Leoš Janáček: The Theory of Speech Melody in His Piano Sonata 1.X.1905 and In The Mists.

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LEOŠ JANÁČEK:
THE THEORY OF SPEECH MELODY IN HIS PIANO SONATA 1. X. 1905
AND IN THE MISTS

By
Mirette Hanna

A DOCTORAL ESSAY

Submitted to the Faculty
of the University of Miami
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the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

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LEOŠ JANÁČEK:
THE THEORY OF SPEECH MELODY IN HIS PIANO SONATA 1. X. 1905
AND IN THE MISTS

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Janáček’s fascination with the intonation of speech started at an early age, and it accompanied him throughout his life. The study outlines elements of speech found in Janáček’s two piano works: the piano sonata “1. X. 1905” and the piano cycle “In the Mists” based on comparing and drawing parallels between his speech melody snippets that he collected during his lifetime with a number of motifs and techniques he employed in those studied works. This parallelizing process also relies on Janáček’s written articles, interviews and essays, as well as on research conducted on his operas and vocal works. Their importance lies in the examples of how Janáček would constitute his chosen melodies, articulations and rhythms, and in their application of compositional devices which enhance the dramatic qualities of the work in respect to the psychological attributes of each character. This study may serve as a supplemental guide to the interpreter’s understanding of the unique nature of these piano works.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Music and Language: Historical Link

It has often been claimed, although there is not enough research to reinforce this view, that the music of a culture is informed by its language, that all the music of a region will bear some imprint of the linguistic culture from which it arises. It has also been claimed that originally music and language were born simultaneously and that ever since the beginning of our history, humans have tried to express their needs by choosing to elongate a specific vowel of a word, or shorten another, or shape the endings of a word’s last syllable by ascending or descending intonations, which created music. In his lecture series “The Unanswered Question” Leonard Bernstein presents his personal thoughts on how music was born; he traces it back to the primitive ages before the languages were developed. When the newly born infant was hungry, the infant opened his mouth to ask for milk which produced the sound “Ma”. That is how the syllable “Ma” is associated with the name “Mother” in the vast majority of languages of the world.

Bernstein adds: “On a purely phonological level, […] sound] begins with an attack, an ictus, and ends in a descending [or ascending] glide, […] when the need of hunger is intensified], we intensify the ictus by prolonging it ‘Maa’, and lo and behold we are singing. Music is born! The syllable has become a note. […] The morpheme is rewritten as a pitch
event. What we seem to be getting to is a hypothesis that would confirm a famous cliché
namely, ‘music is heightened speech.’”

Thousands of years later in the age of antiquity and specifically in ancient Athens,
politicians and people of higher authority required the ability to influence the crowd and
win political debates. They skillfully used rhetorical devices in order to affect their listeners
and persuade them of the correctness of their opinions. During the Roman Empire, rhetoric
lost its original functions and gradually turned its focus towards the beauty of the discourse
itself over its ability to merely influence intellectually. Rhetoric became a tool for
expressing content as accurately and beautifully as possible, above all in literature and
subsequently in music. Rhetoric in music helped composers give affective content an
adequate expression through figures of music labelled and classified similarly to verbal
figures of speech. This became evident in the Renaissance and Baroque eras when the
Theory of Affect, or the German term Affektenlehre, became the prevailing aesthetic theory
and which claimed its origin from the ancient theories of rhetoric.2

Janáček’s Fascination with Speech and Melody

While rhetoric in music during the Baroque era dealt with music and language as
two different elements in which the music borrows verbal intonation in order to create
emotional content, Leoš Janáček (1854-1928) considered them two sides of the same coin;
for him the boundary between the speech act and music was narrow and difficult to trace.

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He had long been interested in the human voice and its expressiveness through words. Since he was a child, he showed a talent for choral singing; he was a choir singer and later a choirmaster (1873-1876) at which time he composed his first vocal works. But even prior to his fascination with the expressivity of the human voice, his love and appreciation for Czech folk songs and the Czech language had taken roots. Although he was taught German in his German-language secondary school in Brno, the teasing and harassment he received as a Czech boy attending a German-language school served perhaps to strengthen his love and appreciation of his native language.

In one of his articles, "The Language of Our Actors and the Stage," in the *Moravska* revue (1899), p. 174, Janáček writes:

> If we want to have a theatre with ‘an individual character’ then we need to plunge to the depths to find the truth: even the tone of our actors’ language, in fact the speech melodies of actors’ language, have to be genuinely Czech, genuinely Moravian. The melody of the Czech language, that which rings out from its speech, which pleases, or touches, which roars with thunder and whispers with tenderness, this florid attire of thought, and its embodiment, this melody, however, is debased through our contact with the Germans and, alas, also through all our schooling, from the very beginning to the end. What is often spoken on our stages is not the soft Czech language, gentle in all its delicate turns. It is simply not genuine Czech.

He started to collect and transcribe specific spoken words through notation, with the intention to: “…preserve the sound of the Czech language for future generations. It would be a dictionary in notes of the living Czech language, which would contain melodic

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phrases for everything which the Czech language is able to express. So he stated in his article, “The Border-Line of Speech and Song,” published in Hlídka, Vol. XXIII/4 (1906).

He was particularly interested in the psychology of the individual, and he considered speech as a form of embodiment of thoughts or emotions. He attended many psychology lectures given at the Brno Imperial and Royal Teachers’ Training Institute during his studies there. He also studied extensively The Grundzüge der physiologischen Psychologie (Fundamentals of Physiological Psychology) by Wilhelm Max Wundt, upon its publication in 1874.

These studies allowed him to gain skills on how to analyze or depict someone’s true feelings through the way of talking, the chosen words, the intonation and volume of the voice, the body language and the facial expressions.

Janáček gained a broader interest in the interaction of music and language when he started accompanying the Moravian folklorist and dialectologist František Bartoš on his ethnographic excursions, during which he began his systematic observations of the musical aspects of folk speech. He realized that music can exist without words, but words cannot be spoken without melodic and rhythmic content, a concept which fueled his lifelong preoccupation with capturing live speech, notating and studying it.

Circa 1897 Janáček started collecting snippets of everyday speech transcribed into conventional musical notation, which he called “speech melodies” or “nápěvky mluvy”. Janáček was consistently interested not so much in the words themselves and their literal

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meanings but in the emotions behind them. The following is his most famous statement, from an interview in Literární svět journal on 8 March 1928 about his interest in speech:

When anyone speaks to me, I listen more to the tonal modulations in his voice than to what he is actually saying. From this, I know at once what he is like, what he feels, whether he is lying, whether he is agitated or whether he is merely making conventional conversation. I can even feel, or rather hear, any hidden sorrow. Life is sound, the tonal modulations of the human speech. Every living creation is filled with the deepest truth. That, you see, has been one of the main needs of my life. I have been taking down speech melodies since the year 1897.

I have a vast collection of notebooks filled with them -- you see, they are my window through which I look into the soul. And what I would like to emphasize is this: for dramatic music they are of great importance.\(^5\)

For an individual like Janáček the border between music and language became vanishingly small. As early as 1903 he suggested that “listening carefully to the people’s speech melodies is a good preparation for the studies of an opera composer.”\(^6\) Janáček left behind a wealth of written materials, of which 75 folders have been classified at the Moravian Museum’s Music Archives in Brno, Czech Republic.

By realizing how, for Janáček, the speech curves and melodies are linked with a person’s psychological state, the author of this study initially has looked through the chosen topics of the composer’s operatic libretti with an intention to find similar dramatic moments that covered specific psychological states, while analyzing the musical texture, melodic lines, rhythms, and other musical elements in an attempt to discover whether the composer had used the same tools in treating similar dramatic moments. From this analysis it was

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concluded that many of his operas have their dramatic climax during an event that expresses oppression, for example: “Jenůfa”, “Kát’a Kabanová”, “The Cunning Little Vixen” and “From the House of the Dead”. The ways Janáček musically treated these climactic moments in each of those works have many common tools and techniques used among all of them.

This study aims to parallel Janáček’s techniques evident in his operas and other compositions, in particular the kind of techniques he created that have links with the linguistics principles and the speech melody theory, and to explain how these techniques supported the dramatic line of the studied works: the piano sonata “1. X. 1905,” and the piano cycle “In the Mists”. The result is intended to serve as a supplemental guide to the interpreter’s understanding of the unique nature of these works.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the present chapter is to summarize and review all materials which have been assembled by the author to familiarize the reader with clear facts about Janáček's general aesthetic views. The focus will specifically target the researchers who have examined and analyzed Janáček’s own essays, writings and musical works (not only for piano), in order to suggest a list of expressive devices that Janáček used more or less as a common practice in his works that depict emotional atmosphere, psychological state, or a dramatic line.

A. In Search of True Music

In the concluding remarks of the musical scores of Janáček's piano works published by the Peters Edition, Miloslav Barvík writes about Janáček's aesthetic views and how they were established, emphasizing that “music of truth” was a key aesthetic category for Janáček. And that music for him was never mere “audible moving form” but a reaction to his own life and the lives of others, with all their hopes and disappointments, their perceptions, feelings and the environment in which they lived.

