von Eduard Mörike*, *Verborgenheit* [Secrecy], demonstrates these points well, and the atmosphere of hopelessness and decay that pervaded Decadent Vienna is captured in the text, which describes an individual's escape from the pain and grief that fills their days through dreams. The emphasis upon introspection and the exploration of the human subconscious is depicted in a musical setting dominated by a harmonic language in which basically tonal progressions are decorated with chromatic voice-leading. Wolf creates harmonic expectations that are often unfulfilled, highlighting the 'stream of consciousness' aspects of the text, and an example of this is the rising line which, through chromatic voice leading, ends on a dominant seventh chord in E flat major, creating the expectation of an E flat tonic chord. This remains unfulfilled, and the subsequent harmonic shift to a G major chord aptly depicts the text, which shifts from 'gazing into the glorious sun' to the interior landscape of the narrator ('only dreaming brings me rest'), with the change in register emphasising the shift in the poetic text (music example 5a).

Ex.5a: Wolf, *Verborgenheit*, bars 16–21

Trä - nen se - - he ich der Son - ne lie - - bes Licht.
 hope - less mor - - row, on the glo - rious sun — I gaze.

pp

⁶⁵This is examined in greater detail in Franklin (2001), pp.614–15.

nach und nach belebter und leidenschaftlicher

Oft bin ich mir kaum be-wusst
On - ly dream - ing brings me rest

pp

A further example which demonstrates Wolf's connections with Fibich in the musical depiction of a Decadent aesthetic comes in the second song from the *Gedichte von Michelangelo. Alles endet, was entsteht* [All creation once must perish] consists of a harmonic language so permeated with chromaticism that it approaches atonality,⁶⁶ with the text exploring the hopelessness of existence and how, whatever emotions and events our lives contain, in death all is lost and we end as we began. Wolf intensifies these statements through the constant pulsation of quavers against contrapuntal lines in the piano, the regular pulse depicting the passing of time within our lives (music example 5b (i)). The composer also employs recognised musical textures, and the 'chorale' that accompanies the words 'we were human beings too' presents, in its clear E major tonality (which stands apart from the surrounding chromaticism), a ray of positivity within the surrounding pessimism. However, this is soon distorted by chromaticism, and is followed by a stark *pp* unison statement in voice and piano, the looming figure of Death all the more powerfully depicted in the stripped-down texture and extreme changes of dynamic (music example 5b (ii)).

Ex.5b: Wolf, *Alles endet, was entsteht*; (i) bars 12–14

denn die Zeit flieht, und die Sonne sieht, dass al - les
for the time flies and the sun - light sees how all things

p

⁶⁶Wolf himself recognised the innovative world he was exploring in this song and, in a letter from March 1897, he states that 'I really stand in awe of this composition, for I am afraid of losing my mind from it.' (See Franklin (2001), p.485).

(ii) changes of texture within the song, bars 25–36

Menschen waren wir ja auch, froh und traurig, so wie ihr,
 We were human beings too, gay and merry, once like you.

und nun sind wir leblos hier, sind nur Erde, wie ihr
 We must pay to Death his due, all the hopes our bosoms

I. Zeitmass.
pp

Wolf's use of an intensely chromatic language in the expression of texts concerned with eroticism, isolation, and pessimism demonstrate clear connections with Fibich's *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences*, suggesting that this collection of miniatures is significant in revealing of both Fibich's relationship with the surrounding socio-political and cultural environment and the most progressive figures of the wider European *fin-de-siècle*. Further evidence for the way in which these miniatures are significant in relation to his larger scale operatic works can be found in the various reference systems and associations which give meaning to his pieces. A good example of a piece that ties together many different references and associations is op.41 no.40, which is described as being a 'study for the opera *Hedy*' and 'Anežka in green'. The music from this piece ended up being included in act III of *Hedy*, in a scene preceding the entry of hunters which illustrates the associations and connections exploited by Fibich in the music. The style is that of a horn call, with in-built echoes, and the music of the hunt provides the link between the music's original depiction (*Anežka in green*, the colour being associated with woodland, which is in turn associated with hunting) and its eventual use in the opera (music example 6a).

Ex.6a: Fibich, *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences*, op.41 no.40, bars 1–7



Many pieces in the collection are used in the operas, and an understanding of their final 'destination' can often be beneficial in understanding their meaning with reference to Fibich and Anežka's relationship. This can be seen in op.41 no.123 which is marked 'dreams, when jealousy was forgotten' (a further reference to the period of jealousy discussed previously), and the musical style depicts this mood in a gentle, yearning character, with pauses on the diminished seventh harmonies emphasising any remnants of tension (music example 6b (i)). This piece was used in *The Tempest* and, as such, can also be seen as having a connection with the relationship between Miranda and Ferdinand (which becomes the focus in Fibich's setting of the Shakespeare original). This connection between Miranda/Ferdinand and Anežka/Fibich is intensified in the following piece, op.41 no.124. This uses the same basic material as no.123, but sets it in a major key (G major instead of minor) creating a calmer mood which is subsequently disturbed by a *pp misterioso* idea, interrupting the serenity of the opening idea (music example 6b (ii)). This can be seen perhaps as past memories of the jealousy that had disrupted Fibich and Anežka's relationship but, more significantly, Fibich creates further connections with *The Tempest*. A study of op.41 no.120 reveals a similar type of figuration being used, and this piece is used for the depiction of Caliban in the opera (music example 6b (iii)). Therefore, Fibich links the disruptive force in the opera with elements of tension and disruption in his own relationship, and uses the inclusion of this material in the opera as a way of providing further meaning in the original piano pieces, and this reinforces the connection between the two that was such an important force in defining Fibich's later output.

Ex.6b: Fibich, *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences*, op.41, no.123, bars 1–5

Lento.

(ii) op.41, no.124, bars 1–4

Lento con extrema espressione.

(iii) op.41, no.120, bars 1–10

Secretamente e tenere.

Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences is a rich and interesting collection, and cannot be dismissed as merely a set of piano miniatures. In their effect upon Fibich's last creative period they are hugely significant, and it would seem that any attempt to understand many of Fibich's later works cannot be undertaken without a thorough knowledge of these pieces. *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences* brings together all of the strands explored throughout Fibich's works for the piano, and reinforces his connection with the surrounding environment of late Romanticism in general and the Decadent movement in art and literature in particular. Fibich's works for piano extend the repertoire for the instrument by incorporating and responding to other artistic movements and create, particularly in the *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences*, a model for later composers such as Suk and Janáček upon which to base their subsequent explorations of the piano as a vehicle of intimate expression.

The final piano works of Fibich and Foerster

Fibich's final work for solo piano is the *Studies of Paintings* (1898–9). Unlike his previous cycle *From the Mountains*, the composer does not seek here to create a cycle that is musically connected, but rather individual musical responses to five diverse visual images. These compositions reinforce Fibich's love, admiration, and, above all, his real knowledge of painters and their art, an element of his artistic personality that was established in his childhood and reinforced as a student in Paris, when he spent much time absorbing the visual arts. This piano cycle also demonstrates Fibich's eclecticism in his appreciation of different artists. *Lesní samota* [Forest Loneliness] is by the Dutch painter Jacob van Ruysdael (1628–82); *Spor masopustu s postem* [The Dispute between Carnival and Fast] by the Belgian Pieter Brueghel (1525–69), *Zahradní slavnost* [A Garden Party] by the French painter Antoine Watteau (1684–1721), and both remaining pictures (*Io and Jupiter* and *Rej blažených* [The Dance of the Blessed]) are by Italian artists, Fra Angelico da Fiesole (1393–1427) and Antonio Allegri da Correggio (1489–1534) respectively. In addition to the diversity of nationalities and painting styles in the choice of artists, it is interesting that Fibich's chosen visual sources are all from historical periods far removed from his own, and this creates an element of distance between himself and his source. The *Studies of Paintings* show Fibich bringing together a range of different musical styles (from different periods) which respond to both the range of visual images presented and their historical distance.

What this diversity of visual stimuli offered Fibich was the opportunity to create five very different musical pictures and, in doing this, the composer was essentially extending the skills he had developed during the creation of the *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences* in capturing in sound a range of situations, moods, and physical characteristics. However, whereas the hundreds of pieces that comprise that collection are all fragmentary and relatively small-scale, the individual pieces of the *Studies of Paintings* are on a much larger scale, and the diversity of style found in the 376 miniatures (completed in the six years prior to the composition of this final cycle) are here combined with the scale and virtuosity found in *From the Mountains*. The *Studies of Paintings* have a precursor in European piano

literature in the *Kartinki s vystavki* [Pictures from an Exhibition] (1874) by Musorgsky (1839–1881). However, this work was not published until 1886, and the first record of a public performance is in 1891, meaning that it is unlikely that Fibich would have had any experience of Musorgsky's work.⁶⁷ Despite this lack of evidence for any direct influence, it is interesting to compare and contrast the approaches taken by the two composers. Although both composers aim to create musical depictions of visual sources and, in doing so, explore and exploit the piano's textural and sonic possibilities, Musorgsky's collection is different from Fibich's in many ways. The Russian composer takes inspiration from a contemporary artist, Viktor Hartmann (as opposed to Fibich's more chronologically distant sources), and uses his paintings as the basis for a 'musical journey', with the *Promenade* movements (constituting a theme and variations) acting as a transition between pictures and a unifying element in the cycle. Musorgsky uses a diverse range of visual inspiration, from the Catacombes of Paris and a castle in the Middle Ages, to more 'nationalistic' images such as the Hut of Baba-Yaga (the witch of Russian folklore) and the majestic depiction of the Great Gate of Kiev that ends the work. Fibich (unlike Musorgsky) provides the visual source for each piece, but his musical pictures are more 'subjective' than Musorgsky's. An example of this is the first piece from the *Studies of Paintings*, *Forest Loneliness*, which draws on both the objective image (see illustration 1) and its associations (birdsong and the hunt), and the emotions experienced by the individual within the forest (depicted in the introspective chromatic opening). Whereas Musorgsky focuses upon the musical depiction of the objective visual image, Fibich responds to the emotions created in response to the visual source, creating larger pieces that contain a higher degree of internal contrast.

Many of the pieces in the *Studies of Paintings* build on the idea of multifaceted expressive states found in Fibich's earlier piano works. The final musical picture, *A Garden Party*, is a multisectional work structured using the model of the Baroque dance suite (including a slow gigue, musette, and gavotte). This drawing on a historical musical genre is reinforced in the third number *The Dance of the Blessed* which depicts the religious and spiritual elements inherent in the visual source by using the call and response style of

⁶⁷For further details on the publication and performance of *Pictures at an Exhibition*, see Russ (1992), pp.25–7.

Medieval liturgy, contrasting an imitative *andante mosso* idea with a chordal *quasi coro* statement (see music examples 7a).

Illustration 1: *Forest Loneliness* by Jacob van Ruysdael



Ex.7a: Fibich, *Studies of Paintings*; (i) *musette* section of *A Garden Party*

Allegretto (*Musette*)

(ii) *The Dance of the Blessed*, bars 22–35

Tempo I.

Maestoso ma in tempo

30

P x P P x P x P x P x P x

Tempo I.

ff pp

1 3 5

The creation of associations between the visual stimuli and historical musical models is also present in the second piece, *The Dispute of Carnival and Fast*, which combines bare fifths, regular rhythms, and simple harmonies to create the image of a peasant festival. Fibich uses this model to exploit quasi-cadenza tremolando figuration, alternating chords and accented chromatic progressions to create a cadenza depicting the climax of a village festival, demonstrating the importance of contrast within pieces. In *The Dispute of Carnival and Fast*, the composer contrasts the musical elements derived from the dance with a *lento lamentoso* idea which, in its closely spaced parts and low dynamic and register, provides a contrasting ‘horn-call’ figure that dramatically interrupts the preceding argument (music examples 7b).

Ex.7b: Fibich, *Studies of Paintings*; (i) opening of *The Dispute of Carnival and Fast*

Allegro con brio

1 2 3 4 5

P x P x P x P x P x

10

mf

(ii) cadenza material, *The Dispute of Carnival and Fast*, bars 143–156

velocissimo

ff

P

(iii) *Lento lamentoso* material contrasted with *Tempo I* sections, bars 69–79

Fibich often draws out contrasting elements from his sources, meaning that the resultant musical argument often proceeds through the dramatic juxtaposition of opposites. The first piece (*Forest Loneliness*) depicts both the association of the forest environment with the hunt (with echo effects and the triadic figuration associated with hunting horns) and the emotions evoked within the individual whilst in the forest, thereby combining internal and external environments. The musical image contrasts the introspective chromaticism and rapid demisemiquaver arpeggiac figuration of the first section with triadic 'horn-call' figuration of the second part, with the coda of the piece bringing these two elements into sharp relief against one another (music examples 7c).

Ex.7c: Fibich, *Studies of Paintings*; (i) bars 1–3, *Forest Loneliness*

(ii) contrasting *lusingando* figuration, bars 22–25

Lusingando
pochettino animato

ppp

(1 & 5 m. d.)

(3 s.)

(3 m. s.)

8

(3 s.)

5 4 3

5

mp

p

x

(iii) 'horn-call' material, bars 81–88

Più mosso
Quasi corni

mf

p

x

Voli.

The creation of a musical image full of contrasting textures and figuration is further demonstrated in no. 5, *Io and Jupiter*, where the powerful and masculine image of the Greek God associated with thunder and lightning is contrasted with the feminine presence of his wife. The musical setting combines a lyrical opening intensified with chromatic harmonies, cadenza-like passages exploring higher registers, filigree arpeggio figuration and harp-like spread chords (all depicting *Io*) with a contrasting idea exploring the bass register of the instrument, building up to a chordal climax that combines extreme registers with a thick texture and high dynamic depicting the power of *Jupiter* (music examples 7d). This piece in particular demonstrates Fibich's awareness of the piano's sonic and textural capabilities and his ability to exploit them in virtuosic and technically demanding large-scale works.

Ex. 7d: Fibich, *Studies of Paintings*; (i) *Io and Jupiter*, bars 1–8

Moderato

mp

p

x

p

x

p

x

p

x

(ii) quasi-cadenza figuration, bars 20–24

(iii) further cadenza material and spread 'quasi-harp' chord depicting Jo, bars 47–50

(iii) second thematic area, depicting Jupiter, bars 51–61

(iv) climax of piece, bars 78–85

Therefore, despite the fact that the composer had focused on the writing of miniatures for the instrument in the six years prior to the *Studies of Paintings*, what the *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences* had provided him with was the ability to respond to a variety of sources and use a complex web of associations and references to create a diverse range of musical depictions. The *Studies of Paintings* stand apart from the previous cycle *From the Mountains* in that Fibich does not attempt to create connections between the individual numbers, but presents individual pieces defined through the use of different musical styles. Rather than provide a unified and coherent musical language, the experience of writing the previous miniatures led Fibich to exploit and emphasise contrast and change over internal unity and coherence.

What is demonstrated in the *Studies of Paintings* is Fibich's greater distance from his sources. Whereas in the *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences* the inspiration is supremely personal, the sources for his last piano cycle are more distant, both in terms of being outside his own personal experience and in the chronological distance between composer and artists. This creates musical pictures which are essentially a demonstration of the skills that Fibich had honed in his creation of the 376 miniatures and, because of this, the *Studies of Paintings* on the whole lack the harmonic adventurousness and dramatic intensity created through the concise and fragmentary expression that characterised the musical depictions of Fibich's jealousy in the *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences*.

Fibich's last work for piano demonstrates both a change in approach (a move from the subjective and personal to more distant and objective sources) and a continuation of earlier trends (the importance of visual art and the importance of a programme), and Foerster's final piano work, the *Črty uhlém* [Charcoal Sketches] (1926–8), illustrates the same points. Although this work lies outside the chronological framework of this study, a brief consideration of it demonstrates the way that Foerster's style and approach to the piano had changed, and how that affected the way he was perceived upon his return to Czechoslovakia in 1918.

Like Fibich, Foerster remained attached to the notion of a programme in his piano writing, and the connection with visual art is made clear in the title of his final cycle. However, the *Charcoal Sketches* are closer to *Dreaming* than to *Eros's Masks* and, rather than being a technically demanding, dramatic, and harmonically adventurous work, Foerster returns to the structure of individual, unconnected movements, unified only by the (almost) constant use of the waltz (another connection with *Dreaming*). Although the pieces in the *Charcoal Sketches* do hint at the adventurous chromaticism used in the previous cycle, they are closer to the salon style used earlier in his piano works. The only 'flashback' to the more adventurous musical language of *Eros's Masks* is in the third sketch, the middle section of which can be compared to the more adventurous harmonic approach found in the 1912 cycle (music examples 8).

Ex.8: Foerster, *Charcoal Sketches*; (i) movement 3, demonstrating an adventurous harmonic approach, bars 9–23

Un poco più mosso.

agitato

allargando

dimin.

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a key signature of two flats and a 2/4 time signature. It is marked 'a tempo' and 'pp'. The second system continues the piece with a 'cresc. poco a poco' marking.

(ii) contrasting harmonic and textural simplicity of movement 4, bars 1–16

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system is marked 'Allegro giusto.' and 'molto meno mosso'. The second system is marked 'a tempo' and 'ritenuto'. The key signature is two flats and the time signature is 2/4.

However, within the overall conservatism of this work this style merely serves to reinforce the fact that Foerster's writing for piano appears to have regressed, and this distance from contemporary models can also be observed in his orchestral and operatic works, meaning that Foerster's importance as a composer upon his return to his homeland diminished significantly. Whereas Fibich's piano writing looks forward to the intimate piano works of Suk and Janáček, it would seem that Foerster's continued attachment to the expressive language of Romanticism meant that, rather than building upon the innovations of *Eros's Masks*, he receded into the background as composers such as Janáček rose to prominence within Czech music. Indeed, the combination of Foerster's interaction with the progressive figures of the wider European *fin-de-siècle*, combined with his attachment to a more conservative style and his eventual absorption into an institutional position in the newly created independent Czechoslovakia (a position reflective of his marginal position in the cultural context of Prague in the 1920s) creates many similarities with the career of Vítězslav Novák, and it is to his output for the piano that we now turn.

CHAPTER 7

Czech music into the new century: the piano works of Vítězslav Novák

Vítězslav Novák (1870–1949) occupies a significant position in the development of Czech music, and his relatively long career means that his period of musical production spans a number of different periods and directions in Czech music, and documents its relationship with wider European musical trends. Novák's significant compositional activity began in the 1890s, and it is important to consider both the musical and cultural environment of Prague in which he developed and how his output corresponds with that of contemporary Czech composers. Through the works of Dvořák, Fibich, and Foerster, the musical life of Prague became connected with wider European contemporary developments, with the ideas of the Decadence movement being echoed in many of Fibich's works, and Foerster's physical presence in both Hamburg and Vienna intensifying the connection with *fin-de-siècle* Europe both through his relationship with Mahler and experience of contemporary foreign musical environments. In addition to the developments in music taking place in Austria and Germany, those occurring in France within the Symbolist and Impressionist movements also deserve consideration. Although these had little impact on Dvořák, Fibich, or Foerster, in the first decade of the twentieth century the ideas of these movements were disseminated within Czech cultural life, and provide a further perspective from which the output of Novák can be explored.

Table 5 presents Novák's piano works in context, and this outlines both the key directions that his musical development took and the genres which assume prominence at certain points. What is immediately striking about Novák's output compared with all of the previous composers considered is the lack of works for the stage during the formative periods of his development. As previous chapters have highlighted, the production of operas and melodramas was a key activity in ensuring Czech composers a place in the national consciousness, and Novák's lack of stage works until 1913 perhaps provides a partial explanation for why he assumes a less significant place in the development of Czech music. Novák's musical language often contains several dualities, including international/national

and progressive/conservative, and these conflicting tendencies are absorbed within a compositional development defined by constant changes of direction and personal crises.

Table 5: Novák's piano works in the context of his output as a whole¹

YEAR	ORCHESTRAL WORKS	CHAMBER/ VOCAL/ CHORAL WORKS	STAGE WORKS	PIANO WORKS
1891		Violin sonata (SP27)		
1892	<i>The Corsair</i> (SP28)	Piano trio in G minor, op. 1 (SP29)		
1893				<i>Variations on a Theme of Schumann</i> (SP30) <i>Ballad in E minor op.2</i> (SP31)
1894	<i>Serenade</i> (1894–5) (SP35)	Piano Quartet, op.7 (SP33)		<i>Reminiscences</i> op.6 (SP34)
1895	Piano concerto in E minor (SP36)			<i>Serenades op.9</i> (SP38)
1896		<i>A Tale of the Heart</i> , op.8 (SP44) Piano Quintet in A minor, op. 12 (SP49) <i>Notations of 75 Moravian Folksongs</i> (1896–7) (SP48)		<i>Barcarolles</i> op.10 (SP45) <i>Eclogues op.11</i> (SP46) <i>At Dusk op.13</i> (SP47)

¹The SP reference number given to each work is derived from *Vítězslav Novák: Tematický a bibliografický katalog* [Thematic and Bibliographic catalogue] by Miloš Schmierer and Ludmila Peřinová (Prague, 1999).

1897		<i>Gypsy melodies</i> op.14 (SP50) Songs on Moravian Folk Texts op.16/17/21 (1897–8) (SP53, 54, 59)		
1898	<i>Maryša</i> op.18 (SP57)	<i>Ballads on Moravian Folk Poetry</i> op.19 (SP58)		
1899		String Quartet in G, op.22 (SP62)		<i>Bagatelles</i> op.5 (SP63) <i>My May</i> op.20 (SP61)
1900		<i>Spring Moods</i> (SP66) <i>Ballads on Moravian Folk Poetry</i> op.23 (SP67)		<i>Sonata eroica</i> op.24 (SP68)
1901		<i>Melancholy</i> op.25 (SP70) <i>25 Slovak Folksongs</i> (SP69)		
1902	<i>In The Tatras</i> op.26 (1902–7) (SP73)	Piano Trio in D minor, op.27 (SP74)		
1903	<i>Moravian-Slovak suite</i> op.32 (SP79) <i>Eternal Longing</i> op.33 (1903–5) (SP80)	<i>Valley of the New Kingdom</i> op.31 (SP78)		<i>Songs of Winter Nights</i> op.30 (SP77)
1904				<i>2 Walachian Dances</i> op.34 (SP81)
1905		String Quartet in D major, op.35 (SP83)		
1906	<i>Toman and the Wood Nymph</i> op.40 (SP89)	<i>Melancholy Songs About Love</i> op.38 (SP86)		

1907	<i>Lady Godiva</i> op.41 (SP91)			
1908	<i>The Storm</i> op.42 (1908–10) (+choir) (SP95)			
1910				<i>Pan</i> op.43 (SP96)
1911		<i>On Native Soil</i> op.44 (SP97)		<i>Exoticon</i> op.45 (SP98)
1912		<i>Eroticon</i> op.46 (SP100)		
1913			<i>The Zvikov Imp</i> op.49 (1913–4) (SP103)	
1914			<i>Karlštejn</i> op.50 (1914–15) (SP104)	
1916		<i>Strength and Defiance</i> op.51 (1916–17) (SP105)		
1918		<i>Spring</i> op.52 (SP106) Three Czech Songs op.53 (SP107)		
1919			<i>The Lantern</i> op.56 (1919–22) (SP115)	<i>Six Sonatinas</i> op.54 (1919–20) (SP111)
1920				<i>Youth</i> op.55 (SP112)
1921		<i>12 Slovak Folksongs</i> (SP114)		
1923		<i>Slovak songs</i> (SP117) A Bouquet of Folksongs (SP118)	<i>Grandfather's Heritage</i> op.57 (1923–7) (SP119)	
1926			<i>Signorina Gioventù</i> op.58 (1926–8) (SP126)	

1929			<i>Nikotina</i> op.59 (SP127)	
1931	<i>Autumn Symphony</i> (+ choir) op.62 (1931–4) (SP134)	<i>Lullabies on Moravian Folk Texts</i> op.61 (1931–2) (SP133)		
1932		<i>From Life</i> op.60 (SP132)		
1936	<i>South Bohemian Suite</i> op.64 (1936–7) (SP137)			
1938		String Quartet in G major, op.66 (SP138)		
1941	<i>De Profundis</i> op.67 (SP140) <i>St Wenceslas Tryptych</i> op.70 (SP143)	Cello Sonata op.68 (SP141) <i>Home</i> op.69 (SP142)		
1943	<i>May Symphony</i> (+choir) op.73 (SP147)			
1944		<i>2 Legends on Moravian Folk Poetry</i> op.76 (SP150)		
1947		<i>South Bohemian Motifs</i> op.77 (SP155) <i>4 Lullabies</i> op.78 (SP156)		

At each of these crisis points, Novák was receptive to new influences and discarded others, meaning that an understanding of when and why they occurred is essential in an appreciation of the changing nature of his status throughout his life. During his apprenticeship (up to 1896) Novák's connection with the past is undeniable and he lacked an individual voice, modelling his piano works upon those of Dvořák and Brahms. Throughout the early part of his career his connection with wider European Romanticism is felt through his concentration

upon the piano and the production of many collections of small-scale character pieces for the instrument. During 1891–2 he was under the tutelage of Dvořák, and Novák's early piano works have many similarities with some of his teacher's works for the instrument. A further point of convergence with Dvořák is Novák's connection with Brahms, who promoted his piano works and encouraged their publication by Simrock, and evidence of the demand and popularity of these works is seen in the immediate publication of all of Novák's piano works produced between 1895–8. There are also connections between his piano output and that of Fibich, with both composers being inspired by poetic sources, and Novák's enthusiasm for the dark, introspective poetry of, amongst others, Machar, Sova, and Ibsen, connected him to the Decadent movement dominant in wider Europe at the end of the nineteenth century.

The production of piano and chamber works in this early period was essentially a double-edged sword for Novák. Although it brought him recognition and publication as a composer, it also intensified his connection with Romanticism, something that he eventually came to interpret as a dependence that was causing him to stagnate in his individual development. 1896 was a turning point, and his concert tours throughout Moravia led him away from the models and expressive language of wider European Romanticism and towards the music and culture of his native country. Novák's approach to nationalism has to be viewed within the context of the twentieth century and, whereas composers such as Smetana and Dvořák had little first-hand experience of folk music and dance, the next generation of Novák and Janáček took a more ethnological approach, making transcriptions and hearing the music in its natural context. This area creates parallels between Novák and Janáček (with the latter being engaged in a study of Moravian music since 1884), and a comparison of the way in which Moravian music influenced their musical languages reveals much about both their individual approaches to folk sources, and the place of folk music within the Czech nationalist debate of the 1890s.

The final decade of the nineteenth century was a significant time for Czech nationalism, with the Ethnographic Exhibition in Prague taking place from 15 May to 28 October 1895. This was broadly conceived as a display of Czech life and the chief focus was on village life, with photographic exhibitions, folk music, and displays of dancing taking

place in reconstructed Czech and Moravian villages. The exhibition consisted of both a celebration of Czech culture in terms of the above activities and the presentation of contemporary works by Czech composers (including performances of Novák's *Serenade* (1894–5) and Suk's *Pohádka zimního večera* [A Winter's Tale] (1894–5)).² This presentation of both folk and contemporary culture in parallel would seem to affect how the former is perceived, as the contemporary art works performed emphasised the way in which Czech music connected with wider European Romanticism (the Novák work being Romantic in language and the Suk a programmatic work based upon Shakespeare) rather than native folk music. What the exhibition illustrates is that, at this stage in the development of Czech music, folk music was viewed as something distant, the music and dance being 'folk artifacts' to be celebrated and appreciated, but essentially separate from the language of contemporary composers of art music. This attitude is supported by the fact that Janáček was not taken seriously as a composer for many years, being seen rather as an ethnographer, his folk collecting activities removing him from the mainstream development of Czech art music (this will be discussed in further detail in the final chapter).

Novák's interaction with Moravian folk music created a change of focus in his compositional output, with the previous concentration on piano and chamber works now giving way to the creation of songs and choral works. In this period the piano features only as an accompanimental force, creating parallels with Janáček, whose *Moravská lidová poezie v písniích* [Moravian Folk Poetry in Song] was compiled over the period 1892–1901. However, whereas the exploration of Moravian folk music fundamentally changed Janáček's musical language, in Novák's output the effect of folk music on his piano writing is negligible. This raises the question of what elements of Moravian folk music Novák was most attracted to and interested in, and it would seem from the music he produced in the first decade of the twentieth century (the symphonic tone poems *V Tatrách* [In the Tatras] (1902), the *Slovácká suite* [Moravian-Slovak Suite] (1903), and *Toman a lesní panna* [Toman and the Wood Nymph] (1906–7)) that the attachment to an external programme and his reaction to the

²Tyrrell (2006), p.420.

changing natural environments during the tours was paramount, leaving Novák's musical language rooted in the nineteenth century.

During 1900–10 Novák was at the zenith of his creative powers and was considered as the foremost contemporary Czech composer. This perception of the composer reveals much about what was considered important in Czech music at this stage, and Novák's output during this decade is defined by its connection with contemporary European developments and diverse musical influences, with the piano playing an integral part in the absorption of these. The *Sonata eroica* op.24 (1900, SP68) is the culmination of the nationalism instigated in 1896 during his travels through Moravia and, in writing a piano sonata, Novák wrote in a form last used by a Czech composer (Smetana) in 1846. The essential conservatism of this structure contrasts with the more experimental approaches found in the *Písně zimních nocí* [Songs of Winter Nights] op.30 (1903, SP77) and the tone poem *Pan* op.43 (1910, SP96), and these works demonstrate Novák's connection with both Impressionism and the innovations and musical language of Richard Strauss. The decade also sees a return to poetic inspiration, with several song cycles created from the introspective poetry of Sova and Machar.

With *Bouře* [The Storm] (1908–10) and *Pan*, Novák reinforced his position at the centre of Czech musical life, and his significance during the first decade of the twentieth century can be contrasted with the status of Janáček at the same point. The success of *The Storm*, written for the Brno Beseda (in the city where Janáček lived and worked), makes clear the difference in status between the two composers, and it is revealing to observe the eventual reversal of their fortunes. After 1910, Novák began a gradual decline in compositional output, experiencing another crisis in confidence which led to the production of works in diverse styles and genres. This crisis may in some part explain why Novák chose to begin producing works for the stage at this point, *Zvickovský rarášek* [The Zvickov Imp] being created between 1913–14 and followed by a further five works up until 1929. Throughout this study, it has been apparent that composing for the stage (predominantly in the genre of opera) was essential for a composer to ensure their position in national cultural life, and Novák may have believed that, by exploring genres for the stage, he could protect the esteemed position he had occupied during the previous decade.

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The piano was an important instrument throughout Novák's development until 1910 and, from the early Romantic piano collections, through the *Sonata eroica* and the *Songs of Winter Nights* to the culmination of his piano writing in *Pan*, each crisis and change of direction in his life produced works for the instrument. However, following *Exoticon* (1911), Novák produced nothing more for the piano until 1919 and, with the *Six Sonatinas* and *Mládí* [Youth] (1919–20), the works for piano experience a change from being independent art works to collections created for pedagogical purposes. The change in the status of the piano in Novák's development somewhat mirrors his own situation following the First World War (and the achievement of Czech independence) and, rather than being seen as the figurehead of contemporary Czech music, he became involved in a variety of institutional positions that led to him no longer being seen as a progressive figure. In this post-war period, Novák was overtaken by the late creative flowering of Leoš Janáček, and it is clear from the former's memoirs that he somewhat resented the fact that the Moravian, with his 'odd views and inferior technique', had supplanted him.³ The opposition of the trajectory of development between these two men has to be juxtaposed with the fact that they had much in common, most significantly their Romantic beginnings and involvement with Moravian folk music. However, these common roots produced two distinct and different musical languages, and their significance at different stages of Czech musical development illustrates much about what was considered important to Czech musical culture during the first part of the twentieth century.

The early works for piano: the connection with Romanticism

The focus in Novák's early output is on piano pieces and songs, and he began composing at the age of sixteen (in 1886). By the same age, he had become proficient enough on the piano and violin to be giving public performances in Jindřichův Hradec. These early works demonstrate the composer's early connection with Romanticism and (like Smetana before him) his enthusiasms were focused upon Chopin and Liszt.

³Tyrrell (2006), p 454

In 1889 Novák began his education in Prague, studying law and philosophy at Prague University alongside music at the Prague Conservatory. During his musical studies at the Conservatory, the composer formed strong friendships with both Josef Suk and Rudolf Reissig (1874–1939), connections that were to prove influential in his later career. Novák attended Dvořák's composition class in the years 1891–2 (alongside Suk); and it can be assumed that the young composer was fairly successful with his compositional studies up to this point, as Dvořák's class was an elite environment and an opportunity that would have been offered only to the highest achieving students. During his time at the Conservatory, the piano was an important instrument to Novák, and he developed his own performing abilities through his lessons with Josef Jiránek which continued until 1896.

As a student Novák concentrated mainly upon works for solo piano, and this can be explained in a variety of ways. As a pianist, he was naturally drawn to the medium and, as a student, he was enthusiastic about the Romantic figures of Liszt, Chopin, and Schumann. Tragedy in Novák's early life (the death of his father) also led him to retreat into a world of literature and poetry, and many of these sentiments are expressed through the early works for solo piano. The influence of Dvořák on Novák's success should also be considered, and the close relationship that existed between Dvořák and Brahms led to the latter becoming interested in many of Dvořák's pupils (including Novák, Suk, and Oskar Nedbal) and recommending their works for publication.⁴ As a result of his solo piano works, Novák was awarded both a scholarship from the Apt Foundation of the Prague Conservatory (for the years 1894–6) and a state scholarship (1896–8). In addition to this, Brahms' Berlin publisher Simrock published all of Novák's early works for solo piano, namely the *Vzpomínky* [Reminiscences] op.6 (1894, SP34), *Serenády* [Serenades] op.9 (1895–6, SP38), *Barcaroly* [Barcarolles] op.10 (1896, SP45), *Eklogy* [Eclogues] op.11 (1896, SP46), and *Za soumraku* op.13 [At dusk] (1896, SP47).

Novák's early works for solo piano illustrate his connection with the wider movement of European Romanticism in his treatment of the piano as a domestic instrument, and his

⁴Schnierer/Tyrrell (2001), p.210.

'appeasing the contemporary demand for charming little pieces for the salon.'⁵ The composer's creation of collections of small-scale piano pieces continues a line of development initiated by Smetana (with the *Albumleaves* and *Sketches* from the period 1848–54), whilst his interest in programmatic writing and the use of poetic sources connects him with the contemporary piano works of Dvořák (in the *Poetic Tone Pictures*) and Fibich (with *In the Mountains*).

The *Serenades* demonstrate the importance of poetic inspiration to Novák, and each of the four pieces that make up the set has a poetic 'motto' by the Czech writers Jaroslav Vrchlický, Jaroslav Kvapil, and Jan Vrba. The fragment of Vrchlický used as the basis for the first piece reads 'Listů vzdechem, květů dechem, větru spěchem píseň tobě nesu na večer' [I am carrying a song for you in the evening, in the manner of a sigh of leaves, a breath of flowers, a hurry of wind], and these images are musically depicted in a ternary structure with harmonies defined by standard Romantic progressions (using diminished and half-diminished chords, and linear chromaticism). No.3 of the set is typical of Novák's writing at this time, being a delicate quasi-nocturne based upon Vrba's poetry, which reads 'Já nesmím říci: mám tě rád...tvou hladit ručku, vlas tvůj dlouhý, jen písní smím ti vyslovit své lásky bol a žár své touhy' [I must not say I love you, stroke your dainty hand, your long hair...only in a song can I express the pain of my love, the heat of my longing]. The unrequited love of the narrator is expressed through the linear chromaticism and enharmonic shifts of the chords which constitute a syncopated 'heartbeat' accompaniment to the lyrical melody (music example 1).

Ex.1: Novák, *Serenades*; opening of no.3

The musical score for the opening of No. 3 from Novák's *Serenades* is presented in two systems. The first system shows the initial measures with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The second system continues the piece, featuring a *cresc.* (crescendo) and a fortissimo (*f*) dynamic. The score is written for piano, with a treble clef and a bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat major), and the time signature is 4/4. The music is characterized by a syncopated accompaniment in the bass and a lyrical melody in the treble.

⁵Lébl (1968), p.16

Although responding to poetic sources creates a connection between Novák and Fibich (reinforced through the use of Vrchlický, the source for the latter's piano cycle *In the Mountains*) there is a difference in the way in which the two composers use their poetic sources. Fibich uses much larger extracts, providing him with a wealth of images to respond to musically and, in *In the Mountains*, uses different sections of the same Vrchlický text to create a cycle of piano pieces which is unified through musical devices, the musical unity mirroring the poetic unity of the source. Novák is less concerned with creating cycles of pieces and the notion of a musical narrative than with creating individual 'moods' which constitute musical responses to poetic fragments. This concern with the musical creation of mood and atmosphere continues in the *Barcarolles* and, in this collection, only the third piece is based on a poetic 'motto', this time from the Czech poet Jaromír Borecký. The other pieces have descriptive titles (e.g. *Za slunných dnů* [On Sunny Days] and *V teskné chvíli* [A Melancholy Moment]) but are not tied to any specific poetic text. The musical style is consistent with that of the *Serenades*, although the final number, *Barcarola baladická* [The Ballad of the Gondolier], illustrates a more dramatic and virtuosic approach, contrasting with the previous pieces. In creating a more extrovert style, *The Ballad of the Gondolier* provides the first evidence of a style that would be explored further in the *Sonata eroica* and culminate in the piano tone poem *Pan* (music example 2).

Ex.2: Novák, *Barcarolles* no.5, *The Ballad of the Gondolier*; bars 19–27

The musical score for Novák's *Barcarolles* no. 5, *The Ballad of the Gondolier*, bars 19–27, is presented in two systems. The first system shows bars 19–23, and the second system shows bars 24–27. The music is in G minor and 3/4 time. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with slurs and dynamic markings. The score includes a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic, a crescendo (cresc.) marking, and various dynamic markings such as 'P' (piano) and 'P sempre'. The piece concludes with a final cadence in bar 27.

In addition to the similarities with Fibich's contemporaneous output, Novák's early piano works also have connections with Dvořák's *Poetic Tone Pictures* (1889). Both composers are concerned with programme, but whereas Dvořák concentrates more on the musical depiction of external, more objective images (*The Old Castle, Spring, On the Holy Mount*), Novák's focus is upon internal emotional states, an element that reinforces his connection with Fibich. However, Fibich creates piano works on a more ambitious scale, using larger extracts of poetry to create a cyclic form with a unified musical narrative, therefore building upon the Romantic piano cycles of Schumann earlier in the century. Novák's focus is upon the creation of expressive, small-scale individual pieces, but it has to be remembered that he was a student, and this status contrasts with the much greater experience of both Fibich and Dvořák in their aforementioned piano works. However, it is significant that these early piano works contain stylistic elements (chromaticism and an adventurous approach to harmony, and an enthusiasm for poetry) that were to remain in Novák's musical language for much longer.

A change of direction: the spirit of Moravia

At the end of his studies in 1896 Novák experienced his first compositional crisis, which occurred as a result of his dependence upon contemporary Romantic models, particularly his

teacher Dvořák, and resulted in his realisation that he needed to develop a more individual voice. The solution to this initial crisis came from his travels through Moravia, but before exploring this it is necessary to discuss the way in which his approach to folk music related to that of other Czech composers. Travelling through regions of Moravia and Slovakia, Novák experienced folk music 'first-hand' and transcribed it in its natural environment, more in the manner of an ethnographer than a composer. In this, he had much in common with Leoš Janáček, who had the same experience of the music of his native land in its natural context, yet the fact that both composers experienced Moravian folk music and responded with completely different musical languages necessitates the exploration of the context behind their investigations in Moravia.

Janáček was a Moravian by birth and, from his early days as a student in Brno, had always been a fervent nationalist. In contrast, Novák had always been connected with wider European Romanticism, and his compositional output to 1896 shows no nationalist tendencies. For Janáček, the music of Moravia became the means by which he created his individual musical language, redefining completely the style in which he had been writing prior to 1888. For Novák, his travels within Moravia came at a time of compositional crisis, and it would seem that he saw the stimulus of folk music as being a way out of this situation, yet his experiences in Moravia were not to create the abrupt change in musical language and style that can be observed in Janáček's output. Novák's reason for travelling to Moravia was his friendship with Rudolf Reissig and, in April 1896, Reissig invited him to Kroměříž (to the east of Brno, in the Haná region) for a concert performance. This was hugely successful and further tours in Moravia were planned, including those to Velké Karlovice in Valašsko, a region close to Javorník where Novák spent the beginning of June 1896. The practical reasons behind Novák's travels meant that he experienced folk music and culture somewhat incidentally and, whereas Janáček had actively sought out the music of his native land, Novák had come into contact with it whilst in the area for independent reasons.

The contact with Moravian folk music led Novák to focus upon vocal works, producing the *Zápisy lidových písní moravských* [Notation of Moravian Folksongs] (1896–7), *Písničky na slova lidové poesie moravské* [Songs on Moravian Folk Texts] opp. 16, 17, and 21

(1897–8), the *Cigánské melodie* [Gypsy melodies] (1898), and the choral *Balady na slova lidové poesie moravské* [Ballads on Moravian Folk Poetry] (1898). The concentration on vocal works (and hence, on folk *melodies* as opposed to any other musical elements) did not lead to a complete neglect of the piano, and Novák produced *At Dusk* (1896) and *Můj Máj* [My May] op.20 (1899, SP61) during this ‘folk’ period. Both of these works illustrate an interaction of different styles, and this can be seen as evidence of Novák’s approach to absorbing new elements into his musical language. Two of the four pieces that make up the cycle *At Dusk* use poetic sources by Josef Svatopluk Machar (1864–1942), immediately creating a connection with the *Serenades* and *Barcarolles*. Despite this similarity, there are new elements in the first piece of *At Dusk*, and the musical language here is more modal (using aeolian G sharp, with a flattened seventh) and the combination of this with plagal harmonies creates a more colourful harmonic language (music example 3a). The alternating notes of the accompaniment line also recall the soundworld and technique of the cimbalom (which will feature in the discussion of Janáček’s music in the final chapter), but there is no concrete evidence that Novák would have experienced this instrument by the time of the composition of this cycle.

Ex.3a: Novák, *At Dusk*; no.1, bars 1–10

Andante rubato ♩ = 96

sotto voce, la melodia poco espressivo
una corda

pp cresc. poco a poco 1 dim.

poco rit. a tempo mf

cresc. tre corde

In spite of these new elements, there are several features of Novák's earlier piano works that remain, namely linear chromaticism, enharmonic shifts, and many added sevenths and ninths. The contrasting sections of no.2 demonstrate this, and Novák juxtaposes a melodic/thematic area with a textural/sonic section dominated by arpeggios which explore increasingly chromatic areas (music examples 3b). The inspiration for this piece is Machar's text which reads 'nebe je tmavé. Mračen kůr se bez hnutí zdá něm tkvít, jen místem protrhlinou chmur zři hvězdný pohádkový svit' [the sky is dark, with a gallery of dark clouds; the clouds seem to settle on it without movement. Only in places through the tears in the darkness can one see the starry fairy tale light], and this demonstrates Novák's continuing enthusiasm for both contemporary Czech poetry and the introspective expressive environment that it depicts.

Ex.3b: Novák, *At Dusk*; (i) opening of no.2, bars 1–8

Alla ballata $J = 69$

p *pp* *cresc.* *con Ped.* *p dolce* *cresc. molto*

(ii) contrasting textural area, bars 18–25

Più animato $J = 88$

pp *p* *mp* *poco rit* *(legato)* *Ped. simile*



The increased harmonic complexity and colour in this work look forward to the language of the *Songs of Winter Nights* and Novák's interaction with Impressionistic influences. The collision of different musical styles within *At Dusk* can be seen by comparing no.2 with no.4 (*Serenade*). The simpler harmonic approach of no.4 emphasises the decorative melody with a chordal accompaniment (a texture which stands out amongst the other pieces in the collection) and the modal inflections highlighted in the first piece are also present. From Janáček's transcriptions of Moravian folk music (discussed in detail in the final chapter) it is clear that modality and decorative melodies are features of this music, but it is unclear how much of this Novák would have experienced by the time of the completion of *At Dusk* (music example 3c).

Ex.3c: Novák, *At Dusk*; no.4, bars 1–15

The composer's knowledge of folk music was built upon various sources, and at the end of 1896 and the beginning of 1897 he undertook a serious study of the folk collections of Karel Jaromír Erben, František Sušil, and František Bartoš (1837–1906),⁶ a study supplemented by his own experiences of live folk music, which he heard on his travels and subsequently wrote down.⁷ His travels through Moravia also introduced him to Leoš Janáček in Brno in 1897 and this meeting came about through Novák and Reissig performing the Piano Quintet in A minor, op.12 (1897) in Brno on 21 March 1897.⁸ In his memoirs⁹ Novák notes that, when the two composers discussed musical topics, they had little in common, and he resolved to talk about music as little as possible.¹⁰

In spite of his negative reaction to Janáček, the older composer was generous to Novák, inviting him to stay in Hukvaldy during August 1897, and introducing him to important collectors of national song, including Martin Zeman, J.N. Polášek, and Xaverie Běhálková, all people who had collaborated with Janáček in ethnological research.¹¹ The relationship between Janáček and Novák has to be understood in terms of the different status and experience which each had at their time of meeting. Janáček, although not known as a composer of art music, had nearly ten years experience of collecting and transcribing Moravian folk music, a situation that contrasts with that of Novák who, though a published and successful composer of piano and chamber works, had no experience of folk music. This situation would clearly have been exacerbated by the fact that Janáček was, by the time Novák was writing in *O sobě a o jiných* [About Myself and Others] (in 1946), considered a far more successful composer, and there is the feeling that Novák was somewhat displeased about the dramatic reversal of their fortunes.

Novák continued his travels through Slovácko (in the south-eastern corner of Moravia), with much of October 1897 spent in Hroznové Lhoty, Javorník, Strážnice, and

⁶Bartoš is also an important figure as a result of his collaboration with Janáček (which will be considered in the final chapter), and his *Nové národní písně moravské* [New Moravian Folksongs] were published in 1882. The collections that he created with Janáček will be outlined in the final chapter.

⁷Lébl (1968), p.16.

⁸Lébl (1964), p.58.

⁹*O sobě a o jiných* [About myself and others], Prague, 1946.

¹⁰Tyrrell (2006), pp.453–4.

¹¹Lébl (1964), p.61.

Velká.¹² His compositional output during and after these experiences concentrated initially upon song settings with the piano used only as an accompanimental force, and a comparison of Novák's piano accompaniments with Janáček's in his contemporaneous collection of *Moravian Folk Poetry in Song* will be undertaken in the final chapter, suffice to say here that Novák's creation of piano accompaniments did not have the same effect upon his subsequent piano writing as Janáček's. Indeed, as later works such as the *Sonata eroica* and the *Songs of Winter Nights* demonstrate, Novák's connection with contemporary European trends was always stronger than his connection with the music of his native country.

The combination of styles found in *At Dusk* is continued in Novák's first significant works for solo piano after his contact with folk music, namely *My May* and the *Bagatelles* (both 1899), and most evident in both of these works is the simplification of elements. Harmonies become less chromatic, textures more dependent upon a leading melodic line, and melodies more related to some of those already observed in Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances* and Smetana's quotation of Erben's folk tunes in his second series of *Czech Dances* (which is to be expected, as Novák had learned about folk music from the same sources). This is illustrated in the third movement of *My May* and, although there are still elements of the linear chromaticism observed in the earlier piano works, the harmonic framework is based around I and V (music example 4a). The melody is also relatively simple and moves consistently in crotchets (thereby not responding to the uneven rhythms that are characteristic of Moravian folk music), and the texture of melody against a broken chord accompaniment is uncharacteristic of the folk music Novák would have been experiencing and has more connections with the texture of Romantic character pieces.¹³

¹²A detailed map of these regions is provided in the final chapter.

¹³The musical features of Moravian folk music are discussed in more detail in the final chapter, where Janáček's writings on the subject are used as a source of information.