“Each of Janáček's pieces contains a small drama, informed by stark contrasts and brought to life less by dynamics than by expressiveness, tempo and timbre. The composer requires that every note should sound ‘as if dipped in blood’, and every piece should consist not only of ‘roses’ but also of ‘thrones’.” 7

He did not randomly select the topics of his operas; the selection was always guided by his own beliefs in art and life. And he continued to declare in his letters, as a response to how his music was misunderstood, the fact that he did not merely play about with notes, but that his music was deeply influenced by and connected to nature and life.

In one of his published Memoirs with Janáček in the Brno magazine *Hudební rozhledy*, vol. IV (1928), Vilém Petrželka, Janáček's student, writes about an unforgettable lesson in which he started giving an introduction to his opera *Jenůfa* (1902). Petrželka quoted Janáček's last words to his pupils: “*Jenůfa* braces herself and sets out to meet life. You are, all of you, young and therefore I impress upon you: Let truth be your guide not only in life, but also in art.”

**Truth in Human Utterance**

Janáček's loyalty to truth led him to a discovery and a fascination that lived with him throughout his life. He discovered in spoken language a truth that lies behind its tonal modulations; he found that the melodic curves of human speech unveil the spirit and serve as a window through which he looks into the soul. In an interview for the Prague literary journal *Literární svět*, dated March 8, 1928, Janáček declared:

> When anyone speaks to me, I listen more to the tonal modulations in his voice than to what he is actually saying. From this, I know at once what he is like, what he feels [. . . .] Life is sound, the tonal modulations of the human speech. Every living creation is filled with the deepest truth. That, you see, has been one of the main needs of my life.

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He then started collecting “speech melodies”, writing down in music practically every utterance he heard, from a woman calling her chickens to the sound of the chickens peeping, even to the final words of his daughter, Olga. His fascination with the distinctive shapes and melodies of spoken Czech and the way the variations in rhythm and pitch reveal a person’s inner life is a theme that recurs constantly in his writings.

Janáček continues in the same interview:

I have been collecting speech melodies since 1879; I have an enormous collection. You see, these speech melodies are windows into peoples’ souls – and what I would emphasize is this: for dramatic music they are of great importance.¹⁰

Janáček's attention to the spoken language was not only derived from his interest in the characteristic rhythms of the Czech language or its prosody, but also in the influence of a speaker’s shifting psychological states on the speech’s intonation; he sought to comprehend the semantics of melodies, examining the connection between an intonation and an emotion.¹¹

The Psychological Dimension in Janáček’s Music

Janáček was mostly concerned about expressing true and honest emotions through his music. ‘For him, only the note that is expression, that is emotion, has the right to exist. . . . [He] acquired a thoroughly unique psychological lucidity; a veritable psychological

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¹⁰ Zemanová, Janáček’s Uncollected Essays on Music, 121-122.

furor marked all of his work. This explains his dedication to opera, for in opera the ability to “define emotions musically” could be realized and tested better than anywhere else. ¹²

By studying in depth Janáček's compositions and discovering more about his philosophical thoughts in music and life generally, we can see how they are embedded in his compositions. We can also see that music for him was a means to express emotions, and specifically emotions of oppression. It was noteworthy that many of his compositions were conceived by this specific psychological state. The opera Jenůfa (composed between 1894-1903) was one of the first major European compositions to cross the threshold to modernism. Janáček was attracted to the subject through his fascination with the theme of tragic womanhood. Along with his earlier opera Šárka (1888) and later in Káťa Kabanová (1921), the heroine was a symbol of oppressed womanhood. There is no doubt that the death of his daughter Olga who died at the age of 21 in 1903 affected him greatly. His way of perceiving life completely changed. In this phase of his life his works reflected a feeling of being oppressed by fate, by a stronger power against which he could not fight. In some works, like his piano sonata 1. X. 1905 (otherwise known as From the Street) it ends in defeat. This work is again an expression of Janáček's revolutionary spirit against oppression, a response to a political event. Among most sources in English, it is particularly well described in the DMA dissertation by David Kalhous of Northwestern University (directly translated from Czech). The incident is recounted by Janáček in one of his letters to Zdenka Schultzová and is presented in Kalhous’ dissertation as follows:

In the Viennese parliament, the Czech delegates heavily lobbied for the establishment of a Czech University in Moravia and specifically in Brno as the capital of Moravia. The German delegates in Bohemia fearing the

¹² Kundera, Testaments Betrayed, 135.
growing Czech and Moravian influence in the bilingual and multinational Brno, which they considered to be culturally and politically a German town, refused. They organized a protest demonstration in Brno on October 1, 1905. A counter-rally was promptly called by the supporters of the Czech delegates in Beseda House [in Brno]. The supporters of both camps clashed violently in the streets, and the mass demonstrations continued into the next day. The police and the army were called in to maintain order, and young worker, František Pavlík, was bayonetted by one of the soldiers. The sonata is dedicated to the murdered Czech worker and bears the following inscription:

White marble of the steps of the Beseda House in Brno. Here, drenched in blood, sinks a simple worker František Pavlík – He came just to advocate for higher learning – and was slaughtered by brutal murderers.  

This period of Janáček's life is marked by a feeling of defeat from hardship in his personal life, in his musical career and even as a Czech citizen confronting the strains of the political situation.

Bohumír Štědroň writes in his collection of Janáček's Letters and Reminiscences, under the title: “With Petr Bezruč Against Social and National Oppression”:

During the period that followed the composition of the piano sonata 1. X. 1905, Janáček began setting words by the poet, Petr Bezruč, which resulted in three choral works that are considered to be witnesses of the great struggle of two kindred artists against social and national oppression.

In those three works Janáček creates dramatic tension by making the singing voices cry as if in pain. He also makes them rise against the violator, show resistance and demand the right to live.

Janáček was able to express various emotional states -- inner conflicts between joyful reminiscences and present sadness, revolt and helplessness, anger and peace, victory

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14 B. Štědroň, Janáček: Letters and Reminiscences, 130.
over oppression -- through his musical writing; he was tremendously capable of reflecting them clearly through his very personal techniques including:

- “Brno Style”, a hallmark of Janáček's compositional approach, characterized by tempo changes between different sections within the piece -- the music just stops and starts, without any attempt to round off the ends of the phrases or to connect them. Milan Kundera was fascinated by this personalized technique of Janáček, he differentiates between romantic music that sought to impose emotional unity on a given movement, and Janáček’s musical structure which is based on unusually frequent alternations [in character, dynamics, tempi and meter] of different, even contradictory, emotional fragments within a single piece and a single movement.

- “Polyphony of emotions”, a term devised by Milan Kundera, which refers to a technique Janáček used while presenting several emotional states at the same time, a simultaneous presentation of different feelings. Kundera was keen to explain this technique by describing Janáček’s approach in music as the “unmediated truth of the emotions” in which the coexistence of emotions is not only horizontal but also vertical, a new usage of semantics to express the juxtaposition of emotions. This technique is prevalent in both works, the sonata and the piano cycle “In the Mists”.

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17 Kalhous, “Janáček and His Works for Piano,” 79.

18 Kundera, Testament Betrayed, 185.
Kundera affirms the importance of understanding this concept and why it should be interpreted by giving all lines equal semantic importance, without subjugating any of the lines to a mere accompaniment or impressionistic murmur. This technique is employed in the first movement (Presentiment) of the sonata \textit{I. X. 1905}, measures 11-14: as explained in his DMA dissertation, Kulhous stated that “the ostinato motif in the left hand does not support the melody in a simply harmonic fashion”, and argues that it functions far more as an independent texture that projects a ferocious quality and a resisting power achieved by the repetitive motif, the independent articulation and the dynamics.\textsuperscript{19}

This persistent repetitive quality can also be heard in his Concertino for piano and chamber ensemble (1925). Here is a direct quotation by Janáček describing the first movement of this work:

One spring day we prevented a hedgehog from getting out of his lair lined with dry leaves in an old linden tree. He was cross but he toiled in vain. He could not make it out. Neither could the horn in my first movement. All it could manage was this grumpy motive. Should the hedgehog have stood up on his hind legs and sung sorrowful song? The moment he stuck his nose out he had to pull it in again.\textsuperscript{20}

The “grumpy motive” (Ex. 1) that Janáček mentions his horn getting “stuck on” is, in fact, the only musical idea the horn plays throughout the entire movement: just this short motive, over and over at different pitch levels.”\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{19} Kalhous, “Janáček and His Works for Piano,” 79.