Ex.4a: Novák, *My May*; no.3, bars 1–8

Andante spianato $\text{♩} = 92$

la melodia dolciss. ma espressivo

l'accompagnamento lequattissimo

P P P P x

The fourth movement of this work is entitled *Slovácky* [In the manner of Slovácko] and its style contrasts directly with the previous movement, with the metrical, tonal, and textural clarity of this movement being marked in its difference. The title of the movement refers to a region in south-east Moravia where Novák had travelled and experienced folk music and musicians, and there are many musical elements that are related to folk genres. The movement opens with bare fifths as a drone (mirroring bagpipe drones) and, when the melody begins, it is a simple construction based upon repeated rhythmic cells with a harmonic support based around tonic and dominant. In terms of figuration and metre it seems inspired by the instrumental genres of folk music and is in many ways reminiscent of many of Smetana's early polkas (music example 4b). There are similarities here with Novák's orchestral *Moravian-Slovak suite* (1903), particularly in the moods and textures of nos 1 and 3 *Zamilování* [In Love] and *Mezi dětmi* [Between Children].

Ex.4b: Novák, *My May*; no.4, bars 1–24

Allegro vigoroso $\text{♩} = 144$

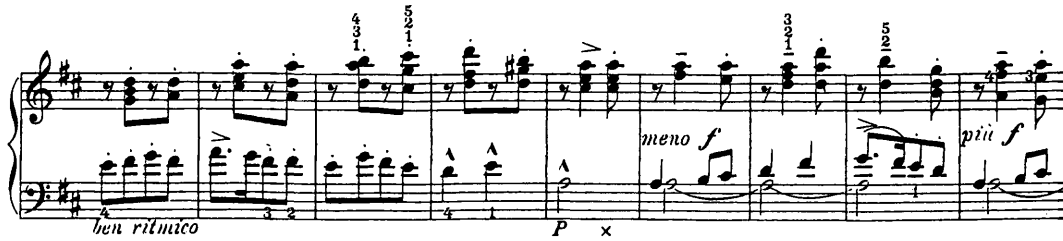
marcatissimo

ff non legato

stringendo

m.s.

accenato e senza Ped.



The *Bagatelles* demonstrate further the fact that the association with folk music prompted a simplification of Novák's musical style and movements 2–4 (entitled *Scherzino*, *Písnička* [Little Song], and *Serenata* [Serenade]) all contain dance rhythms (from the gigue style compound time and dotted rhythms of the *Scherzino* to the cells created from quavers and semiquavers that recall typical polka rhythms used in the *Písnička* – see music example 5a), textures which focus upon the melodic line, and other folk elements (particularly the use of drones)).

Ex.5a: Novák, *Bagatelles*; no.3, bars 1–10

The first movement of the *Bagatelles* is entitled *Vzpomínka* [Reminiscence] and its musical style is much more chromatic, creating a wider variety of harmonic colour, dramatic dynamic changes, and a greater diversity of texture. The title implies Novák 'looking back' on his previous musical style and, as a result of this, the piece stands out from the remainder of the collection (music example 5b). The association of folk music with a simplification of style connects Novák's approach with that of Dvořák, whose investigation of the folk collections of Erben and Sušil coincided with his turning away from Wagner and towards Brahms. The

connection with Classicism is also present in Novák's output in the work for piano which followed *My May* and the *Bagatelles*: the *Sonata eroica*.

Ex.5b: Novák, *Bagatelles*; no.1, bars 1–11

The musical score for Novák's *Bagatelles*, no. 1, bars 1–11, is presented in three systems. The first system, marked "Andante-con sentimento.", begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a "ma espressivo" instruction. It features a "cresc." (crescendo) marking. The second system is marked "molto espress." and "dim." (diminuendo). The third system is marked "p dolciss." (piano dolce) and "pp" (pianissimo). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, dynamics, and articulation marks.

The *Sonata eroica*: a fusion of styles and influences

The writing for solo piano in this period culminates with the composition of the *Sonata eroica* (1900), and it is revealing that this large-scale Classical structure is surrounded by works concerned with folk sources. The *Slovenské spevy* [Slovak songs] (1901) and the *25 Slovenských lidových písní* [25 Slovak folk songs] (1901) show that the emphasis is still upon folk material, but the presence of the *Jarní nálady* [Spring Moods] (1900) also demonstrates Novák's continuing concern with the poetic and Romantic expression that dominated his pre-1896 output. The *Sonata eroica* illustrates the multiplicity of influences and directions experienced by Novák, and the work is imbued with a sense of nationalism, yet concentrates upon social and political rather than musical sources, creating a connection with Janáček's *Sonata I.X.1905* (1906), which is also concerned with social and political notions. Janáček's

work is inspired by a contemporary event, but Novák takes a more historical approach, surveying past Czech oppression and juxtaposing this with hopes for a positive future.

The original title of the sonata was *Independence* and it was intended to chart the oppression of the Czech and Slovak peoples. As Lébl states, it is ‘a song of the fame and slavery of the Slovak people’¹⁴ and combines contemporary and historical ideas. The contemporary issues are Austro-German oppression and lack of independence, and the historical angle is present through allusions to Jánošík, a national Slovak folk hero similar to Robin Hood. Novák himself commented that the work is a ‘hidden political demonstration’,¹⁵ and there are programmatic intentions in each of the three movements. The first is a song to past glories, the second a lamentation of the dismal present, and the third a prophetic vision of the victory of the Slovak people.

Before commencing with a discussion of the musical features of the *Sonata eroica*, a consideration of Novák’s choice of genre is necessary. His previous output demonstrates a connection with contemporary European Romanticism where, in the hands of more innovative composers, the sonata progressed towards a programmatic, one-movement form (as demonstrated in the works of Aleksandr Skryabin (1872–1915), whose piano sonatas from no.4 (1903) onwards were one-movement structures which were used as a vehicle for the expression of the composer’s ideas on philosophy and mysticism), a process that began with Liszt’s B minor Sonata (1852–3). Despite the programme behind the *Sonata eroica* and the fact that it looks towards a one movement form (connecting movements two and three), Novák’s thematic techniques and textures recall an earlier Czech piano sonata, namely Smetana’s Sonata in G minor (1846).

Novák’s sonata is based upon pre-existing material, the folk song *Okolo Horovan* [Around Horovan] (found in Bartoš I¹⁶ no. 139, and Bartoš–Janáček’s *Kytice z národních písní moravských* [Bouquet of National Song], XIII/I, p. 86) (music example 6a),¹⁷ but the thematic material that Novák derives from this folk source is revealing of his conservative

¹⁴Lébl (1964), p. 77.

¹⁵Lébl (1964), p. 77.

¹⁶*Nové národní písně moravské s nápěvy do textu vřaděnými* [New Moravian folksongs with the tunes aligned to the text], Brno, 1889.

¹⁷Lébl (1964), p. 78.

approach. The original folk song consists of a repeated two-bar cell, followed by contrasting material defined by off-beat accents, dynamic contrast, and the semiquaver-dotted crotchet rhythm so characteristic of Moravian folk music.¹⁸ Novák's derived theme diminishes the essential drama of the original, removing the accents and dynamic changes and changing the second part, and replacing the contrasting section with new material based around the interval of a fifth. This creates a greater sense of unity, as both thematic statements are based around the linear presentation of the tonic triad, yet it also undermines the contrast and drama of the original and, in many ways, the similarity and connections between these initial thematic statements restrict the composer's melodic invention throughout the sonata.

The starting material is particularly significant, as Novák's form is monothematic, the work resting upon the motivic structure of the first subject of the first movement. This is the 'remodelled' folk source, and is constructed from what Lébl terms motifs 'a' and 'b' (marked on music example 6a). Motif 'a' consists of a semiquaver upbeat (of a perfect fourth) and a subsequent ascending and descending minor third, with dotted rhythms dominating. Motif 'b' contains a similar semiquaver upbeat (extended to a perfect fifth) followed by the outline of a fifth with a similar dotted rhythm to that of the first motif. The second motif is also longer than 'a', with a half-bar extension reinforcing the third of motif 'a' (a major third here). From this analysis, an initial problem can be identified within Novák's starting material. Although there are two motifs, they are not truly individual and share many elements, being rhythmically similar and reinforcing the tonic triad, with motif 'a' revolving around F and 'b' around the dominant C. The extension of 'b' also emphasises the interval of a third, the dominant interval of 'a'. Because of these connections, Novák restricts the amount of material he has to work with, leading to a structure which lacks melodic invention and variation.

The setting of this material in the first subject of the first movement is dramatic, suggesting the scale of the work to follow. After an accented *ff* second inversion tonic chord,

¹⁸The features of Moravian folk music will be outlined and discussed in more detail in the final chapter as part of the discussion of Janáček as ethnographer.

a *pp* triplet ostinato in the LH providing both continual forward impetus and are motivically connected to 'a' (in the outlining of a third in the bass) (music example 6b).

Ex.6a: The beginning of the folk song *Okolo Horovan* aligned with the *Sonata Eroica*¹⁹

Allegro patetico

p ma marcato

O ko - lo Ho - vo - ran chod - ní - ček ja - ko dlaň.

Ja do že ho u - šla - pať, švarný šo - haj cho - da k nám.

at.d.

Ex.6b: Novák, *Sonata eroica*, movement 1: presentation of first subject

Allegro patetico

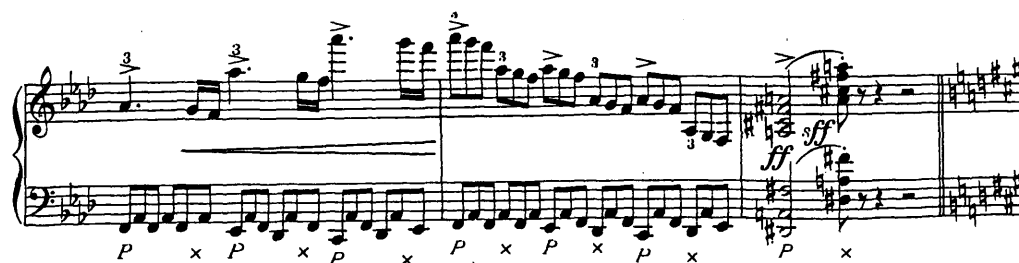
ff sff pp non legato p ma marcato

simile

cresc. poco a poco

f

¹⁹Reproduced from Lébl (1964), p.78.



This initial presentation of first subject material has connections with the opening movement of Smetana's Piano Sonata in G minor, which uses a core motif as the source of thematic material, and also creates a tonally varied first subject area that provides a dramatic introduction to the rest of the work. Novák's first subject area fulfils the same function, and the material is repeated in F sharp minor, B flat minor, and G flat minor before arriving in D flat major (the final tonal destination for the work). This change of key from minor to major can be seen as performing a programmatic function, depicting the journey from past Czech struggles (the dotted rhythms creating associations with military marches) to hopes for eventual victory and independence. The first subject is an extensive area, defined by repetition of the opening material in a variety of keys, and the piano writing is virtuosic, extrovert, and typically Lisztian in its dramatic RH octaves and rapid LH arpeggiation.

The second subject is in E major, creating harmonic distance between itself and the initial F minor of the first subject. Novák uses the opening motivic material to create a reflective, melancholy statement with lower dynamics, expressive markings (*dolce, ma espress*), and a more contrapuntal texture than that of the first subject. The RH melody inverts motif 'a', removes the original upbeat, and the dotted rhythm is transformed into a regular, repeated cell consisting of a minim and a semibreve. However, the rhythmic connection with the first subject is maintained in the RH inner voice, which also presents the interval of a third (now major) from 'a'. Novák performs the same recharacterisation of motif 'b', which presents the interval of a fifth, again without an upbeat, and with the dotted rhythm replaced by tenuto-marked, even minims. The composer continues the recharacterisation of material in the second subject, with the theme repeated in the LH and accompanied by quaver figuration, providing a sense of development and decoration within the presentation of the second subject.

Ex.6c: Novák, *Sonata eroica*, movement 1; presentation of second subject

Ex.6d: Novák, *Sonata eroica*, movement 1; recharacterisation of second subject material

The development area reinforces Novák's relationship with Romantic piano writing, and it is dominated by dramatic, virtuosic octave passages in both hands, culminating with the presentation of first and second subjects simultaneously in a *ff pesante* setting (music example 6e). The composer creates the harmonic instability and drama characteristic of a development section (with a sense of momentum provided through a rhythmic ostinato based on the upbeat to the starting material), but there is little melodic fragmentation or transformation, leading to a dominance of repetition within this section.

Ex.6e: Novák, *Sonata eroica*, movement 1; climax of development section

The musical score for Ex.6e consists of two systems of piano and bass clef staves. The first system shows a piano (p) dynamic with various fingerings (5 2, 5 1, 5 2, 5 2, 4 2, 5 1, 5 2, 5 2) and a 'm.d.' (morendo) marking. The second system shows a forte (ff) dynamic with a 'pesante' marking and a 'poco string.' marking. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Novák's use of keys at the end of the development and in the recapitulation diverge from the conventional sonata model. Rather than presenting second subject material in the tonic in the recapitulation, the composer presents it in D flat major at the end of the development, giving only fleeting reference to it in the recapitulation (music example 6f). The recapitulation concentrates upon the first subject and, in addition to presenting it in the original F minor, it also appears in E major (the key of second subject material, creating a sense of tonal reminiscence) before ending the movement in D flat major, the 'victorious' major surpassing the struggles of the past depicted by F minor (music example 6g). The association of these keys with aspects of the programme throughout the movement means that Novák creates a web of associations through his tonal structure.

Ex.6f: Novák, *Sonata eroica*, movement 1; inclusion of second subject material at the end of the development section

The musical score for Ex.6f consists of two systems of piano and bass clef staves. The first system shows a piano (p) dynamic with a 'dimin. molto e rall.' marking and a 'pp dolcissimo' marking. The second system shows a piano (p) dynamic with a 'più espress.' marking. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Ex.6g: Novák, *Sonata eroica*, movement 1; presentation of first subject material in the recapitulation in E major

The second and third movements are connected, and the second movement is relatively short, constituting an ‘interlude’ between the outer movements. The second movement is a ‘lamentation of the dismal present’, and its shortness can perhaps be interpreted as the composer downplaying the negative oppression of the ‘dismal present’ and stressing the past glories and prophetic victories of the first and third movements respectively. The second movement continues the recharacterisation of the starting material, and its main theme is based around a third (the defining interval of ‘a’), with the inclusion of the dotted rhythm that connects ‘a’ and ‘b’ material (music example 7a (i)). The second movement reinforces the Lisztian influence, and presents the opening theme in varied settings, transforming accompaniment, texture, and dynamic to create a sense of culmination in the final ‘variation’, which is a heterophonic texture, combining dramatic octaves with

simultaneous presentations of the melody in different rhythmic settings, and rapid arpeggio accompaniment in the LH (music example 7a (ii)). This movement cements further the connection between this work and Smetana's sonata, as the older Czech composer uses exactly the same technique of thematic transformation in the second movement of his sonata.

Ex.7a: Novák, *Sonata eroica*, movement 2; (i) opening theme

(ii) movement 2; climax of the movement – final variation of the opening theme

The third movement is a further transformation of the opening theme of the second movement, yet also recalls the first movement in its dramatic octaves and dotted rhythms (music example 7b). An important addition to the melodic structure in this movement is an auxiliary note figure that originated in the second subject of the first movement, which forms the basis of *poco più* sections that act as 'interruptions' to the main melodic material, and are subjected to the same techniques of thematic transformation (music example 7c).

Ex.7b: Novák, *Sonata eroica*, movement 3; opening of the third movement

Allegro energico

string. *fp ma marc. non legato*

p *fp* *x* *p* *x* *p* *x*

Ex.7c: Novák, *Sonata eroica*, movement 3; introduction of *poco più* material

Poco più

p *x* *P* *x* *P* *x* *P*

The process of thematic recharacterisation that dominates the movement culminates in the *andante* section which consists of an extrovert, dramatic, *grandioso* statement, with drama derived through the juxtaposition of the auxiliary note figure and the initial thematic material from the second movement (music example 7c). The subsequent *doppio movimento* section both provides a sense of momentum and, in the reintroduction of triplets, connects with material from the first movement (music example 7d).

Ex.7c: Novák, *Sonata eroica*, movement 3; *andante* section

Andante

ff grandioso *p* *P* *P* *P*

A musical score for piano, consisting of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music features complex textures with many notes, some marked with 'x' and others with 'v'. Dynamics include *p* (piano) and *P* (piano forte). There are also markings for *1*, *2*, *3*, and *4* in the bass staff, possibly indicating fingerings or articulation points.

Ex.7d: Novák, *Sonata eroica*, movement 3; *doppio movimento* section

A musical score for piano, consisting of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (Bb). The tempo is marked *Doppio movimento*. The top staff starts with *pp* (pianissimo) and the bottom staff with *p ma marc.* (piano ma marcato). The music features a series of chords and melodic lines. Dynamics include *pp*, *p*, and *P*. There are markings for *(u.c.)p* and *x* in the bass staff. There are also markings for *4/2* and *5/3* in the top staff, possibly indicating time signatures or fingerings.

The notion of connection with the beginning of the work is significant, as the first subject is reprised here, accompanied by its transformed version from the second and third movements in the LH (making clear the thematic derivations and interrelationships) (music example 7e). The key of D flat major contributes to the programmatic framework of the sonata. In the first movement it was linked with past victories, and its enharmonic reinterpretation as C sharp major (in addition to the juxtaposition of major and minor in the short C sharp minor *più mosso* section) depicts Novák's conception of the third movement as the prophetic hope for future victory and independence, the enharmonic reinterpretation creating the musical equivalent of the projection of past glories into the future (music example 7f).

Ex.7e: Novák, *Sonata eroica*, movement 3; fusion of first movement and second movement ideas

Ex.7f: Novák, *Sonata eroica*, movement 3; final *più mosso* section

The *Sonata eroica* brings together a variety of ideas and techniques. Prior to the composition of this work, Novák's experience of Moravian folk music had prompted a change in direction, demonstrated in the *Sonata* through both the programmatic framework and the folk origin of the core melodic material. However, the ways in which Novák depicts this programme musically and utilises the folk source betray his continuing connection with Romanticism. Any dramatic features from the original source are downplayed, and the starting melody is subsequently subjected to the Lisztian technique of thematic transformation, creating a sonata full of Romantic piano textures and extrovert and virtuosic

writing. Many elements of the work also have similarities to Smetana's work in the same genre from 1846, demonstrating Novák's rather 'backward-looking' approach.

The status of the sonata at the beginning of the twentieth century reinforces Novák's rather traditional and conservative approach. Liszt's Sonata in B minor (1852–3) began the redefinition of the piano sonata as a genre, developing a one-movement structure that uses thematic transformation to create a work whose sections are simultaneously parts of sonata form (exposition, development, recapitulation) and individual sonata movements. However, Novák's restrictive and limited thematic material leads to repetition and monotony, contrasting with Liszt's approach, which creates a variety of thematic shapes from a collection of starting motifs, thus providing greater variety and a sense of drama through the recharacterisation of themes. The sonata had been a genre neglected by many progressive Romantic composers, who saw the form as restrictive and conventional. This continued into the twentieth century, but several composers, including Skryabin, began to redefine the sonata further. In the case of the Russian composer, from 1903 (the year of his Piano Sonata no.4) he began to create one-movement works which were imbued with his ideas on philosophy, mysticism, and Theosophy, depicting these ideas through imaginative and innovative piano textures. The chronological closeness of Novák's *Sonata eroica* to the works of Skryabin underlines the Czech composer's conservative approach and, in his creation of a sonata using the quotation of folk material as the basis for a virtuosic piano work full of Romantic piano textures and gestures, looks back to Smetana (in both the Sonata and the *Fantasia on Czech Folksongs* from 1862) rather than forward into the new century.

The combination of Romantic gestures and textures alongside folk materials within a relatively conventional sonata form resulted in many negative responses to the work. It was not instantly successful (and was given no recognition by the Czech Chamber Music Society)²⁰ and many commentators criticised the folkloristic 'impurity' of the sonata, and its mixing of 'echoes of Moravian and Slovak folk song in an inadmissible manner'.²¹ This comment is revealing of the way in which folk materials were considered at the beginning of

²⁰Lébl (1968), p.20.

²¹Lébl (1968), p.20.

the twentieth century by Czech writers, namely as objects to be scientifically studied and classified, but not used freely as sources for independent art works, corresponding with the way in which the music of Moravia was viewed at the Ethnographic Exhibition discussed previously, at a distance rather than having relevance to contemporary composers.²² This criticism also highlights the difference between Novák and Janáček in the use of folk material. As Jan Trojan states ‘Janáček experiences folklore, Novák stylises folk melody’,²³ and ‘in his relationship to folk music, Novák remains a Romantic.’²⁴ This is not to say that Novák never really understood folk cultures (as he states in a letter to Professor Theurer in 1898 ‘the first year I watched as an observer, but later [...] I understood and allowed myself to be part of the town’)²⁵ but one cannot help but feel a conscious distance in Novák’s approach to folk sources, that his study of folk song was (as Jan Trojan states)²⁶ explicitly pragmatic, and that he devoted his folk study to the point of view of suitability of material within his pre-existing musical language. The key difference between Janáček and Novák in their treatment of folk material is summarised by Jiří Vysloužil, who states that the older composer ‘treated folk song as real artistic material, as an individual compositional product’,²⁷ whereas Novák ‘admires the naïve charms of folk melodies rather than penetrating their essence’.²⁸

The beginning of a new century: the height of fame, and a further change in direction

The beginning of the twentieth century saw Novák in the ‘full bloom of creative power’²⁹ yet, despite a great deal of success abroad and the publication of all his piano cycles by Simrock, this was a second period of crisis in Novák’s life which, like the first, involved Dvořák. The older composer refused the dedication of the Quintet in A minor op.12 (1896), was

²²Lébl (1968), p.20.

²³Trojan (1989), p.45.

²⁴Trojan (1989), p.45.

²⁵Doubravová (1990), p.33.

²⁶Trojan (1989), p.45.

²⁷Vysloužil (1989), p.20.

²⁸Trojan (1989), p.45.

²⁹Lébl (1964) p.83.

unfavourable about the Quartet in G major op.22 (1899), and criticised the compositional method of the *Sonata eroica* (feeling that the dependence on pre-existing folk material within a form that had connotations with tradition and convention was not the way forward for Czech music).³⁰ This rejection wounded Novák deeply, throwing him into a sea of self-doubt, and this mental state led to a resurfacing of the composer's enthusiasm for Romantic poetry. Writers such as Machar, Antonín Sova, and Henrik Ibsen, whose works are heavy in 'natural loneliness and neurasthenia'³¹ expressed Novák's mood of dark pessimism in this period, a mood that was in tune with the *fin-de-siècle* atmosphere of Decadence.

The first significant work to occur after the *Sonata eroica* is the song cycle *Melancholie* [Melancholy] (1901), where Novák engages with the poetry of Kvapil, Machar, and Sova to create a mood of decadent pessimism. There is a return to Moravian-Slovak folk music in the *25 Slovenských lidových písní* [25 Slovakian songs] (1901), yet 'old, half-healed wounds'³² were to return in the later piano and song cycles. Novák's output in the first decade of the twentieth century explores a number of different ideas, all of which connect him to the dominant musical movements of contemporary Europe. Artistic movements at the end of the nineteenth century had the effect of 'opening their [Czech composers'] eyes onto Europe',³³ as demonstrated previously through the works of Fibich. Following the above song cycle and folksong settings, Novák embarked on the production of a series of orchestral tone poems, namely *In the Tatras* (1902), *O věčné touze* [Eternal Longing] (1903–5), and *Toman and the Wood Nymph* (1906–7).

In the Tatras demonstrates the composer's continuing nationalism and pride in his country (echoing the approach of the *Sonata eroica*) but, in this work, Novák focuses on the natural environment. Lébl commented that 'the picture of nature is linked up with the entire organism of national life and the national ethos',³⁴ and this pantheistic attitude to nature is an element that runs through the whole decade. The composer's writings on *In the Tatras* define Novák as a painter in music, and he states that the work depicts 'a gloomy atmosphere before

³⁰Lébl (1968), p.20.

³¹Lébl (1964), p.86.

³²Lébl (1964), p.86.

³³Lébl (1964), p.88.

³⁴Lébl (1968), p.24.

a threatening storm. Greyish white mist clings to the ominous precipitate mountain peaks. The sun still just succeeds in penetrating the cloud and illuminating for a moment this majestically sorrowful stoney landscape [...] the setting sun gilds the peaks of the mountain giants, and from afar the evening bells are to be heard. Night with its pearl-studded veil falls on the Tatras'.³⁵ Novák's language is immensely poetic and detailed in its description of natural phenomena, and this fascination for the natural environment led to the composer's connection to a dominant movement in visual art from the nineteenth century:

Impressionism.

The connection between Novák and Impressionism is a complex one, and the developments in the composer's musical language in the first decade of the twentieth century often draw him closer to other contemporary European ideas. Novák himself acknowledges the part that Impressionism played in his musical language at the beginning of the twentieth century, but also asserts his independence from Debussy, stating that 'It [the relationship with Debussy] isn't at all true. I had experienced Impressionism already in *Melancholy*, written at a time when Debussy was completely unknown in Prague'.³⁶ Debussy's fame in the twentieth century came with the composition of *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902), and his works were not promoted in Prague until much later in the decade, meaning that other sources for and influences upon Novák's Impressionism have to be found.³⁷

During this time, Novák reacted with great enthusiasm to the visual art of Joža Uprka (whose Impressionistic period lasted from 1897 to 1902). However, other elements of Novák's output link him with Debussy at the beginning of the twentieth century. In both *Toman and the Wood Nymph* (1906–7) and *Pan* (1910), the composer explores the ideas of Greek myth and legend in a similar way to Debussy in his works *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* (1892–4), the *Chansons de Bilitis* (1897–8), and *Syrinx* (1913). From the 1890s, Debussy's connections with Symbolist poetry were cemented, and his creation of a musical language full of allusion and suggestion mirrors the Symbolist's use of words to suggest

³⁵Lébl (1968), p. 23.

³⁶From *Paměti* [Memoirs] I, quoted in Lébl (1964), p. 89.

³⁷Although Debussy's relationship with Impressionism is much documented, his relationship with the literary movement of Symbolism is more significant, and the composer's relationship with both artistic movements is examined in detail in Jarocinski: *Debussy; Impressionism and Symbolism* (London, 1976).

rather than to state explicitly, leaving meaning to be created within the individual imagination.³⁸ Novák was also connected with poetry in his enthusiasm for Machar, Sova, and Ibsen, yet these authors were less concerned with allusion and suggestion, and more with exploring the emotional interior landscape of the individual. For Novák, the element of objectivity was always significant and, in his response to Impressionism, he identified with the subjective impulse at the heart of the movement (in the emphasis on the individual perception of light and colour), but then uses this ‘signal to start a powerful objective process’,³⁹ remaining tied to the nineteenth century Romantic idea of a definite programme, rather than creating an allusive, suggestive atmosphere in which meaning resides within individual perception.

Novák’s enthusiasm for musical programme and the creation of numerous tone poems during the period 1900–1910 demonstrates another connection, namely with the work of Richard Strauss, a figure unknown in Czech society until the Prague premiere of *Salome* (1903–5) on 5 May 1906.⁴⁰ The experience of this opera led Novák to study both this work and the subsequent *Elektra* (1906–8), and of great influence on him was Strauss’ approach to eroticism and the depiction of Nature. In *Salome*, Strauss explores the modernist image of the *femme fatale* which was resonating throughout Europe at the time of its composition, and Novák responds to this in the *Woman* movement of *Pan* and in the erotic elements appearing in *Toman and the Wood Nymph*. Novák combines eroticism with images of nature, connecting him further with Strauss, whose tone poems celebrate reality, the natural environment, and nature as a life-affirming source. This positivity and emphasis on reality directly contrasts with the allusion and suggestion of Debussy and the French Symbolists, and it will be seen in the subsequent discussion that Novák’s aesthetic was closer to the tone painting of Strauss than the musical language of Debussy, although the fusion of elements that characterised the *Sonata eroica* continues in his next significant work for piano: the *Songs of Winter Nights*.

³⁸The relationship between Debussy’s musical language and the literary expression of Stéphane Mallarmé is examined in Jarocinski (1976), pp.30–40.

³⁹Lébl (1968), p.90.

⁴⁰Janáček also attended a performance of this opera on 22 May 1906. For details see Tyrrell (2006), p.649.

The *Songs of Winter Nights*: an expression of pianistic Impressionism?

The *Songs of Winter Nights* mark a change in Novák's approach to the piano, from the large-scale *Sonata eroica* to the small-scale musical pictures which comprise this piano cycle. The work consists of four individual movements entitled *Píseň měsíční noci* [Song of the Moonlit Night], *Píseň bouřlivé noci* [Song of the Stormy Night], *Píseň vánoční noci* [Song of the Christmas Eve], and *Píseň noci karnevalové* [Song of the Carnival Night]. Each movement is descriptive and programmatic, and the variety of images explored by Novák leads to the cycle absorbing a range of musical styles. The inspiration for the work also has to be considered and Vačková suggests that it may be the result of a love affair, stating that 'she was sixteen, her name was Růžena'.⁴¹ The creation of a piano cycle based upon personal and emotional expression connects the work with subsequent cycles of Suk and Janáček, both of whom exploited the piano as a vehicle of intimate expression.

Lébl suggests⁴² that the pieces form a unified cycle through the use of motivic connections, with the first movement (*Moonlit night*) being formed around a perfect fourth, and the second (*Stormy Night*) around the initial descending minor third. However, these motivic connections do not appear convincing in the third and fourth movements (although Lébl suggests that the opening of no.4 *Song of the Carnival Night* is a combination of motifs, the RH defined by seconds, whilst the LH consists of thirds and fourths), and it would seem that Lébl's application of the same analytical techniques to this work as to the *Sonata eroica* is not appropriate. Novák's concerns in the *Songs of Winter Nights* are different, and relying on motivic connections to explain the musical argument would seem to undermine the amount of change and contrast the composer creates in these four distinct musical pictures, and the idea of a 'cycle' being unified by musical devices does not apply here.

The *Song of the Moonlit Night* sets a template for the cycle by combining innovative elements with pre-existing parts of Novák's musical language. The movement combines colourful harmonies (including chromatically altered chords and linear harmonies) and

⁴¹Vačková (1991), p. 15.

⁴²Lébl (1964), p. 103.

chromatic modulation with the technique of recharacterisation of material found in the *Sonata eroica*, and the opening material is transformed both into a powerful *più animato* statement (the texture of which also recalls Novák's sonata) and an imitative texture (the high register of which contrasts with the drama created through texture and register in the previous section) (music examples 8a).

Ex.8a: Novák, *Songs of Winter Nights*; (i) *Song of the Winter Night*, opening theme

Andante amoroso $\text{♩} = 60$

p *dolce espress.* *un poco*

con ped.

stringendo e cresc. *dim. e rall. pp* *1* *dolciss. espressivo*

al tempo

(ii) recharacterisation of opening material in a *più animato* setting

più animato

f con calore, non tanto legato

cresc. *più f*

P simile

(iii) further recharacterisation of material at *Tempo I*

The musical score consists of two systems of piano music. The first system is marked "Tempo I" and "dolce, teneramente". It features a treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is characterized by intricate fingering, including a five-finger roll (2, 4, 1, 3, 5) and a descending sequence (4, 3, 2, 1). Dynamic markings include piano (P) and piano fortissimo (P^{ff}). The second system continues the piece, marked "sopra" and "leggieriss.". It features a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is more rhythmic and includes a sequence of notes (1, 2, 3) and a final flourish (4, 5, 4). Dynamic markings include piano (P) and piano fortissimo (P^{ff}).

The second movement of the cycle, the *Song of the Stormy Night*, uses a similar compositional approach, combining the technique of recharacterisation of material and Romantic piano textures and gestures with a more adventurous harmonic approach. The opening presents the figure of a minor third in three different harmonic guises, the final presentation being accompanied by a whole tone scale, reinforcing the harmonic ambiguity of the previous bars (music example 8b (i)). The subsequent *poco meno mosso* presents a contrast through the use of a texture found at the end of the *Sonata eroica*, before the *più animato* presents the first transformation of the opening third figure (music example 8b (ii)). This is followed by two further recharacterisations, both of which are constructed from Romantic melody and accompaniment textures (music example 8b (iii)).

Ex.8b: Novák, *Songs of Winter Nights*; (i) *Song of the Stormy Night*, opening bars

The musical score consists of two systems of piano music. The first system is marked "Allegro tempestuoso" and "f pesante". It features a treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is characterized by a strong, heavy texture with dynamic markings of piano (P) and piano fortissimo (P^{ff}). The second system continues the piece, marked "ff non legato". It features a treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is more rhythmic and includes a sequence of notes (2, 3, 4, 5, 1) and a final flourish (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1). Dynamic markings include piano fortissimo (P^{ff}) and piano (P).

(ii) *Song of the Stormy Night*; recharacterisation of material in a *più animato* setting

più animato
f non legato

(iii) *Song of the Stormy Night*; further recharacterisations of the opening thematic idea
(at *Tempo I* and *poco meno mosso*)

Tempo I.
sfz
ff non legato
p

Poco meno mosso
p marcato la melodia
cresc.

The *Song of Christmas Eve* explores the idea of monothematicism and thematic transformation further, but here it is combined with a greater investigation of texture and harmonic colour. The opening is harmonically ambiguous, with the key signature suggesting F sharp major defining the static RH chords created from C sharp/D sharp as a dominant pedal, yet when the LH enters it suggests C sharp minor as a key (with a flattened seventh degree) (music example 8c (i)). The subsequent section continues to undermine F sharp major as a key, presenting the tonic in second inversion and using bare fourths and fifths to downplay conventional tonal relationships.

Ex.8b: Novák, *Songs of Winter Nights*; (i) opening of the *Song of the Christmas Eve*

Andante misterioso $\text{♩} = 50$

pp *p ma cantando*

die Xid.

In creating this musical depiction of Christmas, Novák employs varied and contrasting textures in order to respond musically to the different facets of the title. The initial thematic statement has a syncopated accompaniment imitating bell sounds, whereas the first transformation creates a layered texture, with the LH theme being accompanied by decorative trill figuration. Subsequent recharacterisations utilise dance figuration, and settings transform accompanimental figuration through the addition of higher register figuration (which undermines the metre of the LH theme) and LH trills and arpeggios (music examples 8b (ii)–(iv)).

Ex.8b: Novák, *Songs of Winter Nights*; (ii) *Song of the Christmas Eve*, first transformation of material

p ma ben marcato la melodia
cresc. poco a poco
 con P

The score consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system features a treble clef with a melody of eighth notes and a bass clef with chords. The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. Fingerings and dynamics are indicated throughout.

(iii) recharacterisation of material in a *doppio movimento* setting

Doppio movimento
 sempre p e staccato, scherzando
 la melodia ben tenuto
 non legato
 P P P x
 P P P x

The score consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system features a treble clef with a melody of eighth notes and a bass clef with chords. The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. Fingerings and dynamics are indicated throughout.

(iv) further transformation of material in the *meno, ma non tempo del principio* section

Meno, ma non tempo del principio $\text{♩} = 66$
 il canto ben marcato e legato
 due corde
 P x P sempre

The score consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system features a treble clef with a melody of eighth notes and a bass clef with chords. The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. Fingerings and dynamics are indicated throughout.

Within these transformations, Novák's soundworld becomes closer to Debussy's piano writing in the exploration of layered textures, bell sounds (Debussy's inspiration for these being the sounds of Indonesian gamelan he experienced at the Universal Exposition in 1889), and harmonic ambiguity (with the expected tonic of F sharp minor not presented until the final cadence, when it occurs with an added sixth).⁴³ Novák's Christmas picture thus combines innovative harmonic elements within thematic transformations that allow traditional symbols and associations to be exploited.

The *Song of the Carnival Night* presents an entirely different soundworld to the previous movement, contrasting the sonic, harmonic, and textural explorations with virtuosic, extrovert piano writing, and the juxtaposition of cadenza passagework with quasi-folk themes brings Novák's writing in this movement close to the style of Smetana's *Czech Dances*. Several contrasting styles come together in this movement, and the opening section is a virtuosic, dramatic introduction, Lisztian in texture, yet takes a more innovative harmonic approach and explores further the percussive possibilities of the piano. The chromatic language of the opening makes the harmonic, textural, and melodic simplicity of the quasi-folk theme even more marked, and the theme here recalls that of the *Slovácko* movement of *My May* from 1899 in its repeated melodic cells and off-beat accompaniment (music examples 8c).

Ex.8c: Novák, *Songs of Winter Nights*; (i) *Song of the Carnival Night*, opening section

Allegro burlesco, rubato

ff precipitando, non legato

⁴³These features can be observed in the piano works of Debussy that are contemporaneous with the *Songs of Winter Nights*, namely the first series of *Images* (1901–5) and the *Estampes* (1903).

Two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system shows a bass line with a triplet and a 'sotto' marking. The second system shows a treble line with a 'stretto' marking and a 'sopra' marking.

(ii) *Song of the Carnival Night*, 'quasi-folk' material in the subsequent *più mosso* section

Two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system includes a treble line with the marking 'p leggiero giocoso' and a bass line with a 'p' marking. The second system includes a treble line with a 'p' marking and a bass line with a 'p' marking.

(iii) *Song of the Carnival Night*, example of 'quasi-cadenza' passage

Three systems of musical notation for piano. The first system is labeled 'Quasi Cadenza' and includes a 'p' marking. The second system includes a 'f poco sosten.' marking. The third system includes a 'come sopra' marking and an 'aff' marking.

The *Songs of Winter Nights* demonstrate Novák exploring a more adventurous harmonic palette, and Vačková speaks of the *Song of Christmas Eve* as being the finest example of Novák's harmonic complexity and beauty.⁴⁴ The combination of this and the tone painting involved in creating the individual images of the cycle make clear why the composer was defined as an Impressionist as a result. However, these more innovative elements exist alongside techniques and textures that look back to Novák's approach in the *Sonata eroica*, and the use of thematic transformation continues to restrict melodic invention and leads to the composer using piano gestures and textures that are more akin to Liszt and Smetana than Debussy. In terms of what role this cycle plays in Novák's piano writing, in the exploration of images, a more innovative harmonic language, and thematic transformation within small-scale pieces, the work also constitutes a series of 'study sketches' for the work that was to be the culmination of his writing for the instrument: the tone poem *Pan*.

In between the *Songs of Winter Nights* and *Pan*, Novák completed works that demonstrate the different elements important in his compositional language. The song cycle *Údolí nového království* [The Valley of the New Kingdom] op.31 (1903) explores the Decadent introspection inspired by Novák's interest in Machar, Sova, and Ibsen, and the elements of description, pantheistic celebration of Nature, exploration of human emotions, and eroticism which began in the symphonic poem *In the Tatras* and continue in subsequent larger scale works. *Eternal Longing* (1903–5), *Toman and the Wood Nymph* (1906), and *Lady Godiva* op.41 (1907) are symphonic poems that explore similar themes of longing, passion, nature, and womanhood. In contrast, other works suggest that he had not left his Moravian and Slovakian enthusiasms behind and, throughout the period 1900–10, the composer was still working on 'folk-inspired' works (the *Slovácká suita* [Slovak suite] op.32 (1903), and the *Slovenské spevy* [Slovak songs] (1906)).

⁴⁴Vačková (1991), p.13.

Storm and Pan: Novák at the height of his creative power

The culmination of this period of Novák's life comes with the composition of works which gained him a central position in the development of Czech music in the twentieth century, namely *Bouře* [Storm – a sea fantasy for large orchestra, solo voices, and mixed chorus], op.42 (1908–10) and *Pan* [a piano tone poem in five movements] op.43 (1910). Lébl refers to this time as a 'první vrchol' ['first peak'],⁴⁵ a time when the composer was at the forefront of Czech musical life. Novák was, at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, Professor of Composition at the Prague Conservatoire (from 1909), a jury member for the Czech Chamber Music Society (from 1910) and, from 1910, had a publishing contract with Universal Edition of Vienna which vouchsafed the immediate publication of all of his orchestral pieces, guaranteeing international dissemination of his works.

Storm was written as the result of a request from the Brno Beseda⁴⁶ for a piece to celebrate their fiftieth anniversary, and this context is revealing of the status Novák had acquired at this time. The fact that the Brno Beseda had requested that Novák provide them with a celebratory work is proof of his status in contrast with that of Leoš Janáček (who lived and worked in Brno), and this further reinforces the idea that the development of Czech music in the first decade of the twentieth century was defined by Novák's approach, with the emphasis being upon the connection with contemporary European influences.

Novák was given almost total freedom when choosing the genre and subject for the work, and his choices reveal much about his aesthetic approach. The composer based his piece upon a poetic source by Svatopluk Čech,⁴⁷ yet Lébl notes the 'poetical poverty of the text'.⁴⁸ What seems to have attracted Novák was idea of the storm both as a natural power and a reflection of human emotions, and the combination of the description of natural forces

⁴⁵Lébl (1964), p.125.

⁴⁶As Tyrrell (2006) discusses, the primary meaning of the word 'beseda' is a friendly conversation or gathering but, in the nineteenth century, a subsidiary meaning for the beseda developed, namely as a type of social entertainment or informal concert. The Brno Beseda began in 1860, and Janáček conducted it during 1876–9, 1880–1, and 1883–8 (p.42).

⁴⁷Svatopluk Čech (1846–1908) was known during his lifetime as the 'last of the National Revival poets' (Tyrrell 1988, p.118): a novelist as well as a poet, his developed social awareness led him to explore more proletarian subject matter, thereby furthering the innovations in the continuing development of Czech opera.

⁴⁸Lébl (1964), p.135.

and the exploration of individual responses within a descriptive programme is a common theme in previous works. With this work, Novák became the symbol of novelty and progress in Czech music, and his status as a leading figure was cemented by the transference of the ideas and scale of *Storm* to the medium of solo piano. *Pan* (begun in April 1910, one month after the composer had completed *Storm*) was published in 1911, bringing further recognition for Novák.

***Pan*: the culmination of Novák's piano writing**

Novák's response to the subject of *Pan* had much in common with other composers of the period and indeed, this particular historical period is known for its connections with the Orient and Antiquity.⁴⁹ The myth of *Pan* is fundamentally concerned with Pantheism, and fuses nature, human emotions, and the figure of a Greek God who lived on Earth. The legend of *Pan* is also infused with eroticism, and this combination of godly distance from humanity and the incorporation of human emotions and desires provided Novák with a topic that contained many of his own personal enthusiasms.

Lébl states⁵⁰ that, in *Pan*, Novák creates a work which is a survey and synthesis of his previous compositional concerns. The work consists of five movements, namely a *Prolog* [Prologue], *Hory* [Mountains], *Moře* [Sea], *Les* [Forest], and *Žena* [Woman], and each movement draws on elements that had been explored previously in *In the Tatras* (with its evocation of mountains), *Storm* (and its depiction of the sea), *Toman and the Wood Nymph* (with the natural setting of the woodland), and *Eternal Longing* (in the eroticism associated with the depiction of female figures). *Pan* can thus be seen as both the culmination of and conclusive sequel to ideas and feelings evoked in many earlier works.

The titles of the individual movements build on images previously used by Novák, with each acting as a 'veil behind which any experience can be concealed'.⁵¹ The elusiveness of the titles, and their openness to different associations, meanings, and expressive states, has

⁴⁹Andraschke (1991), p.23.

⁵⁰Lébl (1968), p.31.

⁵¹Štěpán (1945), pp.24–5.

led some commentators to connect *Pan* with Symbolism, stating that ‘the association of mountains, sea, forests, and women introduce us to an equivocal world, halfway between real and figurative meaning’.⁵² In *Pan*, Novák does not rely on merely one significant epithet for each movement, and his main creative purpose is to explore and follow the rich variability of each depicted realm. The resulting work is ‘four musical pendants based on just one mood’,⁵³ (with the *Prologue* considered as an ‘overture’) and this is reflected in the monothematic musical structure. The names of the movements are also all impressions occurring under the unified breadth of Pan’s cult, namely the consciousness of man in contrast to bestial instinct, music, male power and dominance, and the erotic sensuality of the nymphs and their definition as both fragile beings and highly sexual, erotic females (this idea of the *femme fatale* was dominant in the Art Nouveau period, and would have been something Novák would have encountered in his study of *Salome*). The combination of these elements in a large-scale work for solo piano provides further evidence for the work as the culmination of both his writing for piano and the varied influences and ideas he had previously explored.

Despite the definition of Novák as the symbol of modern Czech music at the time of the composition of this work, the compositional techniques used to create *Pan* look back to the nineteenth century output of Liszt. Like the *Sonata eroica*, *Pan* is monothematic, but here Novák uses the technique differently in order to generate a greater diversity of thematic structures. Whereas in the sonata the initial thematic material remains relatively intact throughout the work, in *Pan* Novák defines the ‘motivic core’ for the work in the initial bars of the *Prologue*. This *foundation motif* consists of the intervals of a fifth, fourth, second, and ninth and, as well as being of supreme melodic importance, the harmonic element is also significant. The opening augmented fourth creates an initial atmosphere of tension, whereas the subsequent octaves and fifths give the impression of imitating the harmonic series, a ‘natural’ element possibly linked with the depiction of Pan. These opening bars can also be perceived as pentatonic, creating a connection between the *Prolog* and the *Sea* movement of the work (music example 9a).

⁵²Jarocinski (1976), p.ix.

⁵³Štěpán (1945), p.25.

Ex.9a: Novák, *Pan*; opening of the *Prolog*

The *Prolog* is the kernel of the entire work, and is an overture to the other movements, presenting fragments of the main themes presented in subsequent movements. Štěpán states that in this introductory movement ‘the dreamer can see four exciting paths’⁵⁴ and, in explicitly stating the foundation motif and the subsequent themes, Novák both provides the listener with a plan of the entire work (by providing them with ‘aural clues’ in the form of thematic fragments which are then presented in full in the subsequent movements) and makes clear the connection between the individual themes and their derivation from the foundation motif. This creation of an overture is further evidence of both Novák’s conservatism and his distance from the Symbolists, as his explicit stating of themes and thematic associations contrasts with their emphasis on allusion and suggestion.

In addition to presenting all of the subsequent themes of the work, the *Prologue* also depicts the figure of Pan. The *stesso tempo* section is defined by Štěpán as ‘the music of the birds and wind’,⁵⁵ and it stands apart from the opening section in its high register and compound time, creating associations with both Pan’s flute and the birdsong of his natural environment. The dominant intervals here are thirds, creating a distance between Pan’s material and the intervallic content of the foundation motif, which provides the source of the rest of the thematic material. The atmosphere of the woodland is made more explicit through

⁵⁴Štěpán (1945), p.25.

⁵⁵Štěpán (1945), p.26.

the use of 'cuckoo calls' beneath the semiquaver figuration which provides a sense of lightness and energy that characterises much of the opening movement (music example 9b).

Ex.9b: Novák, *Pan*; the *stesso tempo* section of the *Prolog*

Despite much of the *Prolog* depicting elements linked to Pan, Novák ensures that the significance of the foundation motif is not undermined by constantly stating it below a variety of figuration, from cascades of arpeggiation (depicting the playing of Pan's flute) to figuration that is reprised and extended in later movements. The *andante pastorale* presents 'Pan's theme' and the association with the flute continues in the decorative trills and quintuplets within an accompaniment based upon arpeggios (music example 9c). This theme continues in its independence from the foundation motif (although the LH presents the outline of a fifth, which is then undermined by a chromatic shift) although, as before, much of the associated figuration hints at developments in other movements (particularly the pentatonic cascades which look forward to the *Sea* movement). The *Moderato* section signals the beginning of the presentation of thematic fragments from subsequent movements in the

order of *Mountains, Sea, and Woman*, and the *Prologue* ends with the chordal theme from the *Mountains* movement, providing a sense of continuation into the next movement.

Ex.9c: Novák, *Pan*; *andante pastorale* material in the *Prolog*

The musical score for Ex.9c is presented in two systems. The first system features a right-hand melody with a 'poco ritard.' marking and a left-hand accompaniment of chords. The second system continues the piece with a 'tranquillo' marking. The score is in 4/4 time and includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and fingering numbers (3, 4, 5).

The *Prologue* therefore performs several functions. It presents the listener with the foundation material and the motivic core of the work in a setting that creates, in its harmonic ambiguity, a sense of drama and tension appropriate in such a large-scale work. In providing fragments of the main themes of subsequent movements, the *Prologue* also gives an overall plan of the work and demonstrates the motivic unity in the dominance of core intervals in all themes. Finally, it also depicts the figure of Pan, whose musical depiction seems to stand apart from the main thematic development, having a theme and figuration not based exclusively on foundation material, yet the way in which much of Pan's figuration links with accompaniment ideas found in subsequent movements depicts his connection with the natural environment.