\textsuperscript{21} Carrasco, “Janáček, The Young Old Man of Brno.” 114.
In the year of his 70th birthday, 1924, Janacek composed a suite for wind sextet entitled *Mládí*, meaning “youth”. The first movement of the suite has a flavor of wit and humor, remembering his youth and happy moments of his life that he spent in *Hukvaldy*, his home village. The oboe’s melody at the beginning of the first movement is said to be a speech melody of the words “Mládí, zlaté mládí!” meaning “youth, golden youth!” (Ex. 2).²²

The second movement of this work is supposed to represent the unhappy aspect of Janáček’s time as a student in Brno when he was isolated from his family and restrained

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²² Ibid. 115.
by strict regulations of the Augustinian monastery.\textsuperscript{23} Janáček describes his time there as follows: “The Bluebirds! All across Brno that is what they called us – due to the light-blue, white-trimmed uniforms. Abandoned and merely watched over, when we were homesick, we’d stand by the barred windows, birds flew over from the prelate’s garden to peck at the crumbs we gave them, small blue birds just like us, only freer than our kind.”\textsuperscript{24} The final movement of \textit{Mládí} begins with a recollection of the “speech melody” that began the first movement, supporting his philosophical concept of the Circle of Life. In this movement, the short motif gets more developed and is presented with more elaboration as if he meant to express the difference between the naivety of the early youth and the wisdom of the mature years. “The older Janáček became, the more progressive and youthful his music was. It came from a man full of energy and strength.”\textsuperscript{25}

The year 1916 marked a positive shift in Janáček’s musical career, with his Opera \textit{Jenůfa} finally being premiered at the Prague National Theatre after 13 years of rejection by the management of the theatre. In 1918, the independence of Czechoslovakia was officially proclaimed after the internal collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which was for a loyal and patriotic Czech such as Janáček a dream come true. His ability to cope with his grief caused by the death of his two children, and the self-satisfaction gained after a series of consecutive successful events, were reflected in his works composed during the later years of his life.

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\textsuperscript{24} “The Augustinian Abbey of St Thomas in Old Brno,” Tourist Information Centre of Brno, accessed November 1, 2018, \url{https://www.leosjanacek.eu/en/augustinian-abbey/}

\end{flushright}
These were his words at the age of 74 in an interview with the journal *Literární svět* (1928): “Truth does not exclude beauty. On the contrary, there should be truth and beauty, and more and more. Life, most of all. Always eternal youth. Life is young. Now the atmosphere is clear. I am not afraid of living. […] Life is so beautiful.”

Margaret Tausky writes in the preface of her book, “Janáček, Leaves from His Life,” “His music is also full of the sounds made by the animal kingdom, with special regards to birdsong. In one of the most attractive operas, The Cunning Little Vixen, he mixed, most successfully, the sounds of nature, of animals and of human voices.” Janáček began work on “The Cunning Little Vixen” in 1922 inspired by Rudolf Těsnohlídek’s short novel which was accompanied by drawings of the Czech painter Stanislav Lolek. What had been a heart-lighted novel by Těsnohlídek became a serious opera that celebrated life, love, nature and life’s constant renewal.

Janáček writes in his letter to Max Brod on March 11, 1923:

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Spring is in the woods yet old age is also apparent. The forest with all its animal folk appears in a dream to the forester. The old man seeks his [vixen] but she is gone. Then suddenly a little cub, exactly like [the vixen] comes gambling to his feet. “Just like her mother.” And so evil and good make their round through life anew. 
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The vixen, Bystrouška, was born beautiful and free, submissive to no one but the rules of the forest, until the forester takes her away as a pet for his children. The restrictions

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of the house and the feeling of being trapped were the reason why she started to act aggressively. She tried to awaken the revolutionary spirit in the rest of the pets, even though this caused her to be beaten and humiliated by the forester. Luckily, she was able to flee from the house and return to the forest, where she found love and true joy.

Here is the synopsis of Act III scene 3:

The opera does not end until the poacher enters the forest, sees the vixen and follows her with a gun. But Bystrouška is braver now; she shouts at him and says: “What, you want to kill me, just because I’m a fox?” This brave confrontation did not deter him from killing her. In the last scene, the Forester walks in, poetically describes the spiritual happiness that comes when the forest and love blossom year after year. He falls asleep smiling. In his dream the Forester rises lamenting the absence of Bystrouška. A tiny vixen, the spitting image of her mother, runs up to him. He tries to catch her but he eventually drops his rifle to the ground.\(^{29}\)

Interestingly enough, the final scene of the opera, “The Forester’s Farewell”, was performed at Janáček's memorial service. He finished writing this opera in 1922, and it was premiered in Brno in 1924.

Milos Štědroň examined in his essay (Wingfield: Janáček’s Studies, 1999) five episodes from “The Cunning Little Vixen” that incorporate utterances of a direct discourse in the text. It is essential to include in this study two of these episodes with a few examples that highlight specific techniques Janáček used in order to evoke certain meanings and emotional states.\(^{30}\)

The first episode forms part of the Inn scene near the start of Act II. The Priest twice quotes a Latin code of ethics, “‘Non des mulieri corpus tuum’”, each time singing in

\(^{29}\) Cheek, introduction to The Janáček Opera Libretti, The Cunning Little Vixen: Synopsis, 27.

monotone (Ex. 3). The Gamekeeper makes the Priest translate this into Czech, which he does by inflecting his speech melody rhythms with whole-tone intonations: ‘In the vernacular, then: “Give not thy body to a woman”’ (Ex. 4).

Example 3. The Little Cunning Vixen, Act II scene 1: “Non des mulieri corpus tuum”.

Example 4. The Little Cunning Vixen, Act II scene 1: “In the vernacular, then: ‘Give not thy body to a woman’”.

In Act II scene 3 the Schoolmaster conducts a ‘dialogue’ with a sunflower, mistakenly believing it to be his distant beloved, Terynka. Štědroň describes this passage as “a veristic arioso studded with speech melodies.” An intervallic sequence of third-fourth-second, used frequently by Janáček, forms the schoolmaster’s initial invocation, ‘Oh, oh, Terynka!’ (Ex. 5). He goes on to lament: ‘If I had known that I would meet you here, I would have deserted those two drunkards long ago’, his vocal line now taking on whole-tone inflections (Ex. 6).

Example 5. The Cunning Little Vixen, Act II scene 3: “‘Oh, oh, Terynka!’”
Example 6. The Cunning Little Vixen, Act II scene 3: “If I had known that I would meet you here, I would have deserted those two drunkards long ago.”

The whole-tone elements in Janáček’s operas are associated with moments of tension (Sádecký, 1962).

The Schoolmaster’s next gambit, ‘You love me, do you? Oh, speak!’ (Ex. 7) introduces the interval of the sixth. Štědroň declares the function of the sixth interval which is frequently used in Janáček’s works as to highlight key words.

Example 7. The Cunning Little Vixen, Act II scene 3: “You love me, do you? Oh, speak!”

Example 8. The Little Cunning Vixen, Act II scene 3: “I shall follow you now. I shall clasp you in my arms!”
Ex. 8 highlights the climax of the Schoolmaster’s declaration in an arioso style ‘I shall follow you now. I shall clasp you in my arms!’, each sentence of which starts with a descending sixth.

![Schoolmaster's declaration](image)

Example 9. The Little Cunning Vixen, Act II scene 3: ‘“Aha, she’s already making room for me. What next . . .”’

At the end of this episode the Schoolmaster switches to talking to himself: ‘Aha, she’s already making room for me...’ (Ex. 9). He abandons his previously heightened vocal style for a more prosaic speech-melody mode of utterance. Then he returns to his earlier arioso style recalling the prominent descending sixth of his assertion that he has adored Terynka for years. At this point, the Priest suddenly approaches him with his monotonous statement, ‘“Remember to be a man of virtue!”’ (Ex. 10).

![Priest's statement](image)

Example 10. The Little Cunning Vixen Act II scene 3: ‘“Remember to be a man of virtue!”’

The following example is in Act II scene 4 when the Vixen recounts to the Fox Lišak the events that led her to flee from the Gamekeeper’s lodge. She quotes the Gamekeeper’s threats after she was caught stealing (Ex. 11), employing the melodious succession of perfect fourth - minor third – major second for the textual cue introducing the quotation,
‘The Gamekeeper vowed:’ but delivering the gamekeeper’s actual words mainly on a succession of repeated monotones (D-flat for three measures, E-flat for four measures, etc.): ‘“Don’t even ask how I’ll beat her! When she’s dead I’ll slit that greedy throat of hers and you will have, wife, a fur like a countess.”’

Example 11. The Little Cunning Vixen, Act II Scene 4: ‘“The gamekeeper vowed: Don’t even ask how I’ll beat her! When she’s dead I’ll slit that greedy throat of hers and you will have, wife, a fur like a countess.”’

In the following speech melody passage the Vixen quotes herself standing up to the Gamekeeper; her tone is at first aggressive, musically rising in pitch and stretching the interval to a sixth. ‘“Aren’t you ashamed of yourself, old man, to torture an animal?”’ And then with a tetrachord set (A-B-D#-F) she continues: ‘“If you hit me again I’ll attack you! Why are you so stingy that you care about a piece of morsel?”’ (Ex. 12). She then returns to her direct speech with the Fox bringing diatonic intervallic successions (fourth-second-third-fourth and second-third-fifth): ‘‘You’ve got everything you want here, and I’ve got nothing at all.’” [The switch to the diatonic intervals replacing the tritone, whole tones and
sixths intervals, releases some of the tension during her conversation with Lišak]. However, the second clause of her utterance ‘I am not used to begging, so I just took a bit’ hints by the brief appearance of the tritone interval to the more strident mode of discourse (Ex. 13). She exclaims, “Hit me if you want,” (Ex. 14) giving way to a broken half-diminished seventh chord concluding with a threatening three-bar trill as she defiantly cries: “Hit me if you want! But if you do –”. Her literal quotation now breaks off momentarily with ‘So he hit me’, the setting of which narrows the intervals of the “Hit me if you want” motif, and is highlighted by the lack of orchestral accompaniment (Ex. 15). This episode concludes with the Vixen’s parting words: “Tyrant! You can have what you wanted” (Ex. 16), set to a monotone in triplets followed by a two measure pause then a descending and ascending minor third.  

Example 12. The little Cunning Vixen, Act II scene 4: ”Aren’t you ashamed of yourself, old man, to torture an animal? If you hit me again I’ll attack you! Why are you so stingy that you care about a piece of morsel?”

It can be suggested that the monotonous nature of this concluding part’s melodic line and the steadiness of its rhythm mirrors the firmness, determination and the awareness of her dignity and self-esteem.
Example 13. The Little Cunning Vixen, Act II scene 4: “You’ve got everything you want here, and I’ve got nothing at all. I am not used to begging, so I just took a bit”.

Example 14. The Little Cunning Vixen, Act II scene 4: “Hit me if you want!”

Example 15. The Little Cunning Vixen, Act II scene 4: “Hit me if you want! But if you do -” So he hit me’

Example 16. The Little Cunning Vixen, Act II scene 4: “Tyrant! You can have what you wanted.”

In the “Cunning Little Vixen” Janáček consolidates his speech melody principle at dramatic peaks. The analysis of these speech melodies done by Milos Štědroň in his essay
“Direct Discourse and Speech Melody” is an invaluable resource in providing several suggested devices that can be mirrored and applied in Janáček's piano works.

B. The Influence of Speech and Moravian Folk Music on Janáček's Musical Writing Style

In 1893 when Janáček’s ethnomusicological studies were just beginning, he visited Polanka, a remote village in his native Vlassko in eastern Moravia. He described in his essays the love, happiness, delight, and above all, the truth of its folk music.

As a consequence of this ethnomusicological trip, Janáček's style of composition was inspired by Moravian folk music, but not a mere imitation of melodies or a borrowing or paraphrasing from folk songs. Since he continuously searched for truth, he believed in the honesty and transparency that lay in any human production of the people from the countryside, who lived in direct and close contact with nature. That was, for him, the biggest and strongest inspiration.

In the case of the Czech language and Moravian folk songs, it is hard to distinguish between speech and music. In Moravian folk songs, the text dictates the melody, not vice versa, hence the characteristics of the songs are mostly improvisatory and melismatic, irregular in metric structure and modal in tonalities. So the inspiration that underlay both folk music and Janáček’s compositions was speech, or to be more precise, the melodic curves of speech. In this he sought dramatic reality and the roots of the very expression of the human mind.

As he was in a constant search for the truth, he saw in human speech and the voice the surest expression of the various states of mind, and the human being was in his speech the most perfect artist.

**Melodic Originality**

Thus, Janáček became the founder of a special theory of the melodic curves of speech, which alongside Moravian folk songs had an obvious influence on his musical style. His intimate knowledge of the intonations that come not only from music but from the concrete world of words was the source of his dramatic effects and unusual expressive qualities. These intonations allowed him access to a different inspiration, a different source of melodic imagination. In consequence, his melodies have a very specific character and are immediately recognizable. They can be briefly characterized as abbreviated and disjointed, based on the repetition of short melodic elements.

For Czech composers, the Czech language transcended the basic means of communication to symbolize Czech identity when, after well over a hundred years of domination by the Austrian empire, their language was formally banned and came close to extinction. With the onset of widespread nationalism in Europe in the nineteenth century, the Czech language was elevated by the contribution of the wonderful Czech poets and writers, and this was followed by composers who would meld music and word into the great art forms of opera and song.

With Janáček, the Czech language and music truly found a match. He transcribed speech contours into musical notation in an attempt to pursue what Milan Kundera called
the “search for the vanished present”\textsuperscript{33}. In notating his dying daughter Olga’s final utterances, Janáček hoped to preserve her presence, to take solace in the notion that, in some way, she still lived with him.

Janáček understood how profound an effect the regional, social, and even occupational differences had on speaking, and he sketched melodies that took these differences into account. He even went so far as to notate phrases of animal sounds and ascribed certain Czech words to those phrases. For a non-Czech speaker it is impossible to assess the precision of these intonations when compared to the original spoken sounds. But their importance lies not in how precisely they reproduce their sound source, -since inevitably, by the very act of becoming music, they are distorted- but it is in their ability to bring about of a very personal, new sound world and attitude towards text and music.

When it came to piano writing, according to Reiner Zimmermann and Miroslav Barvík the editors of the Peter’s edition of Janáček’s piano works, Janáček distanced himself from the virtuoso style of the concert pianist and developed a more individualized style. The interpreter should bear in mind that for Janáček the piano was not a concert instrument in the traditional sense. Any technique which contributed to the ideal of an approximation to the sound of the “cymbalo [sic]” (a Central European variety of the dulcimer) would be considered stylistically preferable to an attempt at a traditional piano interpretation.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{33} Kundera, Testament Betrayed, 138.

\textsuperscript{34} Janáček, Piano Works: Notes on Interpretation, ed. Barvík and Zimmermann, 80-81.
Ethnographic Discoveries

Janáček’s preoccupation with speech melody was preceded by an equally strong interest in the folk songs of his homeland, particularly those of Moravia and Slovakia. He undertook ethnographic studies in the late 1880s, about fifteen years before Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály began collecting examples of Hungarian folk music.

With the folklorist František Bartoš, he collected and published two editions of several thousand songs and dances. These ethnographic studies in folk music played an important role in his compositional style.

Unlike the Czech (Bohemian) folk songs, in which the Western Slavic style is characterized by a regular metric structure and uncomplicated diatonic major and minor harmonies, the Moravian folk song is typically melismatic and improvisatory, rhythmically flexible and primarily based on modal tonalities, looser in form and built up rhapsodically.35

“The irregular and free rhythms, modality and rhapsodic form of Moravian and Slovakian folk music bear witness to both the power of the laws of language as well as

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the ancient origins of the music. Whereas Bohemian folk music (Ex. 17) follows the rhythms of dance, Moravian is clearly more vocal (Ex. 18)\textsuperscript{36}

Example 17. Bohemian folk song.

Example 18. Slovakian folk song.

In the Moravian folk tradition, the text overwhelms the structure, and the speech dictates the melody and the rhythm. This fact explains how the influence of Moravian folklore music on Janáček was not just about borrowing rhythms or quoting melodies, it was primarily about the absorption of the main features of this art, which was in the first place driven by speech and its psychological dimension.

Just as in a literal sentence, the absence of a preposition or even a punctuation mark can change the meaning of the entire phrase, such was Janáček's own observation regarding Moravian folk songs: “In every note of each song, there is, as I see it, a fragment of an idea.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid. 37-38.
If you leave out a single note from the melody, you perceive that it has become incomplete and has ceased to make sense."³⁷ He also believed that the Moravian folk song had “grown from the cadence of speech” and that “it is an impossibility for a tune to have been composed first and words added to it afterwards.”³⁸

Janáček argued that the inflections of Moravian prose are closely linked to Moravian folk song.³⁹ This link corresponds to the relationship between Janáček's music and the speech snippets he collected, not as a direct citation, but as in folk song the words preceded the tune; the voice of the speaker was conceived in his imagination before the music itself. “I have lived in folksong from childhood. . . . If I grow at all, it is only out of folk music, out of human speech,” Janáček declares.⁴⁰

C. Linguistics of the Czech Language

There are two main features of the Czech language which are uniquely apparent in the Western Slavonic languages, described as fixed-stress languages. First of all, the stated stress falls on the initial syllable of each word. However, the final syllable of a Czech word still receives full value. Although not accented, it is not weakened or lowered substantially in pitch and dynamic. This explains Janáček's invariable avoidance of an ending-point of a

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³⁷ Josiah Fisk, and Jeff Nichols, Composers on Music: Eight Centuries of Writings (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1997), 175.


³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Zemanová, Janáček's Uncollected Essays on Music, 60, 61.
motif on a downbeat, which mimics the Czech avoidance of stress on any syllables other than the first; however, the endings are not weakened.\textsuperscript{41}

The other main characteristic of the Czech language is the independence of the stress of a vowel from its length, in which long vowels are not necessarily stressed, neither are short vowels always unstressed. Monosyllabic words tend to behave like clitics, typically joined prosodically to the previous word.\textsuperscript{42} This can be translated in music as “afterbeats.”