The *Prologue* begins in F and ends with a D major chord, the dominant of the key of the subsequent movement. The image of the mountains depicted in this second movement would have had many personal connotations for Novák, recalling the time he spent in the Tatras whilst travelling through Moravia and Slovakia, and the themes used in this movement juxtapose the natural, physical features of the mountains with Novák's experience of folk musicians on his journeys through the area. The opening theme consists of two layers, both of

which are connected to the foundation motif. The LH theme takes the intervals of second, fourth, and fifth and combines them with typical Moravian folk rhythms, whilst the RH presents the interval of a fourth in chords which recall the rhythms of the opening theme of the *Sonata eroica*. However, the character here is different, and the contrasting dynamics between the hands would seem to suggest the ‘earthiness’ of the folk theme and the height and loftiness of the surrounding mountain environment. This opening material returns as a refrain throughout the movement, its static nature suggesting the immovability of the mountains (music example 10a).

Ex.10a: Novák, *Pan*; opening of the *Mountains* movement

The image shows a musical score for the opening of the 'Mountains' movement from Janáček's 'Pan'. The score is in 3/4 time and marked 'Quasi andante'. It features a piano (p) right hand with chords and a mezzo-forte (mf) left hand with a triplet arpeggio accompaniment. The left hand is marked 'ben ritmico' and 'con Ped.'.

Novák uses the foundation material to create a variety of themes in this movement. The *più lento* theme has a melodic outline based around fourths and seconds, and its stepwise root position harmonies and spread chords provide an atmosphere of contemplation upon the spirituality of the natural environment (an indication of Novák’s Pantheism). Subsequently, the *stesso tempo* section takes the rhythm of the opening LH theme and transforms it into quasi-scherzo dance form (exploiting the association of the Tatras and the folk music Novák would have experienced whilst exploring the area), and the *come sopra* takes the previous *più lento* material and sets it as an imitative *dolce, espressivo* theme, with the triplet arpeggio accompaniment recalling the textures and sounds associated with Pan in the *Prologue* (music examples 10b).

Ex.10b: Novák, *Pan*; (i) *più lento* theme from the *Mountains* movement

Musical score for Ex.10b (i), showing the *più lento* theme from the *Mountains* movement. The score is in 4/4 time and features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The tempo is marked *Più lento.* and the dynamics are *dolce* and *espress.*. The score includes markings for *poco rit.* and *a tempo*.

(ii) transformation of opening idea at the *stesso tempo*

Musical score for Ex.10b (ii), showing the transformation of the opening idea at the *stesso tempo*. The score is in 4/4 time and features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The tempo is marked *Stesso tempo, scherzando.* and the dynamics are *pp* and *non legato*.

(iii) further transformation of opening material at the *come sopra*

Musical score for Ex.10b (iii), showing the further transformation of the opening material at the *come sopra*. The score is in 4/4 time and features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The tempo is marked *Come sopra.* and the dynamics are *dolce espress.*.

A subsequent *Vigorous* idea is defined as the ‘theme of rebels’ by Štěpán⁵⁶ and, in its forceful *ff pesante* chords, this theme creates a link between the power and immovability of the mountains and the strength and courage of the Czech people (the association of the natural environment with nationalism recalling Smetana’s use of symbols such as castles and the river Vltava in *My Fatherland*) (music example 10c). The final *Maestoso* theme depicts the power and majesty of the mountains, and the bass register and thick, chordal texture stands in direct contrast to the high register and sparseness of the opening. The

⁵⁶Štěpán (1945), p 27.

accompaniment to this theme is derived directly from the fifths and octaves of the opening of the *Prologue*, and the melodic shape is based almost entirely on the core intervals of the foundation motif (music example 10d).

Ex.10c: Novák, *Pan*; *vigoroso* idea from the *Mountains* movement

Ex.10d: Novák, *Pan*; *maestoso* idea from the *Mountains* movement

The remainder of the movement consists of the recharacterisation of the themes outlined above, many of which also include elements of Pan's musical setting from the *Prologue*. *Più lento* material is transformed through the addition of demisemiquaver arpeggiation recalling Pan's flute, whereas the *stesso tempo* dance figuration is also decorated with the semiquaver figuration also previously associated with Pan. Novák creates a sense of momentum through the continual juxtaposition of different ideas in transformation and, following the above transformations, the 'theme of rebels' appears in rhythmic diminution with powerful chordal accompaniment, demonstrating its increased intensity (music example 10e).

Ex.10e: Novák, *Pan*; (i) 'theme of rebels' in rhythmic diminution in the *Mountains* movement

(ii) the 'theme of rebels' presented in imitation – *Mountains* movement

This theme is presented canonically towards the end of the movement (see music example 10e (ii)), almost imitating the sound of bells, its combination with a triplet accompaniment creating a sense of momentum that leads the movement to its climax, the final *Maestoso* which fuses together many previous elements in a 'song of Zarathustrian joy'.⁵⁷ Štěpán's reference to Strauss reinforces the similarities between him and Novák in their celebration of nature in the form of the tone poem. The final theme of the *Mountains* movement presents the 'theme of rebels' in the LH (its relationship to pealing bells made more explicit) against

⁵⁷Štěpán (1945), p.28.

the original *maestoso* theme combined with the opening LH theme (and the *stesso tempo* dance material) in the RH (music example 10f). An element of cyclic construction is also present in the reprise of the initial thematic material at the end of the movement. The movement thus starts and ends in G, and this harmonic stability both contrasts with the movement between keys found in other movements (*Forest* and *Woman*), and depicts the majesty and immovability of the mountains.

Ex.10f: Novák, *Pan*; the *maestoso* climax of the *Mountains* movement

The musical score consists of two systems of staves. The first system shows the right hand (RH) with a complex, rhythmic melody featuring many accents and the left hand (LH) with a steady, powerful accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Maestoso. (quasi)' and the dynamics are 'accentato assai'. The second system continues the piece, with the RH playing a similar rhythmic pattern and the LH providing a powerful accompaniment. The piece concludes with the instruction 'con tutta la forza'.

The appearance of the opening material of the *Mountains* movement at its end emphasises the contrast between this and the subsequent *Sea* movement, an element intensified by the tonal shift from G to F sharp. In this third movement, Novák builds on the powerful image of the sea presented in the *Storm*, and Štěpán refers to the sea depicted here as ‘the great, dark, eternally moving Atlantic Ocean, a sea of liveliness and glitter’.⁵⁸ Lébl states that it would be more likely that the movement recalls the North Sea, which the composer had experienced on his travels,⁵⁹ but whichever statement is true (and Novák never made an explicit statement concerning the movement’s programmatic source), the composer captures the power and eternal movement of the sea with virtuosic figuration recalling the piano writing of Liszt.

⁵⁸Štěpán (1945), p.29.

⁵⁹Lébl (1968), p.29.

The bass register of the opening (reinforcing the contrast with the 'lofty height' of the end of the *Mountains* movement) consists of interlocking octaves and cascades of passagework, creating an image of the sea through textural rather than thematic means. Harmonically, the opening of *Sea* is dominated by whole tone and pentatonic scales, with the rapid rise and fall of figuration depicting the restless movement of waves (music example 11a). This harmonic perspective is reinforced throughout the movement, and the main theme of the movement is also pentatonic in construction, with the accompaniment consisting of repeated whole tone scales (music example 11b). The thematic construction here is quite limited, and it would seem that Novák's focus for this movement was the creation of a virtuosic, powerful movement that exploits the piano's sonic and textural capabilities.

Ex.11a: Novák, *Pan*; opening of the *Sea* movement

Allegro spumante.

mf
con Ped.

Ex.11b: Novák, *Pan*; main thematic material of the *Sea* movement

non legato
sempre f

In the *Allegretto* section, Novák creates further a link between the *Sea* and *Mountains* movements, and this thematic transformation involves the ‘sea’ theme being set in compound time, in a chordal texture against a static bass note, recalling the ‘chorale’ *maestoso* theme of the previous movement, whereas the subsequent introduction of *scherzando* figuration also looks forward to the *tarantella* section of the *Woman* movement (music example 11c).

Ex.11c: Novák, *Pan*; *allegretto* material in the *Sea* movement

However, despite these efforts on Novák’s part to create connections between movements and exploit the virtuosic and sonic possibilities of the piano, because of the limited thematic material, the movement becomes immensely repetitive and the figuration, as Tyrrell states, ‘descends into a collection of tired Lisztian devices.’⁶⁰ In his dependence upon Liszt and nineteenth century models of piano virtuosity, Novák’s depiction of the sea lacks the innovative, luminous soundworld of some of Debussy’s piano works based upon the depiction of water (despite the pentatonic and whole tone harmonies creating a harmonic connection), providing further evidence of the Czech composer looking backwards to Romanticism rather than into the twentieth century.

The opening of the *Forest* movement is identical to the *Prologue*, and this reprise of opening material underlines the work’s monothematicism. The presentation of the augmented fourth in the opening also provides a connection with the previous movement, as the final F sharp of *Sea* is now enharmonically reinterpreted as a G flat, the darker flat colour

⁶⁰Schnierer/Tyrrell (2001), p.213.

creating a 'mood of intimacy and shadow'.⁶¹ Much of the first part of the *Forest* movement is based upon figural and textural areas, the arpeggiation and harmonic moveability of which recall the depiction of Pan in the *Prolog*, highlighting the association between Pan and the forest environment. The main theme of this movement is presented at the *dolce cantando* where the dominant intervals of the foundation motif are accompanied by thirds (reinforcing the connection with Pan, thirds being the focus of his music in the *Prologue*). This theme is then subjected to transformation, presented in heterophonic layers with a flowing arpeggio accompaniment, and then in an imitative, chordal setting, counterpoint and imitation here depicting the depths of the forest and its layers of activity (music examples 12a).

Ex.12a: Novák, *Pan*; (i) the *dolce cantando* theme from the *Forest* movement

The musical score for Ex. 12a (i) is written for piano. It consists of two staves. The right staff contains the melody, which begins with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. The left staff contains the accompaniment, which is a flowing arpeggio of the notes G, B, and C. The tempo and mood are marked 'dolce cantando' and 'p leggiero'.

(ii) first transformation of this theme

The musical score for Ex. 12a (ii) is written for piano. It consists of two staves. The right staff contains the melody, which is a transformation of the theme from (i). The left staff contains the accompaniment, which is a flowing arpeggio of the notes G, B, and C. The tempo and mood are marked 'a tempo, dolce' and 'ten.'.

⁶¹Štěpán (1945), p.31.

(iii) further transformation of the *dolce cantando* theme

The musical score consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system begins with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble staff starts with a melody marked *mp*, followed by a *cresc.* section. The bass staff provides harmonic support. The second system continues the melody, marked *calando* and *p dolciss.*, with the instruction *ben pronunziato*. The final part of the system is marked *un pochettino string.*

The connection between the music of the *Forest* movement and that of Pan presented in the *Prologue* is made more explicit at the end of the movement, where the accompaniment of Pan's theme reappears alongside the arpeggio figuration of the *Prologue* (compare music examples 9b and c with music example 12b below), and the final pages of the movement restate the foundation motif, creating a constant reinforcement of the connection of material with the opening of the *Prologue*.

Ex.12b: Novák, *Pan*; concluding *quasi andante* idea from the *Forest* movement

The musical score consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system is marked *Quasi andante.* and begins with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble staff features a melody marked *mf non legato* and *dolce espress.*. The bass staff provides harmonic support. The second system continues the melody, marked *dim.*

Further connections between the movements are created through the repetition of the *maestoso* mountains theme at the end of the *Forest* movement. The reprise of this material concludes the movement in F, both providing a further connection with the *Prologue* and

demonstrating Novák's creation of a cyclic harmonic progression through the first four movements. The *Prologue* begins in F and ends in G, *Mountains* remains in G throughout, *Sea* moves up a semitone to F sharp, which is then enharmonically reinterpreted as G flat in *Forest*, before descending down a semitone to the original key of F, the key which begins the final movement of the work.

The final movement of *Pan* is concerned with two main elements, namely the collision of masculine and feminine elements, and the exploration of different aspects of womanhood. The opening of *Woman* consists of two thematic areas, namely the masculine *agitato impetuoso* and the feminine *andante soave*. The juxtaposition of these themes reveals the different characteristics attributed to each sex, and the *agitato* theme outlines the intervals of the foundation motif in virtuosic alternating octaves (although the melodic element of the motif is secondary to the 'masculinity of Pan'⁶² depicted through the accents, speed, and low register), though is more significant as texture and sound than theme. In these elements and the F minor key it contrasts with the delicate and expressive *andante soave* theme, and this 'motif of sweet, meek, painful desire'⁶³ presents the intervals of the foundation motif against a chordal accompaniment, the chromatic shifts of which heighten the expressive potential of the thematic area. The key of E major presented here both creates distance from the 'masculine' F minor, and is also the key in which the work ends, depicting the all-consuming power of the feminine presence in this movement (music example 13a).

Ex.13a: Novák, *Pan*; opening of the *Woman* movement, presenting *agitato* masculine idea and *andante soave* feminine idea

Agitato, impetuoso.

The musical score shows the opening of the 'Woman' movement. It is written in bass clef with a common time signature. The top staff contains a melodic line with various dynamics and accents, including 'mf', 'cresc. molto', 'sfz', and 'mf'. The bottom staff contains a chordal accompaniment with similar dynamics. The tempo is marked 'Agitato, impetuoso.' and the key signature has one flat (B-flat).

⁶²Štěpán (1945), p.33.

⁶³Štěpán (1945), p.33.

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system is marked *ff non legato* and consists of a melodic line in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The second system is marked *Andante soave.* and includes dynamics such as *ff secco*, *mp*, *poco marc. espress. molto*, and *dim.*

Woman proceeds through the juxtaposition of these two thematic areas, with their elements fusing in a statement that combines chords against accented octaves, the drama of the union intensified through the subsequent virtuosic interlocking octaves. The initial *andante soave* is subsequently recharacterised, and the first transformation is as a dance, the original long chords reinterpreted as *animato* dotted rhythms, the triplet accompaniment both providing momentum and being associated with the masculine theme of the opening (music example 13b). The dance becomes defined explicitly as a *tarantella* in the next transformation (music example 13c), and the lightness, high register, and continual rhythmic movement of these sections is constantly interrupted by statements of the foundation motif (music example 13d). The triplets, lower register, higher dynamic, and slower tempo all depict the masculine here, the *passionato* indicating the eroticism of the interaction between the two elements.

Ex.13b: Novák, *Pan*; transformation of the *andante soave* idea into a dance character

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system is marked *a tempo, animato* and includes dynamics *mp* and *cresc. poco a poco*. The second system is marked *f* and features a melodic line in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand.

Ex.13c: Novák, *Pan*; further transformation at the *quasi una tarantella*

Quasi una Tarantella.

Ex.13d: Novák, *Pan*; 'interruptions' based around the foundation motif

The final section of the *Woman* movement is a 'gallery of female portraits',⁶⁴ and Novák explores the various characteristics of womanhood using the technique of theme and variations. The problem with using this technique at this point is that the whole (nearly) hour-long work has been about variation and transformation, and so ending the work with a series of variations further underlines the elements of repetition within the work. The *andante sostenuto* theme that forms the basis for the variations is in E major (the key associated with womanhood) and is linked with the foundation motif through the dominant intervals of fourth, fifth and second. It consists of two parts, the melodic contour and the accompaniment,

⁶⁴Štěpán (1945), p.32.

which consists of an ascending scale and a statement of the foundation motif (music example 13e).

Ex.13e: Novák, *Pan*; *andante sostenuto* theme from the *Woman* movement

Andante sostenuto con intimissimo

The musical score for Ex.13e consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system is marked 'espress.' and the second system is marked 'sentimento.' and 'cresc. poco a poco'. The music is in a 3/4 time signature and features a mix of chords and melodic lines.

The variations recharacterise this theme in a variety of ways, from the reprise of the tarantella, through the gentle *dolce armonioso* spread chords, to the *passionato* powerful octaves (with the scalic figure of the original transformed into an abrupt and dramatic demisemiquaver accompaniment). The *tranquillo* section begins a process of summation, recalling the theme of the *Forests* movement combined with the triplets associated with Pan (the masculine figure) at the start of the *Woman* movement (music example 13f). The original key of the 'female' theme (E major) returns in a powerful *ff* statement and is combined with the foundation motif from the *Prologue*, interrupted by fragments rhythmically defined by the original *andante soave* statement (music example 13g).

Ex.13f: Novák, *Pan*; *tranquillo* concluding section of the *Woman* movement

The musical score for Ex.13f consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system is marked 'Tranquillo. più dolce' and the second system is marked 'ritard.' and 'la melodia dolce cantando'. The music is in a 3/4 time signature and features a mix of chords and melodic lines.

A musical score for piano, consisting of two staves. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The upper staff features a melodic line with slurs and ties, while the lower staff provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. A dynamic marking of *poco a poco più espress.* is placed above the second measure of the second system.

Ex.13g: Novák, *Pan*; combination of 'female' theme and foundation motif, *Woman* movement

A musical score for piano, consisting of two staves. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The upper staff features a melodic line with slurs and ties, while the lower staff provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. A dynamic marking of *dimin.* is placed above the second measure of the second system. There are also markings for *m.s.* (mezzo sostenuto) and *mf* (mezzo-forte) in the lower staff.

The final pages create a 'coda' through the combination of spread chords (outlining the foundation interval of a fourth) above a dominant pedal and cascades of arpeggiac figuration (recalling the *Sea* movement). The last bars present harmonic shifts between F minor and E major, encapsulating the contrast between male and female that underpins the entire movement. The shift between D flat major and E major which constitutes the final cadence is also a reflection of the different harmonic settings of the female theme presented at the beginning of the movement (music example 13h).

Ex.13h: Novák, *Pan*; final bars of the *Woman* movement

A musical score for piano, consisting of two staves. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The upper staff features a melodic line with slurs and ties, while the lower staff provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. The score includes dynamic markings: *dolce*, *f*, *p*, and *pp*. There are also markings for *cresc.* (crescendo) and *largamente* (larghetto). The piece concludes with a triplets marking.

Although *Pan* represents the culmination of Novák's writing for the piano, it is a work with many limitations, and the composer recalls both his own *Sonata eroica* and the nineteenth century piano works of Liszt in his use of thematic transformation as the backbone of the work. Although *Pan* is more advanced in this technique than the previous Sonata (using a series of foundation intervals as the 'motivic core' rather than a pre-established theme), there is much repetition in the work. The final movement is a good example of this, being constructed from both thematic transformation and of theme and variation, with both techniques essentially operating from the same principle. The *Sea* movement depends far too heavily on the virtuosic piano textures and gestures of Liszt, again reinforcing the backward-looking element of the work. Indeed, much of the work is based on Romantic textures and figuration, meaning that it lacks the innovative explorations of the piano's sonic and textural capabilities undertaken by Novák's European contemporaries Debussy and Skryabin, and his fellow countryman, Janáček. An indication that Novák recognised that the piano textures themselves seem insufficient for a work of this scale can be found in the fact that he orchestrated *Pan* two years after its completion (in 1912).

Despite the above comments, *Pan* remains Novák's largest contribution to world piano literature, and is the most extensive Czech piano work of its time. The work combines Eros, myth, nature, and music and, in this, mirrors the turn-of-the-century thinking exemplified in the output of European contemporaries such as Debussy and Strauss. It also constitutes the culmination of Novák's compositional and aesthetic concerns throughout the first decade of the twentieth century, exploring facets of the natural environment and eroticism and emphasising the Pantheism so important to the composer. As with the *Songs of Winter Nights*, *Pan* combines many different elements. The technique of thematic transformation exists alongside the Classical procedure of theme and variation and a more innovative soundworld exploring pentatonic and whole tone harmonies, yet this is combined with piano textures defined by Lisztian virtuosity and extrovert Romantic figuration to create a work that draws on a number of different (yet inherently backward-looking) musical influences.

With *Pan* and *Storm* Novák's international fame and significant position in Czech culture was cemented. By 1912 he was a full member of the Czech Academy and, in 1913, he became an honorary member of the Umělecká beseda, also working regularly as a member of juries, judging prizes and competitions and thus setting the standard for future Czech music. This period also saw positive changes in his personal life and, in 1912, he married Marie Brašková and their happiness was increased in 1914 with the birth of a son, Jaroslav. This happy family life instigated a calm, peaceful period for Novák, and his wife and family were a constant source of support and inspiration for him.

The battle for Dvořák: Novák's fall from grace

It was this position of power and influence in Czech music that was to prove Novák's downfall, and he became involved in what became known as the 'Battle for Dvořák' (following his death in 1904). In 1910 two opposing musical camps were formed and their opinions were vented in contemporary musical journals. Zdeněk Nejedlý expressed his support for Smetana and Fibich, and was supported by the journal *Smetana* and the University Music Club. Challenging his opinions on the development of Czech music (in their support of Dvořák) were the journals *Hudební revue* and *Dalibor*, and this polemical battle culminated in a large protest on 15 December 1912 when a public letter was written against the figures of Nejedlý, Vladimír Helfert (1886–1945), and Josef Bartoš (1887–1952) challenging their criticism of Dvořák. This letter was signed by many, including Novák, and this began a battle of polemics around the composer's name which became distanced from the original disagreement and grew into an arena defined by personal insult and betrayals of trust.

This context led Novák to retreat into his own personal world and, whilst he continued to compose, he lacked a sense of direction. 1910 represented for Novák the zenith of his achievement and the culmination of a decade of upward movement. Lébl notes⁶⁵ that 1910 brought with it a crisis similar to that experienced by Novák in 1896, and at that time he

⁶⁵Lébl (1968), p.35.

was driven from that state by the powerful stimulus of native folk music. In 1910 he met with no such stimulus, and the works that followed represent Novák experimenting with a variety of directional possibilities. These works were *Na domácí půdě* [On Native Soil], op.44 (1911), *Exoticon* op.45 (1911), *Eroticon* op.46 (1912), and *Čtyři básně Otokara Březiny* [Four Poems by Otokar Březina], op.47 (1912). The piano cycle *Exoticon* illustrates the differences between Novák's writing at this time and that of a year earlier in the tone poem *Pan*. In this cycle, the composer fuses exotic foreign influences, making use of musical motifs and features from regions as diverse as India, Arabia, and China, with these diverse sources presented as a 'taster' of each country. As such, the cycle does not have the unifying elements and structural rigour of the previous works, and there is also a clear change in piano stylisation, which now lacks complexity and virtuosity. The harmonies are more straightforward, and contrast with the Lisztian chromaticism and Impressionism that had previously imbued Novák's thinking.

After *Exoticon*, Novák did not compose for the piano again until 1919, when he produced the *Šest sonatin* [Six Sonatinas] op.54 (1919–20) and the collection of miniatures *Mládí* [Youth] op.55 (1920). These pieces are beyond the scope of this study, suffice to say that the creation of an independent Czechoslovakia brought changes to Novák's status. The founding of the independent republic in 1918 brought with it an awakening of new music in Prague, with the International Society for Contemporary Music and the Society for Modern Music (the latter being a Prague institution) becoming significant. Prague in the 1920s became a crossroads for European modern music, with visits from Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and Hindemith provoking new ideas in the younger generation, and works such as the *Six Sonatinas* and the collection of miniatures entitled *Youth* demonstrate Novák's marginalisation within this environment. These works illustrate that the piano was, at that point, removed from the expression of modernistic thought and was resigned to the creation of teaching pieces, symbolising Novák's removal from the modernism sweeping through Prague and contrasting with his position at the height of his power and fame in the years between 1900 and 1910. From 1910, the piano ceased to be a significant medium for Novák, and David Yeomans remarks that 'although Novák seemed more progressive in his treatment

of the piano idiom than his contemporaries, his piano music does not run the full gamut of his career, nor does the piano seem to have been a consistent compositional vehicle for him'.⁶⁶ Novák's influence upon the development of Czech piano music was at its most powerful in the first decade of the twentieth century, and whether or not Yeomans's statement concerning the progressive nature of Novák's works at this time can be justified will be seen through a consideration of two other influential figures in Czech music during that decade: Josef Suk and Leoš Janáček.

⁶⁶Yeomans (2006), p.132.

CHAPTER 8

The piano music of Josef Suk: intimacy and autobiography

The piano was an important medium in which Josef Suk (1874–1935) expressed himself for most of his life, and its presence can be seen in Table 6. This may be seen as unusual for a composer who spent a significant amount of his life playing as part of a string quartet (the Czech Quartet), and the expectation would be that he would have written far more chamber music or music for solo string instruments as opposed to works for solo piano. Suk worked with larger scale forms and orchestral forces at an early stage in his compositional development, and this had an impact on his piano writing which, from the start, is on a larger scale and more virtuosic than that of his contemporary Novák. Oldřich Filipovský splits Suk's career into several distinct periods,¹ and the first (lasting until 1895) is defined as a period of beginnings and preparation, a time during which Suk was exploring ideas and styles during his period of study at the Prague Conservatoire (1885–1892). Piano and chamber works were dominant at this time, and demonstrate Suk's attachment to the Romantic style of salon piece during this period. Chamber works also occur, with the completion of the Quartet in A minor op.1 (JSK12,² 1891) and various *Balady* [Ballads] for string quartet (JSK6, 1890), cello and piano (JSK9, 1890), and violin and piano (JSK10, 1890). This early period also illustrates Suk experimenting with larger structures for orchestra, including the *Fantazie* [Fantasy] (JSK2, 1888) and *Serenáda* [Serenade] (JSK21, 1892), both for string orchestra, and a *Dramatická ouvertura* [Dramatic Overture] op.4 (JSK18, 1891–2) for large orchestra.³

¹These periods are discussed in Filipovský (1947), pp.11–12.

²The reference numbers provided for each work come from Zdeněk Nouza and Miroslav Nový: *Josef Suk: tematický katalog skladeb* [thematic catalogue of the works], Bärenreiter (Prague, 2005). This will hereafter be referred to with the abbreviation JSKat.

³The following texts proved useful in writing this introduction: Berkovec (1962), (1968), Filipovský (1947), and Budiš (1965).

Table 6: Suk's piano works in the context of his output as a whole

YEAR	PIANO WORKS	ORCHESTRAL/ ORCHESTRAL AND VOCAL WORKS	CHAMBER WORKS
1887	<i>Jindřichův Hradec</i> cycle (JSK 107)		
1888		Fantasy in D minor (JSK 2)	String Quartet in D minor (JSK 1)
1889		Funeral March (JSK 3) Mass in B flat major (JSK 4)	Piano Trio in C minor (JSK 5) op.2
1890	Fugues in C minor (JSK 7/8)		Ballads for String Quartet, Cello and Piano, and Violin and Piano (JSK 6, 9, and 10)
1891		<i>Dramatic Overture</i> (JSK 18) op.4 (1891–2)	Piano Quartet in A minor (JSK 12) op.1
1892	<i>Fantasy Polonaise</i> (JSK 19) op.5 Piano Pieces (JSK 26a) op.7 (1891–3)	<i>Serenade</i> (JSK 21) op.6	
1893			Piano Quintet in G minor (JSK 27) op.8
1894	<i>Moods</i> (JSK 31) op.10	<i>The Winter's Tale</i> (JSK 29) op.9 (1894–5)	
1895	Piano Pieces (JSK 36) op.12 (1895–6)		
1896			String Quartet no.1 (JSK 33) op.11
1897	Sonatina (see later revision as Suite) op.13	<i>Radúz and Mahulena</i> (JSK 38) op.13 (1897–8) Symphony in E major (JSK 40) op.14 (1897–9)	
1899		<i>A Fairy Tale</i> (JSK 43) op.16 (1899–1900)	
1900	Suite (JSK 46) op.21		
1902	<i>Spring</i> (JSK 49) op.22a <i>Summer Impressions</i> (JSK 51) op.22b	Fantasy in G minor (JSK 52) op.24 (1902–3)	

1903		<i>Scherzo fantastique</i> (JSK 53) op.25	
1904		<i>Prague</i> (JSK 54) op.26	
1905		<i>Asrael</i> (JSK 55) op.27 (1905–6)	
1907	<i>About Mother</i> (JSK 56) op.28	<i>A Summer's Tale</i> (JSK 57) op.29 (1907–09)	
1909	<i>Things Lived and Dreamt</i> (JSK 60) op.30		
1910			String Quartet no.2 (JSK 62) op.31
1912	<i>Lullabies</i> (JSK 68a) op.33 (1910–12)	<i>Ripening</i> (JSK 70) op.34 (1912–17)	
1919		<i>In a New Life</i> (JSK 73) op.35c (1919–20)	
1920	<i>About Friendship</i> (JSK 75) op.36	<i>Epilogue</i> (JSK 79) op.37 (1920–9)	
1923	<i>Episodes</i> (JSK 78a)		
1931		Mass in B flat major (JSK 4b – revision of JSK 1)	
1934		Funeral March (JSK 3b – revision of JSK 3)	
1935		<i>Sousedská</i> (JSK 81)	

Suk's commitment to a Romantic programme is evident in many works and, in addition to this, he was influenced by many different elements during this first period, with natural surroundings and literature being particularly significant. The movement of Decadence, prevalent at this time in Prague society (and influential upon Fibich and Novák), provided an atmosphere that emphasised pathos, pessimism, and a dark melancholy.⁴

Suk distanced himself from this mood of introspection and negativity and avoided the insecurity, crises and changes of direction that define Novák's development. Following this period of apprenticeship came a time of independence, a period in which Suk explored a number of different directions and ideas. His piano works from this time are defined by an investigation of larger, more abstract structures, collected together in the sets (a forerunner of the larger cycles that were to dominate his mature period) of op.10 (JSK31, 1894–5) and

⁴Berkovec (1962), p.49.

op.12 (JSK36, 1895–6) (the first set entitled *Nálady* [Moods], the second set given the more abstract title of *Klavírní skladby* [Piano pieces]), and an exploration of Classical forms, illustrated by the *Sonatina* in G minor (1897).⁵ The presence of such abstract Classical procedures is balanced in this period by the exploration of programmaticism and description, as demonstrated by the sketches for a cycle of symphonic poems *Ve stínu lípy* [In the Shadow of the Linden tree] (JSK402, 1896). The crowning work of the period (and one that was to have a significant effect on Suk's subsequent works) is *Radúz a Mahulena* op.13 (1897–8), incidental music written to the play by Julius Zeyer.

This second period encompasses two directions, one emphasising the structural and abstract concepts of Classical construction and the other focusing upon more descriptive, illustrative elements. The exploration of abstract Classical principles continued during Suk's next stage, in which he created larger scale piano works unified through musical means, as opposed to the collections of individual pieces that characterise the early output for keyboard. This is exemplified by the *Suite* op.21 (JSK46, 1900) and, subsequent to this, Suk infused these Classically-oriented forms with a greater degree of subjectivity in the cycles *Jaro* [Spring] op.22a (JSK49), and *Letní dojmy* [Summer Impressions] (JSK51) op.22b (both 1902) (the related opus numbers indicating the close relationship and connection between these two cycles, emphasising a large-scale approach to structure).

The death of Dvořák on 1 May 1904 was the first of two tragic personal blows that were to shatter Suk's world and, just over a year later, his wife (and Dvořák's daughter) Otylie [Otilie] died in July 1905. These deaths brought about a shift in emphasis in Suk's compositional development, which moved from an investigation of abstract formal principles to an exploration of his inner emotional world. The first work of this period was the *Asrael* symphony op.27 (JSK55, 1905–6), a five-movement work written as a celebration of the lives of Otilie and her father. The symphony is a grandiose expression of the magnitude of human suffering, and these sentiments become specific and personalised in the piano work that provides a counterpart to the symphony, the cycle *O matince* [About Mother] op.28, (JSK56,

⁵The *Sonatina* is not given a separate reference number in JSK, but is discussed under the JSK46 entry for the *Suite*.

1907). This work is a diary of images of his wife, shaped into a notebook of reminiscences for his son about the mother he would never get to know.

After the tragic events of 1904 and 1905, the piano became a vehicle of intimate expression for Suk, and this continues in the most substantial piano work of the final period, the collection of ten pieces entitled *Životem a snem* [Things Lived and Dreamt] op.30 (JSK60, 1909). This collection constitutes a continuation of Suk's healing process, and the many moods depicted contain occasional painful reminiscences but, on the whole, it is a looking back with a sense of irony and distance as opposed to the intense emotions expressed in *About Mother*. This collection and the symphonic poem *Zrání* [Ripening] op.34 (JSK70, 1912–17) are the two crowning achievements in this last period. Subsequently, Suk's compositional life began to slow down, and many of the other works from this time are smaller in scale (e.g. the *Ukolébavky* [Lullabies] op.33 (JSK68a, 1911–12) and *O přátelství* [About Friendship] op.36 (JSK75, 1920)) or are collections of pieces from various parts of Suk's life (the *Episody* [Episodes] (JSK78a), which bring together four pieces from 1897 to 1923).⁶ An explanation for this dying away of creative activity is hard to reach. It could be stated that practical commitments were a reason, yet his constant touring with the Czech Quartet had been a pressure on him throughout his life and, at any other point, he had composed fluently between rehearsal periods and in the holidays. Through his touring he would have come into contact with a great deal of new music, and maybe these contacts had made him rethink his direction and question his style. During his last phase of development, Suk's musical language had become increasingly complex, and the distance between the composer he had become and the simple son of a kantor he had started out as had become increasingly great. Table 6 illustrates the way in which Suk returned to 'old projects' at the end of his life, revising both JSK 1 and 3 in 1931 and 1934 respectively, and this may be seen as the composer's need to take refuge in the simpler language of his past rather than progressing forwards. As John Tyrrell proposes, 'the gulf between Suk the kantor and Suk the sophisticate was perhaps too great to bridge'.⁷

⁶These four pieces are *Andante* (the original third movement of the *Sonatina*) (JSK46/III), the *Ella Polka* (JSK58), *Lístek do památníku* (JSK72, 1919–20), and *O Štědrém dni* (JSK78, 1923).

⁷Tyrrell (2001), p.686.

The compositional development of Josef Suk: a comparison with Novák

A strong connection exists between these two composers, both through their chronological closeness and the fact that they were exposed to many of the same influences in their early lives. These similarities make even more interesting and revealing the fact that their musical developments take such different paths and that the works that they produced are so far removed from one another in terms of style.

Novák and Suk first became acquainted with each other in Dvořák's class in 1891 and, during this early stage, both concentrated on smaller forms. During this time (1890–1900), Novák focused on the descriptive, small-scale salon-style piece inspired by the models provided by his teacher Dvořák. In contrast, from the beginning Suk's pieces are more ambitious in terms of scale, texture, and harmonic inventiveness. The early *Jindřichohradecký cyklus* [Jindřichův Hradec cycle] (JSK107, 1887) and the op.7 collection of piano pieces reflect similarities with Novák, but with the *Fantaisie-Polonaise (Fantazie polonéza)* [Fantasy Polonaise] op.5 (JSK19, 1892) Suk created a more extrovert, large-scale piano work for which no parallel can be found at the same stage in Novák's output. Suk's harmonic approach is also more adventurous, and whereas Novák is content with a conventional tonal approach overlaid with chromaticism, Suk's style is defined by the creation of deflected harmonic goals and the use of chord progressions for purposes of colour through the creation of non-functional relationships.

Novák's compositional development comprises many changes in direction, and his style incorporates the features of chromaticism and programmaticism characteristic of late Romanticism, Moravian folk music, and the non-functional progressions and exploration of harmonic colour that define Impressionism. In contrast, Suk's development progressed along a much more unified path and, from the start, he sought out abstract developmental techniques and structures in order to move away from the descriptive Romantic salon piece popular at the time. This abstract thinking can be seen in the remodelling of the *Sonatina* into the *Suite* and, in the latter work, Suk creates a dramatic argument through the exploitation of register, texture, harmony, rhythm, and contrasting thematic areas.

Through *Spring* and *Summer Impressions*, Suk's language developed to include elements of Impressionism, fusing this with the abstract structural principles observed earlier in the Suite and a subjectivity derived from autobiographical events. Although Suk makes use of a wide range of motivic connections in these works, they are very different from Novák's contemporaneous work, the *Songs of Winter Nights*. Suk's technique at this point is defined by asymmetry, a lack of clarity in phrasing, unification through rhythm and texture (as opposed to recurring motif) and harmonic complexity (in some cases approaching bitonality). Suk's harmony is, at this point, 'surpassing contemporaries in other nations',⁸ and thus puts the Czech nation on the international map in terms of musical innovation.

Until this point, Suk's ideas and techniques progressed in a unified stream. However, the tragic deaths of Dvořák and Otilie overpowered Suk's creative abilities, and the organic process of healing from the personal wounds inflicted by these events broadened and infused his compositional language with an intensified autobiographical element. Because of the power of these events, the pinnacle of Suk's writing for piano (the cycle *Things Lived and Dreamt*) is significantly different to Novák's *Pan*, written at around the same time. This cycle demonstrates Suk's distance from Novák as a composer, and the former creates unity through dynamic curve, recurring rhythms, and harmonic pedals as opposed to the latter's reliance on recurrent motifs and monothematicism. Suk has a more mosaic-like approach to rhythm, his polyrhythmicity contrasting with Novák's cellular approach, and his polyphony is more unpredictable and asymmetric, with voices coming together, crossing, separating, interrupting, and linking in contrast to the broad streams in Novák's textures. Harmonically, Suk reached a high level of complexity, frequently creating separate harmonic bands, leading to the creation of a polytonal soundworld held together through the use of pedals. Despite the fact that 'temporal parallelness and a similarity of foundation create an exploration of similarity',⁹ beyond surface similarities of chronology and early education there are huge creative differences, an understanding of which will aid an appreciation of Suk's contribution to the development of Czech music.

⁸Štěpán (1945), p.12.

⁹Štěpán (1945), p.11.

From Křečovice to Prague: Suk's beginnings as a composer

Suk was born in the small Bohemian village of Křečovice on 4 January 1874 to a relatively musical family. His father trained as a kantor¹⁰ and awakened in the inhabitants a love of music, the result of which was the founding of a band that won immense renown. Suk's early musical activities involved having violin lessons at the age of six in 1880 and, shortly afterwards, he began to study the piano. His musical horizons expanded quickly, and his father took him to Prague, where they visited the National Theatre and watched many plays and operas. These visits made a great impression on the young student, and he continued his musical study with added zeal and enthusiasm, even completing some small compositions.¹¹ This enthusiasm led to him successfully completing the entrance examination for the Prague Conservatoire in July 1885 at only eleven years of age. The director of the Conservatoire at that time was Antonín Bennewitz,¹² an energetic and progressive musician who made many improvements to the Conservatoire, particularly in orchestral and chamber music activities.

His study at the Conservatoire introduced Suk to the concert life of Prague, and through these concerts he would have experienced a wide range of music, spanning Bach, Berlioz, and Wagner. He also made many significant friendships at the Conservatoire, the most important being with violinists Karel Hoffmann and Oskar Nedbal, and the cellist Otto Berger and, together with Suk, they formed the Czech Quartet in 1892. With Nedbal, Suk also played works from world literature arranged for piano duet (demonstrating his proficiency on the instrument), and through this medium became acquainted with Smetana, for whom he felt immediate enthusiasm. He saw *The Bartered Bride* on 16 October or 22 November 1886¹³ and described it as 'national music created with a burning head and a full heart.'¹⁴

¹⁰For a fuller discussion of the importance of the kantor tradition in the Czech lands, see the discussion in the final chapter.

¹¹The *Polka G dur* [Polka in G major] (JSK101, 1882) for violin and the Sonata for piano (JSK102, 1883), an Overture in D minor (JSK103, 1885), *Skladba B dur* [Piece in B flat major] (JSK104, 1886), *Skladba G dur* [Piece in G major] (JSK105, 1886–7), and a Polonaise (JSK106, 1886–7).

¹²Antonín Bennewitz (1833–1926) was an outstanding and experienced teacher: he was a professor at the Conservatoire between 1865 and 82, and was subsequently its Director between 1882 and 1901.

¹³Confusion over the date of this performance is noted in Berkovec (1962) p.21.

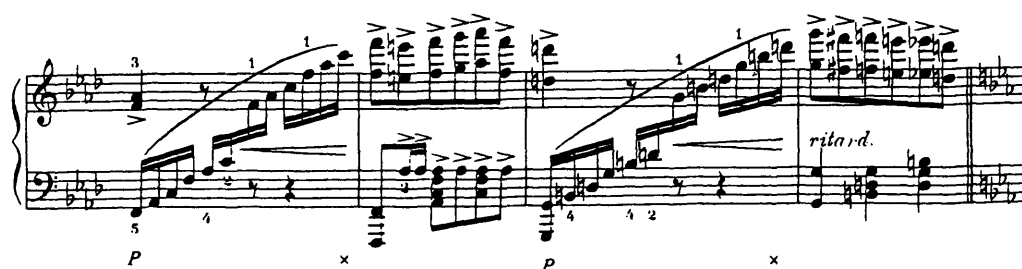
¹⁴Berkovec (1962) p.21.

During Suk's first year at the Conservatoire he completed no new compositions, and there is an absence of work between the pre-Conservatoire pieces¹⁵ and the *Jindřichův Hradec cycle* of 1886–7. This cycle (Suk's first serious composition) was inspired by the South Bohemian village where his sister Emilie was a teacher, and the simplicity of Suk's early style is illustrated in the cellular writing, clear sectionalisation, and well defined key relationships of the *Polonaise*, which has similarities with Smetana's early polkas. The use of this genre also recalls the virtuosic elements within Chopin's polonaises and, although Suk's piece is less extrovert than those of his Polish counterpart, there are seeds of the dramatic piano writing he would later develop in the *ff* arpeggios and accented octave passages (music example 1a).

Ex.1a: Suk, *Jindřichův Hradec cycle*; (i) no.1, *Polonaise*, bars 1–7

(ii) *Polonaise*, bars 10–17 of the trio, illustrating more virtuosic elements

¹⁵See footnote 11 above.



In addition to this overall acceptance of the Romantic conventions of piano writing, the third piece (*Adagio*) provides an example of Suk's response to a more Classically inspired style, with extended passagework and a consideration of polyphonic textures, which were to become more pronounced as his language developed (music example 1b).

Ex.1b: Suk, *Jindřichův Hradec cycle*; no.3, bars 18–25

Allegro vivace

The *Fantasy Polonaise* op.5 (1892) is Suk's first large-scale piece for piano, and the distance from the previous cycle can be seen in the more virtuosic style and greater textural experimentation. The opening demonstrates Suk's creation of a virtuosic and extrovert piano style at this stage, and is a dramatic area built around a dominant pedal, which consists of accented *marcato* chords and unison passages. The entry of the main polonaise theme after the 16 bar introduction presents all of the 'fingerprints' of the dance as developed by Chopin, consisting of repeated rhythmic cells accompanied by tonic and dominant harmony (with

occasional chromatic shifts), and supported by a constant LH accompanimental pattern (music example 2a).

Ex.2a: Suk, *Fantasy Polonaise*; opening section, illustrating introduction and *tempo di polonaise* theme

Allegro pomposo. (M. M. J. 112)

The musical score is written for piano and bass. It begins with the tempo marking "Allegro pomposo" and the number "112" in parentheses. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score is divided into five systems, each with a piano staff on top and a bass staff on the bottom. The piano part features a complex, rhythmic accompaniment with many slurs and accents. The bass part provides a steady accompaniment with a constant pattern of eighth notes. The score includes various dynamics such as *sf*, *p*, *m.d.*, *ff marcato*, *sf pesante*, *poco rit.*, and *ff*. It also features the instruction "tempo di polonaise" and "Da simile".

The consistently high dynamic and widely spaced textures of the opening gives way to a gentler, more lyrical section at the *l'istesso tempo*, where the drama of the first section is replaced by delicate decorative figuration and a waltz-like accompaniment (music example 2b). Suk mirrors Chopin further in the creation of chromatic harmonic sequences, and there are elements of the accompanimental figuration in this section that recall the Polish composer's mazurkas (music example 2c). The final section reprises the extrovert writing of the opening, with the final page juxtaposing different moods and expressive states, contrasting *meno mosso* and *andante* areas with the *vivace* accented chords and *accelerando* passagework. This creates a fitting ending to a work designed for the concert platform which betrays the influences of both Chopin and Smetana (particularly in the first series of *Czech Dances*), demonstrating the distance between Suk and Novák at this stage of their developments, with Novák's introspective, small-scale works inspired by Romantic poetry contrasting with Suk's larger scale, more dramatic and extrovert style.

Ex.2b: Suk, *Fantasy Polonaise*; *l'istesso tempo* section

The musical score for Suk's *Fantasy Polonaise*, *l'istesso tempo* section, is presented in four systems. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo and mood are indicated as *L'istesso tempo. espress. tranquillo*. The score begins with a forte (*ff*) dynamic, followed by a *decresc. rit.* (decreasingly ritardando) leading to a mezzo-forte (*mf*) and then piano (*p*) dynamics. The accompaniment features a waltz-like feel with a steady bass line and a more melodic upper line. The score includes various musical notations such as *decresc. rit.*, *(mf)*, *(p)*, *P*, *P simile*, and *pp*. The piece concludes with a final cadence.

Ex.2c: Suk, *Fantasy Polonaise*; illustration of chromatic harmonic sequences

The image displays a musical score for Suk's *Fantasy Polonaise*, illustrating chromatic harmonic sequences. The score is presented in three systems, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system features a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes markings for *poco cresc.* and *cresc. appassionato*. The second system shows *accelerando*, a forte (*f*) dynamic, and a *pesante* (heavy) character. The third system includes *ff* (fortissimo), *f*, *largo*, and *Molto tranquillo.* markings. The score is characterized by complex chromatic harmonic progressions and a variety of dynamics and articulations.

Subsequently Suk developed these ideas within bigger structures, and created sets of pieces. The first of these is the *Klavírní skladby* [Piano Pieces] op.7 (JSK26a, 1891–3),¹⁶ and this collection brings together six pieces composed over a period of two years. The earliest is op.7 no.6 (the *Capricietto* (JSK15), originally entitled *Melodie*, composed in 1891), followed subsequently by the *Idylky* [Idylls] (JSK17, 1891–2), and the *Dumka* (JSK22, 1892). Op.7 nos 2 and 3 (the *Vzpomínky* [Reminiscences] JSK24 and the *Humoreska* JSK25) were written in 1893, and the final number, the *Píseň lásky* [Song of Love] (JSK26) completed the op.7 collection, which was published as a whole in 1894. What is demonstrated by this chronology is that Suk in no way intended the collection to be any kind of unified cycle and there are no musical connections between the pieces. Evidence that the pieces were predominantly

¹⁶This set of pieces brings together JSK15, 17, 22, and 24–6.

performed separately can be found in the fact that the op.7 collection was only performed as a whole on 13 April 1918.¹⁷

The op.7 pieces demonstrate significant developments in Suk's writing for the piano, and many of these can be seen as a result of the composer's creation of orchestral works during this period (the *Dramatická ouvertura* [Dramatic Overture] JSK18, 1891–2 and the orchestral *Serenáda* [Serenade] JSK 21, 1892), and the exploration of orchestral timbres and textures can be seen in the more complex textures and advanced harmonic language of the op.7 pieces. This more adventurous approach can be demonstrated in op.7 no.1, which is one of Suk's most famous pieces, the *Song of Love*. This piece is one of the few illustrations of Suk's interest in monothematicism, a method of working with themes that would presumably have been learnt during the course of his classes with Dvořák, and a technique that was dominant in the works of Novák. Harmonic invention is a feature, with progressions moving over a tonic pedal decorated with chromatic linear chords, lengthened appoggiaturas, and enharmonic connections, all of which create an evocative language perfect for the expression of the first love of the composer.¹⁸ The piece contains a variety of textures, and an 'orchestral' approach can be found in the F major section of the piece, which consists of a more polyphonic, multi-layered texture, with Suk establishing thematic lines in all registers of the instrument. The elements of virtuosity and extrovert writing observed in the *Fantasy Polonaise* are also present here, with accented chordal and octave passages being combined with a more complex textural and harmonic world to create a dramatic and virtuosic statement (music example 3a and b). The theme presented at the beginning of this piece is one that was to be significant in Suk's later output, and he uses it as a quotation in many of his later works (see particularly *Spring*, *About Mother*, and *Things Lived and Dreamt*), creating a musical language that is self-referential.