Janáček was interested in the psychological aspects of speech intonation, and he theorized that the environment has a determinative effect on how phrases and sentences are spoken. In one of his short essays, he compared the \textit{nápevky} (speech curves) of German and Czech train station announcements: “The German version cut harshly and roughly in the same triad, with a dissonance of a seventh; it has crushed the third syllable and torn off the last one; it has ground into grumbling the first two. In the Czech version you hear a song which winds along in equal lengths within a rainbow of colors.”\textsuperscript{43}

A word in Czech can have only one accent, and it usually falls at the beginning of the word. A typical Czech phrase begins on a strong beat and ends on a weak one – most of the time the exact opposite of English. Another remarkable feature of the Czech


\textsuperscript{43} Zemanová, “Moravany! Morawaan!,” \textit{Janáček's Uncollected Essays on Music}, 41.
language is the strongly marked distinction between short and long syllables that is independent of the stress pattern. When the syllable marked with an accent is not the first syllable, the stress and length fail to coincide; and the word sounds “syncopated”.

And this explains why Janáček preferred prose libretti over verse libretti, because he did not want to impose a foreign kind of rhythm onto the words and phrases, but keep the natural rhythms of the language.

Most of Janáček's operas and vocal works use the Moravian dialect which uses much shorter vowels than those of the Bohemian. To emphasize this element, Janáček went to great lengths to set most long vowels with longer note values. In the libretto of “The Cunning Little Vixen” is specifically in the Brno dialect, apart from the character Lapák, the dog, the only character in the whole opera that doesn’t speak in Moravian dialect. He speaks “standard” Czech instead. Perhaps Lapák’s speech is more formal because he has dedicated himself to art.44

In order to show the impact of speech on Janáček's writing style, John Tyrrell set up an ingenious musicological experiment, contrasting the text setting in two versions of the composer’s earliest opera, Šárka (1887–1888), the first dating long before the “discovery” of speech melodies, the other from 1918, at the beginning of the composer’s maximalist adventure (Ex. 19).

The word “Přemysle” is contracted into a triplet so that its last syllable will not fall on a downbeat and thus pick up an unwanted musical stress. Even more striking is the

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elongation of the second syllable in “velký,” so that it lasts seven times as long as the accented first syllable. In the earlier setting, only the accent had been faithful to the word’s normal pronunciation, not the relative length of the syllables, which is a more distinctively Czech index of fidelity. The result of both changes is to make the line remarkably varied, and at the same time remarkably asymmetric in terms of rhythm.\(^\text{45}\)


This influence of speech in his music explains the textural nature of his compositions which is mostly built upon short rhythmic-melodic cells, each of which he

calls a *sčasovka*.⁴⁶ And during the course of a composition the *sčasovka* cells are often layered upon each other⁴⁷ with the employment of such devices as repetition, division, augmentation, and diminution. Eventually, each *sčasovka* cell can have different functions in different parts of the composition. Besides its rhythmic function it can, at the same time, function as a motif, ostinato, pedal point, or harmony.⁴⁸

D. Musical Rhetorical Figures in Baroque Performance Practice

Although the use of speech by Janáček in his musical works derived from a completely different source of inspiration than Baroque rhetorical principles, some of these figures have similar or nearly identical features in Janáček's cells (*sčasovka*). No doubt that “language,” a human product, was the source of inspiration for both, only one of many of human beings’ common features, regardless of geographical, ethnic or time differences. Some of these musical rhetorical devices are included in this study to enhance and support the theory of the psychological impact of these specific figures.

The following is a list of carefully selected rhetorical devices together with their definitions from Dietrich Bartel’s excellent resource which includes a large number of

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⁴⁶ Janáček's own term for a short rhythmic-melodic cells, used in his analysis of the rhythmical basis of music. The composer wrote several treatises on the subject such as *Můj názor o sčasování (rytmu)* [My view of rhythm], published in the periodical *Hlidka*, XXVI (1909).

⁴⁷ “It seems to me that life has layers. There are many, many layers, components where even a beautiful sound has its place; Schrecker and Schoenberg forget it. Truth does not exclude beauty.” An interview with Janáček from *Literární svět*, 8 March 1928.

musical rhetorical figures that were used in German baroque music.\textsuperscript{49} Chapter five will explain how these devices have been integrated into Janáček's piano works for emotional impact.

- **Abruptio** is a sudden and unexpected break in a musical composition. It is often found towards the end of a composition (right before the cadence) or in the middle of a passage. A tearing or breaking off occurs when one or more voices suddenly break off the passage toward the end of a composition without completing the cadence, according to the requirements of the text. This device is commonly used and employed in speech in order to arouse attention such as in the stylus recitatives.

- **Anabasis** is an ascending musical passage through which exalted, rising, or elevated and eminent thoughts are expressed. [...] The voice also rises as directed by the text, for example: He ascended into heaven. The figure is both descriptive and affective, describing the text and arousing the corresponding affection. Like so many of the musical-rhetorical figures, the anabasis can be both image and source of the affection.

- **Catabasis** is a descending musical passage which expresses descending, lowly, humility, servitude, or negative images or affections.

- **Superjectio** is generally called accentus, occurs when the voice is gently pulled into a neighboring higher or lower pitch. It is either ascending or descending or both together. It is particularly effective in compositions of lamentation or

humility. The embellishment is only to be applied in connection with accented syllables, except in those words where it is appropriate to accent the last syllable (Ex. 20).\textsuperscript{50}

Example 20. \textit{Superjectio on an accented syllable.} \textit{Superjectio on a last syllable but appropriate to accent.}

- \textit{Anaphora or Repetitio} is the repetition of certain words and expressions through which the oration is given great emphasis. When the affection is intensely moving and calls for a concise argument, it does not suffice to say something only once, but rather it should be repeated two or three times, thereby ensuring the proper understanding of the word’s emphasis. “In many cases the repetition signifies a progressive intensification of an idea or a feeling, therefore conveying an emotional response. […] It is usual that the tone of the voice will become more and more intense.”\textsuperscript{51}

Milan Kundera showed the aesthetic dimensions of “repetition” in prose and explained in detail the beauty of it. Even though he was mentioning it as a writing device in literature, his concern with melody and sound was as important to him as the meaning.

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid. 172-173.

\textsuperscript{51} Anna Paradiso Laurin, Classical Rhetoric in Baroque Music, Master Thesis Konstnärlig Institution för klassisk musik, 10, 11, accessed feb. 25\textsuperscript{th} 2019 \url{http://kmh.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:529778/FULLTEXT01}
“The rule: a word is repeated because it is important, because one wants its sound as well as its meaning to reverberate throughout a paragraph, a page.”

He also writes about the melodic importance of repetition in Kafka’s works, connecting the melodic beauty of his prose to the repetition of words; he gives examples that show, for instance, a sentence with five repetitions in nine words. According to Kundera, these multiple repetitions slow the tempo and give the sentence a yearning cadence.

In his analysis of a paragraph by Hemingway which is based entirely on repetitions, Kundera describes repetition as: “They are not a device (like rhyme in poetry), but they come out of everyday spoken language, thoroughly unpolished language.” He continues analyzing the passage showing the artistic importance of the melodic contour of the text: “[…] this very short story, it seems to me, is a unique instance in the history of prose fiction where the musical intention is primordial: without that melody the text would lose its raison d’être.”

- *Dubitatio* is an intentionally ambiguous rhythmic or harmonic progression. It occurs when we hesitate out of doubt or confusion, especially when choosing or differentiating between two or more thoughts. *Dubitatio* indicates an uncertain sentiment. It is musically expressed in two forms: (1)

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53 Ibid, 115.
through an indecisive modulation (Ex. 21), or (2) through a lingering on a certain point in the music (Ex. 22).\textsuperscript{54}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example.png}
\end{center}

\textit{Example 21. An indecisive modulation to express ‘dubitatio’.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example2.png}
\end{center}

\textit{Example 22. Lingering on a certain point to express ‘dubitatio’.

These rhetorical principles are, in the author’s opinion, the accumulations of the work that has been done through history by artists, linguists, and anthropologists. They are of great importance because they allow us to discover how we communicate through art, and how art becomes a tool of self-discovery.

It was Leonard Bernstein who aptly remarked in his lecture on Musical Phonology entitled “Unanswered Questions” in 1973 the following:

By Studying in depth why we talk the way we do by abstracting the logical principles of language, we may be at a position to discover how we communicate in a larger sense through music, through arts in general and ultimately through all our societal behavior. This philosophical science called linguistics seems to be our newest key to self-discovery.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{54} Bartel, \textit{Musica Poetica}, 242-244.

\textsuperscript{55} “The Unanswered Question 1973 | Musical Phonology Bernstein Norton.”
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

After reviewing a number of books, essays, articles, dissertations, and other sources on Janáček’s theories of speech and its melodic curves, chapter five will be dedicated to analyzing two of Janáček’s key piano solo works - the piano sonata “1. X. 1905” and the piano cycle “In the Mists”- from the standpoint of Janáček's theory of speech melody. The method will rely on analytical constructs used in previous studies, as well as other clues from Janáček’s own writings, speeches and interviews used to decode specific fragments, motifs, phrases and sections in the chosen piano works.