¹⁷In a concert given by Václav Štěpán at the Central Hotel in Prague. Details of this and further performances of the op.7 collection can be found in Nouza and Nový (2005), p.78.

¹⁸As suggested by Filipovský (1947), p.23.

alternating octaves in the RH (a technique which recalls the sound of the cimbalom)²⁰ and the addition of a countermelody in the middle of the texture (music examples 4a).

Ex.4a: Suk, op.7 no.5, *Dumka*; (i) original opening theme and decoration with octaves

Andante

p *P* *P simile* *sf* *pp*

(ii) third presentation of theme, with the addition of a counter-melody

cresc. *molto espress.* *p* *mf* *pp* *pp rit.*

P *# P* *# PP #*

²⁰The role of the cimbalom in the Moravian folk ensemble will be discussed in the subsequent chapter, but there is no evidence to suggest that Suk would have had any direct experience of this instrument at this point.

The dark atmosphere created through the rhythmic ostinato in the LH and the minor tonality is lifted in the middle *allegro* section, which provides a gentler and more lyrical interpretation of dance rhythms (using characteristic polka rhythms) (music example 4b). The final section mirrors Suk's technique in the *Fantasy Polonaise*, whereby different expressive states are juxtaposed for dramatic effect. In the *dumka*, the *ff appassionato* widely spaced textures are contrasted with the *ppp* ending, which shifts to the tonic major, injecting a note of positivity into a predominantly dark expression of Slavic oppression (music example 4c).

Ex.4b: Suk, op.7 no.5, *Dumka*; central *allegro ma non troppo* section

Allegro ma non troppo

p *P simile* *p* *P simile*

Ex.4c: Suk, op.7 no.5, *Dumka*; dramatic juxtaposition of contrasting areas, final page

Andante

p *P simile* *ff appassionato* *p* *Largo* *ff marcato ad libit.* *ritard.* *f* *mf* *p rit.*

*

Through the opp.5 and 7 pieces, Suk's early style of writing for the instrument is established, and elements that are instantly recognisable are harmonic adventurousness and a propensity towards creating virtuosic and dramatic pieces, factors which lead to Suk's piano works standing out from the small-scale salon works dominant in the output of his contemporary Novák at this stage. The composer's general lack of dependence upon any kind of programme in the early stages of his development also provides a further element of differentiation from the programmatic works of Dvořák, Fibich, and Novák.

The 'time of independence': the duality of abstract structure and programmaticism

The next piano work in Suk's output is the collection of *Nálady* [Moods] op.10 (JSK 31 1895) and, with this set of pieces, the composer builds on elements found in the earlier works in the creation of larger structures that have greater dramatic force and harmonic complexity. This collection also demonstrates Suk's awareness of the output of other Czech composers in his adoption of descriptive titles for the pieces (e.g *Legenda* [Legenda], *Jarní idyla* [Spring Idyll], *Romance*). Prior to the creation of this set of piano pieces, Suk had composed the concert overture *Pohádka zimního večera* [The Winter's Tale, op.9] (JSK29, 1894), which was premiered at the Prague Rudolfinium on 7 April 1895 and had further performances in August and September of that year as part of the Czech Ethnographic Exhibition (providing evidence of Suk's status at this point).²¹ *The Winter's Tale* was Suk's first piece of explicit programme music and, in creating a concert overture, he was connecting himself with contemporary Czech music, particularly the output of his teacher Dvořák (whose concert overtures were composed in 1891–2). The piano *Moods* can be seen as Suk's transference of these ideas onto the medium of solo piano, and the pieces are given titles typical of the character pieces created by Dvořák in the *Poetic Tone Pictures* and Novák in the *Reminiscences* and *Serenades*. Suk's titles are less explicit, perhaps giving an indication that his previous concern for a more abstract musical language was still present.

²¹Further details of this performance can be found in Nouza and Nový (2005), pp.93–4.

The op.10 collection presents Suk's language in a period of transition, and the pieces bring together a range of different characteristics. No.1 *Legende* evokes the historical perspective of a legend with the quasi-harp spread LH chords, and the musical development is dependent upon the opening theme which is subjected to a diverse number of settings (music example 5a). This thematic transformation allows Suk to explore different textures, and the theme is presented in the LH with a RH countermelody and in a C sharp minor setting which exploits register and creates further counter-melody material (music examples 5b and c). This section is harmonically adventurous, with Suk exploring a range of keys in quick succession (pre-empting the harmonic instability that would characterise his later works), and this precedes the reprise of material in the original key of D flat major with a combination of arpeggios and spread chords in the accompaniment (music example 5d).

Ex.5a: Suk, op.10 no.1, *Legende*; presentation of opening theme

Andante espressivo

The musical score for Ex.5a shows the opening theme of Suk's 'Legende'. It is written for piano in C sharp minor, 3/4 time, with a tempo marking of 'Andante espressivo'. The score consists of two staves: a treble clef staff for the right hand and a bass clef staff for the left hand. The left hand features a quasi-harp spread chord texture, with notes often beamed together. The right hand plays a countermelody. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. Dynamics include piano (p) and piano sempre (P sempre). There are also some performance markings like 'x' and 'P' at the end of the excerpt.

Ex.5b: Suk, op.10 no.1; first transformation of opening material

The musical score for Ex.5b shows the first transformation of the opening material. It is written for piano in C sharp minor, 3/4 time. The score consists of two staves: a treble clef staff for the right hand and a bass clef staff for the left hand. The left hand features a more complex texture with arpeggios and spread chords. The right hand plays a countermelody. Fingerings and dynamics like 'p', 'espr.', 'cresc.', and 'x' are indicated. There are also performance markings like 'rit.' and 'a tempo'.

Ex.5c: Suk, op.10, no.1; C sharp minor setting of opening material

Ex.5d: Suk, op.10, no.1; reprise of material in the original D flat major

What is evident in this first piece is the way in which Suk explores a more complex chromatic harmonic language, and this complexity is, to some extent, a by-product of his more adventurous approach to texture. His awareness of the development of individual lines within a texture can maybe partially explained through his performance activities as, from 1892, Suk was a member of the Czech Quartet, and through playing as part of an ensemble his perception and awareness of individual lines would surely have been emphasised.

Legend presents a variety of textures, ranging from conventional Romantic arpeggiation to more complex contrapuntal combinations, within a piece that exploits the

piano's register to create an extrovert and dramatic work. The more chromatic harmonic language found in this first piece is developed further in op.10 no.3, *Romance*, which is also based on thematic transformation, demonstrating Suk's further exploration of the piano in terms of texture and register. The opening of no.3 contains chromatic bass progressions (E–E sharp – F sharp) leading to a cadence point in B major, yet the I_{6-4} –V cadence in bar 4 is instead deflected through the presence of a D sharp major triad (the raised third implying G sharp minor) which then becomes V_7 in E major, deviating from the implied harmonic goal of B major. The opening theme is then repeated against a different harmonic background, which continues the chromatic linear movement of the first phrase and culminates in a dominant seventh chord in E major. This then leads to a reprise of the whole of the first section, with an identical harmonic foundation, until a C major chord leads to F major, initiating a chromatic progression which ends with the B major triad that has been expected since the outset, yet has been constantly deflected (music example 6a).

Ex.6a: Suk, op.10, no.3, *Romance*; opening section

Andante con moto

The musical score for the opening section of Suk's *Romance* (op.10, no.3) is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 1-4) begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes markings for *espress.* and *cresc.*. The second system (measures 5-8) includes a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and *cresc.* markings. The third system (measures 9-12) includes markings for *ff decresc.*, *p*, *rit.*, and *a tempo*. Fingerings and articulation marks like 'x' are present throughout.

The harmonic language is controlled and connected in a skilful way by Suk, who employs the delay and deflection of harmonic goals, enharmonic connections, chromaticism, and non-

functional chords to create a highly expressive effect. The middle section of this ternary structure further explores this more adventurous harmonic structure within a more complex texture defined by the creation of counterpoint lines. The reprise of the opening material in the final section takes initial thematic and harmonic material and develops it through a more decorative texture thickened through Romantic arpeggiation, illustrating further Suk's creation of pieces containing diverse textures and styles (music example 6b).

Ex.6b: Suk, op.10 no.3; reprise of opening material

The definition of the collection of *Moods* as transitional and experimental is reinforced with reference to the final number *Jarní idyla* [Spring Idyll], which creates a musical depiction of a renewal of life and awakening of energy in a texture akin to that of a Chopin impromptu. Basic tonal harmonies are overlaid with chromaticism, with the sense of energy and momentum provided by the continual triplet accompanimental figuration (music example 7a). As in many other pieces from the op.10 collection, Suk uses a ternary structure, and the middle section illustrates the composer's approach to descriptive writing, using a change of register and decorative RH figuration to suggest birdsong (music example 7b). The continuation of triplet accompanimental figuration creates a link with the first section, whilst its incorporation of dotted rhythmic figures creates a parallel with dance rhythms, reinforcing the energy of natural renewal and awakening. This element of description becomes more marked in the later works of Suk as he moves towards the more subjective style of *Spring* and *Summer Impressions*.

Ex.7a: Suk, op.10 no.5, *Spring Idyll*; opening bars

The musical score for Ex.7a shows the opening bars of Suk's 'Spring Idyll'. It is written for piano in 3/4 time, marked 'Vivace' and 'p'. The score consists of two systems of music. The first system has a treble clef with a melody starting on a quarter rest, followed by eighth and sixteenth notes, and a bass clef with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system continues the melody and accompaniment with more complex rhythmic patterns and fingerings. Dynamics include 'p' and 'p_x'.

Ex.7b: Suk, op.10 no.5; contrasting material in the middle section

The musical score for Ex.7b shows a contrasting middle section of Suk's 'Spring Idyll'. It is written for piano in 4/4 time, marked 'a tempo' and 'p'. The score consists of two systems of music. The first system has a treble clef with a melody starting on a quarter rest, followed by eighth and sixteenth notes, and a bass clef with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system continues the melody and accompaniment with more complex rhythmic patterns and fingerings. Dynamics include 'p', 'p_x', and 'cresc.'.

Moods is an experimental collection that demonstrates the composer trying out styles, textures, structures, and harmonies. Suk continued in a similar vein in the subsequent op.12 collection. The fact that the composer had no intention of creating a musically unified piano cycle is demonstrated by the fact that op.12 no.6 was originally intended as part of the op.10 collection (entitled *Honba za motýlem* [Chasing a Butterfly]),²² and a complete performance of the pieces did not occur until 1923. Despite the dedication of the collection to Otilie, the title's lack of descriptive connotations would seem to indicate Suk thinking in a more abstract way, something which is reinforced by the fact that the composer turned to the genres of Sonatina and Suite in his subsequent piano works.

Op.12 no.1 illustrates the different musical styles explored by Suk in this collection, as it establishes two distinct areas within a ternary structure. The framing outer sections reinforce many elements observed in the opp. 7 and 10 collections, being based around a texture stabilised with a dominant pedal, above which Suk creates contrapuntal movement. There is a characteristic avoidance of any clear statement of the tonic, the harmonic

²²Nouza and Nový (2005), p.121.

movement instead being deflected to the relative major of F before a restatement of a texturally thickened opening idea (music example 8a). The composer explores tonally remote areas through chromatically altered chords, culminating in a *ff* statement which still lacks harmonic stability through the lack of a clearly outlined tonic (music example 8b). This opening material functions as an introduction to the subsequent section which, in contrast, is harmonically stable, and texturally less complex.

Ex.8a: Suk, op.12 no.1; opening statement of the theme

Ex.8b: Suk, op.12 no.1; *ff* climax of the opening section

The middle section quotes the folk song *Loučení, loučení* [Farewell, farewell], derived from Erben.²³ The use of this pre-existing material is musically ‘marked’ by Suk

²³Suk quotes no.356 from Erben’s *Nápěvy prostonárodních písní českých* [Melodies of Czech Folksongs].

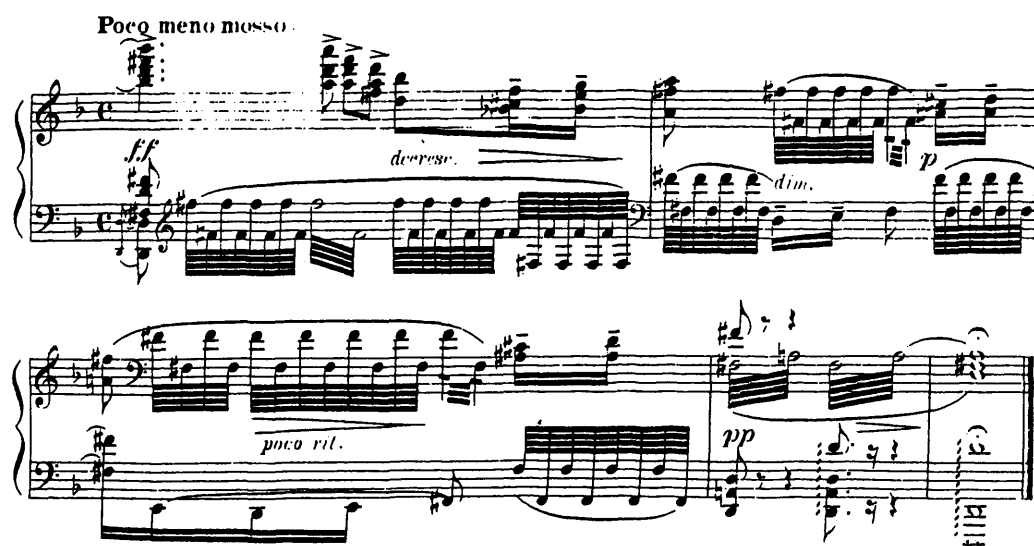
through the clear D major tonality and simpler texture (with an absence of counterpoint), which provides an example of the composer injecting a layer of meaning into an otherwise abstract musical structure (music example 8c). The final section returns to abstract concerns as material from the opening section is combined with the folksong quotation, the latter being transformed through the minor key, the addition of more chromatic inner voices, and a greater sense of drama created through the widely spaced textures and *ff* dynamic, leading to a coda that resolves the conflict between the two sections through combining texture and drama from the framing sections with the major key of the folksong quotation (music example 8d).

Ex.8c: Suk, op.12 no.1; quotation of Erben folksong in the middle section

The musical score for Ex.8c is presented in two systems. The first system shows the piano introduction with a 'rit.' marking and the beginning of the folksong quotation in 'pp espress.' dynamics. The second system continues the folksong quotation, marked with 'cresc.' and 'f' dynamics, leading to the end of the section.

Ex.8d: Suk, op.12 no.1; final section of the piece, illustrating the combining of elements

The musical score for Ex.8d is presented in two systems. The first system shows the piano introduction with 'a tempo' and 'pp tranquillo' markings, followed by a section with 'puro a' and 'puro cresc.' markings. The second system continues the final section with 'f' and 'cresc.' markings, leading to the end of the piece.



Suk's absorption of Erben's material into the above piece creates a further difference between him and Novák. Whereas the latter experienced a change of style in 1896 as a result of his travels through Moravia, Suk's musical development never underwent such dramatic changes of style and, in particular, Czech folk music was never a focus. The use of Erben in op.12 no.1 may have inspired Suk's next piece, a choral work for male voices entitled *Nechte cizích, mluvte vlastní řečí* [Speak Your Own and Not Foreign Tongues] (JSK35, 1896) and, indeed, op.12 no.2 is an example of a harmonically and texturally simpler style of writing, which may have been the result of Suk's experience with folk sources. The *Vesnická serenáda* [Village Serenade] (JSK37, 1897) also illustrates this stripped-down style and shows the composer's musical response to folk collections during this period. A possible explanation for Suk's concern with collections of folksong during 1895–7 could be the Ethnographic Exhibition which took place in Prague in 1895, an event which may have sharpened the focus of the composer's nationalist consciousness.

The op.12 collection also demonstrates Suk's continuing exploration of dance forms, with op.12 no.8 being another *dumka* (reinforcing the previous example found in op.7 no.5). However, the use of the genre in this collection is distinctly different from its previous setting, as it is combined within a theme and variation structure, with the *dumka* constituting the theme which is then subjected to various transformations. The piece therefore brings together a number of different concerns, fusing a nationalistic element within a Classical variation structure which enables Suk to continue his exploration of the textural possibilities

of the piano. The gravity and importance of the opening dumka statement is communicated through the thick textured *tenuto* chords combined with chromatic voice-leading above a tonic pedal (music example 9a).

Ex.9a: Suk, op.12 no.8; opening thematic statement

Andante.

This distinctly unpianistic texture is set apart from the variations, which create progressively thicker textures through the addition of counter-melody lines and enliven the texture through rhythmic diminution. This building up of textural complexity stalls with variation IV which presents a traditional waltz texture, followed by a quasi-scherzo setting in variation V (music example 9b and c). Both of these variations demonstrate Suk's exploration of different styles and textures within a Classical structure, and the scherzo and waltz settings present simpler textures and harmonies to those found in other pieces from the collection.

Ex.9b: Suk, op.12 no.8; opening of variation IV

Moderato. (♩ = ♩)

Ex.9c: Suk, op.12 no.8; opening of variation V

Allegro vivace.

The musical score shows two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system is marked 'p' and the second system is marked 'pp'. Both systems feature a complex, rhythmic melody in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand. The tempo is 'Allegro vivace'.

What the op.12 collection demonstrates is Suk combining and fusing different musical styles and ideas. The quotation of Erben in no.1 and the use of the dumka in the final number illustrate Suk's concern with folk sources, whereas the use of Classical theme and variation form suggests that these materials are explored within an abstract, more Classical musical language, and this element is reinforced by the lack of titles or descriptive programmes in the op.12 collection (making it distinct from the descriptive *Moods* of op.10). The pieces are also marked by a greater textural and harmonic simplicity, and this suggests a focus upon Classical clarity in Suk's musical language. The op.12 pieces also demonstrate the composer experimenting with the piano's registral and textural possibilities to create a range of expressive moods (from the introspective use of register and a more contrapuntal texture of no.3, to the quasi-scherzo ideas of no.6), and no.5 in particular illustrates the changeability of mood and flexibility in the exchange and juxtaposition of ideas that characterise Suk's later output. The op.12 collection, in its combination of elements, points the way towards the next period in Suk's musical language, one that was to develop further the idea of abstract construction within large-scale Classical structures.

From *Sonatina* to *Suite*: an illustration of Suk's developing structural ideas

Following on from the op.12 collection, Suk continued in his exploration of Classical structures in the creation of a *Sonatina* (1897). However, this work was never published, and the completion of extensive revisions led to the work's redefinition as the *Suite* in 1900, with much being revealed about Suk's changing and developing individual style in a comparison of these works. Whilst composing the *Sonatina*, the composer was also creating a work which was to provide a defining point in his musical life. *Radúz a Mahulena* op.13 (JSK38, 1897–8) is based on a theatrical fairy tale by Julius Zeyer, and Suk was commissioned to write the incidental music for the premiere of the work at the National Theatre in 1898. Perhaps the most significant element of Zeyer's tale is its Slovak element, and Suk responds to this in a variety of ways, incorporating Slovak folk songs²⁴ alongside quasi-polka sections and choral writing, thereby creating a musical language which abounds with national symbols and references.

Suk defined this work as a turning point, stating 'spring in the soul, spring in the music. I can say that in the music for *Radúz and Mahulena* I found myself, and that the work affected my compositional style for many years [...] the motifs of love and the motif of death [...] would accompany me through the period of my maturity to the end'.²⁵ Indeed, much of the music presented in *Radúz and Mahulena* was to be used by the composer as a thematic/motivic resource for many years to come, and there are quotations from this work in much of the composer's later output, reinforcing its significance in his development. The connection with Julius Zeyer was Suk's only important literary influence, and it would seem that it also had autobiographical links, with Suk seeing himself and Otilie in the title roles. Therefore, *Radúz and Mahulena* brings together a number of strands crucial in Suk's future development, namely the combination of styles (as a result of his experience of the Slavonic world of the fairy tale) and the concern with programmatic and descriptive elements (incorporating autobiographical features) which, in turn, provide motifs that are essential for

²⁴Details of these can be found in Nouza and Nový (2005), p. 126.

²⁵Nouza and Nový (2005), p. 139.

an understanding of the later music, in which Suk's style became increasingly self-referential.

The creation of music with a specific programme contrasts with the creation of abstract music in the *Sonatina*. This work was composed in 1897 when the composer was in Amsterdam touring with the Czech Quartet, and Suk did not return to the work until 1900, at which time he replaced much of the old material and made additions to that which remained. In the process of doing this Suk moved towards a new method, and the works completed between the *Sonatina* and *Suite* illustrate the influences and directions in the composer's development during this period. The majority of the works show Suk's concern with Slavonic subjects (with JSK41, 44, and 45 all being settings of Czech, Slavonic, and Serbian folksongs), and this involvement with folk sources is combined with a concern for Classical structure, as demonstrated in the composition of the *Symphony in E major* (JSK40, 1897–9). The combination of these elements creates a connection with the work of Dvořák, whose own 'folk' period coincided with an adoption of the Classical approach of Brahms (and a turning away from Wagnerian elements). Suk also uses the form of the *Suite*, creating a counterpart with Dvořák's *Suite in A* from 1894.

The use of Classical formal structures at the turn of the century is an element that unites both Suk and Novák (with the latter creating the *Sonata eroica* in 1900), and it would seem that the use of established genres by both composers is a result of their engagement with folk sources. However, Suk's *Suite* is distinct from Novák's *Sonata* in that it lacks any kind of programme. Novák uses a folksong quotation as the basis for a monothematic sonata, creating an essentially Romantic example of the form and using the technique of thematic transformation to depict the external programme. In contrast, Suk's work is completely abstract, and he retains features of the original Classical form, creating a large-scale, four-movement work, with the only explicitly Slavonic reference being the *dumka* of the third movement. The works thus perform a different function in the output of Suk and Novák. For the latter, the *Sonata eroica* demonstrates both a connection to Romanticism and the composer's essentially conservative outlook whereas, for Suk, the exploration of Classical structures gave him the ability to create larger scale, dramatic works, enabling him

to progress to the subjective, yet musically integrated, cycles of *Spring* and *Summer Impressions*.

The Suite represents the peak of one period and the beginning of a new epoch in Suk's piano writing, and shows him creating larger piano works and moving away from collections of smaller pieces. The first movement of the Suite contains two contrasting ideas, marked *Adagio* and *Allegro*, both of which have the same melodic structure, and the *Adagio* melody provides the motivic fund for the movement as a whole (creating a connection with the monothematic *Sonata eroica*). The *Adagio* theme is used as a formal incision at significant points within the work, acting as a rondo element between the exposition and the development, and as a coda. This first thematic idea is full of rhythmic and dynamic tension (with the harmonic emphasis being on the diminished seventh), and the melody contains a balanced ascent and descent, presenting important motivic shapes, with fourths and fifths being significant in the future development of the movement. This opening *adagio* section is presented as separate to the main *allegro*, which forms a dramatic contrast to it, the *allegro* being in G major and dominated by Classical figuration and passagework, and presenting a musical language defined by metrical, tonal, and textural constancy and regularity (see music example 10a). Suk also incorporates the technique of thematic recharacterisation (found in the opp.10 and 12 sets), presenting the opening thematic material in a variety of 'guises'.

Ex.10a: Suk, *Suite*, movement 1; opening statement of *adagio* and *allegro* ideas

The musical score for Ex.10a is presented in three systems. The first system, labeled 'Adagio', shows the opening of the first movement in piano. It features a melody in the right hand and accompaniment in the left hand. The second system continues the Adagio section, showing a transition to a more rhythmic texture. The third system is labeled 'Allegro vivace (♩ = ♩)' and features a more rhythmic and energetic melody in the right hand and accompaniment in the left hand. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (p, mp, sf), articulation (accents, slurs), and fingerings.

Suk's response to and use of Classical sonata form can be seen in the dramatic contrast between first and second subjects. The second subject is marked by a change in register, texture, and melodic contour, and the transitional passage between subjects emphasises this dramatic contrast. Prior to the presentation of the second subject, there is a steep registral descent and a *crescendo* followed by an immediate *pp*. The construction of this idea from repetitions of small segments exploits the whole keyboard, exploring register, figuration, and dynamics, and demonstrates Suk's awareness and exploitation of the dramatic element of Classical sonata form (music example 10b).

Ex.10b: Suk, *Suite*, movement 1; presentation of second subject material

The development continues Suk's use of conventional sonata form principles, with the diminished seventh harmonies of the opening *adagio* creating the instability and tension

that conventionally defines this section. There is also the incorporation of the *adagio* theme in changed rhythmic values and presented in a canonic texture, instigating the transitional passage that leads to the recapitulation. Suk does not create a conventional recapitulation, and neglects to present the opening *adagio*, using instead a fragmented version that outlines the main motivic shape so crucial in thematic development. The power of this main theme is again realised in the coda, where it is presented at a high dynamic and register, and in rhythmic augmentation, and the definition of this theme in the coda is aided by the fact that it is preceded by the second subject which sweeps through the whole expanse of the keyboard (music example 10c).

Ex.10c: Suk, *Suite*. movement 1; presentation of main *adagio* theme in the coda

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system is marked '(loco)' and 'a poco', with dynamics 'dim.' and 'pp'. The second system is marked 'Adagio' and 'rit.', with dynamics 'f' and 'pp'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

The first movement was subject to the most significant and revealing changes made by Suk in the process of transition from Sonatina to Suite. Although the main components of the Suite are present in the earlier version, they are given a completely different working out in the later work, which reveals Suk's changing concept of how the work should be structured.

The first movement of the Sonatina has never been published in its entirety, but the exposition was published in 1945 (provided on the subsequent page as music example 11).²⁶

²⁶Štěpán: *Novák a Suk* (Prague, 1945), p.145.

In contrast to the dramatic, yet abstract, nature of the Suite's first movement, the Sonatina is dreamy, capricious, and graceful, and hence closer to the eighteenth century origins of the form. In the Sonatina the two ideas presented separately in the Suite (the *adagio* and *allegro*) are compressed and combined, lessening the sense of dramatic contrast. The earlier work has the same thematic shapes, but these are combined into one thought and presented in G minor (rather than the juxtaposition of G minor and major in the Suite). The development of these opening ideas also happens in a contrary manner, and in the Sonatina the theme begins lower and then progresses to a higher register. In the Suite, the opposite is the case, and the *allegro* theme begins in a high register and then moves down for the presentation of the second subject.

The methods of thematic development used in the Sonatina are conventional, and the theme is subjected to sequential treatment, repetition, and registral transfer. The Sonatina also uses the opening idea as a kind of 'marker' to divide areas of the movement, but the difference here is that the Suite reprises the opening *adagio* idea before the development, whereas in the Sonatina it marks the divide between first and second subjects. There is no real contrast between ideas in the Sonatina, so the same sense of drama is not produced by this reprise of the opening idea.

The Sonatina focuses less on exploring the dramatic potential of material. The second subject is presented after a thinning of texture and a slowing down of rhythmic energy that is provided by the reappearance of the opening idea. The texture and key (B flat major, the relative major) of the subject is conventional, and there is no marked change in register. There is a much greater sense of direction and drama in the Suite, and a clearer demarcation between ideas. Suk also uses register effectively to mark out thematic areas and aid the sense of dramatic interaction. The first subject ends in a high register and this contrasts with the presentation of second subject material in a much lower register, with unison between the hands and the motoric rhythm of a broken chord accompaniment. This second subject builds

Ex.11: Suk; the exposition section of the *Sonatina**Allegro moderato*

Measures 1-3 of the exposition section of the *Sonatina* by Suk. The music is in 3/4 time and features a melodic line in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand.

Measures 4-5 of the exposition section of the *Sonatina* by Suk. The music continues with the melodic and bass lines.

Measures 6-7 of the exposition section of the *Sonatina* by Suk. The music continues with the melodic and bass lines.

Measures 8-9 of the exposition section of the *Sonatina* by Suk. The music continues with the melodic and bass lines.

Measures 10-11 of the exposition section of the *Sonatina* by Suk. The music continues with the melodic and bass lines.

Measures 27-28 of the exposition section of the *Sonatina* by Suk. The music continues with the melodic and bass lines.

Measures 30-31 of the exposition section of the *Sonatina* by Suk. The music continues with the melodic and bass lines.

Measures 34-35 of the exposition section of the *Sonatina* by Suk. The music continues with the melodic and bass lines.

Measures 37-38 of the exposition section of the *Sonatina* by Suk. The music continues with the melodic and bass lines.

Measures 39-40 of the exposition section of the *Sonatina* by Suk. The music continues with the melodic and bass lines.

Measures 12-13 of the exposition section of the *Sonatina* by Suk. The music continues with the melodic and bass lines.

Measures 15-16 of the exposition section of the *Sonatina* by Suk. The music continues with the melodic and bass lines.

Measures 18-19 of the exposition section of the *Sonatina* by Suk. The music continues with the melodic and bass lines.

Measures 21-22 of the exposition section of the *Sonatina* by Suk. The music continues with the melodic and bass lines.

Measures 24-25 of the exposition section of the *Sonatina* by Suk. The music continues with the melodic and bass lines.

Measures 41-42 of the exposition section of the *Sonatina* by Suk. The music continues with the melodic and bass lines.

Measures 43-44 of the exposition section of the *Sonatina* by Suk. The music continues with the melodic and bass lines.

Measures 45-46 of the exposition section of the *Sonatina* by Suk. The music continues with the melodic and bass lines, including first and second endings.

Measures 47-48 of the exposition section of the *Sonatina* by Suk. The music continues with the melodic and bass lines.

Measures 49-50 of the exposition section of the *Sonatina* by Suk. The music continues with the melodic and bass lines.

tension effectively by repeating material through ascending registers and gradually changing harmonies which incorporate a higher degree of chromaticism. The idea then fragments and moves through higher registers, reaching its highest point at the moment when the opening *adagio* theme returns. In making these revisions, Suk creates a dramatic structure that exploits the full possibilities of the instrument in constructing an expressive and rhetorical interaction of thematic ideas.

Although little is known of how the movement progresses in the Sonatina, the beginning of the development appears to be constructed along similar lines. Both versions use the same diminished harmonies and the thematic contour of the second subject idea is similar. The difference is that its presentation in the Suite is more fragmented, as opposed to the longer melodic lines in the Sonatina, the former creating a greater sense of momentum and urgency. This incorporation of drama within an abstract structure is perhaps the biggest difference between the two versions and, as Štěpán notes, the Suite consists of a ‘polished layer of instrumental colours’, has a ‘huge architectural span’, and contains a ‘greater energy and inner power’.²⁷ The development of the work between the two versions illustrates Suk moving away from abstract Classicism towards a more subjective, dramatic viewpoint.

The main differences between the Sonatina and the Suite’s first movement can be summarised as follows. The latter has a larger architectural span, ideas are divided and fragmented for dramatic contrast, unity is retained through motivic connections, and a sense of drama is exploited through the clear demarcation of the structure through the return of the opening theme. The separation of subjects into *adagio* and *allegro* allows for the development of a larger scale, more dramatic form where ideas are developed to their full potential and greater dramatic power is realised through fragmentation, repetition, and registral change. Expressive potential is exhausted within a structure held together through a firm, logical linking of ideas.

The collision between old and new thinking is exemplified in the second movement. The first (minuet) section was completed in February 1897 in Amsterdam, yet the trio was not added until September 1900. The minuet illustrates the elegance of the form, in a

²⁷Štěpán (1945), p.155.

consonant harmonic style defined by regular 4-bar divisions and symmetrical phrasing. The phrase structure revolves around the standard Classical antecedent-consequent form, underpinned by simple harmonies, and the emphasis is above all on simplicity, grace, and elegance (music example 12a).

Ex.12a: Suk, *Suite*, movement 2; opening minuet theme

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece. It is titled 'Ex.12a: Suk, Suite, movement 2; opening minuet theme'. The tempo is marked 'Moderato'. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of two systems of music. The first system is marked 'grazioso' and includes dynamics like 'P' and 'Red. simile'. The second system includes dynamics like 'P' and 'x'. The score features intricate fingerings and articulation marks.

The middle section, added later, provides a complete change of expression in its more fragmented musical utterance, and provides further demonstration of the fact that Suk, in revising the Sonatina into the Suite, wanted to create a more dramatic structure which exploited the principle of contrast. The added middle section provides this sense of contrast by shifting into the tonic minor, with the *poco più mosso*, along with sharper articulation, creating a greater sense of urgency and energy in the musical argument (music example 12b). The repetition of the opening theme of the section with rhythmic variation builds up to the climax of the section, a *ff* dominant pedal accompanied by dominant and diminished seventh arpeggiation sweeping through different registers. Prior to this dominant area, Suk reinforces the contrast between sections through the presentation of an *espressivo* area which, in its legato melodic lines and suggestion of the major key, recalls the opening minuet section (music example 12c). The final revision is in the addition of a coda, which is constructed from parallel second inversion chords presented in the pattern of a whole tone scale with a

syncopated bass line (music example 12d). In its disruption of the basic minuet theme, the coda performs the same function as the addition of the trio section, creating a greater sense of dramatic contrast, and providing a different view of the whole construction, constituting a 'profound way of underlining the light seams by a darkened background'.²⁸

Ex.12b: Suk, *Suite*, movement 2; presentation of the contrasting *poco più mosso* idea

The musical score for Ex.12b consists of two systems of piano music. The first system is marked 'Poco più mosso' and includes first and second endings. The second system features a 'cresc.' marking and a 'p' dynamic.

Ex.12c: Suk, *Suite*, movement 2; presentation of *espressivo* idea before the recapitulation of the initial minuet idea

The musical score for Ex.12c consists of three systems of piano music. The first system is marked 'mp espress.' and 'cresc.'. The second system is marked 'cresc.' and 'f'. The third system is marked 'ff', 'dim.', and 'mp'.

²⁸Filipovský (1947), p.106.

Ex.12d: Suk, *Suite*, movement 2; coda at the end of the movement

The musical score consists of two systems of music. The first system begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It starts with a 'poco' marking, followed by a 'poco' marking with a fermata over the first measure. The tempo then changes to 'sosten.' (sostenuto). The first system ends with a 'dim.' (diminuendo) marking. The second system begins with a 'Più mosso' marking, followed by a 'poco rit.' (poco ritardando) marking. The tempo then changes to 'Tempo I.' (Allegretto). The second system ends with a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

The third movement provides an expression of Suk's Slavonic intentions in the use of the dumka. The composer creates a complex song involving quick alternations of speed and mood and is significant in the way Suk creates a sense of drama and contrast between three individual areas. However, when considering the composer's use of this genre in this movement, it is revealing to compare it with his previous dumkas (op.7 no.5 and op.12 no.8). In both of these, Suk uses the technique of variation, creating recharacterisations of the theme in op.7 no.5, and using the dumka as the basis for a Classical theme and variation form in op.12 no.8. In the third movement of the Suite, Suk takes the association of the dumka with variation form one step further in the creation of what, on the surface, appear to be three individual sections from the opening thematic source. The composer's structuring of this movement therefore provides further reinforcement of the way in which he fuses Classical construction principles with a Slavonic genre.

The opening theme provides a different perspective on the dumka. Previous examples have emphasised the solemnity and poignancy of the genre, whereas here there seems to be a 'romanticising' of the dumka, as Suk creates a typical nocturne texture, with the expressivity heightened through the decoration of the clear tonal structure with a *sfz* chromatic shift. The second area exploits the notion of contrast, characterising the opening material in a *più mosso e ad lib* quasi-recitative setting and creating a greater sense of urgency and forward motion through the use of 'atomic and molecular musical shapes'.²⁹ The melody is built upon

²⁹Štěpán (1945), p.149.

the repetition of small motifs, and Suk creates a feeling of metrical liberation through the lack of bar lines (music example 13a presents both ideas).

Ex.13a: Suk, *Suite*, movement 3; first two thematic ideas of the movement

Both Filipovský and Štěpán provide their own interpretation of how the theme divides into irregular sections, and both interpretations show how motifs are expanded and contracted throughout the section, and how they change with each presentation of the recitative section.³⁰ However, although this sense of metrical freedom and improvisatory writing is important (and an element Suk developed in his later output), in this movement it would seem that the composer's principal concern is with creating surface contrast which is supported through an underlying unity provided by the use of variation. The *più mosso* area

³⁰These interpretations can be found in Štěpán (1945), p.149 and Filipovský (1947), p.107.

combines two elements, namely the melodic contour and rhythmic cells of the opening idea and the more personal, expressive element, with human speech suggested by the changes of speed and lack of metric definition. Suk reinforces the notion of unity by using a similar harmonic foundations for this section as were presented in the opening theme.

The creation of a third thematic area provides further evidence of Suk's concern for creating dramatic structures with a sense of culmination and climax. This section fuses elements from the previous two sections, using a thematic motif from the opening theme and combining it with the dance-like rhythmic figures from the *più mosso*. The sense of energy and movement created through continual semiquaver movement and a more varied harmonic framework culminates in a *f* chordal passage, the rapid repetitions of chords for dramatic effect recalling Suk's previous dumka op.7 no.5 (music example 13b). The final section of the movement exploits the use of contrasting expressive states, presenting all three areas in quick succession and emphasising the sense of changeability within the movement. What is significant about this movement however, is not just the creation of a dramatic musical argument through contrast, change, and an element of improvisation, but the way in which the composer underpins this process with the principle of variation, ensuring a sense of unity which supports the surface change and recharacterisation of material.

Ex.13b: Suk, *Suite*, movement 3; third thematic area of the movement

Moderato quasi allegretto

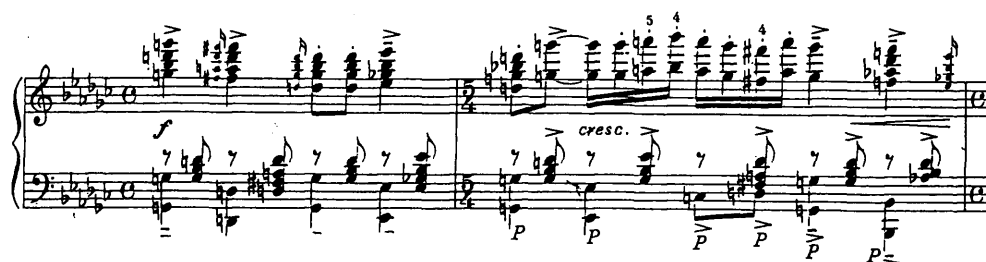
senza ped.

p

p

cresc.

p



The original third movement of the Sonata was published as the first piece in the set of *Episodes* (JSK78a, published in 1924) (see music example 13c). The work is a three-part structure in C major, and the regular periodisation is matched by a clear tonal structure, decorated simply with chromatic movement in the bass line. The middle section develops a much wider register, with an arpeggiated accompaniment moving beneath a chordal presentation of a theme clearly related to the opening idea. This theme is cellular in construction and is developed through a section that uses more complex chromatic harmonies, contrasting with the rest of the section, which is defined by its simple harmonic outline decorated with chromatic auxiliary notes. The coda explores a deeper register and includes more chromaticism, being like a recitative, and in the use of D flat major builds a section around the Neapolitan harmony so favoured by Suk.

Ex.13c: Suk; beginning of the original third movement of the *Suite*³¹

Andante semplice. (♩ = 96)

This original was eventually rejected by Suk, and it can be suggested that the thought processes involved in its creation were too mechanistic and, in using a restrictive formal

³¹This example has been taken from Nouza and Nový (2005), p.175.

tradition, he became involved in replicating all of its inherent problems. The main problem with the original third movement is its symmetrical construction; bars are segmented in 2, 4, or 8 bars and, as Štěpán notes, the movement is ‘guided by the laws of symmetry’.³² The revisions demonstrate Suk creating a more varied, dramatic movement which explores the principle of variation within the genre of the *dumka*, and thus combines the composer’s concern with his Slavonic heritage with his musical needs to develop an abstract language guided by Classical structures.

The final movement of the Suite is a rondo structure based upon three themes. The material for this movement was basically taken over from the parallel movement in the *Sonatina*, composed on 20 April 1897 in Křečovice, and illustrates to a lesser extent the development in Suk’s ideas. The movement is concerned with technical ‘glitter’ and virtuosity, and this may explain why the composer felt happier simply taking over these ideas from the original *Sonatina*, as it was the movement that perhaps needed the simplest, most straightforward, virtuosic style. More than the other movements, it demonstrates a working-out of the movement from a traditional form, and an acceptance of older forms on Suk’s part. The folk influence (seen in the use of the *dumka* in the third movement) can also be felt here, with the opening theme being supported by a ‘drone’ figure in the LH, with the bare fifths emphasising this character (see music example 14). The writing in this final movement demonstrates a clear connection with Classicism, presenting a language dominated by a clarity of rhythm, texture, and harmony, and the inclusion of Alberti bass figuration in the accompanimental line. The acceptance of Classical form and figuration, and the combination of this with folk elements, creates a work which connects Suk to his teacher, Dvořák, whilst the concentration upon passagework and virtuosity creates a less individualised expression. However, this experimentation and exploration of Classical forms and principles of construction can be seen as an essential stage in Suk’s development, and one that comes to fruition in the next period, in which the composer focuses upon the production of large scale piano cycles that fuse subjective impulses with abstract constructional principles.

³²Štěpán (1945), p. 148.

Ex.14: Suk, *Suite*, final movement; opening theme

Allegro ma non troppo

The creation of larger forms: the combination of subjectivity and abstraction

After completing the *Suite*, Suk began to incorporate subjective elements within the framework of abstract structural ideas. The results of this fusion of approaches can be seen in the next two piano cycles, *Jaro* [Spring] and *Letní dojmy* [Summer Impressions] (both 1902). These works are connected thematically, and both use melodic material which recalls previous works, introducing the self-referentiality that becomes such an important part of Suk's mature language. Monothematicism is used within *Spring* to balance aspects of subjectivity and personal input with the objectivity of abstract formations, and creates cohesion in the overall formal construction. The idea of creating sets of pieces has been observed in Suk's earlier output, but here the focus is upon the formation of musically unified cycles.

The piano cycle *Spring* was composed between 2 and 19 April 1902, and was published in 1903. The work has to be understood in context, and prior to its composition Suk had composed incidental music to a dramatic legend by Julius Zeyer. *Pod jabloní* [Beneath the Apple Tree] (JSK47, 1900–1). Although the composer was initially hesitant about creating more incidental music (it may have seemed out of place with his exploration of Classical construction in the *Suite* completed previously), he later wrote that he was

‘captivated by the quiet apotheosis of familial bliss in the final act’.³³ The works produced subsequently by Suk (the songs of JSK48 and 48a) are celebrations of his wife, and written in memory of her whilst he was away touring with the Czech Quartet. This element of personal expression continues in the piano cycles *Spring* and *Summer Impressions*, which Suk defined as ‘works of joy, full of love and tender compassion [...] when our boy was born’.³⁵ The composer had initially intended to compose piano cycles for all four seasons, with *Spring* and *Summer Impressions* followed by *Podzimní nálady* [Autumn Moods] and *V zimě* [In Winter].³⁶ Each piece was to have a separate title, further demonstrating Suk’s enthusiasm for descriptive writing and external programmes at this point, but it is unknown as to why plans for all four cycles did not come to fruition. *Spring* is the first example of Suk creating a musically unified cycle, distinct from the collections of pieces he had previously produced, although the performance history of the work indicates that it was initially performed as separate pieces.³⁷

In the opening movement of *Spring* (entitled *Jaro* [Spring]) there is a connection with the Suite in the form of three ascending chords which create immediate tonal instability. The juxtaposition of D major, V₇/B flat major, and V₇/E major provides a colourful harmonic opening and, through the lack of resolution of dominant sevenths, the chords create a tension which is maintained through the first two pages by their continual restatement, gradually exploring higher registers to accentuate the sense of drama (music example 15a).

³⁴In a letter to Otakar Šourek dated 25 May 1921, quoted in Nouza and Nový (2005), p. 186.

³⁵Nouza and Nový (2005), p. 204.

³⁶Details of these plans are outlined in Nouza and Nový (2005), p. 206.

³⁷The first performance of the work as a complete cycle was on 13 April 1905, and the journal *Dalibor* discussed the performance in an article entitled ‘*Jaro poprvé v celku*’ [‘*Spring* for the first time as a whole cycle’]. Details are contained in Nouza and Nový (2005), p. 206.

Ex.15a: Suk, *Spring*, movement 1; opening 13 bars

Allegro con brio

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system begins with three chords, each marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system continues with a descending triplet accompaniment, featuring dynamics of *p*, *f*, *cresc.*, and *sffz*. The third system concludes with a *sempre f* marking and further triplet accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and fingerings.

There is also a strong element of interruption in this introductory section, as the drama and force of the opening three chords are followed by a repeated descending figure that provides the motivic core for the cycle. This second idea provides a contrast to the opening chords, creating energy and movement through the continual triplet accompaniment. The whole opening section has the character of an introduction, with the three opening chords permeating the texture, exploring remote areas of harmonic colour, and the tension between the E flat and D sharp of the second and third chords is played out in the shifts between sharp and flat keys. Suk introduces a good deal of harmonic colour, with the enharmonic reinterpretation between these notes forming the basis for the sequence of seventh chords that end the introduction section (music example 15b).

Ex.15b: Suk, *Spring*, movement 1; concluding bars of the introduction

The first movement of *Spring* has a formal structure that has connections with sonata form, and Suk creates a sense of expectation in the lead-in to the ‘exposition’ through diverse elements. The opening three chords are augmented rhythmically and presented in a sequence of unresolved seventh chords, and the introductory section ends with the presentation of a bare, unharmonised diminished seventh interval, creating an expectation of the tonic which is satisfied at the beginning of the subsequent section (see previous music example 15b). Filipovský notes the connection with Impressionism in the use of constant harmonic changes, the absence of the tonic, the fragmented nature of the themes, and the nature of their development, which is based upon repetition and recharacterisation.³⁸ The first movement is created through the continual presentation of the three opening chords against different harmonic backgrounds and accompaniments, and Suk thus creates a movement where Impressionistic harmonic colour is combined with unifying motivic elements within a loose type of sonata form (music example 15c). In this fusion of elements, the movement brings together many different elements of the composer’s musical language, and has a close relationship with some of the writing within the Suite.

³⁸Filipovský (1947), pp.120–1.

Ex.15c: Suk, *Spring*, movement 1; different settings of the opening motif

(i)

Musical score for Ex. 15c (i). The piece is in 3/4 time and G major. The tempo is marked *a tempo*. The score consists of two staves. The right hand starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic, playing a series of chords. The left hand plays a bass line with some triplets. The piece concludes with a *mf* dynamic and a triplet figure in the right hand.

(ii)

Two systems of musical score for Ex. 15c (ii). The first system is marked *molto espress.* and begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand features a rapid sixteenth-note passage. The left hand has a bass line with some triplets. The dynamic increases to *f* (forte) towards the end of the system. The second system continues the sixteenth-note pattern in the right hand, with a *din.* (diminuendo) marking in the left hand. The piece ends with a descending sixteenth-note scale in the right hand.

(iii) the presentation of chords at the end of the movement

Two systems of musical score for Ex. 15c (iii). The tempo is marked *Meno mosso*. The first system shows the right hand playing a series of chords, with dynamics ranging from *pp* (pianissimo) to *con p* (con piano). The left hand has a bass line with some triplets. The second system continues the chordal texture in the right hand, with a *rit.* (ritardando) marking in the left hand. The piece concludes with a descending sixteenth-note scale in the right hand.

No.2, entitled *Vánek* [The Breeze] illustrates Suk moving towards a more descriptive style of writing and away from Classical structures and forms. The motivic connection with the first movement is present in the rising arpeggio figure that is restated throughout the movement although, in this movement, there is no clearly defined theme, and Suk's concern would seem to be the depiction of an image through the exploration of registral, textural, and harmonic resources. The constant rise and fall of musical lines represents the unpredictability of the wind, and metrical irregularity (in the form of added half bars creating irregular periodisation) strengthens this (music example 16a). The movement also contains a great deal of harmonic uncertainty, with the constant 'piling up' of thirds through arpeggiation creating chords with added notes which ultimately function to blur the outline of the chord given in the bass. Suk also employs modal harmonies, and the second period uses the flattened seventh of the Mixolydian mode (B flat major) and E flat major with a raised Lydian fourth. Harmonically, the emphasis is on chromatic shifts rather than functional tonal relationships, and the movement ends in a whirl of seventh harmonies, with an Aeolian harp-like sound created in the presentation of the main motif compressed and repeated (music example 16b). This final section reinforces Suk's focus upon the creation of a sound impression, and a loosening of his connection with abstract forms and constructional principles. The emphasis here is upon image, sound, and atmosphere, and Filipovský notes the 'enchanting use of sound' and 'capturing [of] the sound impression'.³⁹

Ex.16a: Suk, *Spring*, movement 2; opening section

The musical score for Suk's *Spring*, movement 2, opening section, is presented in two systems. The first system is marked *sempre scherzando e grazioso* and *p*. The second system is marked *cresc.* and *dim. pp*. The score features complex arpeggiated figures and chromatic shifts.

³⁹Filipovský (1947), p.125.

Ex.16b: Suk, *Spring*, movement 2; concluding bars of the movement

In no.3, entitled *V očekávání* [In Expectation], Suk uses the thematic shape of the first movement in the creation of a movement based around the recharacterisation of the opening motif. The tension and drama of the ‘expectation’ in the title is created initially through the improvisatory changes of speed, the contrapuntal texture, and gradual ascent to a peak (marked *sfz*), with the subsequent *ad lib* descent perhaps depicting the unfulfillment of the goal at this point (music example 17a).

Ex.17a: Suk, *Spring*, movement 3; opening 8 bars

Musical score for piano, showing a sequence of measures with various dynamics and tempo markings. The score includes markings such as *accel.*, *a tempo ad lib.*, *molto rit.*, and *a tempo*. Dynamics range from *cresc.* to *p*.

The freedom and elasticity of the opening section is contrasts with the regularity, clarity of harmony, and textural constancy of the subsequent section. There is ultimately a lack of invention in this movement, and a good deal of repetition of both the opening motif and accompanimental figuration (which changes from demisemiquavers to a dance-like dotted rhythm – see music example 17b). As Filipovský states, although there is some lyrical writing in the movement, there is ‘too much routine prettiness in melody and harmony’,⁴⁰ and whilst the changeability and drama of the opening section looks forward to Suk’s later piano writing, the constancy of texture and continual repetition of the opening motif limits the composer’s inventiveness in later sections.

Ex.17b: Suk, *Spring*, movement 3; (i) *poco più mosso* material

Musical score for piano, showing two systems of music. The first system is marked *Poco più mosso* and includes markings like *p*, *espress.*, and *cresc.*. The second system includes markings like *poco sost.*, *poco accel.*, and *a tempo*.

⁴⁰Filipovský (1947), pp.126–7.

(ii) subsequent transformation of previous *poco più mosso* material

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system begins with a melody in the right hand marked *mp espress.* and *poco a*, featuring a triplet of eighth notes. The left hand accompaniment is marked *p*. The second system continues the piece, marked *poco accel.*, *a tempo*, *poco sosten.*, and *poco dim.*. It includes various dynamics such as *p* and *P*, and includes fingerings and a cross symbol (x) in the bass line.

If the monothematicism of the third movement is seen as restricting Suk's inventiveness, the fourth movement (without title), provides an example of the creation of a piece which looks forward to the abrupt ideas and dramatic power contained within *Things Lived and Dreamt*. No.4 (presented in full in music example 18) functions as a dramatic introduction to the final piece of the cycle, yet their musical styles could not be more different, and the fourth piece demonstrates the power of Suk's expression in a condensed emotional drama played out through purely musical means. The thematic element of the movement is restricted to the presentation of the 'spring' motif, and this repetition creates a fragmented version of the melody, with the resultant tension provided through repetition and

Ex.18: Suk, *Spring*, movement 4

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano, titled "Andante". The first system is marked *mp espress.* and *p pp*, featuring a melody with a "5" fingering and a bass line with *p pp*. The second system includes *poco acceler.*, *cresc.*, and *f*, with dynamics like *pp* and *P sempre*. It also includes a cross symbol (x) in the bass line.

The image shows a page of musical notation for a piano piece. It consists of four systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef. The notation includes various dynamics such as *p*, *mp*, *mf*, *pp*, *ppp*, *cresc.*, and *dim.*. There are also performance markings like *poco più mosso*, *poco a poco*, *a tempo*, *rit.*, and *accel.*. The piece ends with the instruction *attacca subito*. The music features complex textures, including arpeggiated patterns in the bass and chordal textures in the treble.

the registral ascent through the first half of the movement. Suk creates harmonic tension from the start, presenting an augmented fourth between the hands and, throughout the piece, the composer explores a non-functional harmonic language, with the movement containing a huge number of chromatic shifts and diverse harmonic colours. There is an absence of an established tonic, and the LH arpeggiation presents a sequence of half-diminished seventh chords which remain unresolved. The lack of a clearly defined tonic creates a constant need for resolution which is not immediately satisfied, and this expectation is established from the outset with the G sharp that demands resolution onto the A, something which is delayed until the final six bars. The use of texture and register aids the dramatic construction, with the shift to a chordal texture coming at the highest registral point, intensified through *crescendo* and *accelerando* markings. The harmonies at this point become clearly tonal for the first time, but the quick movement between F minor, G sharp minor, B minor, and D minor results in a

lack of tonal stability, and the movement climaxes on a B flat major chord, with this Neapolitan harmony reinforcing the tension and expectation for resolution onto the tonic. The final resolution onto A major is complicated by being overlaid with diminished seventh harmonies, and Suk lengthens the final cadence in order to maintain the tension for as long as possible. In its drama, tension, abruptness of expression, and concision, this movement looks forward to the musical language found in Suk's later cycles *About Mother* and *Things Lived and Dreamt* and, in creating a huge sense of scale and drama in such a small-scale piece, Suk's development as a composer through this cycle cannot be underestimated.

There is a huge change in style between the fourth and final movement, and the contrast between the forward-looking elements of the fourth movement and the Romantic piano texture and limited thematic material of the final movement could not be more marked. This contrast makes clear that, in *Spring*, Suk's musical language was in transition, and the cycle fuses elements of Classical construction (in the use of a type of sonata form in the first movement), thematic recharacterisation, and a unifying motivic element (conservative elements) with programmatic description, harmonic colourfulness, and a flexibility and changeability in structuring ideas (more progressive elements), which leads to an exploration of the piano's sonic and textural capabilities, and Suk's advances in this area lead to a great deal of drama and inner tension in this cycle. These ideas cross over into the next cycle, *Summer Impressions*, although the two cycles have distinctly different moods.

Whereas *Spring* creates an atmosphere of expectation and excitement, *Summer Impressions* transforms the previous sharp colours and dramatic changes into a mood of fulfillment and calmness. This is illustrated in the first movement *V poledne* [At Noon] which presents a constancy of texture and clarity of harmony (established through the use of pedals) not found in *Spring* (music example 19a). There is less focus in this second cycle on the importance of a unifying motif, and *Summer Impressions* constitutes three individual musical pictures, with the emphasis being on tone painting and musical description as opposed to thematic interrelationships. This element of contrast and individuality can be felt in the change between the *At Noon* and the second movement, *Hra dětí* [Children's Play],

which uses polka rhythms and drones to evoke the simplicity of a folk dance (music example 19b).

Ex.19a: Suk, *Summer Impressions*, movement 1 – *At Noon*

Ex.19b: Suk, *Summer Impressions*, movement 2 – *Children's Play*

The playful atmosphere and sense of energy created through rhythmic constancy and regularity contrasts with the intensity of expression found in the final movement *Večerní nálada* [Evening Mood]. This movement is more progressive harmonically, and in the opening chords there is an example of bitonality as a G flat major chord collides with D major (enharmonically reinterpreted as B double flat, E double flat, and G flat). The opening three notes retain the shape of the 'spring' motif, and this element of interconnection continues in Suk's quotation of other works, including his own *Song of Love* op.7 no.1

(marked 'x' on the example) and a four-note motif from Dvořák's *Requiem* (marked 'y' on the example). The 'love' motif relates to the unifying motivic shape of *Spring*, conjuring up ideas of growth, life, expectation, and renewal, whereas the Requiem motif evokes ideas of conclusion and ending, as well as linking with the autobiographical aspect (in the relationship between Suk and Dvořák, and Otilie's role as the connection between them). The composer thus employs quotations to create a musical form rich in associations, cross references and extra-musical meaning (music example 20).

Ex.20: Suk, *Summer Impressions*, movement 3 – *Evening Mood*

The musical score for Suk's *Summer Impressions*, movement 3 – *Evening Mood*, is presented in five systems. The first system begins with the instruction *espress.* and a dynamic marking of *p*. The second system includes *cresc.* and *poco*. The third system features *poco* and *f*, with *espress.* written below. The fourth system is marked *dim* and *mp*. The fifth system is marked *dolce* and *p*. Two specific motifs are highlighted: 'x' is a four-note motif in the bass line of the first system, and 'y' is a four-note motif in the treble line of the fifth system.

Through the cycles *Spring* and *Summer Impressions*, Suk's language was in transition, moving from the Classical construction and formal structures explored in the Suite to a

language more concerned with description and external programme. This emphasis upon the subjective was to become the guiding principle in Suk's subsequent compositions, and the free-standing images of *Summer Impressions* set a template for Suk's future piano works. However, the emphasis on subjectivity was not a purely musical decision, but was partly the result of two tragic blows experienced by the composer, events that altered the course of his musical development.

Complete subjectivity: Suk's reaction to tragedy

The period between the completion of *Spring* and *Summer Impressions* and Suk's next piano cycle *About Mother* (1907) was a momentous time in the composer's life. After finishing the piano cycles of 1902–3, Suk continued to develop the descriptive elements of his previous musical language in the creation of a monumental symphonic poem, *Praga* [Prague] op.26 (JSK54, 1904). Although this work may seem nationalistic in its dedication 'To the Royal City of Prague', the work is born out of Suk's experiences whilst touring abroad with the Czech Quartet and, as he stated to Šourek in 1921, 'its guiding idea is to express love for the beloved city (an idea born of my homesickness whilst abroad) [...] I wished to express the elevation of Prague above all else'.⁴¹ Therefore, this symphonic poem illustrates Suk's further exploration of ideas of programme and autobiography initiated in the previous piano cycles.

On 1 May 1904 the death of Dvořák was the first blow to strike the composer. As a response, Suk began work on the *Asrael* symphony (JSK55, 1905–6), yet whilst he was composing this work a second blow came with the death of his wife Otilie on 6 July 1905. The second part of the symphony was subsequently dedicated to her, and the work as a whole is a celebration of the lives of Otilie and Dvořák. Suk himself defined these events as being the catalyst for 'a definitive turn' in his compositional development, and stated that 'I wrote this work of my pain for my own consolation; may it be destined to console others who suffer

⁴²Nouza and Nový (2005), p.226.

as well'.⁴³ The symphony received a 'tumultuous, absolutely sensational response'⁴⁴ when it was premiered on 3 February 1907 at the National Theatre. The work brought Suk a great deal of fame and, as well as receiving the annual First Prize for the Emperor Franz Joseph's Czech Academy for Sciences, Literature, and Art (in 1907), it received a warm response from his contemporaries, with Novák stating that '*Asrael* sets the standard for the modern Czech symphony'.⁴⁵ Given that Suk's symphony follows the same combination of personal emotion and description of an external programme as Novák was exploring at this time (he was to begin work on *The Storm* in 1908), his admiration is understandable.

Following the large-scale personal statement of grief and loss that constitutes *Asrael*, Suk focused his subjectivity onto the more intimate vehicle of solo piano. The cycle *O matince* [About Mother] op.28 (JSK56, 1907) was the first work to treat the piano as a medium for the most personal and intimate expressions, and this designation of the instrument brings Suk's treatment of the piano in line with that of both Zdeněk Fibich and Leoš Janáček. *About Mother* is defined as a collection of 'simple piano pieces for my little son', and the work is a celebration of Otilie's life, designed as a collection of pictures for his son of the mother he would never know. The definition of the pieces as 'simple' is questionable, as many of the pieces (particularly no.4) contain a high level of virtuosity and make many technical demands. The pieces are certainly not intended for children and, in being an adult form of expression, they are akin to the musical world explored in Schumann's *Kinderscenen*. As in *Summer Impressions*, Suk quotes from his other works in *About Mother*, and an appreciation of this element of self-referentiality leads to a deeper understanding of the meaning of the pieces.

About Mother (written during May and June 1907) presents the image of Otilie from a variety of different perspectives. The first piece, *Když byla matinka ještě děvčátkem* [When Mother was still a girl] depicts her as a young woman experiencing first love in her relationship with Suk. The opening theme is a waltz, capturing the naivety, innocence, and

⁴³Nouza and Nový (2005), p.233.

⁴⁴Nouza and Nový (2005), p.239.

⁴⁵Nouza and Nový (2005), p.240.

charm of the young Otilie, with the high register, tonal clarity, and textural constancy reinforcing these elements (music example 21a).

Ex.21a: Suk, *About Mother*, movement 1; opening waltz statement

Allegretto molto moderato.

p dolce ma espress. *dolciss. ma espress.*

Rea * Rea, * Rea * Rea * Rea * Rea *

The rhythmic regularity of this opening waltz gradually fragments, and the tonality becomes ‘blurred’ through the introduction of chromatically altered tones. Suk uses register to create ‘female’ and ‘male’ areas and, at the *pochettino più animato*, the bass register is explored depicting the arrival of Suk into the young Otilie’s life. The romantic element of this encounter is indicated by the quotation of the *Song of Love* in an antiphonal exchange between registers, depicting the interaction between Suk and Otilie. The *pp* arpeggiation and staccato accompaniment in the bass register characterises the statement as uncertain and tentative, whereas the higher register ‘female’ response is light and playful, intensifying the contrast between responses (music example 21b).

Ex.21b: Suk, *About Mother*, movement 1; *pochettino più animato*

stringendo *rit.* *pochettino più animato*

p dolce *pp*

* Rea * Rea * Rea *

The image shows a musical score for piano. It features two staves, treble and bass clef. The music is in a key with three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The score includes several measures with dynamics *p* and *pp*. Tempo markings include *scherzando*, *accel. poco*, *rit. poco*, and *a tempo p dolce*. There are also some performance instructions like *una corda* and *tre corde* indicated by asterisks and symbols below the bass staff.

The *Song of Love* quotation builds up to a *ff appassionato*, the widely spaced texture and arpeggio accompaniment creating a point of climax. The final section of the ternary structure repeats the opening waltz (with the lower counter-melody indicating the presence of Suk in Otilie's life) before a coda reprises the *Song of Love* quotation.

No.2, *Kdysi zjara* [Once in the Springtime] contrasts the intense emotions of the first with 'fresh, pastel colours'.⁴⁶ This movement consists of two sections and a coda (which partly reprises the opening material), with each of the sections exploring the idea of spring in both an objective and subjective sense. The first idea juxtaposes *adagio* and *allegro non troppo* themes to create an introduction which depicts the sense of awakening associated with spring. This first section is harmonically colourful, with harmonies changing quickly and avoiding any clearly stated tonal centre, a feature that becomes more pronounced in *Things Lived and Dreamt*. This lack of harmonic stability, combined with a more detached articulation of the theme and an accompaniment that develops through rhythmic diminution, creating a continual sense of movement and momentum (a feature observed in the first movement of *Spring*), and an energy associated with new beginnings (music example 22a).

Ex.22a: Suk, *About Mother*, movement 2; opening material

The image shows the opening material of movement 2 from Suk's 'About Mother'. It is divided into two sections: *Adagio* and *Allegro non troppo*. The *Adagio* section starts with a treble clef and a bass clef, with dynamics *mp* and *pp*. The *Allegro non troppo* section starts with a treble clef and a bass clef, with dynamics *f* and *cresc.*. There are also performance instructions like *una corda* and *tre corde* indicated by asterisks and symbols below the bass staff.

⁴⁶Filipovský (1947), p.147.

Adagio.

ff *p dim.*

Ped. Ped. *Ped.* Ped. *

The second section is marked in its contrast to the opening. The texture is simpler, and the energy and momentum provided by the accompaniment in the first section disappears, being replaced by a single line melody with an accompaniment in a higher register (music example 22b). The meaning of this whole section can be more clearly understood with reference to the later part, when the initial melody is decorated with the addition of a counter melody (music example 22c) indicating the ‘company of two people’.⁴⁷ The presence of this contrapuntal conversation, along with the higher register, simpler texture, and clearer tonality (inflected with chromatically altered tones) suggests that this section depicts the more subjective ‘spring’ of the couple’s relationship.

Ex.22b: Suk, *About Mother*, movement 2; contrasting *allegro non troppo* material

Allegro non troppo.

pp *p*

espress. senza Ped. *sempre espress.*

Ex.22c: Suk, *About Mother*, movement 2; addition of counterpoint to previous material

espress. *pp* *espress.* Ped.

⁴⁷Filipovský (1947), p.153.

Between the two melodic statements is a section based entirely around arpeggiation which creates a sense of 'time suspended' in its interruption of the previous theme and exploration of sound and texture, and the static nature of harmonic relationships undermine notions of tonic and dominant (music example 22d). This exploration of harmonic colour returns in the coda, the final section of which presents the opening 'cuckoo call' against varied harmonic backgrounds, combining the 'reflective' mood of the second section (and hence, the personal, subjective meaning of spring) with the motif from the opening section (concerned with the energy and awakening of nature in spring) (music example 22e). The shift from the F sharp minor of the second section to the major at the end, in addition to the rising register of the final chord, depicts the happy nature of the union between Suk and Otilie.

Ex.22d: Suk, *About Mother*, movement 2; arpeggiation within the *allegro non troppo* section

Ex.22e: Suk, *About Mother*, movement 2; concluding *Adagio* material

The third piece in the cycle, *Jak zpívala matinka za noci chorému děcku* [How mother sang to her sick child during the night] moves from the depiction of Otilie as a young girl to her role as a mother. The musical language used here represents a huge jump in the composer's thinking from the bright harmonic colours and vital rhythmic movement of the previous piece to the essentially static nature presented here. This third piece establishes an element that unites the final three pieces of the cycle, namely the use of a syncopated pedal figure. The contrast with the previous movement can be depicted as the move from the idyllic past to the anxiety and tension of the present, and the texture here is the most sparse in the cycle, with the fragmented melody invested with a heightened expressive power through frequent chromatic alterations. There is a lack of directional tonal harmony in this movement, and the piece is tied together with a continuous pedal 'heartbeat', and this ostinato figure brings together many different descriptive elements of the situation, namely the uncertain heartbeat of the child and the mother's worry (with the melodic line being a distorted lullaby). Tension and anxiety are intensified through the constancy of the rhythmic ostinato, and the lack of clearly defined cadence points creates a 'static' atmosphere, with a lack of tonally defined goal directed motion (music example 23a).

Ex.23a: Suk, *About Mother*, movement 3; opening section

The musical score is presented in five systems. Each system contains a piano part (left hand) and a right-hand part. The piano part features a constant ostinato pedal point in the left hand. The right-hand part has various melodic lines with ornaments and dynamic markings like *pp*, *p*, and *espress.* Fingerings and ornaments are indicated throughout the score.

The ostinato pedal is used throughout this movement as a unifying device, a point of constancy within a harmonic language marked by complexity and the lack of clearly defined tonal centre, and would seem to provide some sense of tonal solidity in its constant restatement of the tonic. However, the status of this pedal has been examined by Novák,⁴⁸ who states that the interpretation of the pedal note as the tonic of B flat minor may be too simplistic. He notes that, although the key signature indicates B flat minor, C Phrygian is the dominant scale of the piece, with the third alternating between major and minor. This would mean that the key signature is misplaced, as the modal key signature for C Phrygian would have four flats; however, throughout the first part of the ABAB structure, the G is

⁴⁹Novák (2002), p. 83.

consistently not flattened. This brings into question why Suk would have chosen the five flat key signature for the movement, and several reasons can be suggested. Firstly, it refers to the central pitch of the movement, the B flat, which is reiterated and remains constant throughout, and the first emphasised harmony (on the downbeat of bar 2), which is a B flat minor chord. Novák also suggests a kind of ‘tonal compromise’,⁵⁰ with the B sections of the structure appearing to be in B flat minor, but without emphasising that particular harmony. The chords focused upon in each section create a further source of harmonic tension, as the A sections accentuate the C dominant seventh chord, whereas the B sections focus on G flat major, creating a tritone relationship between them (this relationship can also be found in *At Noon* from the cycle *Summer Impressions*, and in many pieces from *Things Lived and Dreamt*, suggesting that it is a significant part of Suk’s musical language).

The designation of C Phrygian as the modal key of the A sections of the movement means that the pedal note, in addition to providing a source of unity, also reinforces the atmosphere of tension. This is because of the harmonic ambiguity it creates right from the start and, rather than performing the role of tonic pedal, it is far less constant. Throughout the movement, although the B flat takes turns at being the root, third, or fifth of a chord, these consonant statements are fleeting and, as Novák states ‘the irony of this miniature piece is that the note B flat [...] is only at rest when it is the seventh’.⁵¹ Therefore, although the conventional role of the pedal note is that of unity and constancy, Suk uses it in a more flexible and changeable way that reinforces the elements of tension and anxiety inherent in the external programme. Although the B flat pedal is perceived as a stable element throughout the piece, the fact that it constitutes a third inversion dominant seventh chord means that this stability is partial and illusory.

The second statement of sections A and B adds a lower layer in the bass, and Filipovský emphasises the ‘confrontation of foreign harmonies’,⁵² which lead to the creation of a polyharmonic, bitonal style through the independent combination of the original melody and the lower bass layer (music example 23b). Novák notes that the collision of harmonies

⁵⁰Novák (2002), p. 83.

⁵¹Novák (2002), p. 84.

⁵²Filipovský (1947), p. 168.

between the hands leads to the creation of 'partly-quartal' harmonies through the combination of B flat minor and E flat major (F–B flat–E flat–G).⁵³

Ex.23b: Suk, *About Mother*, movement 3; restatement of previous material with added lower layer of harmonies

The musical score consists of three systems of piano music. The first system shows a right-hand melody with dynamics *dim.*, *mp*, and *pp*, and a left-hand accompaniment with *pp* dynamics. The instruction *una corda* is present. The second system continues the melody and accompaniment, with *pp* and *mp* dynamics. The third system shows the final part of the piece, with *pp* dynamics. The score features complex harmonic structures with bitonality and dissonance.

The bitonality in this final section also reinforces the tension between the hands in the opening statements of A and B, with B flat emphasised in the lower registers and C Phrygian above. This leads to a heightened sense of tension through both the exploration of a lower register and the introduction of dissonance which remains unresolved at the end of the piece. There is a huge amount of latent tension here that only comes to fruition in the following piece, which contains a wealth of motivic and atmospheric connections and gives full expression to the tension inherent in this third piece (music example 23c).

⁵³Novák (2002), p.85.

Ex.23c: Suk, *About Mother*, movement 3; concluding bars of the movement

No.4, *O matčině srdci* [About Mother's Heart], is the peak of the cycle both technically and emotionally. The rhythmic constancy of the pedal in the previous number contrasts with its changeability and irregularity in this piece, with its function altered to depict Otilie's heart condition and its status as the cause of her eventual death. Rhythmic complexity and metrical instability are the focus of attention here, and the sense of momentum and forward motion of the whole piece is derived from the pedal (music example 24a). In no.4 the rhythm of the pedal is irregular, alternating between triple, quadruple, and quintuple divisions of the beat. A connection with the previous piece is the fact that the key signature, although indicative of the tonal centre of D flat major, does not account for the minor mode in which the piece begins, or for the fact that the prolonged exploration of distant keys throughout 'renders the tonality suspended throughout most of the movement'.⁵⁴ The piece is the most technically demanding and virtuosic of the cycle, and Suk creates drama through the exploration of the extremes of the keyboard. This is combined with polyrhythms between the hands, which creates an independence between the hands that intensifies the mood of instability and turbulence central to this movement.

⁵⁴Novák (2002), p.86.

Ex.24a: Suk, *About Mother*, movement 4; opening material

Andante sostenuto.

The musical score consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The right hand (treble clef) features a continuous ostinato of eighth-note triplets. The left hand (bass clef) provides a harmonic accompaniment with various dynamics and articulations. The score is marked 'Andante sostenuto' and begins with a piano (p) dynamic. The right hand starts with a piano (p) dynamic and gradually increases in volume, marked with 'mp', 'piu cresc.', 'cresc.', 'f marcato', and 'mf marcato'. The left hand starts with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic and also increases in volume, marked with 'piu cresc.', 'cresc.', 'f marcato', and 'mf marcato'. The piece concludes with a final chord marked 'ff'.

The pedal has a different function in no.4 and, rather than providing a point of stasis, it is a means of creating change and forward motion. Rather than staying on the same pitch, the pedal note changes throughout the piece and this, combined with its rhythmic variety, reinforces its role as the catalyst for the piece's development. Suk's harmonic strategy for the opening third of the movement is to centre the ostinato pitch consonantly within a greater

number of chords whilst avoiding using it as the root of any one chord, which further demonstrates the composer's redefinition of the ostinato as something which can be a source of both change (in its rhythm and relationship to underlying harmonies) and stasis (in the repetition of one tone). Throughout the first third of the piece, Suk explores D flat minor/major, F flat major, and F minor/major, demonstrating the 'linking of parallel major and minor keys within a universal chromatic key',⁵⁵ and also illustrating the composer's sensitivity to dissonance and consonance, with the ostinato note always consonant in the opening segment of the piece. A further feature of Suk's harmonic language presented here is his interest in exploring chromatic mediant relationships, in the move D flat to F flat major, from A flat minor to F minor, and from F to A major.

In contrast to the third piece, in no.4 there is a yielding, or inflecting, of the ostinato note, and this has a programmatic source, with the chromatic changes in the pedal note reflecting the unsteadiness of the mother's heart. Suk also introduces tritonal tension between D flat major and G minor simultaneously with the chromatic movement of the ostinato note, meaning that these harmonic motions are reinforced and intensified through the changes in the RH line (music example 24b). Suk creates a constant sense of direction and momentum, derived from the changeability of the relationship between the ostinato and the underlying harmonies, the irregularity of the ostinato rhythm, and the quickly changing harmonies, combined with an ever-increasing dynamic. Suk also shows his mastery of the piano's sonic capabilities, employing a depth of register, a fullness of LH chordal texture against the bare octaves of the RH, and the exploitation of the entire range of the keyboard.

Ex.24b: Suk, *About Mother*, movement 4; illustration of tritonal relationships between G minor/major and D flat minor, combined with a changeable pedal note

⁵⁵Novák (2002), p. 86.



The middle section of the fourth movement emphasises the tragedy of the situation through contrast. The use of a high register, the disappearance of the pedal, rhythmic regularity, the co-ordination of parts, and the references to the *Song of Love* all point to the section being a 'flashback' to a depiction of Otilie as a young girl (music example 24c). However, despite the function of this section as a refuge in reminiscence, there is still an underlying tension in the tritonal relationship between D flat major and G major (the keys which begin and end the section).

Ex.24c: Suk, *About Mother*, movement 4; middle section

The permeation of the piece by death is emphasised at the end of the movement, where Suk quotes the death motif from *Radúz and Mahulena* (providing a meaning for the tritones heard earlier) against the ostinato pedal figuration. The finality of the last bars of no.4 contrasts with the ambiguity of the ending of the previous piece, and the tonal progressions heighten much of the harmonic tension felt throughout the movement, with the shifting G minor/major chords constituting a final ‘ray of hope’ before the tritonal relationship between this chord and the final D flat minor constitutes the devastating blow of death (music example 24d). The presentation of this chord is ‘jolting and final, connoting a death that is shocking and premature’,⁵⁶ and is underlined by ‘echoes’ in the lower register, the diminishing level of sound depicting the fading heartbeat of Otilie.

Ex.24d: Suk, *About Mother*, movement 4; final 11 bars of the movement

The final number of the cycle, *Vzpomínání* [Reminiscences], brings together elements from the other pieces of the cycle and, in doing so, functions as a coda. The syncopation of Otilie’s heartbeat is present here and is absorbed within an accompanimental texture. The

⁵⁶Novák (2002), p. 89.

motif of death (from *Radúz*) also occurs, woven into a longer melodic idea, with the counterpoint in the RH line recalling the idea of the love duet found in no. 1. The harmonic language is expressive, with chromatic alterations defining the progressions, and the final bars constitute a peaceful epilogue, with the previous harmonic complexity and more contrapuntal texture depicting the beginning of Suk's recovery from the tragedy of Otilie's death and a coming to terms with the intensity of his own emotional world (music example 25).

Ex.25: Suk, *About Mother*, final movement; concluding bars

About Mother exemplifies many important elements of Suk's compositional language. The emphasis upon large-scale planning, the creation of links and associations, the importance of an external narrative idea, and the overall emphasis upon subjectivity are all elements that were to find full expression in Suk's crowning achievement in his writing for piano, the cycle *Things Lived and Dreamt*.

The culmination of a lifetime of experience: *Things Lived and Dreamt*

About Mother constitutes a means by which Suk came to terms with his grief and loss, recording important memories in musical form, as a 'notebook of reminiscences' for his son. The work which followed this piano cycle, the orchestral musical poem *Pohádka léta* [A Summer's Tale] (JSK57, 1907–9) was a further step on the road to recovery from previous

tragedy and, as Suk notes, he was ‘finding a soothing balm in nature’.⁵⁷ This orchestral work was followed by two small scale piano works, the *Ella polka* (JSK58, 1909) and *Psina španělská* [Spanish Joke] (JSK59, 1909), and both of these were written as gifts for friends,⁵⁹ demonstrating further the fact that Suk’s piano writing focused upon the autobiographical and personal.

The culmination of Suk’s piano writing is the collection *Životem a snem* [Things Lived and Dreamt] op.30 (JSK60, 1909), and the way in which they were perceived by contemporary audiences can be illustrated by the conditions of the first performance. This took place in the National House in Smichov, Prague on 11 January 1910 in an evening entitled *Intimní hudební večer klavírní poesie Josefa Suka* [‘An Intimate Musical Evening of the Piano Poetry of Josef Suk’], with the performance of the cycles *Spring*, *Summer Impressions*, and *About Mother* taking place at the same concert. What was unusual about this evening was the performance conditions, as the grand piano was placed in the middle of the audience, who sat in a half circle around the instrument. The room was dimly-lit, and the audience were asked to refrain from any applause, which ‘with its brutal clamour disturbs all artistic impressions’.⁶⁰ The presentation of Suk’s piano works in such an environment demonstrates that his piano works were perceived as being intimate expressions and evocations of personal emotions that were a world away from the virtuosic writing expressed in Novák’s contemporaneous *Pan*.

Things Lived and Dreamt is a collection of pieces as opposed to a cycle, and they represent a series of individual moods and shifting emotional states. The pieces are a part of Suk’s process and recovery and healing and there is a sense of distance, with many ironic and witty juxtapositions of ideas. This collection lacks any specific programme, and the pieces are instead given titles which indicate their emotional and expressive capacity. The breadth and contrast of these states can be seen in no.1 (*s humorem a ironií, místy rozduřděně* [with humour and irony, in places annoyed]) no.4 (*zamyšleně, později stále výbojněji*

⁵⁸Nouza and Nový (2005), p.249.

⁵⁹Mrs. Ela Švabinská and Professor Adolf Mikeš respectively. Details can be found in Nouza and Nový (2005), pp.257–261.

⁶⁰Nouza and Nový (2005), p.245.

[contemplatively then increasingly aggressively]), and no.7 (*jednoduše, později s výrazem drtivé moci* [simply, then with shattering power]), and these expressive headings indicate the changeability and contrast contained within individual numbers, creating an atmosphere which is somewhat unsettled.

The elements of contrast and changeability in the emotional states expressed is mirrored in the musical techniques and styles used by Suk. No.1 presents a greater emotional distance than the pieces from *About Mother*, depicted here in the form of an ironic interpretation of the polka, with Suk distorting features of the dance through the introduction of a greater number of tempo changes and a more complex harmonic basis (music example 26a).

Ex.26a: Suk, *Things Lived and Dreamt*; opening of no.1

The musical score for the opening of Suk's 'Things Lived and Dreamt', no. 1, is presented in four systems. The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features three successive *poco* markings. It concludes with *sosten. a tempo ten.* and *dolce*. The second system starts with *poco marc.* and includes another *poco* marking. The third system begins with *poco rit.*, followed by *a tempo*, and contains dynamic markings of *f*, *mf dim.*, *p*, *f*, and *p dolce*. The fourth system starts with *poco animato*, followed by *a tempo*, and includes *f marc.*, *p*, and *cresc.* markings.

Fundamental aspects of Suk's mature musical language are illustrated in these pieces, and in no.1 there are many pedal points which are overlaid with chromatic voice leading. This culminates in the creation of separate harmonic bands between the hands, and this can be seen in the simultaneous presentation of D flat major and A major (written enharmonically as B double flat major), with the interval of the augmented fifth being characteristic within Suk's harmony. Within no.1, the composer juxtaposes perfect and augmented fifths, and brings the hands together in unison after their separation into individual harmonic layers (music example 26b). The coda section of this first piece makes clear the connection with the genre of the polka, where the G major tonic pedal accompanies upper layers of chromaticism presented within the characteristic rhythmic figures of the dance. The piece combines many elements, from adventurous polytonality to the polka rhythms and clarity of tonal harmony within the drone that ends the movement (music example 26c).

Ex.26b: Suk, *Things Lived and Dreamt*, no.1; creation of separate harmonic bands

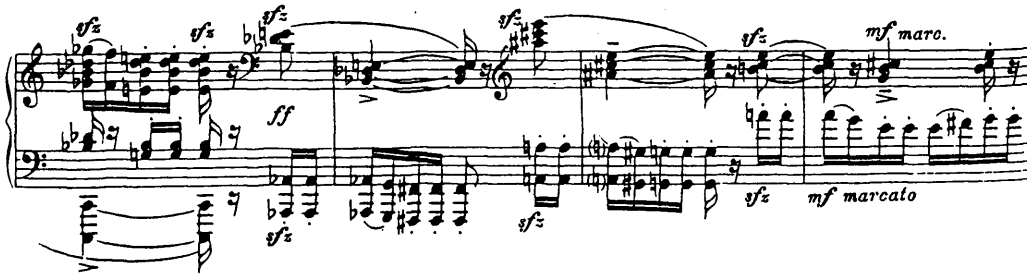
Ex.26c: Suk, *Things Lived and Dreamt*; concluding section of no.1

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a tempo marking 'a tempo (non ritard.)' and a dynamic marking 'p mollo'. The second system also consists of two staves with a dynamic marking 'dim. sempre'. The music features complex harmonic structures with various chords and melodic lines.

A similar harmonic approach can be found in no.4, which again uses pedal points as a way of creating a harmonic foundation above which different bands of harmony move. In the example below, the movement between D flat and G, and G and C in the bass is accompanied by D flat major harmonies in the RH, chords which shift between augmented and perfect fifths, playing out the tension between diminished fifth and perfect fifth within the pedal notes (music example 27a). A subsequent section of no.4 illustrates similar points, with a diminished fifth presented between the E pedal and the B flat harmonies moving above it. Following this separation of harmonic bands, the hands come together but maintain a sense of tension with the quick movement between harmonies (shifting between B flat minor, A flat major, G flat major, D flat major, and B flat minor before arriving on a G major chord), meaning that a sense of tension is maintained through the lack of a clearly defined tonal centre (music example 27b).

Ex.27a: Suk, *Things Lived and Dreamt*, no.4; separation of harmonic bands

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a dynamic marking 'f sempre e marcato'. The second system also consists of two staves with dynamic markings 'pizz f' and 'marcato sfz'. The music features complex harmonic structures with various chords and melodic lines, including a section with a diminished fifth between the E pedal and the B flat harmonies.



Ex.27b: Suk, *Things Lived and Dreamt*, no.4; further example of Suk's creation of separate harmonic bands

In addition to the creation of a texture from separate harmonic bands and the rapid changeability of harmonies, Suk often presents different harmonic styles within the one piece. In no.3, which Štěpán defines as a 'dream of the forest',⁶¹ a pastoral element is expressed through the use of clear tonal 'fanfare' figures (decorated with flattened seventh harmonies, adding a modal flavour to the harmony) which punctuate a texture otherwise defined by rapid movement and change between harmonies, often unified through the use of pedal points. The opening of no.3 presents another perspective of this forest idyll, with chromatically altered chords and the creation of separate harmonic layers leading to dominant seventh chords which, in turn, create harmonic expectations which are continually

⁶¹Filipovský (1947), p.187.

deflected and unfulfilled (music example 28). Suk thus creates a contrast between the introspective, chromatic world of the opening and the compound metre and fanfare figures of subsequent sections.

Ex.28: Suk, *Things Lived and Dreamt*, no.3; opening section, illustrating contrasting ideas

Suk often uses different harmonic worlds as a means of description, and this can be illustrated with reference to no.5. This is one of the few pieces in the collection given a title, and is headed *k uzdravení mého syna* [on the recovery of my son]. It has a basic stanzaic structure, with the first two stanzas followed by a middle section before the statement of a final stanza. Each stanza builds on the previous one in terms of thickening texture, increasingly chromatic language, and an exploration of the piano's registral capacities. This piece is also further evidence of Suk's self quotation, and his concern for his sick son is expressed through the quotation of the death motif from *Radúz and Mahulena* in the opening phrase (music example 29). The connection here can also be seen with the fourth movement of *About Mother* (*About Mother's Heart*), where this motif was also used as a means of indicating impending tragedy. The interval of an augmented fourth associated with this motif appears throughout the musical argument of no.5 of *Things Lived and Dreamt*, and the

dominance of chromatic part movement and the lack of any clear tonal centre reinforces the atmosphere of tension and anxiety.

Ex.29a: Suk, *Things Lived and Dreamt*, no.5; opening section

The musical score for Ex.29a consists of two systems of piano music. The first system shows the initial chords and a melodic line with chromatic inflections. The second system continues the piece with more complex textures, including a prominent chromatic upper line and a more stable bass line. Performance markings such as *pp*, *express.*, *dim. ten.*, and *pp* are used to guide the performer's dynamics and expression.

The middle section of the piece appears to depict the idea of hope, exploring a higher register and fusing pedal points with chromatic upper layers of sound. There is a contrast between two different harmonic languages here, and the chromaticism of the higher register material is juxtaposed with an expressive falling diminished fifth, which is interpreted as an *appoggiatura* above clear tonal harmonies (moving through G major and A flat major) (music example 29b). This combination of chromatic and diatonic harmonies has an expressive purpose within this piece, demonstrating the conflicting emotions of tension and hopefulness experienced by Suk at this point.

Ex.29b: Suk, *Things Lived and Dreamt*, no.5: collision of chromatic and diatonic harmonies

The musical score for Ex.29b is divided into two systems. The first system shows a piano introduction with chromatic movement in the bass line and a more melodic upper line. The second system continues the piece with more complex textures, including a prominent chromatic upper line and a more stable bass line. Performance markings such as *p*, *molto p*, *poco*, *poco più animato appassionato*, and *poco rit.* are used to guide the performer's dynamics and expression.

al tempo

8

p dolce

molto p

8

poco f

appass.

più animato

poco a poco stringendo

ten.

ten.

ten.

There is an element of musical connection between pieces created by Suk in the reprise of material from no.5 (the motif of death from *Radúz*) at the end of no.9 (marked *šepotavě a tajemně* [whisperingly and mysteriously]), the *adagio* marking and chordal texture marking the section as distinct from the continual rhythmic movement and energy of the rest of the movement (music example 30a). The quotation of this material depicts the continual reappearance of painful events and emotions within Suk's interior world, whilst the energetic rhythmic ostinatos that define the rest of the piece demonstrate a sense of distance and time passing.

Ex.30a: Suk, *Things Lived and Dreamt*, no.9; quotation of material from no.5

Animato.

ff

8

marcatissimo

sfz

mp



The opening of no.9 demonstrates Suk's exploration of the piano's sonic capabilities, and is somewhat Impressionistic in its texture built upon arpeggiation and harmonic colourfulness. There is a lack of any clear tonal centre, with the stepwise movement of the arpeggios culminating in a series of rapidly shifting chordal progressions, through G sharp minor, D minor, F minor, A minor7, B major, E minor7, and G minor7, landing upon C sharp major7. This appears to function as the dominant seventh of the following F sharp, but this perception of a tonal relationship is instantly undermined by the separation of harmonic bands between the hands, with the RH presenting C major against the LH's F sharp major (music example 30b). This confrontation of 'black and white' harmonies within a tritone relationship (C – F sharp) recalls the writing of Skryabin within his later piano sonatas.

Ex.30b: Suk, *Things Lived and Dreamt*; first page of no.9

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system consists of two staves with complex rhythmic patterns and chromatic movement. It includes dynamic markings 'poco', 'perdand.', and 'pp'. The second system continues the piece, featuring a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking and a 'puls' (pulsation) marking at the bottom left.

Within the collection of *Things Lived and Dreamt*, Suk explores many different ways of constructing pieces, from the motivic cores that govern the construction of nos 5 (the interval of a fourth associated with the death motif from *Radúz*) and 1 (the 'polka' motif from the opening) to the 'stream of consciousness' that appears in no.2, defined by Štěpán as a 'subject selected from the land of dreams'.⁶² This piece is marked *neklidně a nasměle, bez silnějšího výrazu* [restless and shy, without very strong expression], and this is depicted in the fleeting opening thought, defined by chromaticism and an ascending sequence, the atmosphere of restlessness enhanced through constantly changing harmonies (music example 31a). These create expectations through occasional dominant seventh chords and tonal harmonies which are never fulfilled or extended, and any clearly defined tonal centre is constantly deflected and avoided. The complex and changeable harmonic world of the piece culminates in the final cadence, the underlying plagal nature of which is decorated through the separate harmonic bands presented between the hands, the bare fifths of the final chord intensified against the thick texture and harmonic complexity of the previous musical argument (music example 31b).

Ex.31a: Suk, *Things Lived and Dreamt*; opening of no.2

The image shows the opening of the second piece from the collection. It features two staves with a tempo of 18/8. The music is marked 'sempre sotto voce e p' (always sotto voce and piano). The notation includes chromatic lines and complex harmonic structures.

⁶²Filipovský (1947), p. 183.

Ex.31b: Suk, *Things Lived and Dreamt*; concluding bars of no.2

Suk maximises the principle of contrast in his overall organisation of moods and expressive states, and this can be seen in the contrast between nos 6, 7, and 8. No.6, in its clear ternary structure, relatively diatonic harmony and repetition of rhythmic cells presents, as Květ suggests, ‘a song of the forest’⁶³ (music example 32a). The contrast between external description and internal emotion is expressed in the ternary structure, the middle section of which is in F sharp major (creating an augmented fifth relationship with the B flat major framing sections), and combines harmonic colourfulness with tonal stability through unifying pedal points. The pastoral atmosphere is continued in no.8, the compound time and clear rhythmic definition of which recall the opening *vivace* idea from no.3 (also concerned with pastoral description) (music example 32b).

⁶³Quoted in Filipovský (1947), p.209.

Ex.32a: Suk, *Things Lived and Dreamt*; opening of no.6

Ex.32b: Suk, *Things Lived and Dreamt*; opening of no.8

The rhythmic energy of nos 6 and 8 is in complete contrast to the musical argument presented in no.7, where the stark unison statement presents the ‘theme of fate’⁶⁴ (also used in Suk’s orchestral tone poem *Ripening*). Suk exploits the piano’s registral capacity, the depth of the opening gradually expanding to create the widely spaced textures of the climax point which recall those of Janáček in the Sonata *I.X.1905* (music example 33). The textural sparseness of both Suk and Janáček (and the abrupt, dramatic form of expression it creates) contrasts with the full, Romantic virtuosity and technical glitter presented by Novák in the contemporaneous *Pan*. The intensely slow tempo of no.7 of *Things Lived and Dreamt*, dominated by dotted rhythmic figuration and complex chromatic harmonies (with the typically Sukian absence of tonal centre and creation of separate harmonic bands between the hands), creates a movement full of tension and concealed power, the final C sharp major

⁶⁴Filipovský (1947), p.214.

chord representing a man at peace with the force of Fate in his life, creating an atmosphere of acceptance made all the more powerful following the previous complexity and power.

Ex.33: Suk, *Things Lived and Dreamt*; opening of no.7

The musical score for the opening of piece no. 7 is written for piano. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system shows the right hand with a melodic line and the left hand with a complex, chromatic accompaniment. The dynamics are marked *p molto*, *poco*, and *p molto sotto voce*. The second system continues the piece, with the left hand accompaniment becoming more prominent and marked *piu*.

The rhythmic definition of the ‘theme of fate’ presented in no.7 is reprised in the final number of the collection, entitled *Zapomenutým rovům v koutku hřbitova křečovického (snivě)* [To forlorn graves in a corner of the Křečovice cemetery (dreamily)], but the crushing power of fate presented in no.7 is transformed here into an atmosphere of acceptance and contemplation. The key of both pieces is the same (F sharp minor) but, in no.10, the low register and complex chromaticism of no.7 is replaced by a clear chordal accompaniment in the middle of the register, and a higher melodic line (which uses the interval of a fourth, connected with the death motif from *Radúz* which has been present throughout the collection) which creates a feeling of personal contemplation above the ever-present fate of eventual death (music example 34a).

Ex.34a: Suk, *Things Lived and Dreamt*; opening of no.10

The musical score for the opening of piece no. 10 is written for piano. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system shows the right hand with a melodic line and the left hand with a clear chordal accompaniment. The dynamics are marked *Dolce sempre p molto* and *molto p e dolce, ma espress.*. The tempo is marked *ten.*

dolcissimo, ma espress.

The use of stark octaves (against a changing harmonic background) also recalls the texture of no.7 but, in no.10, these octaves are followed by a section that seems to depict the healing power of nature, in its clear tonality, arpeggiation, high register, and ornamental *stringendo* figuration and trills in the RH line (imitating the sound of birdsong) (music example 34b). The whole atmosphere of this piece is one of acceptance, healing, and contemplation, and the intense emotions of earlier pieces and movements from *About Mother* are now very much muted, the final F sharp major chord depicting the composer's peace with himself and his life after years of pain and struggle.

Ex.34b: Suk, *Things Lived and Dreamt*; middle section of no.10

poco stringendo

mp

p

Animato.

poco rit.

a tempo

dim molto

pp

mp

ten.

ten.

8.....

A revealing comparison can be made between Dvořák's *At a Hero's Grave* (from the *Poetic Tone Pictures*) and the final piece of Suk's collection. Both pieces deal with death and the image of the graveyard, but there are many differences in the way the two composers depict this image musically. Dvořák work is dominated by virtuosity, power, and strength, and explores these within a piece which develops textures and ideas through a process of elaboration that creates connections with Liszt. Dvořák's hero is defined as a national one, and the power and strength of the musical argument reflects this nationalist perspective, depicting the courage and heroism of a soldier fighting for his country. In contrast, Suk's piece represents a personal coming to terms with the tragic deaths that redefined his life, and the understated musical argument (including a redefinition of the motif of death used in many other pieces, and the depiction of the healing power of nature) contrasts with the powerfully virtuosic and extrovert creation of Dvořák. This sense of resignation and resolution of previous emotional intensity can be seen in the final bars of no.10, where the tritone between F sharp and C (the key interval of the motif of death) is resolved into a perfect fourth, the major key underlining this atmosphere of acceptance (music example 34c).

Ex.34c: Suk, *Things Lived and Dreamt*; concluding bars of no.10

The musical score for Suk's *Things Lived and Dreamt*, concluding bars of no.10, is presented in three systems. The first system is marked *ppp dolcissimo e sostenuto* and features a tritone between F sharp and C. The second system is marked *Tempo I.* and includes dynamics such as *pp*, *molto p*, and *ten.*. The third system includes markings for *dimin.*, *sostenuto*, *pp*, and *perdendosi*. The score concludes with a perfect fourth interval, resolving the tritone from the first system.