Since many scholars and researchers agree that Janáček did not intend to transcribe his collections of notated speech directly into his compositions, but that his fascination with speech affected his compositional style in a more indirect way, the target of this study is to look at the whole world of speech through Janáček’s eyes and connect it to his piano works. It is important to mention that there is no way to identically match his short snippets of speech melodies with his musical motifs in the piano works, but it is possible to trace those qualities of speech which caught his attention and which were the center of his passion, and locate them in these works as expressive devices that he used either consciously or unconsciously.

The assembled devices in this study are presented as the keys which allowed the author to discover in depth the following features in Janáček’s music:
1. rules and characteristics of the Czech language mirrored in the musical phrases, texture, rhythm, articulation, and the melodic lines;

2. the psychological dimension of his music through the employment of certain intervals, trills, or motifs treated by the various techniques of repetition, intensification, simplification, diminution, augmentation, etc.);

3. the influence of the “kingdom of animals” in the melodic contour and the rhythmic figurations.

The study will also infer some additional devices which were not clearly stated in previous studies, accompanied by a number of supporting analyses to provide a more detailed account.

A number of performance suggestions will be proposed to serve as a practical guide to interpreting these works and offer a range of interpretative tools which can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of these two studied piano works as well as Janáček's other piano works.
CHAPTER 4
INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND ON THE STUDIED WORKS

Sonata 1. X. 1905

This sonata was composed during Janáček’s revolutionary phase\textsuperscript{56}, when his concerns were directed towards preserving the Czech identity. The piano sonata is considered a patriotic work which was composed as an emotional response to a dramatic incident in Brno which caused the death of a young worker “František Pavlík” (see pages 10, 11).

However, the sonata cannot be confined only to this specific incident, without unveiling other factors in Janáček’s life that definitely played a role in the creation of this work. By the year of the composition of the sonata, Janáček had already lost his two children, both of them died at a young age. First, his son Vladimir at the age of two in 1890 and then his daughter Olga at the age of twenty-one in 1903. This tragedy greatly affected Janáček. At the time of Olga’s death, he was completing his opera *Jenůfa* and he eventually dedicated it to her memory. He later said that Olga’s death felt as though someone was tearing his heart out, and that “*Jenůfa* was painted in black on black; gloomy music – such as my own spirit.”\textsuperscript{57}

It is true that a period of three years separated the loss of his daughter from the composition of the piano sonata which was considered a response to a specific event. However, the feelings of helplessness in the face of oppression by authority and/or of fate


are not only connected to the Street Clashes incident but they must have had their roots in the suffering, pain and grief he experienced after the death of Olga.

Janáček originally composed this sonata in three movements with the title “Street Scene 1 October 1905.” The first movement, *Foreboding*, which depicts perfectly the cruelty of the scene using Janáček’s specific techniques such as short motifs inspired from living examples and developing them in a way that serves to express the emotional impact of the incident. The movement may serve as an allegory of Janáček’s emotional reaction, expressing such confrontation against a powerful undefeatable entity whether represented by authority, death or fate in general.

The second movement, originally called *Elegy*, later *Death*, begins in the style of a funeral march. Unlike the opening movement, this movement reflects tiredness and resignation. It is more as a self-talk, self-pity, expressing agony and subsequently anger in the middle section. The adagio tempo, the long durations of notes, the melody in parallel octaves, and the nonlinear texture of the music are all elements that allude to the inexorability of “death”.

The third movement of this sonata was unfortunately lost since Janáček decided to burn it during the final rehearsal of its first performance on 27 January 1906 in Brno. He suddenly seized the music of the finale from the performer and burned it on the spot. The reason isn’t totally known, but it was suggested that Janáček was apparently depressed by the other, more attractive novelties on the program by other composers.

After a second private performance in Prague, Janáček threw the two remaining movements into the river. Fortunately, the soloist had made a second copy of the other two
movements, thus saving them from destruction. Later, Janáček even gave permission for their publication. The work was published by Hudební matice in Prague in 1924.

In the Mists

Described as one of Janáček’s “Intimate Confessions” by Vogel, this cycle of four movements with no individual names all adhere to the title of the work by their misty character, not from an impressionistic point of view, but rather through the harmonically hesitant language, and the short and ambiguous motifs that evoke Janáček’s “foggy” mental state during that time. The motivic connection within each movement supports the unity of the structure as well as the provoked emotional state.

The cycle composed during a period when Janáček suffered severe doubts about himself as a composer (1903-1915). “It was in the spring of 1912, in his new house located in the garden of the Brno Organ School, hidden from the eyes of the world, his self-confidence broken and his mind in a state of melancholy, that he completed his piano cycle In the Mists, the last of his more substantial solo works for piano.”

His struggle to arrange a performance of his opera Jenůfa in Prague, which had not been performed since its 1904 premiere in Brno, was putting him in a seriously miserable condition. At the end of this period, Janáček wrote to František Veselý: “I no longer value my works – just as I did not value what I said. I did not believe that sometime someone would notice anything of mine.”

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58 Vogel, Leoš Janáček: A Biography, 185.


Approaching the age of sixty, Janáček was hoping for more public recognition as a composer. For example, the score rejection of his opera *Fate* (completed 1907) from Brno Theatre and Vinohrady Theatre in Prague whose conductor Bedřich Holeček refused to rehearse it because of its level of complexity. He claimed that the number of rehearsals he would need will be large, therefore, it would never lead to a financial gain, rather the opposite.\(^{61}\) The opera has not been premiered until years after Janáček’s death. Besides the career disappointments he faced, the death of his daughter Olga was still affecting him strongly. He also had some health problems with his legs that made walking difficult. All these factors caused Janáček to lose his sense of direction in life, and insecurities took over his thoughts and feelings during this time period.

It is *In the Mists*, however, that portrays his innermost struggles as a composer—“it is one long struggle of resignation and recurring pain which predominates even at the end.”\(^{62}\)

Unlike most of the other movements in the set, the first movement of *In the Mists* does not include an abundance of varied rhythmic values. The main rhythmic values that are present in this movement alternate between quarter notes, eighth notes, and half notes. Moreover, the tonal inflection of the melody may actually suggest that these lines are inspired more so from the singing voice than the speaking voice. However, it still possesses several common elements of speech as for Janáček, singing and speaking are inseparably connected.

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Vogel describes the work as a cycle that “[…] does not contain a single moment of cheerful respite—it is one long struggle between resignation and newly felt pain—pain which gains the upper hand at the end.”\textsuperscript{63} He also confirms that the title does not evoke an impressionistic image, but is rather an expression of Janáček’s mental state.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}}
CHAPTER 5

JANÁČEK’S SPEECH MELODIES DEVICES IN HIS PIANO WORK: SONATA

I. X. 1905 AND IN THE MISTS

This chapter of the study is dedicated to exploring the compositional techniques of Janáček that were inspired from his speech melody theory and which are employed in the two piano opuses studied in this essay; the piano sonata I. X. 1905, and the piano cycle In the Mists.

Stressed and Unstressed Syllables

In the Czech language, the long vowels are not necessarily accented, nor are the short vowels necessarily unaccented. Another important rule in the Czech language is that the first syllable in most Czech words is stressed, however, the last syllable is not weakened and receives full value. Janáček sometimes added a crescendo to the endings of phrases to insure the ending’s full value.64

To see how Janáček would apply that concept in music, it is useful to look at an extract from song No. 17 of his cycle “Diary of The One Who Disappeared”, examining the word súzeno in measure 2 in this context: Co komu súzeno, tomu neuteče “What is meant to be cannot be escaped”, and how it is notated in a way that provides the first syllable, which is short, with a stress, whereas the last syllable which is longer in rhythmic value is unstressed (Ex. 23).

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Equipped with this information, many of Janáček’s phrases will be examined from a different perspective. For instance, in the first movement’s opening material of *In the Mists* in measures 1 to 4: the first note (G-flat) is the softest in the phrase but possesses a natural stress (according to the linguistics of Czech language), whereas the B-flat is supposedly the loudest in dynamics and longest in duration, however not stressed (Ex. 24). What is also striking about this opening is the falling of the G-flat over a harmonic dissonance and the B-flat on a harmonic resolution, this fact supports the claim that suggests the interpretation of the first note as a stressed first syllable and the last note as an unstressed final syllable.
A similar employment of the same concept can be found in the B section of the first movement, which consists of a transcription of a melody from the Slovakian anthem *Nad Tatrou sa býska* ‘Far Above the Tatra’ notated in chorus-like chords. The melody is a good example of the employment of Czech language characteristics reflected in music. In measure 49, even though the second beat has the note of longer duration (half note), it is unstressed and played lighter, whereas beat one is stressed and should have more weight (Ex. 25). The crescendo towards the end of the phrase confirms as well the importance of sustaining the entire phrase to its very end.