Aside from the cycle of *Ukolébavky* [Lullabies] op.33 (1910–12), *Things Lived and Dreamt* was the last significant work for the piano that Suk completed, and in it he brings together all of the experiences and techniques accumulated throughout his compositional and personal life. What this chapter clearly demonstrates is that, despite the fact that Novák and Suk started from a similar point of departure (Dvořák's teaching, late Romanticism, and the technically unchallenging salon piece), Suk's individuality means that the end product is very different and, right from the start, there were elements of his language that stood out. The dramatic and virtuosic early pieces (such as the *Fantasy Polonaise*), with their inclusion of colourful non-functional harmonic relationships, act as a precursor to how Suk's language would develop in subsequent years and reinforces the point that, despite the surface similarities with Novák, Suk was always more innovative and original.

Whilst the similarities with Novák have already been outlined, Suk's approach to the piano creates connections with Janáček. Both composers use the instrument as a vehicle of intimate expression, as well as a way of experimenting with new ideas before working on larger-scale genres. As with Janáček, the piano was significant for Suk whilst his language was developing, meaning that the instrument is important in defining his mature musical expression. The obvious difference between the two composers (and a further point of contrast with Novák) is Suk's relative lack of interest in the music of his native country and, unlike Novák and Janáček, he never undertook any form of ethnological study. Suk's musical language is the product of both the absorption of a number of contemporary influences and his personal responses to events in his own life, and it was left to Janáček to demonstrate that the combination of Moravian folk music and personal, intimate experiences could form the basis of a truly original and innovative individual style. It is to his works for the instrument that we now turn.

CHAPTER 9

The piano music of Leoš Janáček: the redefinition of musical style through Moravian folk music

Table 7¹ shows Janáček's output for the piano during the period 1900–12, which is the most significant time in the composer's writing for the instrument. Although Janáček produced works for keyboard before and after this period, the first decade of the twentieth century is the most important both in terms of considering Janáček's musical development and in making comparisons between his piano works and those of his Czech contemporaries, Novák and Suk. Janáček (unlike Novák or Suk) is known primarily as a composer of opera, and the fundamental task of this chapter is to explore what role the piano works have in the composer's development. The fact that the key period for piano writing is between 1900 and 1912 is important in this, as it was a time when Janáček had completed his first significant opera, *Její pastorkyňa* [Jenůfa] (I/4, 1894–1903), but was also a period during which the composer experienced a huge sense of personal and professional isolation. At this stage in his life, Janáček was not considered a significant Czech composer, being seen as a marginal figure (his situation in Moravian Brno rather than Prague may have played some part in this) and more of an ethnographer than a creator of independent art works. The piano works bring together these elements of Janáček's life, being programmatic works that are all in some way linked to autobiographical elements, and connect with Moravian folk music in the way in which Janáček's experiences of the cimbalom and the textures of folk music were first transferred onto western instruments and independent art works through the keyboard.

¹The information included in the table has been taken from *JAWO* (1997), pp.461–3.

Table 7: Janáček's solo piano works from 1900-12 in context

YEAR	INSTRUMENTAL WORKS (solo piano works given in bold)	STAGE WORKS	VOCAL AND ORCHESTRAL WORKS
1900	<i>On the Overgrown Path</i> VIII/17-7 pieces by 22 Oct		<i>Four Moravian male voice choruses</i> IV/28 between July 1900-Nov 1906
1901	VIII/17-3 pieces published for harmonium	<i>Jenůfa</i> I/4-work on Act II	
1902	VIII/17-2 pieces published for harmonium	I/4-Act II by 8 July. Work begun on Act III	
1903		I/4-Act III completed by 18 March <i>Fate</i> I/5 begun by 8 Dec	
1904	18 Moravian Dances VIII/18 by 22 Sept		
1905		1905 version of I/5 completed by 12 June	
1906	<i>I.X.1905</i> VIII/19 by 27 Jan	1906 version of I/5 by 26 July	<i>Kantar Helfar</i> IV/23 by 24 Oct <i>Maryčka Magdónová [I]</i> IV/34 by 11 Nov
1907		1907 version of I/5 by 19 Nov	<i>Maryčka Magdónová [II]</i> IV/35 by 21 March
1908	VIII/17-5 pieces between 7 May and 6 June	<i>The Excursions of Mr. Brouček to the Moon</i> I/6-Act I scene I completed by 27 March	<i>5 Moravian Dances</i> V/6 between 1908-12 <i>4 Ballades</i> V/7 between 1908-12 <i>2 Ballades</i> V/8 between 1908-12
1909	<i>Christ the Lord is Born</i> VIII/20 by 24 Dec		<i>The 70,000</i> IV/36 by 8 Dec <i>6 Folk Songs</i> V/9 by 10 Dec

1910	<i>Fairy Tale</i> VII/5 – 1910 version by 10 Feb	I/6 – Act I scene II by 18 Feb	
1911	VIII/17– series I published in Dec <i>Moderato</i> VIII/21 by April		
1912	VII/5 – 1912 version by 28 March <i>In the Mists</i> VIII/22 by 22 April	I/6 - Act II completed by ?June	<i>5 Folk Songs</i> IV/37 by 9 March

Janáček's marginal position during the decade 1900–10 can be contrasted with that of Novák, who was at the peak of his creative power at this point, having experienced a variety of influences and created a language that combined Moravian folk music and the soundworld of Impressionism with an approach to motif and characterisation of themes that recalled Liszt and Smetana. These influences fuse in the work that represents the peak of his writing for solo piano, the tone poem *Pan*, where the vast, virtuosic textures and monothematic rigour of Liszt combine with Impressionistic harmonies and extra-musical influences.

Suk was also experiencing a good deal of success in the first decade of the twentieth century. His position in the Czech Quartet meant that he travelled a great deal, resulting in a broader knowledge of contemporary music (as opposed to Novák's fundamental and unshifting attachment to conventions of Romanticism). His technique developed in a cumulative, linear way until the personal tragedies of 1904–5, which led to his turning towards the piano as a vehicle of intimate expression in the cycle *About Mother*. These programmatic intentions continued in the cycle *Things Lived and Dreamt*, a set which contains numerous examples of the flexibility of Suk's technique which, along with forward-looking harmonic and rhythmic elements, situate the composer's musical language firmly in the twentieth century.

Both Suk and Novák experienced success as published composers, and the creation of a ‘Novák cult’ in Brno during 1900–12² would surely have been a further source of frustration to the older Janáček, who was experiencing a sense of dejection and lack of self-esteem at this point. By 1900, his enthusiasms had been redirected into the Moravian folk music that was to redefine his musical language and he had completed his third opera, *Jenůfa*, yet, as a figure on the map of Czech music, his presence was marginal. Professionally, he was recognised in Brno as a composer, teacher, writer, and theorist, yet Prague failed to see beyond the figure of ethnographer, and the refusal of the National Theatre to stage *Jenůfa* cast a shadow upon Janáček until its production in 1916. Personally, the deaths of his two children (in 1890 and 1903) had a huge impact and ultimately led to the complete disintegration of whatever was left of his marriage. Both personally and professionally, Janáček must have experienced a sense of isolation, and it is in this atmosphere that the principal works for solo piano were created.

Table 8: The solo piano works of Novák, Suk, and Janáček in the period 1900–12

YEAR	NOVÁK	SUK	JANÁČEK
1900	<i>Sonata eroica</i> op.24	<i>Suite</i> op.21	<i>On the Overgrown Path</i> – 7 pieces
1902		<i>Spring</i> op.22a <i>Summer Impressions</i> op.22b	
1903	<i>Songs of Winter Nights</i> op.30		
1906			<i>I.X.1905</i>
1907		<i>About Mother</i> op.28	
1908			<i>On the Overgrown Path</i> – 5 pieces
1909		<i>Things Lived and Dreamt</i> op.30	
1910	<i>Pan</i> op.43		
1912			<i>In the Mists</i>

²This is discussed in Tyrrell (2006), pp.453–4.

Table 8 demonstrates that the period 1900–12 was a key period in the development of Czech piano music, and the outputs of Novák, Suk, and Janáček illustrate different facets of this. Both Novák and Suk can be seen as more ‘cosmopolitan’ figures than Janáček, and they absorbed many ideas and styles from contemporary European figures in the development of their own musical languages. Novák’s piano writing can be seen as distinct from Janáček’s in his attachment to the textures and compositional techniques of late Romanticism, and the dominance of these throughout his compositional life mean that, despite his engagement with contemporary movements (particularly Impressionism and the music of Strauss), Novák remained a conservative figure, something that was emphasised in his status after 1918. After the achievement of Czech independence, Novák became ‘institutionalised’ and was important as a teacher as opposed to a progressive composer. In this, his career is diametrically opposed to that of Janáček, for whom the ‘opening up’ of Czech music to progressive twentieth century European influences subsequent to the achievement of independence led to the creation of an international reputation.

In terms of piano output, the works of Suk and Janáček have many points of connection and similarity. Janáček is a composer whose mature style fuses many different elements, but his connection with Romanticism is constantly felt in his attachment to a programme. The piano works demonstrate this fully, exploring and depicting many aspects of his personal life, and they illustrate his use of the instrument as a vehicle of intimate expression, an element that remained until the end of his life (the final work written by Janáček being the pieces in the *Památník pro Kamilu Stösslovou* [Notebook for Kamila] (VIII/33, 1927–8)). The beginnings of Janáček treating the piano in such a way is in the first decade of the twentieth century, when a combination of personal and professional crises led to a mood of introspection. For Suk, the treatment of the instrument as a way of recording personal and intimate emotions was the result of the tragic deaths of Dvořák and Otilie, which led to a change of direction in the composer’s piano writing (away from the more formal approaches found in the *Suite* and *Spring*). However, despite points of connection (a more abrupt, changeable musical language removed from Romantic hyperbole and virtuosity, and the importance of personal programme), the fundamental difference is in the derivation

of the composers' individual musical languages and the influences that they absorbed. In comparison to Novák and Janáček, Suk was relatively untouched by folk music, and it certainly never led to any kind of redefinition of his compositional style. Whilst Novák shared many of the same folk music experiences as Janáček, the influence upon his writing was minimal, as he responded predominantly to melody as opposed to the instrumental and textural elements focused upon by Janáček. The older composer's experience of Moravian folk music (beginning seriously in 1888) redefined his language, and its effect can be felt first in the piano accompaniments that Janáček wrote to folk melodies he had collected. The piano is thus fundamental in transferring the sounds and textures of Moravian folk music onto western instruments, and his experience of writing for the instrument was also to be influential on his operatic writing.

Significant aspects of Janáček's musical language are drama and disruption, and these elements can be seen as being derived from Moravian folk music. Drama is central to Janáček's operas but is also a crucial element in the piano works, providing a point of convergence between the composer's key operatic works and those for piano, which are often seen (because of their lack of volume in the composer's output) as marginal in Janáček's development. It would be hyperbolic to suggest that the piano was central to Janáček's development throughout his life, as there are vast periods when he wrote nothing for the instrument, and opera clearly emerges as the most important genre from the time of completing *Jenůfa*, yet its significance in his transference of the features of Moravian folk music cannot be underestimated. The absorption of these features in the depiction of intensely personal and autobiographical events and emotions creates a musical language that is totally unique in its ability to imbue relatively small-scale works with an emotional load far beyond their modest scale. The huge impact of Moravian folk music upon Janáček can only be fully appreciated after an exploration of the composer's style prior to 1888, and it is to this that we now turn.

Early life and educational background³

The period 1900–1912 is the most significant for the piano in terms of the volume of works produced for the instrument, but a fundamental change in Janáček's compositional language had occurred much earlier during the period of intense contact with Moravian folk music. The examination of the composer's piano music in this chapter will thus emphasise the major changes in technique brought about through his ethnological research and the piano works created subsequently but, in order to demonstrate the upheaval in Janáček's language that these experiences created, a survey of the composer's early style and educational background is also necessary.

Janáček's earliest musical experiences were in his involvement with the musical and cultural life of Hukvaldy, and his education began with attendance at the Staré Brno monastery. The *kantor*⁴ tradition that existed within his family meant that this was followed with three years (1866–9) at the Staré Brno Realschule, culminating in his studying for a teaching degree at the State Teacher's Training College in Brno. A significant figure during Janáček's early development was Pavel Křížkovský (1820–85), and his impact on the young composer can be felt by the fact that Janáček continued to write about him throughout his life (from his first published article – about Křížkovský's reform of church music (XV/I) to one fifty years later when he wrote for *Lidové noviny* about Křížkovský's statue in Brno (XV/280)). Most of Křížkovský's small output was liturgical, but he also wrote secular choruses based on folk texts from František Sušil's *Moravské národní písně s nápěvy do textu vřaděnými* [Moravian folksongs with melodies added] (8 volumes, 1853–1860), and these works had the result of focusing Janáček's nationalism into Moravian and Slavonic channels. Early evidence of the composer's attitude towards his native country can be found in a letter to his uncle dated 26 May 1869, where he writes 'Ah, dear Uncle, you don't know how I love these Czechs, you won't believe how I hate these Germans, these Germans who don't have

³The following texts were useful in preparing this section: Tyrrell (2006), Wingfield (1999), Beckerman (1994), Vogel (1981), Hollander (1964), and Štědroň (1955).

⁴The Czech term 'kantor' is used colloquially to mean schoolteacher, but also embraces the notion of a musician: kantors were often organists and choirmasters in addition to their everyday teaching activities – more information is given in Tyrrell (2006), pp.24–6.

their own homeland, who came into our beautiful Czech lands, to take our beautiful homeland away from us, attach it to themselves and then Germanise us.’⁵ Janáček was exposed to a great deal of music of tremendous variety under Křížkovský yet, despite being introduced to the innovative and progressive styles of Wagner and Liszt, by the end of his schooling he had a conservative taste in music, an element that was to continue until his encounters with Moravian folk music.

Janáček’s first compositions were male voice choruses for the Svatopluk choral society in Brno and, throughout his early development, he was fully involved with the musical life of Brno, playing the organ at the Brno Abbey and conducting the Svatopluk choral society. However, following his early education in Brno, Janáček went to study at the Prague Organ School during 1874–5, and his involvement with the Bohemian capital came at a time when the idea of Czech nationalism and its expression through the operas of Smetana was at its height, Dvořák’s involvement with folk sources and the Classicism of Brahms was beginning, and Fibich was beginning to follow in the steps of Smetana with his creation of programmatic symphonic poems. The distinction between the modern and progressive camp of Smetana and Fibich and the more conservative style of Dvořák would have been perceptible to the young composer, and the alignment of Janáček with Dvořák’s conservative ‘camp’ is revealing of his compositional style at this point.

In Prague, Janáček was confronted with a wealth of contemporary styles by František Skuherský (1830–92), an adventurous teacher whose daring curriculum reflected the innovations of Wagner (in the form of chromaticism and enharmonic modulation). Janáček’s exercises from this period⁶ illustrate both his thorough involvement in and enjoyment of the course, and interest in the chromatic soundworld of the age, betrayed by abrupt modulations.⁷

Whilst in Prague Janáček met Dvořák, and this relationship developed into a deep friendship that was to continue until the older man’s death. The circumstances surrounding their initial meeting are unclear, but several sources state that the pair met in 1874–5, quite

⁵Tyrrell (2006), p.61.

⁶See VIII/1, completed between Oct–June 1875.

⁷Examples of these can be found in Beckerman (1994), pp.9–10.

possibly at St. Vojtěch's, where Dvořák was employed at the time.⁸ Janáček's enthusiasm for Dvořák sits beside his negative opinion of Smetana, whom he saw as, in Hollander's words, 'the epitome of intellectually underpinned urbanity, of the bourgeois romanticism and modernism of Prague and of the Westernising trends of Bohemia in general.'⁹ This comment illustrates both Janáček's conservatism and his suspicion at the creation of a Czech national style through the absorption of wider European contemporary Romantic models. The influence of Dvořák can be felt in Janáček's early works for string orchestra, the *Suite* (VI/2, 1877) and the *Idyll* (VI/3, 1878), both of which reflect the musical language used by Dvořák in his *Serenade for Strings* (1875).

Janáček graduated as a state certified teacher in 1876 and returned to Brno to resume his organist post at the Staré Brno monastery and his conductorship of Svatopluk. His activities as a performer are particularly significant at this point and, from 1876, he began having piano lessons with Amalie Wickenhauser (1834–90), and organised a series of chamber concerts in Brno with her between 1877 and 1879.¹⁰ The presence of Mendelssohn, Rubinstein, and Saint-Saëns confirms Janáček's orientation towards a solid Romantic repertory at this stage, an element that can be further demonstrated by the composer's plan to study with Rubinstein in St. Petersburg. Rubinstein was the most famous piano virtuoso of the day, and a figure whom Janáček hero-worshipped at this point in his life. His enthusiasm for the Russian is illustrated through many of his letters to his future wife Zdenka,¹¹ and it would seem that it was not just Rubinstein's virtuosity, but also his compositional style, that fascinated Janáček. The fact that the young composer responded so enthusiastically to 'such conventional if well-wrought music'¹² shows both his attachment to the conventions of Romanticism at this point and his essential conservatism, reinforcing the huge effect that Moravian folk music had on redefining his musical language.

Janáček's initial plan to study with Rubinstein never came to fruition, and he continued his formal education in Leipzig in 1879. The choice of this city seems to be

⁸See Tyrrell (2006), p.261.

⁹Hollander (1963), p.49.

¹⁰The repertoire performed at these concerts is outlined in Tyrrell (2006), p.120.

¹¹See Tyrrell (2006), p.151.

¹²Tyrrell (2006), p.151.

particularly suitable at this stage in Janáček's development, being as it was a conservative musical centre dominated by Mendelssohn and Schumann. Whilst in Leipzig Janáček attended many concerts, the repertoire of which (being predominantly conservative Austro-German music and Classical repertory, stopping short of anything as adventurous as Liszt or Wagner) would have further reinforced his musical conservatism. Janáček used Leipzig as a way of learning about the standard orchestral repertory, and his connection with instrumental music in his concert-going matches his interest in these genres in his compositional output. Works composed whilst he was in Leipzig include a Piano Sonata (X/5, 1879), two movements of a Violin Sonata (X/12, 1880), and the piano Theme and Variations (VIII/6, 1880), all of which demonstrate his emphasis on Classical form and structure during this time, a focus which reinforces the composer's closeness to Dvořák's musical style from the mid-1870s. The distance between the piano Theme and Variations and the composer's next work for solo piano (*On the Overgrown Path*) demonstrates the huge change in style Janáček was to experience during his contact with Moravian folk music. Jiraský has commented that the Theme and Variations shows Janáček's ability to assimilate a number of different styles at this point, with variations 2 and 7 being reminiscent of Schumann, 3 recalling the style of Tchaikovsky, 4 and 5 reminding of Liszt and Brahms respectively, and variation 6 capturing the style of the Baroque era¹³ (although there is no concrete evidence that Janáček would have experienced Liszt or Tchaikovsky by this point). The opening theme of this work illustrates Janáček's piano style at this point, and phrases are balanced and even, the tonality is clear, and the texture is predominantly polyphonic (unusual for the mature Janáček, but here perhaps a response to the many fugal exercises completed in Leipzig, or his experiences of the piano writing of Schumann) (music example 1a). Many of the variations have a characteristically Romantic sense of virtuosity provided by conventional figuration – octaves (variations 2 and 4), virtuosic counterpoint (variation 4), and rapid figuration (variation 7). The only figuration here that is striking when considered along with the later works for piano is the accompanimental figure in variation 7, which is remarkably similar to that of the last movement of *In the Mists*, completed thirty-two years later (music example 1b).

¹³Jiraský (2006), p.131.

Ex.1a: Janáček, *Theme and Variations*; opening theme, bars 1–8

Andante
2/1

p

5

Ex.1b: Janáček, *Theme and Variations*; variation 7, bars 1–6

Adagio
2/1

mf

138

140

142

The fact that Janáček's focus in Leipzig was on form and structure can be felt in his statement that 'I've got to know the state of one of the most musical cities in the world, in that I've heard many concerts and I have, as I hope, thoroughly studied musical forms – these are the fruits of my time here.'¹⁴ However, despite the advances Janáček made in Leipzig, he transferred to Vienna on 24 February 1880, spending the remainder of the academic year at the Conservatory there. The composer had a specific agenda for his studies in Vienna, and wanted to focus on composition and piano, his ambitions as a concert pianist still being significant at his point. However, after a few months in Vienna, these ambitions were laid to rest (the precise reasons are unknown) and Janáček focused on composition. Vienna in 1880 would have been an interesting place for Janáček to be after the conservative Leipzig, as it was a city musically divided between conservative Classicism and the more progressive Wagnerian camp. The young composer was at this time siding with the conservative and Classical camp of Brahms and Hanslick, remarking that the purpose of his Vienna studies was to 'work further only on Grill's foundations'¹⁵ and not let myself be influenced by this Wagnerian bombast.'¹⁶ However, his studies in Vienna were unsuccessful, the compositions from this period (X/15 – X/18) being neither numerous or significant in Janáček's future development, and after leaving Vienna he became self-taught.

From this outline of Janáček's early education and musical experiences several significant elements are revealed. Fundamentally, the young composer's conservatism comes through as a defining part of his musical language, and his resistance to more progressive and innovative musical models (such as Wagner or Liszt) aligns him with Dvořák rather than Smetana or Fibich. This image of Janáček as a conservative is diametrically opposed to the modern and progressive composer who redefined Czech opera in the twentieth century, and his openness to modern influences in the 1920s can be contrasted with the resistance to musical innovators that the composer felt during this early stage of his development.

A further element that is revealed through an exploration of Janáček's early development is the limited genres in which he worked during this time of apprenticeship.

¹⁴Tyrrell (2006), p. 167.

¹⁵Leo Grill (1846–1919), Janáček's composition teacher in Leipzig.

¹⁶Tyrrell (2006), p. 175.

Table 9 outlines the composer's output until the key turning point of 1888 and perhaps what is most interesting with regard to our current perception of Janáček is the lack of any stage works, aside from *Šárka* (I/1, 1887), the definitive version of which comes from 1918. The young composer would have been surrounded by examples of Czech opera and melodrama (by Smetana and Fibich), and the fact that he chose to go against this, emphasising instead a conservative approach to Classical form and structure further reinforces his alignment with Dvořák. In addition to the lack of stage works in his output, there is also minimal attention given to orchestral works (examples being only the *Idyll* and *Suite*), and the focus is on works for keyboard (piano and organ) and the choral works he produced for Svatopluk. Table 9 demonstrates clearly the change in direction gradually emerging through the first part of the 1880s, at which point the keyboard works become more 'folk-inspired', being the result of the beginning of Janáček's ethnographic collection of sources. From 1888, the emphasis on Moravian folk music led to the reinvention of the composer as a musical ethnographer, something that was to prove a 'double-edged sword' for Janáček. Although the experience of the music of Moravia was to prove the key to unlocking his completely individual and unique musical voice, it also led to him being seen as a marginal figure in the development of Czech music, with his lack of absorption of contemporary Romantic models meaning that he failed to fulfill the requirements of a Czech national composer as outlined by Hostinský and Nejedlý.

Table 9: Janáček's early piano works in context

YEAR	KEYBOARD WORKS	STAGE WORKS	VOCAL/ INSTRUMENTAL WORKS
1875	<i>Prelude</i> VIII/2 by 19 June <i>Varyto</i> VIII/3 by 24 June <i>Choral Fantasy</i> VIII/4 by 7 July (all works for organ)		<i>Introitus</i> II/2 ?Jan <i>Exaudi Deus (1)</i> II/3 by 3 Feb <i>Exaudi Deus (2)</i> II/4 by 10 Feb <i>Benedictus</i> II/5 by 17 Feb <i>Communio 'Fidelis servus'</i> II/6 by 20 June

1876			<i>True Love</i> IV/8 by 6 Jan <i>You cannot escape your fate</i> IV/9 by ?Jan <i>Vocal Duma</i> IV/10 by 23 Feb
1877	<i>Exercises in form</i> VIII/5: 20 June–13 July		<i>Suite</i> VI/2 by 2 Dec <i>Slavonic chorus</i> IV/12 – 15 July
1878			<i>Idyll</i> VI/3: 31 July–29 Aug <i>Slavonic chorus</i> IV/13 by 8 July
1879			<i>Exurge Domine</i> II/8 <i>Suscepimus</i> II/9
1880	<i>Theme and Variations</i> VIII/6: 29 Jan–22 Feb		
1881–3			
1884	<i>2 pieces for organ</i> VIII/7 published		
1885	<i>Dymák</i> VIII/8 – tune collected in 1885		<i>Four male voice choruses</i> IV/17: June–Nov <i>The Wild Duck</i> IV/18
1886	<i>National Dances in Moravia</i> VIII/10: 1886–91		
1887	<i>In Memoriam</i> VIII/9 – ?1887	<i>Šárka</i> I/1 – 1887 version by early Aug	
1888	<i>Srňátko</i> VIII/11 – tune collected 1888		<i>3 male voice choruses</i> IV/19 by 14 May

Janáček's encounters with Moravian folk music: the redefinition of his piano style

The focus upon folk music in Janáček's life began in earnest in 1888, and his involvement with this activity provides the key to unlocking his individual musical voice. The composer's reinvention of himself as a musical ethnographer may seem like a sudden change in direction, yet there are signs before the crucial date of 1888 that this would be the direction the composer would take and we can note the key events that provided the final 'push' into folk research. The beginnings of Janáček noting down folk songs and dances came much

earlier, the first example occurring in the summer of 1884,¹⁷ and the areas investigated by the composer reveals that his approach is more that of composer than purely ethnographer, and he concentrates his explorations on the musically interesting areas of Valašsko, Lašsko, and Slovácko. In addition to his compositional and collecting activities, Janáček was also a prolific writer on folk music, and the fact that his first article on the subject occurs also in 1884¹⁸ demonstrates that the composer had a detailed knowledge of folk songs and had been studying folk accompaniments in detail for some time before 1888.

Several practical events also led to Janáček's absorption in ethnological research at this specific time. The lack of success of his opera *Šárka* (I/I, 1888) and his resignation from activities with the Brno Beseda would have both provided encouragement for a change of direction, but the final impetus possibly came from František Bartoš. An experienced ethnographer (having already published the *Nové národní písně moravské* [New Moravian Folksongs] in 1882), Bartoš became a colleague of Janáček in 1886, when both men were employed at the Czech Gymnasium. Together with Bartoš, Janáček brought out several significant folk publications, namely the *Kytice z národních písní moravských* [Bouquet of Moravian Folksongs] (XIII/I, 1890), the *Kytice z národních písní moravských, slovenských a českých* [A Bouquet of Moravian, Slovak, and Czech folksongs] (XIII/2, 1901) and, their largest collection, the *Národní písně moravské v nově nasbírané* [Moravian Folksongs newly collected] (XIII/3, 1899 and 1901), which consisted of 2057 items, the classification and ordering of which occupied the two men between 1890 and 1901.

Janáček's involvement with folk music can be divided into two areas, that concerning folk dance and those activities involving vocal music. In terms of the composer's piano writing, the period concerning the study of folk dance (essentially up to 1891) is less significant, yet some examples from this period look forward to important events in the later folk period of study. Janáček's redefinition of his piano writing came fundamentally as a result of his writing of accompaniments to Moravian folksongs (the features of which will be

¹⁷A complete table of Janáček's collection of folk materials between 1884 and 1898 is provided in Tyrrell (2006), pp.344–6.

¹⁸This being *Slovanstvo ve svých zpěvech ...*] vydává Ludvík Kuba [Slavdom in its songs [...] by Ludvík Kuba] (XV/65). It was written in 1884 before being published in *Hlídky* in 1886 and *Hudební listy* in 1888.

examined subsequently), and the individuality of approach in these is reinforced through comparison with Janáček's earlier accompaniments. *Královičky* [Little Queens] is a collection of ritual folk dances and songs, and was the result of the composer's collaboration with Lucie Bakešová (1853–1935). Janáček eventually wrote accompaniments to the songs (IV/20, 1889) which are chordal, supportive of the vocal line, and lacking any kind of independence (music example 2). This style is a world away from the cimbalom-inspired soundworld of the later accompaniments, demonstrating that it was the music of Slovácko that provided the catalyst for a decisive change in Janáček's language.

Ex.2: Janáček; an example of the accompaniment writing in *Little Queens*¹⁹

Allegro

Ne-se-me, ne-se-me má - ji - ček, u - řal ho, u - řal ho Ja - ni - ček,

Further evidence of the significant place that the cimbalom would have in redefining Janáček's piano writing comes in the *Národní tance na Moravě* [National Dances of Moravia] (VIII/10, 1891). The sixth piece in this collection, the *Starodávny*, is important in documenting the composer's early response to the soundworld of the cimbalom and, as it is a transcription made by Janáček in Petřvald, it can be suggested that it was the cimbalom playing of Jan Myška during 1885–8 that sparked the composer's enthusiasm.²⁰

An awareness of the structure of the cimbalom and the technique used to produce sound is essential to understanding the soundworld of this instrument.²¹ There are various different types of cimbalom, from the concert instrument supplied with pedals to the basic portable structure presumably used by folk musicians. This latter type of instrument consisted of unfretted strings which are played with hammers or by plucking the strings (although the former technique is the most characteristic) and, because of the hammer-playing technique

¹⁹Reproduced from Tyrrell (2006), p.391.

²⁰See Tyrrell (2006), p.344.

²¹Much of the descriptive information here has been derived from Kettlewell (2001), pp.679–690.

and lack of sustaining ability, common musical features of the cimbalom include rapidly repeated and alternating notes, both ways of creating a more continuous and constant sound from an instrument whose natural limitations mean that sound decays quickly. These features can be observed in Janáček's transcription of the instrument in the *Starodávny*, which illustrates the repeated notes, rapid alternations, and flourishes that constitute the soundworld of the cimbalom (music example 3a). This piece shows how Janáček approximated the cimbalom sound on the piano, and spread chords and typical Moravian rhythms become the accompaniment to a simple melody, which is further elaborated by the rapid 'swirls' of sound (music example 3b).

Ex.3a: Janáček; transcription of the cimbalom in the *Starodávny*

By - strá vo - du vy - le - la, všec - ky luč - ky
 při - kry - la.

Ex.3b: Janáček; second part of the *Starodávny*, transferred onto the piano

Moderato $\text{♩} = 88$

What these elements produce is a texture far removed from traditional piano writing, and the creation of a more complex soundworld combining a melody line with all of the decorative elements absorbed from cimbalom technique. This was the first step towards the redefinition of piano writing that was to come to fruition later in the collection of *Moravská lidová poezie v písních* [Moravian Folk Poetry in Song] (V/2, 1892–1901). From 1891, Janáček's focus was on the area of Slovácko, and the textures, techniques, and sounds from this musically rich location were to provide the composer with the means through which to create a very different musical language.

The music of Slovácko: the key to unlocking Janáček's individual musical voice

In 1891, Janáček travelled to Velká nad Veličkou in Slovácko, and his interest in this area can be seen both from the fact that he returned in the following summer and applied for a grant to study this area in more detail. In this region, he discovered a completely different musical spirit and a harmonic dimension that he had thought absent from Moravian folk music, and he notes himself in his grant application 'what harmonic, contrapuntal, and rhythmic forms there are, so far unsuspected in Czech folk music.'²² The area of Slovácko was particularly rich and varied in terms of its folk sources, and the map below²³ shows that this region is positioned in the south east, close to the border with Slovakia, and this accounts for many of the differences between the music of that area and that of the more western Bohemia.

²²Tyrrell (2006), p.369.

²³Reproduced from Tyrrell (1988), p.xvi.

Illustration 2: map of Bohemia and Moravia



Moravian folk music is more independent of the western tonal system and uses more colourful, modally inflected scale types, often involving dissonances such as the tritone and the minor seventh. Whereas Bohemian folksong is predominantly major, Moravian folksong is more varied in mode and in its choice of intervals, and modulates frequently (often to quite distant keys), as opposed to Bohemian folksong, which rarely modulates. Moravian song and dance is closely connected with vocal genres (in contrast with the more instrumentally conceived Bohemian folk music), and many of the melodic-rhythmic structures are derived from the textual rhythms. This leads to a greater sense of rhythmic freedom in Moravian folksong, which is characterised by the frequent use of irregular, unbalanced musical periods, internal pauses, and sharply dotted rhythmic figures (music example 4).²⁴ It is immediately clear why this would have appealed to Janáček, the later creator of the theory of speech melody. To the composer, the closeness of the structure to the individual voice would have made Moravian folksong seem like the most personal evocation of nationalism, towards

²⁴See Tyrrell (1988), pp.246–8 for more information on Moravian folksong.

which he always strove, stating that ‘the melodic curves of speech are an expression of the complete organism and of all phases of spiritual activity’ (XV/180).²⁵

Ex.4: An example of the ‘Slovakisation’ of a melodic line²⁶

(i) original melodic line



(ii) the same melodic line, subjected to the rhythmic irregularity of Slovakian folksong



Janáček’s writings as a means of understanding his perception of Moravian folk music

In order to understand how Janáček responded to the Moravian and Slovakian music to which he was exposed, what he perceived as the most important elements of this has to be explored. Much is revealed about the composer’s knowledge and perception of folk music through his article *O hudební stránce národních písní moravských* [On the musical side of Moravian national songs] (XV/163),²⁷ and this extensive essay summarises the main elements of Moravian folk music drawn from the composer’s years of ethnological research.

The texture of Moravian and Slovak folk song was fundamental to Janáček’s redefinition of his own musical language. The typical Moravian folk ensemble is made up of three stringed instruments, usually two violins and a bass yet, occasionally, there is the creation of several layers of instrumental colour with the accompanimental role taken by the cimbalom or the *gajdy* (bagpipe). Many songs with a bagpipe accompaniment illustrate the

²⁵Taken from Janáček’s article *Loni a letos: Hudební studie* [Last Year and this: musical study], first published in *Hlídky* in 1905, and reproduced in Drlíková/Straková (2003), pp.333–343.

²⁶Reproduced from *LJOLP* (1955), p.266.

²⁷In *LJOLP* (1955), pp.241–380.

lack of continuity and fragmentary utterance that Janáček found in Moravian folksongs, and these elements are demonstrated in the subsequent music example. Perhaps more significant than the bagpipe was the instrument that often replaced it in its accompanimental role, the cimbalom, whose sound fascinated Janáček, and he compared it to ‘the evening mist with the gold of the setting sun’.²⁸ The composer made many transcriptions of the instrument, and these reveal the predilection for repeated notes, alternating octaves, and sudden flourishes of sound, all elements which create a sense of independence from the vocal line, and a relationship which is defined by drama and disruption (music example 5).

Ex.5: *Když sem já šel kolem dvorka, kapaly mi slzy z oka* – an example of the cimbalom playing of Jan Myška in Petřvald²⁹

This drama is inherent in the texture of Moravian folk music, which is made up of a vocal line, the main melody echoed on the fiddle (the *hudec*) whilst a second fiddle (the *kontráš*) provides an accompaniment of rhythmic interest, accenting the second and fourth quavers and providing a source of rhythmic dislocation. The texture is therefore defined by its emphasis upon the horizontal and its combination of different layers of sound. This idea of stratification was to have a wide-ranging influence on Janáček’s musical language, but also

²⁸*LJOLP* (1955), p.319.

²⁹Reproduced from *LJOLP* (1955), p.557.

important was the role played by the different layers. Disruption is inherent in the texture of Moravian folk music and is a result of the way in which the instruments interact with one another. The vocal line and the violin have a heterophonic relationship, whilst the second fiddle enlivens and disrupts the rhythmic structure with off-beat accents. Music example 6³⁰ illustrates the typical texture of a Moravian folk band, with three lines made up of vocal and two fiddle parts. The violins provide both an accompaniment and a counter melody to the vocal line, and the *kontráš* part provides rhythmic energy at the lowest part of the texture through off-beat emphasis (what Tyrrell terms the ‘double-strike’ accompaniment).³¹

Ex.6: *Dyž mně dáš péřečko* – collected by Janáček in Lipov in 1892³²

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is labeled 'Zpěv' (Vocal) and contains the lyrics 'Dyž mně dáš pé - re - čko, daj pěk - né ze - le - né,' with two triplet markings over the first and second phrases. The middle staff is labeled 'Hudec' (Violin) and features a triplet in the first measure and four *sf* (sforzando) markings in the subsequent measures. The bottom staff is labeled 'Kontráš' (Double Bass) and is marked 'energico', showing a rhythmic pattern of double strikes (two notes per beat) throughout the piece.

Moravian folk song thus has inherent within its texture an in-built disruptive element, and tension and agitation are essential parts of this music. This stratified texture, defined by independent and disruptive lines, was to have a wide-ranging influence on Janáček’s orchestration at a later stage, yet its influence can be felt first within the piano writing, and the independence of lines and incorporation of dramatic and disruptive elements can be seen clearly in the piano accompaniments created by the composer.

³⁰Reproduced from *LJOLP* (1955), p.576.

³¹Tyrrell (2006), p.395.

³²Reproduced from *LJOLP* (1955), p.576.

The soundworld of the cimbalom and its transference onto piano accompaniments

The previous section outlined the elements of drama and disruption inherent in Moravian folk music and, in its role as an accompanimental force, the cimbalom plays an important part in this. In accompanying the vocal line, the cimbalom provides a minimal accompaniment, creating an independence between the lines, as the accompaniment is no longer merely supportive to the vocal line. This had a huge effect on Janáček's writing, as it 'freed up' the vocal line and allowed parts of the texture greater independence. This enabled the tension that is such an essential element of Moravian folk music to be expressed through the relationship between voice and piano in the creation of his folksong accompaniments.

Janáček began writing accompaniments to folksongs he had collected at a previous stage with Bartoš (the *Bouquet of Moravian folksongs*). This collection of 174 songs was first published in 1890 and was hugely popular, selling out within a few months of its publication, which led to a second edition coming out a few years later (in 1892 or 1893),³³ in turn leading to the demand for Janáček to write accompaniments for them. The composer initially wrote accompaniments to fifteen songs and these came out at about the same time as the second edition, but it was not until about 1901 that the composer created accompaniments for a further 38 songs, taking the collection to the total of 53 songs that constitute the *Moravská lidová poezie v písniích* [Moravian Folk Poetry in Song] (V/2, 1892–1901).

This collection of piano accompaniments provides examples of the way in which Janáček's absorption of both the texture and soundworld of the folk ensemble in general (and the cimbalom in particular) created a completely different type of piano accompaniment. No.9 from *Moravian Folk Poetry in Song*, *Koukol* [The Corn Cockle] illustrates the imitation of the cimbalom in its alternating octaves, and is essentially a modification of the rapid repeated notes that are such a defining feature of the authentic folk instrument writing, as the piano is physically incapable of exactly recreating this sound. The simplicity of the vocal line is typical of Moravian folk music and the accompaniment follows and decorates it with

³³These two dates are given in *JAWO* (1997) on p.157 and p.341 respectively.

alternating octaves, and the harmony is also folk-inspired, being coloured by the raised Lydian fourth (music example 7).

Ex.7: Janáček, *Moravian Folk Poetry in Song*; no.9, *Koukol*

The musical score for 'Koukol' is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal line in treble clef and piano accompaniment in bass clef. The tempo is marked 'Moderato'. The lyrics are 'Ja pu - jdu do ha - ja, ha - ja'. The piano accompaniment features a prominent triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a similar triplet in the left hand. The second system continues the vocal line with lyrics 'ze - le - ne - ho a na - - - la - mu so - bě' and the piano accompaniment, which includes a 'Pia.' (Piano) marking and a 'Pia.' (Piano) marking. The piano accompaniment continues with complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and accents.

In no.30, *Rozmaryn* [Rosemary], the texture of the accompaniment is dominated by the spread chords which are typical of cimbalom writing. The vocal line is punctuated by piano flourishes which consist of repeated notes and rapid ascending and descending scalar passages, and the final line of this song demonstrates the way in which the accompaniments to these songs carry a dramatic and expressive force. The penultimate piano interjection consists of a three note motif which is repeated in rhythmic diminution, creating a sense of drama compounded by the increasing dynamic and addition of accents. The final bars of the song illustrate the way in which dynamics play an important role in the dramatic expression of these songs, with a change from *ff* to *ppp* occurring within the space of three bars (music example 8).

Ex.8: Janáček, *Moravian Folk Poetry in Song*; no.30, *Rozmarýn*

(i) first line of the song

Pod na - ší - ma ok - na - ma, pod - na - ší - ma

(ii) final line of the song

tá, roz - ma - rýn pro - kví - tá.

In many of these songs the sense of drama derives from the fact that there is a lack of co-ordination between the vocal and piano lines, and this can be illustrated with reference to no.19 *Péřečko* [The little feather]. This song shows the predominance of uneven phrase lengths in Moravian folk music and the disruptive characteristics of the accompaniment, with each phrase ending with an expressive, accented piano interjection in direct contrast with previous material. The accents and pause marks create a partial sense of rhythmic freedom, and the drama is provided through extreme changes in dynamic, with the final line of the song illustrating many features of folk textures in its rhythmic unevenness, juxtaposition of contrasting dynamics, and spread chords (music example 9).

Ex.9: Janáček, *Moravian Folk Poetry in Song*; no.19, *Péřečko*

(i) first line of the song

Adagio

Stó - jí šo - haj pod na - ším o - kén - kem, tu - ká na mňa

(ii) final line of the song

dob - rá, půjdu k němu na dvě, na tři slo - va.

f *p* *ff* *pp* *rit.*

The originality of Janáček's folksong accompaniments is made particularly clear when they are considered in relation to those of his contemporary, Vítězslav Novák. Novák's tours of Moravia in 1897 brought him into contact with Janáček, and led to the two men spending time together during that summer in Hukvaldy. Novák's knowledge of folk music came from two main sources, namely his systematic study of folksong collections (Erben, Sušil, and Bartoš) and his experiences of live performances on his travels, during which he often transcribed melodies. The experience of folk cultures had an immediate effect on Novák's compositional life, and his piano accompaniments within the *Písničky na slova*

národním tónu [Songs set to Moravian Folk Poetry] opp. 16, 17, and 21 (1897–8) are contemporaneous to Janáček's. However, the musical style of the accompaniments in this collection could not be more different from Janáček's, and Novák's approach serves to emphasise Janáček's individuality. Examining a setting of the same text by Janáček and Novák reveals much about their individual approaches, and this can be undertaken with a study of Novák's op. 16 no. 7, *Rozmaryn*. In Janáček's setting of this text (illustrated earlier in music example 8) each verse is given the same piano accompaniment, which consists throughout of spread chords, imitating the cimbalom. The accompaniment incorporates a motif which is accented and presented in rhythmic diminution, with the dramatic potential of the song being further realised with the addition of extreme dynamic contrasts at the end.

In contrast, Novák provides a different accompaniment to each verse whilst the melody remains the same, thus responding to models established by lieder composers (music example 10). He uses a piano introduction which is then repeated as an interlude between each verse, a standard pattern of song setting which is eschewed by Janáček. Novák also strives for greater variety and, with each setting of the piano interlude, it changes in some way, becoming higher, thicker in texture, and with a greater registral change, creating a more conventional and more 'westernised' line of change in development. The contrasts between Janáček and Novák can be explained by the different elements of folk sources that the composers responded to. Novák was clearly more focused upon the melodic aspect (and this would have been reinforced through his study of collections of folksong) and paid little attention to elements such as instrumentation and texture, which were the main focus for Janáček. In concentrating upon melody, Novák's settings of Moravian folksong do not really move beyond those of his teacher, Dvořák, whereas Janáček's settings are completely individual, and lead in turn to a complete redefinition in his piano writing and, eventually, to his orchestral textures and operatic writing.

Ex.10; Novák, *Songs set to Moravian Folk Poetry*; op.16 no.7, *Rozmarýn*

Andante amoroso.

Pod na - ši - ma ok - na - ma

poco f, espress. *poco rit.* *p legaliss. a tempo*

con 2^{da}.

espress.

roz - ma - rýu pro - kví - tá, cho - dí - vá k nám šo - haj - ko, o - de mña ho pý - tá.

Ne - pý - taj ho o - de mña,

f espressivo *poco rit.* *p legaliss.*

espress.

o - de mña od sa - méj, lež ho pý - taj od ot - ca,

The period of intensive folk study can be said to have reached an end for Janáček in 1901. However, the composer had been involved with folk sources in detail for such a considerable period of time that its features had become absorbed within his musical language, which then developed through his return to work on *Jenůfa* and the set of small piano pieces entitled *Po zarostlém chodníčku* [On the Overgrown Path] (VIII/17, 1901–11). The importance of the piano in transferring features of Moravian folk music onto independent art works continues in Janáček's output from the first decade of the twentieth century, in the Sonata *I.X.1905* (VIII/19, 1906) and the cycle *V mlhách* [In the Mists] (VIII/22, 1912). Through these works, the features of Moravian folk music were absorbed within a musical language capable of creating structures that can support and sustain a massive emotional and dramatic load. Janáček's operatic writing is at the heart of his output and it would seem that, to understand the other genres, reference has to be made to the operas in order to acknowledge the fact that his language is inherently dramatic, and this is expressed through every genre the composer worked in. However, the dramatic impetus behind Janáček's writing is fundamentally derived from the textural and instrumental resources of Moravian folk music and, despite the importance of opera in his output, these notions of drama and disruption were first explored at the keyboard, in the transference of the cimbalom soundworld onto the piano.

From folk stylisation to independent piano works: the genesis of *On the Overgrown Path*

Janáček's writing of piano accompaniments was an important way in which the composer transferred the techniques of Moravian folksong onto a traditional Western instrument and, from this time, the writing for solo piano builds on the ideas and techniques found in these accompaniments. Janáček began work on the series of pieces entitled *On the Overgrown Path* in October 1900, and the set began as a request on 19 January 1897 from Josef Vávra, a schoolmaster working in Ivančice, who asked the composer for a contribution to his intended series of music for harmonium, stating that 'I would like to put the most beautiful Slavonic melodies harmonised in an easy style in such a way that they would be accessible to even less

experienced players.³⁴ Janáček did not respond to this request until 1900 but, by this stage, the compositions, which had originally started out as ‘folk arrangements’ for harmonium, had now turned into ‘moods’ or ‘character pieces’ for piano. The fact that Janáček was approached by Vávra in the first place provides further reinforcement of the way in which the composer was perceived at this point, as primarily an ethnographer and collector of folk music rather than a composer of independent art music.

Three pieces from this series were published (nos. 1, 2, and 10 of the present series) in the next volume of *Slovanské melodie* (vol. 5, 1901), and nos. 4 and 7 were presented in volume 6 of the following year. Along with these five pieces, a further two pieces were produced in 1902 but only published posthumously, as part of a partially realised second series.³⁵ This reveals that, by 1901, half of the pieces that make up the work we know today were in existence, and the remaining five were added in 1908 and later.³⁶ By 23 May 1908 these seven pieces had become nine, and on 3 June 1908 Branberger wrote back to the composer asking him for the programme or ‘poetic contents’ of the individual pieces, as he intended to write an analysis of them. Janáček responded (on 6 June 1908) and included aphoristic comments on several of the pieces and seven musical quotations (the development of the titles of the individual pieces can be seen in table 10). Janáček eventually sent the cycle to the Brno firm of Arnošt Píša on 23 September 1911 who, despite his reservations about the pieces being ‘too difficult’, published nos. 1–10 in December 1911. The comment about difficulty is revealing of the distance between the original conception of the pieces (as simple folk harmonisations) and the eventual result (pieces loaded with dramatic and expressive power) and, despite the small-scale nature of the individual pieces, they present many difficult and unpianistic textures, revealing of the origins of the musical language in Moravian folk music.

³⁴*JAWO* (1997), p. 259.

³⁵These pieces are included in the Critical Edition of Janáček’s works under the definition of *Paralipomena* – a term that means additions or supplements to a published series.

³⁶*JAWO* (1997), pp. 260–1.

Table 10: The development of the titles of the pieces in *On The Overgrown Path*³⁷

1900 (in <i>Slovanské Melodie</i>)	after 3 June 1908 (Branberger to LJ) ✓ = music quoted 'description/title'	by 6 June 1908 (LJ to Branberger) ✓ = music quoted; 'description'; ◆ title	1911 (pubd by Piša) with final no. and title
✓	✓ 'Glance to'		1. <i>Our Evenings</i>
✓	✓ 'Declaration' [of love]	✓ 'a love song' ✓ (final 2 bars) 'A letter put away for ever'	2. <i>A Blown-Away Leaf</i> 3. <i>Come With Us!</i>
✓		✓✓ (opening and 'Faraway Procession') ◆ <i>The Frýdek Madonna</i>	4. <i>The Frýdek Madonna</i> 5. <i>They chattered like swallows</i> 6. <i>Words Fail!</i>
✓	✓ 'The Bitterness of Reproach'	✓ 'The Bitterness of Disappointment' ✓ 'Perhaps you'll hear parting in the number with the motif [. . .]' ◆ <i>Good Night!</i> ['the words "Good Night!" suit it'] 'Perhaps you'll sense weeping in the penultimate number? The premonition of certain death. During the hot summer nights that angelic being lay in such mortal anguish.'	7. <i>Good Night!</i> 8. <i>Unutterable Anguish</i> 9. <i>In Tears</i>
✓		✓ ◆ (implicit in description): 'In the last number the ominous motif of the screech owl is heard in the intimate song of life.'	10. <i>The screech owl has not flown away!</i>
	✓ 'A Closed Book'	✓ 'A company on an excursion is returning late. The long-drawn- out song is punctured by the terse motif of women's chattering.' (x/zr)	— —

The titles given to the individual pieces reveal the importance of autobiography and programmaticism in the collection.³⁸ No. 4 *Frýdecká Panna Maria* [The Frýdek Madonna] is located in Frýdek-Místek, close to Janáček's birthplace of Hukvaldy, which suggests that the cycle may in part be based on childhood memories. This is also supported by the title of the series, which evokes the symbol of an overgrown path for the recollection of memories from long ago. Vogel states that the title of the cycle is inspired by folk poetry, with a folk song of Těšín containing the words 'the footpath to my mother is overgrown with clover'.³⁹ As

³⁷Reproduced from Tyrrell (2006), p.492.

³⁸This issue is explored in greater detail in Perutková (2006).

³⁹Quoted in Perutková (2006), p.107.

Perutková proposes,⁴⁰ the programme for the work needs to be understood on a more general level, similar to the titles given by Debussy to his *Préludes*. Indeed, Janáček himself states that ‘it doesn’t matter that the listener knows a concrete situation. Let the listener add to the name of the piece [...] whatever they can relate to.’⁴¹

Janáček’s role as ethnographer had a profound influence on his musical style and particularly his writing for the piano. The stylisation of the piano, incorporating elements of cimbalom writing, had been an important activity for Janáček in the previous decade, so features of Moravian folk music and the previous piano accompaniments can be expected to find their way into this first substantial work for solo piano. The fact that the cycle began as a series of folk stylisations for the series *Slovanské melodie* must also be considered, and Perutková notes that the style of the pieces is ‘simple and empty’, noting that the composer was thoroughly attuned to the colour of individual instruments.⁴² Despite these humble beginnings, the eventual structure and musical contents are far removed from simple folk melodies. As Tyrrell notes ‘their impact is quite out of proportion to their modest means and ambitions’,⁴³ and these piano miniatures contain within them some characteristically profound and disturbing music. Jiraský supports this and proposes that, although Janáček’s technique contains a simplicity and transparency that reminds us of folk song, there are complex musical procedures at work that show the composer exploring new ways of connecting horizontal and vertical aspects.⁴⁴ More will be said about Janáček’s harmonic thinking in this cycle later in the chapter.

To understand Janáček’s fusion of folk elements with other aspects of his musical style, it is appropriate to outline first the components of Moravian folk music that are evident in the cycle. No. 1, *Naše večery* [Our Evenings], provides the first example with its Dorian-inflected melody structured in uneven phrases, and the importance of modal inflection is also felt in the middle section, where the Phrygian mode is used. The piece is constructed from a ternary form with variations, and this allows the composer to explore the idea of past and

⁴⁰See Perutková (2006), p. 110.

⁴¹Letter to Bohumír Štědřoň, quoted in Perutková (2006), p. 111.

⁴²Perutková (2006), p. 106.

⁴³Tyrrell (2006), p. 490.

⁴⁴Jiraský (2006), p. 139.

present so crucial to his programmatic framework. Throughout the series, the pieces are constructed from framing lyrical outer sections which then give way in the middle to music characterised by tension and agitation, constituting an arrival of the painful present within an idealised, romanticised image of the past. No.1 also introduces the important dialectic of unity and contrast within Janáček's style, with the sections being dramatically contrasted in mood and yet unified motivically. This is illustrated in the way in which the agitated motif of the middle section is derived from the extended cadence point of the first phrase, and subsequently becomes the ostinato accompaniment in the subsequent *Adagio* section (music example 11a).

Ex.11a: Janáček, *On the Overgrown Path*; motivic transformation no.1

(i) the motif from the end of the first phrase (marked 'x')

(ii) the agitated motif of the middle section

(ii) the final Adagio

95 rit. ∞
Adagio
dolcissimo
ppp

102

This idea of agitated fragments breaking up an overall mood of lyricism can also be found in no.2, *Lístek odvanutý* [A blown away leaf]. From bar 24 there is the dramatic acceleration of a motif which forms a point of punctuation, with the melodic shape becoming gradually transformed into a disruptive trill (mirroring the ‘cimbalmesque’ flourishes of sound at the ends of phrases in the accompaniments of *Moravian Folk Poetry in Song*) and, in a further example of unity, this motif then becomes the accompaniment for the next section (music example 11b).

Ex.11b: Janáček, *On the Overgrown Path*; no.2, *A blown away leaf*, bars 23–33

23 accel.

28 Con moto
pp
lehce (leggiero)
P

No.8 *Tak neskonale úzko* [Unutterable anguish] contains a typically Moravian sparse texture, with its accompanimental figures relating to the cimbalom punctuation in the folksongs previously considered (music example 11c (i)). There is also a rhythmic similarity between this figure and that used in the earlier Theme and Variations and the last movement of the cycle *In The Mists*, to be discussed subsequently (see music example 1 above). A further folk element is the heterophonic texture at the culmination of the *poco mosso* section from b.40 (music example 11c (ii)).

Ex.11c: Janáček, *On the Overgrown Path*; (i) opening of no.8, *Unutterable anguish*

Musical score for the opening of 'Unutterable anguish' (bars 1-30). The score is in G major, 2/4 time, and begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and slurs, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and eighth notes. The piece concludes with an *accel.* marking and a forte (*f*) dynamic.

(ii) *Unutterable anguish*, bars 31–41

Musical score for 'Unutterable anguish' (bars 31-41). The score is in G major, 2/4 time, and begins with a *Poco mosso* tempo marking. The right hand starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and includes a *cresc.* marking. The left hand features a complex accompaniment with chords and eighth notes. The piece concludes with an *accel.* marking and a forte (*f*) dynamic. The score includes a 3:2 ratio marking and a 24:16 ratio marking.

There are further examples in the collection which recall the use of the cimbalom. No. 10, *Sýček neodletěl!* [The barn owl has not yet flown away!], begins with rapid, widely-spaced figuration typical of folk settings, and the accompaniment in this opening section is characteristic of the figuration of the cimbalom accompaniments transcribed by Janáček in his folk research (music example 11d). A similar type of accompaniment can be found in no. 4 *The Frýdek Madonna* and, it could be suggested that, as these two pieces were conceived in the earlier phase of the work's development (along with nos. 1, 2, and 7), maybe Janáček was thinking about writing more for the harmonium than the piano. Indeed, Doležel notes the appearance of pedals in nos 9 and 10 of the cycle, stating that these illustrate Janáček recreating the sound ideal of the harmonium and organ.⁴⁵ However, it seems more likely that the composer was in the process of synthesising characteristic elements of Moravian folk music with his own piano style than thinking specifically for another instrument, as the above chronology suggests that the composer abandoned the harmonium early on in the set's genesis.

Ex.11d: Janáček, *On the Overgrown Path*; opening of no.10, *The Barn Owl has not yet flown away!*

The juxtaposition of structural unity and surface spontaneity and changeability in Janáček's writing is explored by Jaroslav Jiránek in an article discussing the dramatic

⁴⁵Doležel (2006), pp. 125–6.

potential of Janáček's piano works.⁴⁶ He notes how the composer creates the 'maximum expressive impact with the utmost economy of means' by what he defines as the *thematization* and *dethematization* of elements. An example of this can be found in no.1 of this cycle, where the agitated figure that is the source of dramatic tension in the second part is derived from the end of the phrases of the opening section and, hence, it is 'dethematized'. This process continues in the *Adagio* where the agitated figure is recharacterised to become the static ostinato accompaniment. The same technique can be found in no.2 (where the *accelerando* figure becomes the accompaniment of the *con moto* section, and is initially derived from the opening section) and no.6 (where the melody in bar 3 is dethematized to become the rhythmically repetitive, sequential, *accelerando* figures which follow). This concept illustrates Janáček's capacity to both investigate his material thoroughly and to think hierarchically in his generation and development of material, with elements surfacing and then disappearing within the musical texture, creating the duality of inner unity and surface contrast within the framework of a stable motivic core for each piece. It also enables the contrast of lyricism and agitation, a feature which permeates the whole cycle.

The composition of *On the Overgrown Path* also documents Janáček's developing harmonic thought. There are the obvious modal inflections observed previously that the composer absorbed from his folk research, but his harmonic thinking was far deeper, more structural, and multi-faceted than this, as Thomas Adès discusses in his article on Janáček's piano music.⁴⁷ He begins with *In Memorium VIII/9* as an illustration of the seeds of Janáček's single most far-reaching quality, namely 'the redefinition of structural tonality through an unprecedented concentration on ambiguous, enharmonic key relationships'.⁴⁸

⁴⁶Jiránek (1978), pp.139–148.

⁴⁷Adès (1999), pp.18–35.

⁴⁸Adès (1999), p.18.

Ex.12: Janáček: *In Memoriam*⁴⁹

The image shows a piano score for Janáček's *In Memoriam*. It consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The tempo is marked 'Con moto (♩ = 92)'. The score includes various dynamics such as *pp*, *sf*, *dim.*, and *ppp*. There are also markings for 'rit.' (ritardando) and 'A tempo'. The score is numbered with bar numbers 7, 13, 20, and 25. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and a prominent ostinato accompaniment in the bass line.

In Memoriam consists of three paragraphs, each underpinned by the same ostinato accompaniment. Adès notes the cadence at bars 15–16, with the enharmonic reinterpretation of D sharp as E flat in the same register, stating that the conclusiveness of the D flat major pause chord at the end of the piece is a result of the following-through of a curve in the LH line beginning with the previous cadence, with the line moving through D sharp–E–E flat–E–F. The F flat of the penultimate bar provides a similar connection with the parallel E natural of bar 12, so the E in bar 12 resolves in bar 16 in a similar way that the F flat of the

⁴⁹Reproduced from Adès (1999), p.19.

penultimate bar resolves into the final chord. The piece illustrates a traditional, tonal, conventional ABA structure, and yet within this the structure is defined by texturally and melodically defined harmonic shifts, with the tonal functions being subservient to the main structural event, which is the enharmonic progression outlined above. Adès states that, subsequently, Janáček's control of enharmonic devices becomes ever more profound, and the pieces in *On the Overgrown Path* become highly sophisticated reinventions of binary and ternary structures 'exhibiting long range events which rely on relationships between individual harmonic/colouristic objects to the almost exclusion of conventions of tonal logic.'⁵⁰

An example of this idea can be found in no.3 of the series, *Pojďte s námi!* [Come With Us!], where the structural process is generated through the introduction of a C sharp major chord in bar 4. This constitutes the 'germinal harmonic event'⁵¹ which finds its full dramatic expression in the enharmonic reinterpretation of C sharp major as D flat major in the second part of the piece (music example 13a), allowing the colourful harmonic shift between D major and D flat major to occur. What Adès reveals is that, rather than relying on tonal functions for structure, Janáček allows alterations (melodic, and often modal, inflections) to provide pivotal structural moments and create colourful, unrelated harmonic shifts.

Ex.13a: Janáček, *On the Overgrown Path*; no.3, *Come With Us!*

(i) opening four bars, illustrating C sharp major chord in bar 3

⁵⁰ Adès (1999), p. 22.

⁵¹ Adès (1999), p. 23.

(ii) shift from D major to D flat major, bars 14–20

These ideas can also be applied to other pieces within the series, and the D sharp which creates a sharp dissonance at the beginning of no.9 becomes resolved within its E flat reinterpretation later in the piece, creating both a semitonal harmonic shift (between E and E flat major) and a resolution of the initial dissonance on the same note. This illustrates that what Janáček creates, through the alteration of certain notes, is a macrocosmic structure derived from microcosmic details. This can be illustrated with further reference to no.9, where the opening melody has an A sharp (Lydian fourth) added, which is then reinterpreted as B flat in E flat major. Also important in this piece is the way in which the *adagio* final cadence includes the pivotal structural notes of the piece (E flat and A flat), creating a statement of the important structural movements in microcosm (this can also be noted in no.1, where the A sharp, which has a crucial role in connecting C sharp minor and B flat minor, becomes a melodic part of the cadence figuration, with Janáček eschewing traditional tonal functions for more microcosmic melodic ones).

On the Overgrown Path demonstrates Janáček's ability to transform small-scale changes into larger, long-range structural formations, enabling the composer to create dramatic structures whose aims are far beyond their small scale. He also handles sectional structures with a more cumulative, linear approach in no.4, *The Frýdek Madonna*, and the opening four bars establish a harmonic tension derived from the lack of resolution onto the tonic and the introduction of the minor inflection of the tonic. With each presentation of this opening 'chorale', the harmonic ambiguity and lack of resolution intensifies, with the

constant ending on an unstable second inversion chord compounding the lack of a definite cadence point. The main section of the chorale (the *un poco più mosso* section from b.25) fully realises the dramatic potential of the previous fragments (music example 13b), within which the climax is reached through the presentation of the tonic minor (decorated with appoggiaturas) and then an extended cadence moving between II and I in second inversion, constantly implying a V–I cadence which never arrives until the following *Tempo I* statement. The final *adagio* bars sum up the harmonic motion underpinning the whole structure, creating a piece whose form moves beyond the simple, illustrative conception of the work's title.

Ex.13a: Janáček, *On the Overgrown Path*; the *un poco più mosso* 'chorale' section of no.4, *The Frýdek Madonna*

The image displays three systems of musical notation for piano. The first system begins at measure 25 and is marked 'Un poco più mosso'. It features a complex texture with many accidentals and dynamic markings such as 'f'. The second system starts at measure 35 and continues the intricate harmonic and melodic development. The third system begins at measure 46 and includes the marking 'rit.' above the staff, indicating a change in tempo. The notation is dense, with numerous accidentals and dynamic markings throughout.

In terms of his treatment of the piano in *On the Overgrown Path*, Janáček sows the seeds of the daring instrumental technique that can be found in his later piano works. Many of the innovations in his technique can be related to some of the Moravian folk song features outlined earlier, as illustrated in no.8 *Unutterable anguish*, which contains pianistic

challenges in the management of the different layers of the heterophonic texture in the *poco mosso* section. This piece also presents widely-spaced figuration in rapid, uneven rhythms of the type to be found in no. 10. Jiraský has proposed that the creation of Janáček's piano technique may well have been the result of his explorations of the soundworld of his own piano, which was closer to the cimbalom in its ability to create layers of sound, giving the impression of a 'sound mist' above the resonant board, meaning that figures retain clarity even when the pedal is applied.⁵² Perhaps the most unusual element of this series is the sudden changeability of the individual pieces, and the musical argument is extremely spontaneous, lacking a secure linear argument or overall structure to take hold of or communicate. Rhythm and tempo are irregular and move against each other in layers, and there is a constant interruption of lyricism with more aggressive interjections. The main innovation in Janáček's writing is to combine this surface spontaneity and changeability with sound structural foundations and a common motivic basis. The series demonstrates Janáček's lack of concern for glitter or effect in his piano writing, thus removing himself from the Romantic thinking of figures such as Liszt. For Janáček, the piano offered many rhythmic possibilities and provided him with the ability to explore a more 'layered' style of writing through the presence of the pedals.⁵³ The fact that the cycle has such a powerful impact despite its apparent simplicity is noted by Kundera, who states that 'Janáček's style is without harmonic filling, embellishments, or decorations [...]. The individual tone is quite capable of bearing the weight of the piece'.⁵⁴

Music as socio-political commentary: the piano sonata *I.X.1905*

The next significant piano work to be completed was the sonata *I.X.1905 (Z ulice dne 1. října 1905)* [From the Street, 1st October 1905] (VIII/19, 1906) and, as with the previous piano work, there is an autobiographic programmatic background. In 1901 Czech delegates went to the Viennese parliament to demand the establishment of a Czech university in Moravia. The

⁵²Jiraský (2006), p. 131.

⁵³Discussed in Doležel (2006), p. 124.

⁵⁴Quoted in Doležel (2006), p. 128.

Czechs were overwhelmingly in favour of Brno, but this was designated as a ‘German’ town, and the result of this was that a demonstration took place in Brno on 1 October 1901, where Germans rallied representatives of German speakers from Moravia. In response, Brno Czechs organised a counter-demonstration, and a rally of Czech delegates took place in the Besední dům, leading to mass demonstrations and ugly scenes which culminated in the death of a worker, František Pavlík, who was bayoneted by one of the soldiers.

The event created a great resonance in Czech Brno and, with his nationalistic fervour, Janáček was involved in the event. He had been present in the crowd and also attended Pavlík’s funeral, and the powerful emotions stirred up by this provided the inspiration for the *Sonata I.X.1905*. The work was first referred to as ‘*Z ulice dne 1. října 1905*’ [From the street on the day of I.X.1905] on the handbill advertising its first performance. Press reports however referred to it as *Večer dne prvního října 1905* [The evening of the 1st October 1905] and also suggest that the second movement was originally called *Elegie*. For publication the title was shortened to *I.X.1905* and the inscription of the first edition was as follows:

The white marble staircase of the Besední dům in Brno. A simple worker, František Pavlík, fell there, stained with blood. He came only to demonstrate his enthusiasm for higher education, and was killed by cruel murderers. Leoš Janáček. In memory of a worker bayoneted during demonstrations for the university in Brno.⁵⁵

The question remains as to when the title of sonata was attached to the work. It first appeared in Kunc’s list of works by the composer, which describes the work as ‘the programmatic piano sonata (from the turbulent Volkstag days in Brno)’, and the title ‘sonata’ was taken over in the worklists of Brod’s biography in 1924 (which refers to the work as ‘Sonata for piano’) and in Janáček’s autobiography (Veselý (1924), which refers to the work as *Z ulice I.X.1905 – sonata in three movements*).⁵⁶

In Veselý the work is referred to as being ‘in three movements’, yet the work as it exists now has only two, as Janáček destroyed the final movement (apparently a ‘gloomy

⁵⁵JAWO (1997), p.265

⁵⁶See JAWO (1997), pp.264–6.

funeral march')⁵⁷ at the rehearsal on the day of the performance of the work by Ludmila Tučková and, after the second, private performance in Prague, he threw the remaining manuscript into the Vltava. It has been proposed that Tučková had made a private copy which she played to the composer on the occasion of his seventieth birthday in 1924,⁵⁸ yet a more plausible theory has been suggested by Jiří Zahrádka, in that Tučková could have played from the copyist's version of the work which she would have been given to work with originally.⁵⁹

The destruction of manuscripts was common in Janáček's compositional life for the next decade (until 1916) and can be seen as indicative of the uncertain state of mind the composer experienced as a result of the huge blow to his confidence by the refusal of Prague to stage *Jenůfa*. The destruction of the above sonata may also be connected to the context of the works' premiere. It was first performed at a *Klub přátel umění v Brně* [Friends of Art Club, Brno] concert on 27 January 1906 and other works performed on that occasion included Foerster's *Dreaming*, Suk's *Spring* op.22a (the movements entitled *The Breeze* and *Longing* were the only ones performed on this occasion),⁶⁰ Novák's *My May* op.20, and a piano version of his *Slovácko Suite* op.32. The main focus of interest was Janáček's work, for many reasons, amongst them being that he was a well-known figure in Brno, in addition to the fact that the work responded to an event which would have provoked local comment, and perhaps this put a pressure on Janáček that he felt he was unable to satisfy. There is also the fact that his work was very different from anything else on the programme, and a comparison between the *Sonata* and the other works on the programme truly underlines his individuality.

Novák's *My May* was composed in 1899, a time which saw him moving away from the Romantic models provided for him by Brahms and Dvořák and looking towards Moravia for inspiration. However, Novák's use of folk materials differs significantly from Janáček's, providing a veneer of nationalism which did not fundamentally affect the composer's late Romantic outlook. *Spring* (1902) shows how different Suk's path of development was to that

⁵⁷From Kunc (1911), quoted in *JAWO* (1997), p.256

⁵⁸*JAWO* (1997), p.256.

⁵⁹Tyrrell (2006), p.643.

⁶⁰Tyrrell (2006), p.643.

of Novák. In this cycle he moves away from the technical and abstract concerns of the *Suite* towards something more intentionally subjective, whilst still retaining the large-scale structural elements established in the former work. The musical language of *Spring* is, to a large extent, closer to Janáček than Novák, with motif playing a significant role in the generation of material and enharmonic reinterpretation important in the harmonic argument. However, the contrapuntal development in Suk's cycle is not related to Janáček's technique, nor is the recharacterisation and transformation of material (which is more akin to Novák). Suk's exploration of sound in the second movement (*The Breeze*) is Impressionistic and fleeting and is an exploration of sound *per se* rather than thematic development, lacking the structural and harmonic rigour of Janáček. Perhaps the only piece in the cycle which has some affinity with the older Czech composer is the unnamed fourth piece (not performed at the above concert), which contains within it a condensed emotional drama, illustrating the power of Suk's expression in an impact which goes far beyond its small physical scale. The obsessive motivic working, harmonic changeability, and use of a non-functional harmonic language, combined with rhythmic changeability and an appearance of surface spontaneity all illustrate an affinity with Janáček.

The above comparison highlights Janáček's individual approach of fusing folk elements with harmonic originality, and presenting them within a coherent large-scale structure and a layered approach to motivic development (in terms of dethematisation). This ensures underlying unity and coherence within a surface appearance of spontaneous gesture and contrast, all of which point to the composer's mature musical technique.

These ideas are all illustrated clearly in *I.X.1905*, and Tyrrell notes that the work's designation as a sonata reflects both the perceptible sonata form of the first movement as well as 'the density and stature of the work.'⁶¹ This piece is a large-scale dramatic structure which fully realises the dramatic potential inherent in some of the small pieces of the previous *On the Overgrown Path*. There is present from the start Janáček's characteristic juxtaposition of lyricism and agitation, and the first subject is an expressive, cantabile melody, with the avoidance of the first beat with ties and rests emphasising the lack of

⁶¹Tyrrell (2006), p.639.

regularity. The motivic core is presented in bar three, and this becomes the main source of ideas and development throughout the movement. Immediately, in bar four, it is transformed into a dramatic accompanimental interjection, and Janáček subsequently achieves expressive contrast throughout the movement through the metamorphosis of this motif, creating a layered and hierarchical approach to motivic development (music example 14a).⁶² Křupková notes that Janáček's method of motivic development is not straightforward, and that the composer creates thematic changes through reduction and extension of the motif rather than relying on the standard Romantic technique of recharacterisation (as used extensively by Novák in the contemporaneous *Sonata eroica*).⁶³

Ex.14a: Janáček, *I.X.1905*; the opening of the first movement, bars 1–14

Con moto (♩. 72)
2/4

pp *mf* *f marc.* *mf*

6 *f* *rit.* *dim.*

11 *a tempo* *mf* *simile*

⁶²These ideas are discussed by Jirský (2006), p. 137, and can usefully be linked with Jiránek's notion of dethematisation.

⁶³Křupková (2006), p. 20.

The sense of drama and disruption created through this thematic and motivic transformation has parallels in the essential elements of contrast and disquiet that are such an important part of the texture of the accompaniments of *Moravian Folk Poetry in Song*. The first subject also presents pianistic challenges with unusual, unidiomatic writing, and the lyrical melody is accompanied by a widely spaced version of the dethematised fragment from the opening, creating uncomfortable shifts across the keyboard. The texture becomes even more complex at the climax of the first subject, with widened intervals and the combination of three layers in an imitative texture that creates huge virtuosic demands. The lack of co-ordination between the motifs creates a dissonant soundworld due to the blurring of harmonies as the horizontal element takes precedence over the vertical (music example 14b).

Ex.14b: Janáček, *I.X.1905*; first movement, bars 18–23

The blurring of the motivic shapes at this point perhaps provides musical evidence of Janáček's earlier theoretical concerns, particularly that of chord connection. This investigates our perceptual abilities to hear a chord or note even after it has ended, meaning that between two chords/notes there is a *chaotický okamžik* [chaotic moment] at which both can be

perceived, with the chords being connected through a *spletna* [a ‘tangle’ or ‘twine’].⁶⁴ This theory was presented in the article *Nový proud v teorii hudební* [New Current in Music Theory] (XV/147, 1894), with the idea that memory has an important part to play in how we hear consecutive sounds. The motivic ‘collisions’ in the first subject of the sonata seem to illustrate this idea of a ‘chaotic moment’ aptly, and illustrate how Janáček’s theoretical writings may have influenced his compositions. The ‘motivic overlappings’ within the Sonata create a dissonant and dramatic soundworld which culminates in the *fff* trill of bar 21, where the disintegration of motif into an unmetered ornament recalls no.2 of *On the Overgrown Path*, but here the dramatic impact is intensified, with the subsequent dissonances and virtuosic texture contrasting with the stark figuration at the *fff* point. The sudden change in dynamics, combined with the enharmonic shift, increases the dramatic effect of the section. This passage illustrates the way in which Janáček creates a unified structure which also embodies much spontaneous change and contrast, as the common motivic basis ties together all of the strands, creating a structural coherence that supports and unifies the surface change.

The contrasting thematic and textural areas in this ‘exposition’ illustrate Janáček’s response to the sonata genre. The second thematic area is connected motivically and contains the same combination of agitation and lyricism, with the agitated interjection from the first subject forming an accompaniment (as in the first subject, but the dramatic impact is subdued by the narrower range and lower dynamics) whilst the lyrical melody is presented in imitation, creating a distinctly unpianistic texture which combines different rhythms and melodic strands (music example 14c). The duplet added to the end of the lyrical upper part becomes important as a generator of material in the subsequent section, as a ‘filler’ and as an accompanimental figuration. The fragment becomes dethematised and, presented in conjunction with the lyrical element from the second subject area, creates a contrasting texture whilst still retaining underlying coherence and continuation.

⁶⁴These ideas are defined in Beckerman (1994), pp.134–5.

Ex.14c: Janáček, *I.X.1905*; bars 29–44

The writing in the second time bar illustrates Janáček's long-term structural and harmonic planning. Within this bar, the F flat from the first time bar is enharmonically reinterpreted as an E which facilitates the transition into the G major development section. The F flat reappears at the end of the movement and makes sense of the unusual cadential harmony of V7/C going to E flat minor, completing the line of F flat–E flat–D–E flat and demonstrating the completion of a long-term linear progression rather than a conventional harmonic combination. Adès also notes the bringing together of textural strands in the final cadence, commenting upon the way in which the final chord spans three registral layers which 'define the orchestration of the entire movement' (music example 14d).⁶⁵

⁶⁵Adès (1999), p.27.

Ex.14d: Janáček, *I.X.1905*; conclusion of the first movement, bars 107–111

The musical score for Ex.14d shows the conclusion of the first movement of Janáček's *I.X.1905*, bars 107-111. The score is in E-flat minor and 2/3 time. It features a piano (p) accompaniment with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The piece ends with a fortissimo (fff) dynamic marking.

Adès makes a subsequent point relating to the way in which Janáček presents the same thematic material (at the same pitch) in the recapitulation, with a different harmonisation (an E flat minor (tonic) accompaniment). The melodic material is presented in the recapitulation virtually untouched and only the lower parts provide ‘an empirical distinction’ with the section giving ‘every sense of violence undergone.’⁶⁶ Janáček’s piano writing at the climax of the movement in the development section at bar 64, in its use of registral space, mirrors the composer’s use of the orchestra in the later operas, with the utilisation of extreme registers leading to ‘space’ in the middle of the texture. High chords are starkly contrasted with deep bass interjections, and the build-up to bar 68 allows this texture to have a huge dramatic power, illustrating Janáček’s individuality by going against the standard principle of having thicker textures at climax points (music example 14e).

Ex.14e: Janáček, *I.X.1905*; climax of the first movement, bars 65–72

The musical score for Ex.14e shows the climax of the first movement of Janáček's *I.X.1905*, bars 65-72. The score is in E-flat minor and 2/3 time. It features a fortissimo (ff) dynamic marking and a complex texture with high chords and deep bass interjections.

⁶⁶Adès (1999), p.26.

The first movement of *I.X.1905* illustrates Janáček's individual approach to creating a sonata structure, and he constructs a monothematic movement which generates drama through contrasting textures and manipulation of material. The second movement, *Smrt* [Death], continues the obsessive monothematicism, and the agitated accompanimental figuration from the first movement becomes 'thematized' into a fragmented melodic line which, through its avoidance of the strong metrical first beat, dislocates the overall metre. Adès notes that the composer creates a hugely dramatic structure derived from both the motivic unity and the way in which the movement's monumental power is derived from the tiniest harmonic inflection in the melody. As the melody is so often dislocated from the strong metrical beat, the chords which are on the downbeat assume an important structural significance, and this occurs at bar 9, with an F major chord enabled by the A natural in bar 8. This becomes B double flat in the following cadence into D flat major, which is enharmonically reinterpreted as a C sharp in bar 14, enabling the progression into the next section, where there is harmonic tension between C sharp minor and A major (music example 15a).

Ex.15a: Janáček, *I.X.1905*; second movement, bars 8–21

13

1.

dim.

P x P una corda x

18

2.

una corda tre corde

The D flat/C sharp also assumes a structural role in the subsequent ‘development’ section, being present as a pedal either in the bass or within another part of the texture. D flat minor arrives powerfully at bar 33 and, through the intense silence on the first beat, the composer captures the drama within the emptiness at this point. Adès notes here the descriptive importance of silence, in that the movement portrays the emptiness of death, the silence and finality of that state. The juxtaposition of hugely thick textures and silence therefore aptly summarises the violent action and the subsequent silence of death (music example 15b).⁶⁷

Ex.15b: Janáček, *I.X.1905*; second movement, bars 33–6

33

f

y

35

sf ff

y

Janáček’s individual and unpianistic style of writing is shown initially through the fragmented melodic utterances of the first part which, in the second section, develop into a jagged, dotted accompanimental figuration. This permeates the section, creating a thick, low

⁶⁷Adès (1999), p.29.

texture, which moves against stark octave lines in the treble, and the resultant stratified texture is typical of Janáček's orchestration. The middle section of the movement continues the metrical ambiguity of the opening, and layers obscure metre, as does the continual dotted rhythm (music example 15c). The 'recapitulation' illustrates the dramatic journey which the material has traversed by incorporating widely spaced 'dotted' figuration in between the fragmented melody (music example 15d).

Ex.15c: Janáček, *I.X.1905*; second movement, bars 41–3

Ex.15d: Janáček, *I.X.1905*; second movement, the recapitulation of previous material, bars 46–9

As a postscript to this discussion on Janáček's *I.X.1905*, connections with Novák's *Sonata eroica* can be considered. Lenka Křupková⁶⁸ notes the chronological closeness of the two

⁶⁸Křupková (2006).

works and also discusses the fact that, despite the works being composed at around the same time, the status of their composers could not have been more different. Novák was at his peak and was experienced with piano writing at this time, whereas Janáček was relatively unsuccessful and marginalised in Brno. Although both composers were involved with Moravian folk music, its effect on Janáček's textures can be seen fully when these two works are considered side-by-side. Novák's textures and development respond to the Romantic ideal whereas Janáček aims for a greater 'tonal plasticity' in linking vertical and horizontal perspectives, and divides the sound space into three distinct layers.⁶⁹ Both composers create 'indistinct tonal boundaries'⁷⁰ and avoid the traditional tonal opposition of I and V that defines standard Classical sonata form. The sonatas are also both monothematic, yet it is in the area of motivic development that Janáček demonstrates both his originality and removal from traditional Romantic thinking. Whereas Novák's musical argument progresses through the Lisztian technique of thematic recharacterisation, Janáček creates 'partial links'⁷¹ between thematic material, creating a surface appearance of polythematicism, yet retaining underlying unity and coherence through a well-thought out motivic core. Because of this multifaceted approach to motivic development, and the redefinition of texture enabled through his study of Moravian folk music, Janáček's sonata demonstrates his truly individual musical language, whereas Novák's work remains thoroughly connected with Romanticism.

In The Mists: a consideration of the influence of Debussy

The piano sonata as a whole shows Janáček developing techniques found in *On the Overgrown Path* and extending them to be able to support a dramatic structure imbued with monumental power, and Janáček's final large-scale work for solo piano, the four-movement cycle *V mlhách* [In the Mists], continues to some extent ideas that have been commented on previously. Although this work was completed by 21 April 1912,⁷² the impetus behind its

⁶⁹These points are noted in Křupková (2006), p.114.

⁷⁰Křupková (2006), p.115.

⁷¹Zdeněk Sádecký, quoted in Křupková (2006), p.119.

⁷²*JAWO* (1997), p.267.

creation goes back as far as 1907, when the Club of the Friends of Art in Brno had aimed to publish new Czech compositions. By 1909 the club needed its next edition, and a competition was announced in June, when 35 Moravian composers were invited to send compositions, either piano pieces or songs. Results were disappointing and, because of this, the competition was relaunched with the submission date of 1 November 1912. However, as Tyrrell states, this probably is not the full impetus for *In the Mists*, as Janáček sent a copy on 21 April to Jan Branberger, a figure who had been enthusiastic about *On the Overgrown Path*, and the composer clearly believed that his supportive comments had aided the work's publication and would contribute to the success of the new cycle.⁷³

Tyrrell also notes that Debussy may well have provided the final trigger for the creation of this cycle. During the autumn of 1911 'sonata hours' existed at the Organ School, and the third concert of the 1911–12 season occurred on 28 January 1912 and was a chamber concert which included d'Indy's Violin Sonata op.59, Franck's Piano Trio op.1, songs by Duparc, Chausson, and Debussy and, perhaps more importantly, Debussy's *Reflets dans l'eau* (composed in 1905). Debussy was at this time a little-known figure in the Czech lands and, as Miloš Štědroň notes in his list of Czech performances of Debussy that Janáček may have attended,⁷⁴ these began only in 1908 and were mostly confined to orchestral works in Prague. The consideration of the influence of Impressionism on other Czech composers in previous chapters has indicated that, during the first decade of the twentieth century, composers such as Suk and Novák produced works that betray some of the features of Impressionism (in *Spring* and the *Songs of Winter Nights* respectively) without necessarily having any knowledge of Debussy (indeed, Novák actively stated his lack of knowledge of the works of the French composer). Thus, the Brno performance of *Reflets dans l'eau* may have been Janáček's first encounter with his French contemporary, and Štědroň notes that Janáček did have a programme from this concert. Although this is not definite evidence that he attended the concert, he was the arranger of the sonata hours and it would have been unusual for him not to attend. On the surface it would seem that there are several points of connection

⁷³Tyrrell (2006), pp. 781–2.

⁷⁴Štědroň (1998), p. 64.

between the two works, with the evocative title of Janáček's work bringing to mind the Impressionistic images of some of Debussy's titles. The relationship of the cycle to Impressionism and Debussy's musical language will be considered after a discussion of the work's musical and structural elements.

In The Mists retains and extends the structural security of the earlier piano works, and all four movements (as noted by Adès) retain features of binary form, operating with two clearly distinguishable groups of material. Movement one juxtaposes a lyrical opening theme with the *poco mosso* chorale theme of the middle section, whilst also creating connections between the two in shape and motivic content. Harmonically, Janáček creates ambiguity and changeability within an overall stability achieved by the presence of a tonic pedal. Despite the almost constant presence of D flat/C sharp, the various inflections within the melody create a more ambiguous harmonic perspective. Janáček's enharmonic connections create a colourful harmonic landscape, and the C flat of the opening melody is enharmonically reinterpreted as B, leading to a C sharp supported by an A major chord. This is V₇ in D minor and leads to V₇ in E flat major which never resolves to the expected E flat major chord, instead deflecting to D flat minor, illustrating the typical play of tonic major-minor in Janáček's works (music example 16a).

Ex.16a: Janáček, *In the Mists*; first movement, bars 6–12

The musical score for Ex. 16a shows two staves. The upper staff is the right hand, and the lower staff is the left hand. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The score includes a 'cresc.' marking in the left hand and a 'rit.' marking in the right hand. The melodic line in the right hand features a chromatic descent from B-flat to C-sharp, with a sharp sign above the C-sharp indicating an enharmonic shift.

Dethematisation can also be found in this cycle as an underlying structural concept.

The rhythmic and melodic shape of bar 9 is transformed in the middle section into descending figuration, at first contrasting with the chorale theme and then becoming the accompanimental figuration (music example 16b). In its accompanimental role, the figuration becomes distinctly Janáčekian, and its depth of register and continual repetition of motivic shape create tension and drama. This idea of a consistent rhythmic ostinato is a crucial part of the dramatic backbone of his musical language, and the extrovert chordal statement (a recharacterisation of the middle section 'chorale') in the RH adds to this drama (music example 16c).

Ex.16b: Janáček, *In the Mists*; first movement, bars 44–53

44 *rit.* *Poco mosso* ($\text{♩} = 133$)
p *ppp cantando*
 (con)P

50 *1/♩* *4/♩* *3-2*
ppp *3-2*
leggero e veloce
 P

Ex.16c: Janáček, *In the Mists*; first movement, bars 63–8

63 *ff*
 P (P) (P) (P) (P)

The creation of a binary form built around contrast (yet being unified through motif) in the first movement is replayed in the second. D flat major creates a sense of continuation (and large-scale structure) and, much like the first movement, there is underlying harmonic stability. The D flat/C sharp pedal is a constant presence and the harmonic foundations of the sections outline a clear I–V–I structure. Adès also notes how Janáček generates contrast whilst maintaining unity by presenting A and B themes in both fast and slow ‘personalities’, and the overall plan of the movement is presented below.⁷⁵

Motivic groups: A a A / a + b A a B / a + B a B
 Harmony: I V I V I I I I V I

The structure of the opening theme is typically Janáčekian, and the avoidance of the first beat creates rhythmic dislocation, with the rests reinforcing the fragmented nature of the delivery (a similarity with the second movement of *I.X.1905*). The presentation of material in fast and slow personalities creates temporal layers which correspond with the motivic layers created through the process of dethematisation. The first *Presto* section dethematises the opening melody, creating rapid interjections reminiscent of some of the musical arguments found in the earlier piano works (music example 17a).

⁷⁵Taken from Adès (1999), p.32.

Ex.17a: Janáček, *In the Mists*; second movement, bars 1–21

Molto adagio ($\text{♩} = 72$)
2/5
p dolce
poco marc. il contralto

7
mf come prima

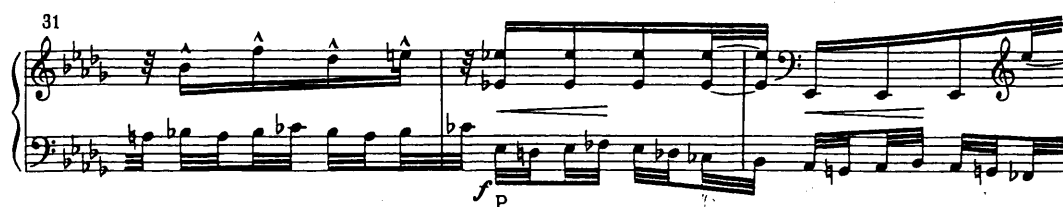
13
p
P simile
Presto
3/5
pp

18
p
P
P tre corde
P simile
Tempo I
2/5

This idea of continuity and contrast is embedded within the second *Presto* section (from bar 28), where the dethematised first idea accompanies the agitated, aggressive new motif, culminating in octaves (music example 17b). The *Grave* section (bars 51–62) is the ‘slow’ presentation of the motif of the second *presto*, and illustrates how Janáček juxtaposes chromatic, dissonant areas with more clearly tonal ones, with chromaticism used for dramatic and expressive impact (music example 17c).

Ex.17b: Janáček, *In the Mists*; second movement, bars 28–33

28 Presto
pp
bb
rubato e cresc.



Ex.17c: Janáček, *In the Mists*; second movement, bars 50–9

The third movement demonstrates a simpler musical language, providing a sense of release after the tension and drama of the previous two movements (further illustrating the connection between movements and the conception of the cycle as embodying a continuous, linear trajectory). The opening theme contains the motivic ‘germs’ of the movement, and again illustrates Janáček’s ability to generate large-scale tonal drama through small-scale alterations and enharmonic reinterpretation. The fifth bar of the melody is written as G flat–C flat–E double flat, which is then enharmonically reinterpreted as B minor in the final bar of

the first section,⁷⁶ an enharmonic shift which creates a tonal connection with the middle *poco mosso* section. This is matched by the thematisation of the middle accompanimental layer of the opening melody juxtaposed with the descending fourth from bar 2. Adès notes that the middle B minor section ‘drives an enharmonic wedge into the crack of doubt’ opened by the enharmonic rewriting of bar 7,⁷⁷ and the generation of the middle section from this bar illustrates the impact of chromatic alteration on the whole structure (music example 18a).

Ex.18a: Janáček, *In the Mists*; (i) third movement, bars 1–10

Andantino ($\text{♩} = 80$)
2/4
p
(P) (P) (P) (P) P

6 *rit.*
bb (P) (P) (P)
Poco mosso
mf lehce [leggiero]
(P)

(ii) compared with bars 37–48

37 Poco mosso
2/4
ff
dolente, appassionato
P
tre corde P (P) (P) (P)

⁷⁶This chord is written differently in many editions, undermining the structural connections within the movement: in the Klub přátel umění edition (Brno, 1913) and the Hudební matice edition (Prague, 1924) the chord is written in B minor, whereas in the CE of Janáček's works (Prague 1978) and the volume of *Klavierwerke* (Frankfurt, 1987) the chord is written in C flat minor. These issues are discussed in Murphy (2001).

⁷⁷Adès (1999), p.33.



The above section is quoted in the final movement of the cycle, reinforcing the large-scale cyclic intentions behind the work's construction. It is presented in the original key of B minor and, in its appearance in the fourth movement, is constructed from the diminished seventh of B minor (written enharmonically), and these chordal statements are juxtaposed with demisemiquaver 'cascades' that also elaborate this diminished seventh (music example 19a). This virtuosic figuration both connects to the third movement (the *accelerando* rising and falling figures) and the previous *stringendo* figuration in the fourth movement, thus resolving and connecting the two movements. Rather than simple quotation, Janáček integrates the third movement material both harmonically and motivically, betraying a carefully thought-out structural foundation.

Ex.19a: Janáček, *In the Mists*; presentation of third movement material in movement 4, bars 121–130

precipitando

121

m s

Vivo

ff espressivo

m s

123

P (P) (P) (P) P

127

The fourth movement returns to D flat major (performing a concluding function within the whole cycle) and contains some of Janáček's most original and individualistic piano writing. There is a sense of contrast, change, and spontaneity in this movement, but it is underpinned by the structural solidity provided by a barely adorned rondo structure. The opening melody contains the uneven metrical structure and widely spaced demisemiquaver accompaniments noted previously in the *Theme and Variations*, and is tonally anchored in D flat minor, which allows the intervening sections to be more chromatic without losing a sense of overall harmonic direction (music example 19b).

Ex.19b: Janáček, *In the Mists*; fourth movement, bars 1–8

The musical score for Ex.19b is presented in two systems. The first system covers bars 1-4 and the second system covers bars 5-8. Both systems are in D-flat major and 5/4 time. The first system begins with a tempo marking of 'Presto (♩ = 180)' and a dynamic of 'mf'. The piano part features a demisemiquaver accompaniment. The second system begins with a tempo marking of 'Meno mosso' and a dynamic of 'f'. The piano part continues with a demisemiquaver accompaniment. The score includes tempo markings: 'Presto (♩ = 180)', 'Meno mosso', 'sost.', 'accel. molto', and 'rit.'.

The initial *meno mosso* episodes restate the end of the opening improvisatory theme at different pitches, creating tension through repetition and lack of development. The third *Andante* episode (bar 56) creates a respite from constant repetition with a lyrical theme, yet repetition is still present, and the insistent rhythmic ostinato of the accompaniment is typically Janáčekian. There is a connection with the opening here and the interjections from the opening theme play a significant part. This section gradually builds up elements, and the texture is rhythmically stratified, with the theme, *stringendo* figuration, and triplet figuration all combining in the *molto pesante* section to create a sense of expected climax that is subsequently deflected (music example 19c). What occurs instead is a disintegration of the

previous sense of development into the *ppp* trill figuration that ends the section, and the sense of interruption creates further correspondences with the accompaniments from *Moravian Folk Poetry in Song* and Janáček's earlier piano pieces, such as no.2 from *On the Overgrown Path* (music example 19d).

Ex.19c: Janáček, *In the Mists*; fourth movement, bars 54–65

54 $1/\text{♩}$ $2/\text{♩}$ rit. Andante ($\text{♩} = 66$)

f

58 *espressivo* $1/\text{♩}$

62 $2/\text{♩}$ string. 8 *ff feroce* $8:4$ $8:4$

Ex.19d: Janáček, *In the Mists*; fourth movement, bars 90–97

90 *dim.* *ppp*

P *P*

Tempo I *sost.* *accel. molto* *Meno mosso*

94 $5/\text{♩}$ $1/\text{♩}$ $2/\text{♩}$ *pp* *mp*

P *P*

The fourth episode (from bar 102) is unusual in terms of its unidiomatic writing for the instrument. The texture is dissonant and the lyrical improvisatory shape of the opening theme is transformed into a driving LH theme accompanied by sparse demisemiquaver leaps (also derived from the opening). As the theme progresses, the registral space it occupies becomes increasingly wider and both hands present demisemiquaver leaps until the tension amassed through dissonance, repetition and register explode into the cascades which begin at bar 121 (music example 19e).

Ex.19e: Janáček, *In the Mists*, fourth movement, bars 102–122

102 Adagio

f energico
(con) P
molto pesante, non troppo legato

107

112
sempre pesante
P P

117
largamente
ff

121
precipitando
Vivo
ff espressivo
m s m d m s

In The Mists contains evidence of Janáček's most pianistic writing (particularly in movement 1) and this is perhaps in some part due to his absorption of the influences surrounding him at that point. However, despite the greater sophistication of the cycle (in comparison to the 'folk' soundworld of *On the Overgrown Path* and the harsh, unpianistic writing of *I.X.1905*) the composer's individual voice is still unmistakably present, and his awareness of large-scale dramatic structure permeates the work. As a postscript to the above comments, it is useful to see how the composer's dramatic thinking developed through the cycle's genesis, and evidence gathered from autograph and authorised copy material reveals much of Janáček's developing dramatic thinking.

Much work on the manuscript material for the cycle has been done by Paul Wingfield,⁷⁸ and in his study he notes the major changes that have been made, particularly to the first and fourth movements. The genesis of the middle section of the first movement provides evidence of the composer becoming more aware of utilising the dramatic potential inherent in his material. Example 20a is the first complete version of this section and contains a less harmonically unified musical argument in which the division between the two musical ideas (the chorale and the figuration) is blurred as they are presented together, lessening the sense of dramatic contrast and cumulative tension characteristic of the final version.⁷⁹ The manuscript material, as well as demonstrating Janáček's heightened sense of dramatic thinking, also illustrates his developing sense of pianism. In the next stage of the section's development (ex.20b)⁸⁰ the composer separates the two elements in order to exploit contrast, but the rhythm here is far removed from the smooth triplet figuration of the final 'cascades', the passagework here being more akin to the disruptive, uneven rhythms found in some of the Moravian folksongs transcribed by Janáček.

⁷⁸See Wingfield (1987).

⁷⁹This version is to be found on leaves 22–3 of manuscript BmJA A23.494, and was transcribed by the author of this study on a research trip to the Janáčkův archiv [Janáček Archive], Brno in 2000.

⁸⁰Contained in the autograph material of A.23.525 in the JA, Brno.