*Example 25. In the Mists, movement I, measures 49, 50 and 51.*

Similar instances are also found in measures 67 and 68 (Ex. 26); 106 and 107 (Ex. 27).
The Abruptness and Suddenness Between Phrases:

Brno Style

The abrupt changes of dynamics, texture and tempi between phrases and sections are a characteristic that personalized Janáček’s music. Instances of this are distinguished by the sudden stopping and starting without any attempt to round off the ends of the phrases or to connect them (see ‘Brno style’, page 12). It is also defined by Milan Kundera as the horizontal coexistence of contradictory emotions in a very limited space which lend to Janáček’s music its dramatic quality. Evoking a stage set on which different characters are present, speaking and confronting each other, and not a mere narration of a tale.65

In measure 22 of the piano sonata’s first movement “Foreboding”, there is an abrupt change of dynamics (\textit{fff} to \textit{ppp}), tempo and rhythm (Ex. 28). The ending of the trill in measure 21 cuts off aggressively on the D, adding a short cesura before the \textit{ppp} of the following measure (22) that starts abruptly in tempo.

\begin{footnotesize}
\end{footnotesize}
The forte motif in the fourth measure of the sonata also forms a harsh emotional opposite to the gentle quality of the preceding measures (Ex. 29). This characteristic is derived from the Czech language and specifically the Brno dialect, in which the phrases start decisively on a downbeat and end on an upbeat without any decay.

Example 28. Sonata, movement I, measures 21 and 22.

Polyphony of Emotions and
the Moravian Folk Music Influence

As mentioned in chapter two, Janáček’s music is often characterized by the presenting of several emotional states simultaneously (see page 12), which was termed “Polyphony of Emotions” by Milan Kundera. The describing of the previous section of the abrupt changes between contrasting emotions as the “horizontal coexistence of contradictory emotions” is differentiated by the vertical coexistence of contradictory emotions, or the “Polyphony of Emotions”. Akin to the abrupt horizontal emotional
changes, the “Polyphony of Emotions” clearly evokes a stage set and various characters who speak and confront each other. Many examples of this technique are clearly observed in his piano works; in the first four measures of the first movement of the sonata, a clear division of three elements is presented: the lyrical line of the right hand; the left hand accompaniment chords evoking the strumming of the Moravian folk instrument “cimbalom”; and the opposing material in measure 4 as explained on page 54 (see Ex. 29). This opening introduces the characters consecutively, until measure 11 and onwards where the three characters of a presumably theatrical scene are confronting each other simultaneously (Ex. 30).


From measure 49 of the first movement of the cycle In the Mists (Ex. 31), the motif of the Slovakian anthem Nad Tatrou sa blýska is quoted, the anthem bears the following text:

There is lightning over the Tatras, thunderclaps wildly beat.
Let us stop them, brothers,
for all that, they will disappear,
the Slovaks will revive.

Nad Tatrou sa blýska, hromy divo bijú.
Zastavme ich, bratia,
ved’ sa ony stratia, Slováci ožijú.
The lyrics of this anthem were written by Janko Matuška in February 1844 and the melody derived from the folk song "Kopala studienku".66

The way Janáček included this melody in his piano cycle is fascinating. Its first statement is peaceful and exhibits no conflict, but it gets interrupted in measures 52 and 57 by a passage of a descending leggiero and veloce notes in ppp which may allude to distant “lightning bolts”. Later in measures 64 to 68 when the melody of the anthem is stated in thicker chords played by the right hand, the turbulent left hand transforms the “lightning bolts” motif into an effervescent, spirited motif (Ex. 32). The overall dynamic level is raised to ff. The juxtaposition of contrasting emotional states horizontally, then vertically, is one of the most distinguishing characteristics of Janáček’s music.

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This technique also falls under a different category of devices employed by Janáček, which was inspired by Moravian folk music. In other words, the “Polyphony of Emotions” technique may be categorized as a Moravian folk characteristic (which will be addressed later) in the first place, after which Janáček adapted it to his own compositional style.

Janáček arranged many piano accompaniment parts for Moravian folk songs and folk dances, with the intention of bringing folk music from the countryside into the town. There were essentially three instrumental possibilities: cimbalom, instrumental ensemble and bagpipes. As for the piano accompaniment, the cimbalom was the easiest and closest to imitate; however, Janáček also employed figures, resembling the drones and decorative flourishes of bagpipes.  

A typical Moravian folk ensemble consisted of a violin (hudec) or a singer supplying the tune, a cello or double bass supplying the bass line, and the remaining instruments —usually a second violin—providing the harmony in the middle voice. But the middle part of the texture also consisted of a built-in disruptive element as a ‘contrast’ to the main melody, emphasizing the offbeat and interjecting with trills and embellishments.

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67 Tyrrell, Janáček: Years of a Life, 392.
The balance between foreground and background, between the tune of the first violin or voice and the remaining voices, created a tension that would animate the music.

Janáček employed this characteristic of Moravian folk music in his own writing in which this middle voice is transformed into disruptive ostinatos that can threaten to derail the main melodic elements. In the first movement of *In the Mists*, this division is clearly observed among the three parts: (Ex. 33)

![Example 33. Division of three parts. In the Mists, movement I, measures 1-6.](image)

And starting from measure 19, the middle part overpowers the other two parts by a general *crescendo* and the introduction of booming bass notes in the second eighth note of each measure, as well as the addition of short *marcato* notes in measure 25. (Ex. 34)

![Example 34. In the Mists, movement I, measures 19 to 25.](image)
In the B section, the division of the three voices may be broken down as follows:

1. the principal part (Ex. 35) (which in this case is mostly a chorus rather than a single voice):

   ![Example 35. In the Mists, movement I, measures 49 to 50.]

2. the middle part (Ex. 36):

   ![Example 36. In the Mists, movement I, measures 31, 32.]

3. the bass part (Ex. 37):

   ![Example 37. In the Mists, movement I, measures 49 to 51.]
The middle part which appears in measures 52, 53 (see example 31) and 57, 58 as a descending flourish and responds to the initial two announcements of the principal theme (measures 49, 50, 51 and measures 54, 55, 56), and its phrasing defies the metrical accentuation in its phrase structure. The subsequent appearance of the middle voice leads to a growth in volume and power. When in measure 64 the principal melody joins, the tension is raised, and the disruptive effect of the middle voice is clearly perceived. (Ex. 38) This is repeated in measures 71-80.

Example 38. Disruptive effect, In the Mists, movement I, measures 63 to 68.

Rhythmic Units

Another characteristic of common Czech speech is the division of syllables into even rhythmic units that naturally occur in discourse. The following examples are from Janáček’s speech melody notations in 1910 in a collection entitled “Whitsunday 1910 in
Prague”68 (Ex. 39). It is worthy of note that every word possesses an equal division of its syllables, so that if a word contains three syllables, then those syllables will be notated as three notes of the same rhythmic value.

![Musical notation](image1)

*Example 39. Speech melody snippets from the feuilleton “Whitsunday 1910 in Prague”.

In some of Janáček’s vocal works, his notation closely resembles these snippets of speech melody. However, if one of a word’s syllable contains a long vowel syllable most singers will lengthen that syllable and compensate by shortening the other syllables in the word even though the rhythmic units have not been changed in the notation.69 In the piano works, Janáček is usually more specific, such as in the fourth movement of *In the Mists*: the right hand’s opening material can be perceived as a spoken discourse that consists of a number of words and syllabified in eighth notes, except for the first note which is elongated and for the last four which are shortened. This opening line is considered an accurate version of how a Czech phrase would sound; lengthening the notes that fall on long

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69 Christiansen, “Sounds of the Soul,” 157
syllables and shortening the others. This also explains the numerous changes in tempo of this section from *Presto*, to *sostenuto*, to *accelerando* to *meno messo* in less than four measures. No doubt that the initial accented note with the fermata adds further importance to the first syllable, while the indication of *sostenuto* emphasizes specific middle syllables, and the *accelerando* increases tension towards the end of the phrase.

**Pitch Inflection of Melodic Curves**

It is evident from Janáček’s speech melody snippets that his notations of neutral discourse adopt a medium speaking range and are mostly shaped as monotonous repetition of the same note with occasional intervallic diversions (Ex. 40).

![Example 40. Speech melody snippet from the feuilleton “Whitsunday 1910 in Prague”](image)

More tensed utterances are often notated in a higher register with the melodic line fluctuating between a number of notes within a relatively narrow intervallic diversions (Ex. 41).
The above motif is described by Janáček as spiky, “Each note is sharp, each interval is clear, and their rhythmic portrait is like a fresh tile.”

Janáček notated a snippet of a beggar’s speech melody in the bass clef and consisting of two parts, in which the second part rises to a higher register (Ex. 42). The accompanying caption of this snippet states: “[...] A worse picture of poverty in a deserted beggar, who goes into the Beseda house, carrying a pot of kitchen waste. In a harsh angry voice he complains to a woman even worse-looking than himself: [...]”

Example 42. Speech melody snippet, from Janáček’s feuilleton “Melodic Curves of Speech from the Brno Streets.”