Ex.20a: The middle section of movement 1, found on leaves 22–3 of A.23.494

Musical score for Ex.20a, measures 26–32. The score is in G major (one sharp) and common time (C). It consists of three systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef).
Measure 26: Treble clef has a half note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Bass clef has a half note G2, quarter note A2, quarter note B2, quarter note C3.
Measure 27: Treble clef has a half note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Bass clef has a half note G2, quarter note A2, quarter note B2, quarter note C3.
Measure 28: Treble clef has a half note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Bass clef has a half note G2, quarter note A2, quarter note B2, quarter note C3.
Measure 29: Treble clef has a half note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Bass clef has a half note G2, quarter note A2, quarter note B2, quarter note C3.
Measure 30: Treble clef has a half note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Bass clef has a half note G2, quarter note A2, quarter note B2, quarter note C3.
Measure 31: Treble clef has a half note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Bass clef has a half note G2, quarter note A2, quarter note B2, quarter note C3.
Measure 32: Treble clef has a half note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Bass clef has a half note G2, quarter note A2, quarter note B2, quarter note C3. The dynamic marking *pp* is present in the bass clef.

Ex:20b: The version of the middle section of movement 1 in A.23 525

Musical score for Ex:20b, measures 52–54. The score is in G major (one sharp) and common time (C). It consists of two systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The tempo marking *Più mosso* is written above the first system.
Measure 52: Treble clef has a half note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Bass clef has a half note G2, quarter note A2, quarter note B2, quarter note C3. The dynamic marking *Red.* is written below the bass clef.
Measure 53: Treble clef has a half note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Bass clef has a half note G2, quarter note A2, quarter note B2, quarter note C3.
Measure 54: Treble clef has a half note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Bass clef has a half note G2, quarter note A2, quarter note B2, quarter note C3.

The image displays two musical staves. The first staff, numbered 56, is marked with a forte (*ff*) dynamic and includes a 'Ped.' (pedal) instruction. It shows a complex rhythmic pattern with chords and moving lines in both hands. The second staff, numbered 58, is marked with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic and shows a similar rhythmic pattern with chords and moving lines in both hands.

The developments which occur in the first movement's genesis are mirrored at several other points in the cycle. The second section of the third movement is far less dramatic in its original guise⁸¹ and concentrates on one idea as opposed to the contrast of chordal and figural material to be found in the final version. As in the first movement's middle section, the main difference here is the lack of a clearly graded climax point (music example 20c). The sense of accumulation in the published version is achieved through a fusion of contrasting ideas, register, dynamics, and tempo, all combining to create a directed musical argument. In this earlier version of the third movement's second section, the musical argument is fragmented by rests, and the direct opposition of dynamics creates extreme change as opposed to a feeling of momentum and accumulation.

⁸¹To be found on the lower layer of leaf 9 of A.23.494 in the JA, Brno.

Ex.20c: The earlier version of the second section of movement 3 of *In The Mists*

38 Poco mosso

43

48

53

59 Meno mosso

Similar points can be made with reference to the fourth movement, and this received the most attention from the composer, with the original version being very different to that published.⁸² The earliest version has a less clearly demarcated structure, and ideas are far more compressed, contrasting with the expanded rondo structure that defines the published movement. This compression and changeability of ideas lessens the dramatic impact of contrast and, again, the lack of a clearly graded climax leads to the absence of a directional musical argument. There is also little evidence of long-range structural planning and

⁸²This first version is printed in the CE of Janáček's works, (Prague, 1978), pp.123–8.

connection on Janáček's part at this stage, as third movement material is not included in this final movement (the element that provides the climax of the published version). The piano writing is also less individual, and the last section in particular contains conventionally virtuosic piano writing, with the thick chordal texture and increased speed forcing the movement to its close (music example 22). In the published version, the reappearance of the 'refrain' after the cascades of the climax gives a sense of the material being so thoroughly investigated that there are no more possibilities, and the closing D flat minor cadence, with its stark solo line and jagged accompaniment, encapsulates the emotional journey undertaken throughout the work.

Ex.22: Janáček, *In the Mists*; original fourth movement, bars 116–end

This complex genesis demonstrates Janáček becoming far more aware of the dramatic potential contained within musical ideas, and his growing ability to construct a musical argument that exploits this fully. The piano writing in *In the Mists* illustrates that, although it may be asserted that the pieces have a greater sophistication than *On the Overgrown Path*, the fourth movement of the cycle is pure Janáček (in terms of unpianistic writing and surface spontaneity), and many of the ideas and techniques found in the previous piano works can

also be found here on a larger scale. Typically Janáčekian textures occur in this cycle, in the fourth movement's stratified writing and rhythmic complexities, in the third movement (where the middle section piles up accompanimental figuration to a climax, and the ending is sparse and ambiguous, making perfect sense within Janáček's overall structural plan for the four movements, with the third movement essentially leading into the final movement), and in the *presto* sections of the second movement, which contain unpianistic writing at the climax points, accumulating layers, and exploiting the registral and sonic possibilities of the instrument.

In the Mists: an Impressionistic work?

The question of influence with regard to Debussy is a complex one, as much of Janáček's technique and soundworld is so far removed from his French counterpart that it would, on the surface, seem that the case for influence and transference of ideas is virtually non-existent. However, Debussy was a figure of interest to Janáček, and his connection with him can be split into two distinct periods, namely from 1909–1910 and from 1921 onwards. From the point of view of the piano works, the earlier period is obviously of significance, and the list of pieces discussed previously⁸³ shows that Debussy's piano pieces were among his first experiences of the French composer. The fundamental question is to what extent Impressionism in general, and Debussy in particular, had an impact on Janáček's musical language, and whether his contact with the movement instigated a change in style or merely a reinforcement of aspects of his style that were already formed.

Janáček heard *Reflets dans l'eau* in January 1912 before composing *In the Mists* and, at a similar time (1910), a performance of *La mer* was given in Prague. Štědroň's list of Debussy performances begins in 1908, but consists only of his orchestral works performed in Prague. Although Janáček visited Prague many times between 1908–12 (the latter being the date of composition of *In the Mists*) there is no evidence to suggest that he heard any Debussy and, in light of the composer's habit of writing about any musical experiences that

⁸³Štědroň (1998), p.64 – see footnote 74.

attracted his attention and enthusiasm, the lack of any mention of his French contemporary would suggest that he knew none of his music before *Reflets dans l'eau*. This lack of documentary evidence of any response to Debussy becomes more significant when we consider Janáček's reaction to his later experience of hearing *La mer*. Debussy's symphonic work was given in three performances in 1918 in Prague and then three further performances in the first part of 1921. No programme from any of these performances survives in the Janáček archive, but he was in Prague at the same time, so it is highly likely that he would have attended,⁸⁴ and further evidence for this comes from the writing of a substantial essay (XV/336) on *La mer*. This essay is dated 11 March 1921, and is revealing of both Janáček's attitude towards Debussy's musical language, and (in his method of analysing the work) his own compositional technique.

Paul Wingfield notes that the analysis combines a literal-descriptive approach (concerning the 'game of waves' and 'flung-about wavelets') with affective commentary (discussing 'desolation' and 'isolation') and philosophical interpretation ('a human being into Fate').⁸⁵ The focus is upon motivic transformation rather than any concern for musical narrative, although Janáček clearly appreciates the French composer's approach to colour, stating that 'the music of Debussy is a continuation in shimmering colours [and] in gleaming lustre'.⁸⁶ This essay was never published, a fact that would suggest that the composer wrote it purely for himself, and it therefore provides evidence for his enthusiasm for Debussy around 1920. As well as having an in-depth knowledge of *La mer*, Janáček was also aware of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and the composer attended the opening night of this work when it was performed in Brno on 4 February 1921. His reaction to it was not entirely positive, and he stated that 'it is too much speech and too little song. Melody cannot be replaced in music, and I prefer a better balance of symphonic style and musical diction than Debussy believed in'.⁸⁷ Janáček also experienced Debussy's orchestral *Nocturnes* in 1924, and the composer's comments and the above analysis are evidence of Janáček's experience

⁸⁴Tyrrell (2007), p.393.

⁸⁵Discussed in Tyrrell (2007).

⁸⁶Tyrrell (2007), p.390.

⁸⁷Tyrrell (2007), p.486.

and enthusiasm for his French contemporary at the beginning of the 1920s. However, there is no evidence of the Czech composer being enthusiastic about Debussy before this point, and it would seem that, even though he experienced *Reflets dans l'eau* in 1912, the French composer was not a significant figure to Janáček until almost a decade later. Even when acknowledging his appreciation of Debussy, Janáček constantly asserts his own individuality (and therefore undermining the Frenchman's influence upon his thinking), stating that 'I proclaimed freedom in harmonic progression long before Debussy'.⁸⁸

In light of the fact that Janáček knew very little of Debussy's music before writing *In the Mists*, it is revealing that the two composers share many musical characteristics.

Janáček's musical language at the time of the composition of the above piano work used harmony in a freer manner, independent from its functional responsibilities and taking on a primary role in terms of shaping the work (see the earlier discussion of Adès' analysis of the relationship between micro- and macrostructural harmonic shifts in Janáček's music).

Štědroň notes that further similarities exist between the two composers in the creation of stratified, montage-like textures defined by colourful sonic areas, and he points out that both men explore 'sonic stylisation', defined as an investigation of instrumental timbre.⁸⁹

However, although both composers share these characteristics, it has to be appreciated that they have very different derivations. Janáček's approach to sonic stylisation can be understood through his appreciation of the primacy of instrumental colour in Moravian folk music and, in his approximations of the cimbalom sound on the piano, he demonstrates his awareness of the way in which the soundworld of an instrument can play a role in redefining the texture and structure of a work. The individuality of Janáček's textures (the 'stratification' and 'montage' aspects) is also derived from Moravian folk music and, in this, the comparison with Debussy becomes more revealing. Debussy's sensitivity to sound was heightened through his experience of the Indonesian gamelan at the 1889 International Exposition in Paris and, as with Janáček's response to the cimbalom soundworld, he approximates the sound of the gongs and bells that define the gamelan sound through his

⁸⁸Tyrrell (2007), p.508.

⁸⁹Štědroň (1998), p.62.

piano writing. Debussy's stratified textures are also derived from his experience of the gamelan, which is characterised by its multi-layered, heterophonic sound combinations. The French composer therefore creates, through his piano writing, a completely new approach to the instrument, and one that was derived from the sounds of other instruments. In this, both Janáček and Debussy create in their piano works a new approach to the instrument, and their sensitivity to sound and texture are derived from their responses to other musical cultures. For Debussy, the music of the Indonesian gamelan provided a model for a new soundworld, whereas for Janáček, the textures and sounds of his native Moravia were essential in unlocking his individual musical voice. Folk music brought to Janáček an awareness of stratification, timbre, and colour that were in place well before the composer's contact with Debussy.⁹⁰

Therefore, although some of the piano writing in *In the Mists* would seem to demonstrate the influence of Debussy on Janáček, it can be suggested that the effect of Impressionism on the Czech composer was to illuminate and intensify elements of his compositional technique that were already present due to his involvement with Moravian folk music. The examples that Štědroň gives of Janáček's Impressionism are confined to the way the composer creates opposing sonic areas, for example the beginning of the middle section of the first movement of *In the Mists*, where the chorale theme alternates with 'cascading' figuration, creating thematic/motivic and purely sonic areas.⁹¹ However, aside from these 'sonic' areas (which are also present in other movements) there is little to suggest that Debussy played any part in significantly changing Janáček's writing for the piano. Indeed, as much of the previous discussion of *In the Mists* had suggested, this piano cycle further demonstrates the composer's individuality (particularly noticeable in the final movement), illustrating many features already observed in *I.X.1905* and *On the Overgrown Path*. All of this evidence suggests that, although Debussy was a significant figure in Janáček's development in the 1920s, during this earlier period the contact with him would seem to have merely reinforced elements that were already existent within Janáček's style.

⁹⁰Štědroň (1998), pp. 58–62.

⁹¹Discussed in Štědroň (1998), pp. 76–7.

In the Mists was Janáček's last significant contribution to the genre of solo piano and, although he continued to write for the instrument, pieces tend to be small-scale and relatively insignificant (see VIII/26–32). After the above cycle, Janáček's next work for solo piano was the *Moravské lidové písně* [Moravian Folksongs] (VIII/23, 1922) and the presence of this work in the 1920s (when the composer was being exposed to many different musical influences, as demonstrated through the composition of the *Concertino* (VII/11, 1925) and the *Capriccio* (VII/12, 1926)) illustrates the way in which the piano remained connected to Moravian folksong throughout the composer's life. The final piano compositions in Janáček's output are again linked with his own intimate life, being the pieces written in the *Notebook for Kamila Stösslová* (VIII/33). These pieces were written in Kamila's album during visits by Janáček to Písek (from October 1927– June 1928) and her visits to Hukvaldy in August 1928, and the album is a small bound volume with blank pages into which the composer wrote various a combination of words and music, the words 'leading straight into the music and forming a context for it'.⁹² The pieces are short, only six of the thirteen pieces have titles, and the album also consists of existing pieces and examples of speech melodies.⁹³ As musical works, the pieces cannot really be considered in an independent way and, lasting between a few seconds and a minute, they are too short to make much impact when performed. The pieces are clearly programmatic and document events experienced with Kamila, or various aspects of the fantasy life that the composer created around her,⁹⁴ and are a development of a line of miniature compositions that had always appealed to the composer (from the first series of *On the Overgrown Path*). What the two solo works that Janáček produced for the piano in the last decade of his life demonstrate is that the piano remained attached to two significant directions in the composer's life, namely the connection with Moravian folksong and the exploration of a programme derived from the arena of the personal and autobiographical, both directions with which the instrument had been associated in Janáček's output for solo piano during 1900–12.

⁹²Tyrrell (2007), p.254.

⁹³Details given in *JAWO* (1997), p.276–7.

⁹⁴For example, references to their imaginary children (*Our Children*, no.1) and the ring that would unite them (*The Golden Ring*, no.13) – further discussion of these ideas can be found in Tyrrell (2007), p.254.

The definition of the piano as a vehicle for intimate and personal expression to some extent explains the presence of the greatest volume of works for the instrument during the first decade of the twentieth century, a period during which Janáček was experiencing a sense of isolation both personally and professionally. The refusal of Prague to stage *Jenůfa* until 1916 meant that, until that date, Janáček was struggling to establish his reputation as a significant Czech composer, and was being usurped by his younger contemporaries Novák and Suk. Therefore, the period between the completion of *Jenůfa* in 1903 and its Prague premiere in 1916 was a time during which the composer experimented with a variety of different approaches to operatic writing and, within this context, the piano works can be seen as a kind of 'refuge' for the composer, and the instrument was to remain a vehicle of intimate expression for the remainder of his life.

The success of *Jenůfa* in 1916 changed the status of Janáček from marginalised ethnographer to a figure at the forefront of Czech music and, with this opera, he was thrust onto the international scene, achieving fame as it was performed in numerous opera houses around Europe. This success reinforced the importance of opera in Janáček's compositional output, resulting in the piano receding completely into the background. The fact that the composer also met Kamila Stösslová at this time provided a further impetus for his operatic composition, with Janáček aiming to recreate his muse in many different operatic roles. The importance of the composer's relationship with Kamila during the last decade of his life cannot be undermined and it would be expected, taking into consideration the previous status of the piano in his output as a vehicle of intimate expression, that the instrument may have a significant role to play in the musical depiction of that relationship. However, the only example of the piano being linked with Janáček and Kamila's relationship is in the collection of tiny pieces in the *Notebook for Kamila* completed during the last two years of the composer's life, and this can also be seen as being an issue of practicality rather than choice, with Janáček writing purely for an instrument that was present in both of their homes.

Indeed, until the beginning of the creation of the *Notebook* in 1927, the piano began to be explored from a different perspective. In both the *Concertino* and *Capriccio* the piano is treated not as a vehicle of intimate expression but as the means for the expression of more

abstract sentiments, and these works demonstrate Janáček's involvement with contemporary European musical movements. Particularly significant in the above works is Neoclassicism (which Janáček would have experienced through his attendance at ISCM festivals during the 1920s), and the creation of works which recall Classical forms and structures (and, particularly in the *Capriccio*, looking back with humour and irony) sees the composer approaching the piano in a very different way. The influence of contemporary musical movements can also be felt in the *Moravian Folksongs* from 1922, and many of these folk song settings are significantly different from the composer's previous 'folk-derived' piano style, as demonstrated in the accompaniments to the *Moravian Folk Poetry in Song* and *On the Overgrown Path*. Therefore, the 1920s see the composer treating the piano in a different way and, rather than being a vehicle for intimate expression, it is used in the composer's more 'abstract' works of the period, and his relationship with Kamila (and the intense emotions involved with that) was to be musically depicted in, primarily, the operas, but also in the string quartets and the song cycle *Zápisník zmizelého* [The Diary of One Who Disappeared] (V/12) (1917–19).

Through a consideration of Janáček's output as a whole, it becomes clear that the composer did not place a huge amount of significance in writing for the piano. His works for the instrument are not numerous (in comparison with his contemporaries Novák and Suk, he wrote very little piano music) and are mostly produced in the first decade of the twentieth century, a period when the composer was unsure of his musical direction. It would seem that, throughout most his life, Janáček's focus was opera and, once he had achieved success with *Jenůfa*, that was the genre which he concentrated upon and which his posthumous reputation is built upon. However, it would be wrong to say that the piano was completely insignificant in Janáček's development, as it was an instrument that was present at a fundamentally important stage within the composer's life. Janáček's complete absorption of the sounds and textures of Moravian folk music provided the key to unlocking his individual musical voice, and the piano played a crucial role in transferring the sounds, textures, and techniques used in folk music onto western instruments. This process of transference began with the writing of piano accompaniments in the *Moravian Folk Poetry in Song* and was then extended into the

realm of independent art music in the collection of small pieces from *On the Overgrown Path*. Through these pieces Janáček created an individual language defined by disruption and drama, elements which he had absorbed from Moravian folk music. The composer's experience of textures comprised of independent parts working against each other was hugely influential upon his operatic writing, and the element of stratification present in folk ensembles is a crucial part of Janáček's orchestration, and in the unique relationship he creates between orchestral and vocal parts. Drama and disruption are the key elements of Janáček's musical language and, although this can be most clearly seen in the operas, the seeds of this can be observed in the piano works, which constitute a crucial link between the folk music of Moravia and the mature language found in the operas produced in the last decade of the composer's life.

CONCLUSION

In exploring the development of Czech piano music from 1840–1912, this dissertation covers a significant time in Czech history, a period during which the notion of the development of a specifically national form of expression became crucial to composers. Because of the significance of nationalism within this period, many previous studies have focused upon the genre of opera, as this was the dominant carrier of these sentiments. However, focusing upon this genre provides only a partial view of the development of Czech music, and has led to certain elements of composer's outputs being highlighted at the expense of other aspects that can provide a more multifaceted and rounded picture of their development.

The previous chapters have explored a line of development in Czech music through the outputs of many composers who are often neglected, and the reason for their marginalisation is much to do with the creation of a map of Czech music by contemporary commentators of the period. A fundamental issue to be explored was the way in which our current view of Czech music – with the figures of Dvořák and Janáček being predominant – contrasts with the opinions of writers at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. The influence of Zdeněk Nejedlý was fundamental in defining the development of Czech music, and the issue of what a Czech national style should be was crucial in his assessment and evaluation of composers, and his opinions were influential in the careers of many composers explored within this dissertation.

As outlined in the introduction, Nejedlý believed that Smetana was the definition of what was required of a nationalist composer, and an understanding of how Smetana fulfilled that role also requires an appreciation of what Czech nationalism was perceived as being in the key decade of the 1860s. By the time of his return to Prague from Sweden, Smetana had composed a great deal, yet these works are neglected when the operatic works are the sole focus. An understanding of Smetana's relationship with Czech nationalism requires an appreciation of the type of musical personality that the composer had formed prior to his concentration upon producing operas, and this is fundamentally revealed through an examination of his piano works. What Smetana's piano works up to 1860 reveal is a

composer thoroughly connected with wider contemporary Romanticism, initially through the cycles of piano pieces, albumleaves, and sketches, and later through the absorption of the innovative and progressive musical language of Liszt.

As a result of this, Smetana entered Prague musical life at the beginning of the 1860s (the height of the National Revival) as a progressive composer connected with the most innovative strands of contemporary Romanticism, and his outlook corresponded with the musical environment of the city at that time, which was fully receptive to the most innovative composers and their works. Because of this environment, contemporary commentators (particularly Hostinský) were enthusiastic about Smetana's status as a modern and progressive composer and believed that it was favourable for Czech nationalism to be connected with the most modern musical styles.

This connection between nationalism and modernism in the output of Smetana can only fully be appreciated through an examination of the piano works completed before the composer turned his focus to opera. From 1860, the frequency of piano works diminishes dramatically, demonstrating the genres which were valued within the development of a national style. However, the piano plays an important role in highlighting another aspect of the nationalist debate in the *Fantasia on Czech Folksongs*, namely the place that folk music had in the creation of a specifically Czech form of expression. Opinions on the role of folk music created a divide into progressive and conservative camps, with the latter seeing it as key to the creation of a national style and the former (including Smetana and Hostinský) seeing folk music and its imitation as being restrictive upon composers and forcing Czech music to look inwards rather than absorbing the most progressive and innovative contemporary influences. The *Fantasia* highlights this debate by presenting a collision of different styles, and the quotation of Erben-Martinovský melodies reveals much of Smetana's position at the beginning of the 1860s and the society in which he was trying to forge his career.

Opinions on what constituted a national form of expression were thus divided into the progressives (who believed that nationalism should be linked with contemporary Romanticism) and conservatives (who believed that folk music was an essential ingredient in

a national style), and these two approaches became translated into the polemical battle between Smetana and Dvořák that was to define Czech music for decades. These two composers were responsible for the formation of a Czech national school, and the fact that they were perceived as having contrasting musical languages created two distinct directions in Czech music. Smetana's connection with Liszt and the most progressive musical movements of the nineteenth century was juxtaposed with Dvořák's more conservative approach, which was the result of turning away from Wagnerian influences and towards the Classical approach of Brahms at the same time as responding to Czech folk sources. Dvořák also focused upon writing orchestral music, and his subsequent promotion abroad and international success was contrasted with Smetana's perceived focus and loyalty towards his native land. The younger composer's international fame reveals much about the contrast between how a Czech nationalism was perceived abroad and at home, with foreign audiences responding to the folk sources as the key element of 'Czechness', whilst the more progressive Czech commentators and composers saw the focus of Czech nationalism as being the absorption of the most progressive elements of wider Romanticism.

The conflicting approaches to creating a Czech form of expression and the polemical battles between Smetana and Dvořák can be appreciated through an examination of their piano works. A comparison of the former's *Czech Dances* and the latter's *Slavonic Dances* reveals much of the different musical languages used by the two composers, meaning that an exploration of the piano music illustrates important aspects of the relationship between Smetana and Dvořák and their role in the creation of a national school. An investigation of the piano works of Smetana is important in understanding both how his musical personality developed before the key period of the 1860s and how Czech nationalism was understood at this point, yet it would seem that the piano was always less significant to Dvořák, and he wrote relatively little for the instrument. However, the presence of the *Poetic Tone Pictures* is revealing both of a further element of Dvořák's musical personality and of the atmosphere in Czech musical society in the 1890s. The way in which this collection of piano pieces instigated a change in Dvořák's output (with their production being followed by concert overtures and symphonic poems) illustrates the composer's connection with both the

progressive and innovative aspects of Romanticism and the compositional outputs of Foerster and Fibich.

The connection of the *Poetic Tone Pictures* with the musical languages of Foerster and Fibich is revealing of many of the contradictions within the opinions of Nejedlý, and how his opinions create a partial and biased account of the development of Czech music. Nejedlý believed that the successors to Smetana in the continuation of Czech music were Fibich and Foerster, and that Dvořák had no significant part to play. However, Dvořák's output in the 1890s brings his musical language and compositional approach in line with both of these composers (and, significantly, that of Smetana), meaning that a consideration of his piano works is revealing of a significant facet of his musical personality, one which undermines and refutes the simplistic and biased assertions of Nejedlý.

The fact that Nejedlý saw Foerster and Fibich as the next stage in the development of Czech music demonstrates how his assertions have been refuted by history, as neither composer is perceived as significant in any contemporary account of Czech music. Their importance in Nejedlý's eyes was based on their continuation of Smetana's approach, with both composers writing for the stage and creating symphonic poems, both genres associated with a Czech form of expression through Smetana. Despite their marginal positions in accounts of Czech musical history, an exploration of the outputs of Foerster and Fibich is revealing of important aspects in the development of Czech music and, fundamentally, its connection with the *fin-de-siècle* during the 1890s. As well as being a composer, Foerster was also significant as a critic, and his promotion of both Fibich and Smetana in his writing can be seen as concurring with Nejedlý's opinions on Czech music.

An exploration of the piano music of both of these composers is revealing of important elements of their musical personalities. Although neither Foerster or Fibich wrote for the piano with the same intensity as Smetana, the works that they created for the instrument have many similarities and connections with later Czech composers such as Suk and Janáček. Fibich's piano works demonstrate the diversity of his influences, and combine poetry and visual art with his own subjective experiences, and this wide spectrum of source material was something that the composer was also to apply in his operatic output, thereby

diversifying and widening the subject matter of Czech opera. With the *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences*, Fibich both created connections with the Viennese *fin-de-siècle* and established the piano as a vehicle of intimate and subjective expression, a role which was to be explored and developed by subsequent Czech composers.

Foerster's works for the piano appears relatively insignificant in terms of volume within his output as a whole, yet his writing for the instrument is important in revealing significant elements of his musical personality, elements which aid an appreciation of the composer's eventual marginal position in the development of Czech music in spite of Nejedlý's enthusiasm. Upon his return from Vienna in 1918, he occupied a significant position as a teacher (being principal at the Prague Conservatoire during 1922–3, 1927–8 and 1928–9) rather than being a progressive composer at the centre of the development of Czech music in the new independent Republic. His marginal position post-1918 is initially hard to understand as, during his time abroad in Hamburg and Vienna, he had experienced the most progressive and innovative musical ideas of Mahler, Strauss, and the Second Viennese School, all contemporary tendencies that were embraced in Prague in the 1920s. However, despite being surrounded by the most innovative contemporary developments, Foerster remained fundamentally attached to Romanticism (an element which would have appealed to Nejedlý) and, although he documented the musical styles he experienced in Vienna, he never absorbed them into his own language, which remained conservative throughout. The piano works were produced as a result of the feelings of isolation he experienced whilst in Hamburg and Vienna, illustrating his conservatism (looking back to Schumann in *Dreaming* and using Classical theme and variation form in *Eros's Masks*) and demonstrating the distance between his works and the contemporaneous works for piano being produced by Novák, Suk, and Janáček. In illustrating his isolation from the surrounding contemporary musical ideas of Vienna, Foerster's piano works show the regressive and conservative elements of his personality, thereby revealing why he played little part in Czech musical life (as a composer) post-1918 and why he is marginalised in accounts of Czech musical history.

Foerster's conservative and backward-looking musical language is demonstrated through a comparison of his piano works with those of Novák and Suk during the first decade

of the twentieth century (with *Pan* and *Things Lived and Dreamt* being produced at a similar time to *Eros's Masks*). However, despite the huge creative distance between Foerster and Novák and Suk, all three of these composers ended up in the same position in Czech musical society after 1918, yet whereas Foerster had never occupied a hugely significant position as a composer in Czech society, both Novák and Suk were highly esteemed and significant figures during the period 1900–10 so it is revealing to look for reasons for their dramatic reversal in status between 1912–18, and to explore the part that the piano works of these composers play in facilitating an understanding of this situation.

In terms of the prescribed direction of the development of Czech music defined by Nejedlý, both Novák and Suk were immediately evaluated and assessed in a negative way as a result of their involvement with Dvořák. Both composers were accused of neglecting the influence of Smetana, and their failure to be fully involved in creating works for the stage exacerbated Nejedlý's lack of support for them. However, despite the efforts of Nejedlý to undermine their place in Czech musical society, both composers succeeded and achieved significant fame and recognition during 1900–10. Indeed, Novák and Suk should have taken over the mantle of Czech music after Dvořák's death in 1904 and, for several years, they did, but their suddenly diminished status requires further explanation and, contrary to all predictions, neither Novák or Suk was able to maintain his significant position unchallenged for more than a decade. Reasons for their change in status, and the fact that both Novák and Suk experienced the same fate post-1918 despite their very different musical languages, have to be searched for within the individual developments of each, and the piano plays a significant part in revealing important facets of Novák and Suk's style.

Reasons for why Novák experienced a change in status, from being at the zenith of his career in 1910 to being marginalised post-1918, may be found in his development, which was defined by changes of direction and crises from the start, resulting in a musical language that absorbed many different stylistic elements. The piano was an important presence at each change in direction, meaning that Novák's output for the instrument illustrates many facets of his development. The composer's initial Romanticism and connection with Dvořák led to an exploration of Moravian folk music, yet his involvement with this essentially provides a

demonstration of the conservatism that characterises Novák's language despite his later absorption of many contemporary musical ideas. A comparison of Novák's approach to Moravian folk music with that of Janáček reveals that Novák, in paying attention to melody rather than any other musical elements, is closer to the approach of Dvořák, and his combination of folk music and Classical form is illustrated in the *Sonata eroica*. The composer's fundamental attachment to Romanticism can also be observed in the *Songs of Winter Nights* and *Pan* where, despite the absorption of Impressionism and Straussian elements, Novák's compositional techniques and textures still owe much to the style of Liszt established decades earlier.

The career of Novák is a demonstration of the influence that the polemical battles between Smetana and Dvořák discussed previously had on Czech composers. The perpetuation of these issues through the writing of Nejedlý reached a peak in 1910 in the so-called 'Battle for Dvořák', with Nejedlý, along with Helfert and Bartoš, outlining the continued importance of Smetana against Dvořák. Novák, as a pupil of Dvořák, naturally defended his deceased teacher, and this resulted in a conflict that created a crisis point in the composer's life and led to a series of insults and slurs on his character that dramatically undermined his confidence. Novák's sudden exploration of stage genres at this point thus demonstrates both his lack of direction and experimentation during this time, and his response to attacks from Nejedlý et al. Therefore, an examination of Novák's development through his piano works reveals elements that perhaps led to the composer occupying a less significant position in Czech music after 1918, and it would appear that the combination of backward-looking and conservative elements in his style with the attacks from Nejedlý as a result of his alignment with Dvořák creating a crisis of confidence that Novák never recovered from, and his position in the independent Republic was institutional. He was respected as a teacher rather than a progressive composer, meaning that his status was marginal, constituting a complete reversal of his fame ten years earlier.

An examination of the compositional development of Suk reveals a very different musical personality whose style was not the result of periods of crisis and changes in direction, but developed cumulatively, culminating in a language defined by harmonic

complexity, rhythmic asymmetry, textural variety, and an abrupt and fragmented form of expression that takes his style closer to Janáček than Novák. However, Suk's creative life was redefined by the deaths of Dvořák and Otilie, and his output became focused upon autobiographical and intimate elements (which had played a part before, but were now the focus). His musical style became increasingly isolated and self-referential, and this element links him to Fibich, whose *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences* were the first example of a Czech composer treating the piano as a vehicle of intimate expression. This element of introspection is clearly demonstrated in the piano works, and we find self-quotation from *Asrael* and *Radúz and Mahulena* in both *About Mother* and *Things Lived and Dreamt*.

Therefore, at the end of the period under consideration in this dissertation, Suk was a successful performer and composer, but the seeds of the elements that were to lead to his diminishing position within Czech musical life in the subsequent decade had already been sown, and can be observed clearly in the piano works. Suk's increasingly personal, intimate, and self-referential style gradually led to his output decreasing, and he became involved with reworking and revising old projects as opposed to the creation of new works. The composer's position post-1918 can be compared with that of both Novák and Foerster, yet we can contrast the situations of Novák and Suk at the end of the period in question. Novák's career experienced a time of crisis as a result of very public battles, and yet he kept composing after 1918, demonstrating that he still had a need to create. In contrast, Suk's diminishing compositional activity was the result of very personal events and, after 1918, he composed much less, focusing upon teaching and performing.

The examination of the piano works of the composers included in this dissertation reveals that Novák, Suk, and Janáček produced their main piano works during the period 1900–12, so before exploring the status of these composers in the period following the achievement of independence, it is interesting to consider the piano works of Janáček and to compare them with those of Novák and Suk. Janáček's career took a different trajectory to that of Novák and Suk and, if his career were considered on the basis of the period considered in this dissertation, it would seem that he was not a significant figure in the development of Czech music. His status after 1918 contrasts with the relatively unsuccessful

and marginal position he occupied until that point, and it is interesting and revealing to consider the elements of Janáček's musical personality and compositional language that ensured his success within the final decade of his life, and the part his piano works have in this transformation of status.

When considering Janáček's musical development, chronology is a significant issue. Born in 1854, the composer is essentially of the same generation as Fibich and Foerster, yet he can also be perceived as part of the same generation as Novák and Suk (particularly in terms of his piano works, produced in the first decade of the twentieth century). However, the inclusion of Janáček in the same generation as Novák and Suk does not really take into account the composer's absorption of contemporary musical influences in the 1920s or his international fame during the last decade of his life. Reinforcing the difficulty in placing Janáček in a particular generation is the fact that the composer he became in the 1920s was diametrically opposed to the point from which he started in the 1870s, and an examination of his piano works reveals much about this process of transformation.

Despite his eventual involvement with the twentieth century avant-garde, Janáček was initially a conservative composer who favoured Dvořák over the 'intellectual urbanity' of Smetana, and his rejection of innovative and progressive movements whilst studying in Leipzig and Vienna reinforces this. However, from 1888, the study of Moravian folk music redefined his musical language and, with an exploration of the composer's ethnological study, the dissertation comes full circle in a consideration of Janáček's form of nationalist expression. Smetana's approach was to reject the quotation of folk music and to create a national style from the absorption of the most progressive and innovative movements of contemporary Romanticism, thus intensifying the connection between Czech music and the rest of Europe. Janáček's approach was diametrically opposed to this, and his involvement with Moravian folk music led to him being defined as a 'Moravian separatist' by Nejedlý, who was already less than enthusiastic about him as a result of his alignment with Dvořák. The encounters with Moravian folk music thus had both positive and negative effects on Janáček's career. The positive effect was that he was exposed to music which contained many features not appreciated by previous composers (who had only been exposed to the

'Classical' melodies of Erben and Sušil), elements which planted the seeds of a new compositional language, yet the negative effect of this involvement with Moravian folk music was that Janáček became defined primarily as an ethnographer rather than a composer (which reveals further the separation of folk music and art music in Czech music at the end of the nineteenth century), a definition that marginalised his influence and removed him from the mainstream of Czech musical development.

The individuality of Janáček's approach to folk music can be seen through a comparison of his output with that of Novák, who experienced the same music. Novák's encounter with Moravian folk music resulted in an approach close to that of Dvořák (which further reveals the inherent conservatism of Novák's language), whereas Janáček's focus on texture and timbre redefined his language, and created a more abrupt and direct form of expression. This redefined language was first explored through the piano accompaniments in *Moravian Folk Poetry in Song* and in the collection *On the Overgrown Path*, demonstrating that the piano was crucial in transferring the features of Moravian folk music onto western instruments and independent art works.

Janáček's posthumous reputation is defined by his operatic output, and the fact that the piano receded into the background after 1912 would seem to indicate that the instrument was not hugely significant in the composer's success after 1918. However, Janáček's operatic writing underwent dramatic changes through his work on *Jenůfa*, and the redefinition of the relationship between vocal and orchestral lines to create a greater sense of dramatic interaction occurred as a result of the composer's experimentation within his piano accompaniments and *On the Overgrown Path*, meaning that the piano was a significant instrument in terms of Janáček's redefinition of his operatic writing, and can thus be defined as important in the transformation of the composer from conservative Romantic to avant-garde twentieth century figure.

The fact that Janáček's main works for solo piano occur during the first decade of the twentieth century enables a comparison with Novák and Suk. The common involvement with Moravian folk music of Novák and Janáček has already been considered, and Janáček's emphasis upon subjectivity, intimate expression, and autobiography also creates similarities

with Suk's output for piano. Indeed, Janáček's situation in the first decade of the twentieth century has many points of connection with Suk, and both composers experienced a sense of isolation at this point (Suk's as a result of the deaths of Dvořák and Otilie, and Janáček's as a result of the refusal of Prague to stage *Jenůfa*, along with the problems he had experienced in his personal life). However, despite these similarities and points of connection, their statuses after 1918 were completely reversed, with Novák and Suk receding into the margins of musical development whilst Janáček became its centrifugal force. An understanding of the changes that took place in the musical environment of Prague will lead to a fuller understanding of why this situation occurred.

1918 was a momentous date in both Czech and world history, with the end of the First World War also bringing the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire, leading to Prague becoming the capital of the new Republic of Czechoslovakia. This, in turn, led to a return to political importance for a city that had been Germanised and controlled by foreign governing forces for many centuries, and this change in socio-political environment had a huge effect on the musical life of the city. A comparison of the musical situation at the end of the chronological period in question and that post-1918 is revealing of important directions and developments that were to occupy Czech music during the inter-war period. An examination of the status of composers in 1912 would seem to suggest that Novák and Suk would take over from Dvořák, with both of these composers achieving great success within the first decade of the century.

Parrott suggests that the compositional careers of both Suk and Novák were disturbed by the epoch-making events of the First World War and the creation of the new Republic,⁹⁵ yet, as has been examined previously, there were signs before 1914 that both of these composers were diminishing in importance. It would appear that 'the rebirth of the nation within the framework of an independent republic seemed to call for a new generation to serve and celebrate it. The traditions of pre-war Bohemia which had been sacrosanct before were now, for the first time, in dispute'⁹⁶ and, for contrasting reasons, neither Novák nor Suk

⁹⁵Parrott (2002), p. 43.

⁹⁶Parrott (2002), p. 44.

were able to continue their positions at the forefront of Czech music. Certainly the opinions and powerful position of Nejedlý had a detrimental effect on their careers, but it would seem that, even before the outbreak of the First World War, there were signs that these composers could not carry the mantle for Czech music post-1918. Both Novák's regressive attachment to Lisztian Romanticism and Suk's introspective, isolated, and self-referential language meant that, with the atmosphere of cultural regeneration and the 'opening up' of Prague to the most innovative and progressive musical figures and movements, they were respected as 'past masters' rather than the catalyst for future Czech musical development. Indeed, it is revealing of the musical changes in Prague in 1918 that both Novák and Suk should be usurped by a figure who had been marginalised prior to the First World War, namely Leoš Janáček, and an appreciation of the musical developments in Prague after 1918 will aid an understanding of the reversal of fortunes of these composers.

The musical environment of Prague after the achievement of independence was modern and progressive, and fully embraced contemporary developments in wider Europe and America. The National Theatre remained a prominent institution which, from 1920–35 was led by Otakar Ostrčil, who was a significant figure in bringing the most contemporary operatic works to Prague audiences (including Berg's *Wozzeck* in November 1926). Alongside the National Theatre was the Neues Deutsches Theater, which reinforced the progressive and modern outlook at the former with performances of Schoenberg, Shostakovich, Hindemith, and Milhaud. In the field of orchestral music, the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra increased and became more significant after 1918, and the creation of Czech Radio in 1923 led to the subsequent development of the *Symfonický orchestr Československého rozhlasu* [Czech Radio Symphony Orchestra]. A further element which reinforced the positive and receptive attitude to innovative and progressive works was the flourishing of the *Spolek pro moderní hudbu* [Society for Modern Music] between 1920–39. Therefore, throughout the 1920s and 30s, Prague re-established its position as an important centre of contemporary music (as opposed to being secondary to Vienna throughout Habsburg rule) and, in addition to the institutions outlined above, several International

Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) festivals took place in Prague, meaning that the city had a further connection with the most progressive and innovative contemporary works.

Prague in the 1920s was thus a city dominated by contemporary music, and the achievement of independence and the end of World War I had a liberating effect on the city. This change in musical environment had an effect on the composers examined in this dissertation and, as has been previously discussed, both Novák and Suk had retreated from their central position in Czech music and a ‘new guard’ of composers rose to prominence, with major figures in post-1918 Czech music (and particularly Czech piano music) being Bohuslav Martinů (1890–1959), Alois Hába (1893–1973), and Janáček. These composers demonstrate the way in which the composers explored previously had become ‘institutionalised’ in the new Republic, and Martinů attended Suk’s composition class between 1920 and 1923, with Hába studying with Novák during 1914–15. The outputs of both Martinů and Hába were fully in line with the contemporary music of the 1920s, with Martinů leaving Prague for Paris to absorb Stravinsky, jazz, ragtime, and Neoclassicism. He was a prolific composer of piano music throughout his life, beginning with the *Loutky* [Puppets] in 1912–14, and had also attended the Prague conservatory in 1906 and been exposed to Debussy, Strauss, and the music of Suk and Novák during that time, so an examination of his piano music would make an interesting comparison with the composers in this dissertation. After time both in Paris and the USA, Martinů’s language had absorbed many influences, from Neoclassicism and jazz to Notre Dame polyphony, meaning that his works are emblematic of the open and accepting musical environment of the new Republic.

Martinů’s cosmopolitanism and internationalism is complemented by the innovations of Alois Hába. Like Martinů, Hába’s influences are diverse; he was a Moravian (like Janáček) and, early in his life, absorbed features from his native Valašsko. Following study with Novák, he had a further period of training with Schreker in Vienna, and his time in the Austrian capital led to him absorbing the most progressive contemporary ideas of the Second Viennese School (indeed, Hába’s early piano works are defined by an extreme chromaticism which encourages a comparison with Schoenberg and Berg’s piano music). Hába discovered Janáček by being a proof-reader at Universal Edition, meaning that he remained in contact

with the music of his native country even whilst abroad. In 1920, Hába spent time in Berlin and began making plans for what was to be his most forward-looking proposal, namely that of quarter-tone instruments. He returned to Prague in 1923, where he established a department of microtonal music at the Conservatory, finding support in his colleague Suk (demonstrating that the older composer, even though not prominent as a composer at this point, still appreciated innovation, an element that had been demonstrated in his works from 1900–10).

Also connected with Hába's microtonal works was Ervín Schulhoff (1894–1942), a hugely successful and acclaimed pianist who lived in Berlin from 1919, and absorbed avant-garde art (in the work of Paul Klee) and jazz. During 1919–23, Schulhoff organised a series of concerts providing a platform for the performance of works by the Second Viennese School, demonstrating his full involvement with both atonality and Expressionism. In 1923 he returned to Prague and combined his previous musical enthusiasms with that of Janáček and Czech folk music. The work of Schulhoff (in its combination of a full involvement with contemporary music and folk elements) thus has parallels with the work of Janáček, creating a further area for exploration. Schulhoff was also a significant performer and interpreter of Hába's quarter-tone piano works and, therefore, from this outline of composers active in the 1920s in Prague, it can be suggested that the piano played a significant part in their musical outputs, encouraging a comparison with the figures considered in the time frame of this dissertation.

Through Martinů, Hába, and Schulhoff, Czech music embraced the contemporary ideas of wider Europe, and it is interesting to finally consider the position of Janáček within this environment. In comparison to the other Czech composers who were active in the 1920s, Janáček appears to stand out for many reasons. At the beginning of the 1920s, Janáček was 66 years old, and yet was only just starting to carve an international reputation after years of marginalisation. In many ways, the older Czech composer's compositional technique was completely out of place with the mood of the decade in his fundamentally Romantic attachment to programme, and the explicit linking of his music with autobiographical elements. How did this composer, essentially in the latter stages of his career, and who had

been isolated for so many years, gain such a stronghold and position of respect within a Prague defined by innovative and progressive contemporary musical ideas? An answer to this question involves an exploration of Janáček's relationship with modernism in order to reach an understanding of how the different elements of his language are reconciled within the concerns and aesthetic framework of this movement.

In the introductory chapter of this dissertation, the incompatibility of modernism and nationalism was outlined by Bohlman. In line with his statement that national music cannot be modern, at the beginning of the chronological period in question Smetana rejected the notion of formulating a specifically Czech form of expression through the simplistic quotation and imitation of pre-existing folk melodies. The composer at the end of the period in question, Janáček, took exactly the opposite approach, and his initial musical language was completely redefined as a result of his contact with Moravian folk music. Janáček's attention to the textural and timbral elements of this music were essentially the elements that provided him with the means to reconcile his language with that of modernism in the 1920s and, as Tyrrell notes, 'Janáček's forays into documenting folk material and speech patterns represented the assertion of a preserved rural tradition against a progressive, cosmopolitan urban culture. The past, sustained in the provincial present, held the key for modernity'.⁹⁷

Moravian folk music contained within it many elements that could be perceived as 'modern', and disruptive and heterophonic stratified textures combined with rhythmic irregularity all correspond with an important element of twentieth century modernism, including the importance of collage and montage (in the visual art of Braque and Picasso). Janáček's abrupt and direct form of expression, along with his limitation and restriction of means also often creates a fragmentation of textures and sounds as a result of his absorption of the inherently disruptive and dramatic elements of folk textures and instruments.

Therefore, before 1918, certain ingredients were in place that meant that Janáček's musical language would be responsive and able to absorb many elements of contemporary modernism. The Czech composer was hugely enthusiastic about modern music in the 1920s, and had a great deal of knowledge about Schoenberg, Berg, Hindemith and Bartók, as well as

⁹⁷Tyrrell (2007), p. 719.

contemporary Czech composers such as Hába. He also encountered Henry Cowell, who visited Brno in 1926,⁹⁸ so would have had a full awareness of the main strands of musical developments in the 1920s. Janáček also attended ISCM festivals in Salzburg (1923), Vienna (1925), and Frankfurt (1927) and, despite a lack of knowledge of exactly what he heard, his reactions to modern music in general are far from what would be expected of a septuagenarian composer, and he stated that ‘In Prague, we have had an international music festival. I can say for myself that I like listening to extremes’.⁹⁹

Janáček’s absorption of contemporary musical movement can be seen in all genres of his output in the 1920s; the piano *Capriccio* and the *Concertino* show the composer absorbing the humorous and ironic aspects of Neoclassicism, whilst his operas demonstrate many modernist tendencies. Leon Botstein notes that the ‘economy of means and surface simplicity had initially concealed his capacity to confront the dilemmas of modernism’, whilst Adorno (who had previously denied Janáček connections with modernism because of his involvement with folk materials) observes modernist tendencies in the fragmentary scoring of the later operas such as *The Makropulos Case* and *From the House of the Dead*.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, this last opera reveals much of the composer’s relationship with modernism, with its utilisation of extremes of register, realistic sound effects, lean textures, and unusual juxtapositions of instruments. Clearly, these elements demonstrate Janáček’s relationship with, absorption of, and enthusiasm for the contemporary music he was surrounded by rather than being directly derived from Moravian folk music, yet, in its disruptive textures and attuning of Janáček’s compositional ear to distinct sonorities, Moravian folk music had provided the composer’s language with the ingredients with which to develop a musical style which was compatible with many elements of Modernism.

History has proved that Nejedlý’s map of the history of Czech music was misguided, partial, and biased, and the international fame of Dvořák and Janáček requires a more multifaceted and unbiased approach. Many previous accounts of Czech musical history have disregarded figures such as Foerster, Fibich, Novák, and Suk, yet an appreciation of the

⁹⁸Tyrrell (2007), p. 720.

⁹⁹Tyrrell (2007), p. 720.

¹⁰⁰Tyrrell (2007), p. 723.

output of these composers demonstrates the changing focus of Czech music through the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. A focus on piano music illustrates the close relationships between Prague and Vienna in the *fin-de-siècle* period, as well as demonstrating aspects of Suk and Novák's techniques which may have resulted in their marginalisation post-1918. Equally, an appreciation of the derivation of the individual elements of Janáček's musical language can be gained through an exploration of his piano works, which are a fundamental step in the composer's absorption and transference of the same features of Moravian folk music which were to be essential in the composer's acceptance and involvement with the modernist musical world of Prague in the 1920s. This dissertation therefore ends with a complete reversal of the picture of Czech music presented at its beginning, with folk music being not only about national identity, but also the key to internationalism and, hence, at the heart of the creation of modern Czech music in the works of Janáček.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography begins with a list of abbreviations summarising dictionaries and frequently cited works and publications followed by an alphabetical listing of sources by author.

NG2: ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell: *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London, 2001).

HV: *Hudební věda* (journal).

ZVN: *Zprávy Společnosti Vítězslava Nováka* [Reports of the Vítězslav Novák Society] (journal).

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