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70 Ibid. 255.

71 B. Štědroň, Janáček: Letters and Reminiscences, 94.
This shares similar features with the motif of measure 68 from the first movement of the piano sonata, the piano motif is also in *ff* and its narrow intervals have this ‘spiky’ and sharp quality (Ex. 43).

Example 43. Sonata, movement I, measure 68.

The Language of Intervals

When Janáček was composing operas and vocal works, he was particularly concerned how faithfully the singing contour should emulate actual spoken discourse. Janáček preferred prose over verse in his operas’ libretti, he believed that opera should reflect the daily life events and that singing should be as truthful as possible. He stated: “The best way of becoming a good opera composer is to study analytically the melodic curves and contours of human speech.”

This is why his operas are considered to be an invaluable resource to any scholar or musician who wants to study Janáček’s concept of speech melody. He was very careful in writing his vocal lines, in such a way as to reflect the truthful emotion of each character

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according to the dramatic line of the work and the personality/psychological state of every character. His own reference was the day to day conversations that he heard around him everywhere. He listened carefully, and notated accurately, and this lay at the core of his inspirations. He almost never quoted in his works any of his speech melody motifs that he transcribed in a literal way and felt rather offended when he was accused by doing so. In his essay entitled “Around Jenůfa” from Hudebni revue, IX (1915-16), p. 245-9, he writes: “The motifs of every word in Jenůfa are close to life. Perhaps some can almost speak.”. He resumes: “Is it conceivable, however, that I could furtively take collected speech melodies, [...] and ‘compile’ my work out of them? How is it possible to spread such nonsense?”.

Nevertheless, they were definitely a vital source of inspiration to him.

The Interval of fourth-second

In Janáček’s song number 17 of his cycle "Diary of One Who Disappeared" he employed a motif that can be found in his piano works as well. It consists of a descending major second, then a descending perfect fourth. The characteristic figure corresponds to the following text in bold: Co komu súzeno, tomu neuteče “What is meant to be cannot be escaped”, and is described by P.V. Christiansen in his PhD dissertation as “[…] an

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73 Zemanová, Janáček's Uncollected Essays on Music, 91.

74 This motif has been studied earlier in this paper for its stressed and unstressed syllabic function.
important, not to say pivotal [motif] for the piece, […] the line could be spoken with the same contour.”75 (Ex. 44)76

Song number 22, also uses the same intervals accompany the text: ‘Bohem, rodný kraju, s bohem, má dedino! Navždy sa rozlúčit zbývá mi jedino. “Goodbye, my native land, goodbye, my village! To part forever, nothing else is left for me to do” (Ex. 45). From the similar content of these texts and their corresponding intervallic structure, it is conceivable that these specific descending intervals are tonal expressions of the harshness of fate, the unchanging condition, and the momentary feeling of helplessness. This melodic shape is frequently used by Janáček in most of his works and defined by Jan Vičar as the fourth-second melic constant.77 Derek Katz also states that the perfect fourth and a major second is “[…] one of Janáček’s favorite configurations” and that “These pitches initially suggest a return to the quartal sonorities of the fanfares, since the three pitches can be arranged as two perfect fourths”.78


76 Notice in the example how Janáček turned the melody into an accompanying material in the piano part, firstly in stretto then in ostinato bass.


78 Katz, Janáček Beyond the Borders, 131.
Example 44. Diary of The One Who Disappeared, no. 17, measures 1-9.

Example 45. The Diary of One Who Disappeared, no. 22, measures 1-12.
This intervallic descent is also outlined in the sonata’s first movement in measures 2 and 3 as follows (Ex. 46):

It starts on E-flat and arrives on A-flat (measure 3) shaping a melodic line that consists of a major second then a perfect fourth (omitting the passing tone of B-flat).

Another instance of this intervallic set is found in the second movement “Death”, in which it was preceded by a narrower interval (3rd) and followed by a wider one (7th). This middle placement adds to the figure more weight and emphasis since it lies in the center of the phrase (Ex. 47).

The same motif is also outlined in the fourth movement of In the Mists, measures 2, 3, 4 and 6, 7, 8 (Ex. 48):
Example 48. In the Mists, movement IV, measures 2-4 and 6-8.

Motif of Fate

In his opera “From The House of the Dead”, a motif that first displayed in a series of dissonant chords followed by a dark sounding minor triad appears throughout the opera as a terrifying symbol to metaphorically represent the House of the Dead and the prisoners’ unescapable fate.79 (Ex. 49)

Example 49. Fate motif, From the House of The Dead.

Vogel connects this motif with the instrumental accompaniment of the seventh song from “The Diary of the One Who Disappeared” which starts and ends in a very similar distribution of chords (a dissonant surge followed by a dark-sounding minor triad) (Ex. 50)

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79 Vogel, Janáček: A Biography, 357.
accompanying the words: *Co komu súzeno, tomu neuteče*, “What is meant to be cannot be escaped”.

Example 50. *Diary of The One Who Disappeared*, no. 7.

A similar manipulation of this set of chords resembles the fourth movement’s motif of *In the Mists* (Ex. 51). This motif is the principal cell that forms the whole movement, it is repeated in various way, of which the majority possess a harmonic scheme of a dissonant chord that resolves to a minor triad.
This harmonic language that is borrowed from the “fate motif” is repeated throughout the entire movement and suggests a pervading character of helplessness and humility, facing the power of fate. This assumption is reinforced by another observation which will be explained later in this chapter, the assumption postulates that the above motif possesses a rhetorical device called superjectio, applied to render a sense of humility and lamentation.

The Interval of the Seventh

In the first Act of Janáček’s opera “The Cunning Little Vixen”, the scene takes place in the autumn, Bystrouška, the little vixen, having been tied up by the forester in his courtyard after she tried to flee. Hens, Rooster and Lapák the dog are telling her that she shouldn’t have tried to run away; life is all about suffering and she has to accept it. Bystrouška’s answer surprises them:
Hleďte, sestry, jakého máte vůdce! Chce vás pro svoje choutky, za to bere žold od člověka. (lisavě) Družičky!
Sestřičky! **Odstraňte** staré vlády! **Stvořte** nový svět, kde budete rovným dílem sdílet radosti a štěstí.

Look, sisters, what a leader you’ve got! He wants you to satisfy his lust. That’s what man bribes him for.
(Insinuatingly) Friends, sister, **abolish** the old order!
**Create** a new world where you will get your fair share of joy and happiness.

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A courageous, and rebellious statement coming from the youngest and “weakest” figure of the scene, Bystrouška, who is a little chained vixen, incites the Roosters, the Hens and the dog Lapák to abolish the orders and create a new free world (Ex. 52). Notice the use of the interval of a seventh in both words “Odstraňte” and “Stvořte”; it projects a sense of rebelling force, as well as a desire to be free.

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*Example 52. The Cunning Little Vixen, Act I scene 2.*
The interval of a seventh is observable in many of his speech melodies as well. In this example Janáček notated an utterance of a child, with an added accompaniment texture (Ex. 53).  

![Example 53. Speech melody snippet, from the feuilleton “Last Year and This Year” (1905).](image)

Another two examples of the interval of a seventh: a rising minor seventh (Ex. 54), and a rising major seventh (Ex. 55).

![Example 54. Speech melody snippet, from the feuilleton “My Luhačovice” (1903).](image)

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80 Beckerman, Janáček and His World, 245.

81 Ibid. 234.
Example 55. Speech melody snippet from the feuilleton “Last Year and This Year” (1905).

The previously stated examples have some common features such as the bold and courageous nature of the statements, the direct and brave questions, and the rebellious imperatives (as cited in The Cunning Little Vixen example).

This specific interval of a seventh has been employed a few times in the selected piano works of this study, but its appearance particularly in the fourth movement of the cycle In the Mists is extremely prominent. The Andante section starting from measure 55 has an ostinato motif in the left hand, consisting of an interval of a minor 6th, while the melody in the right hand begins in measure 57 with a rising leap of a major seventh followed by descending intervals of seconds and a third (Ex. 56). The same passage is repeated again starting from measure 127. In measures 76, the melody appears as well with some chordal elaborations, as well as in measure 81.

Example 56. In the Mists, movement IV, measures 56-62 and measures 76-78.
The way this melody’s contour is shaped with a rise of a seventh interval then a sequence of smaller descending intervals may reflect the struggle that Janáček wanted to convey, the leap reflecting the rebellious personality and the strong will to escape, but the force of gravity, of fate, pulling it downward and causing disappointment.

The seventh interval is also apparent in the sonata’s first movement measure 7, then in the development section measures 70 and 72 (Ex. 57). It may have the same suggested function.

Example 57. Sonata, first movement, measures 7 and 70.

Bird Motifs

Janáček’s speech melody snippets of birds are fascinating; it did not, however, suffice to simply transcribe their melodies. He would imagine a whole conversation, suggesting the topics, the emotional states of his birds, and uttered words. “Again and again […] Janáček shows his great sympathy and understanding of the world of nature, the animal kingdom, and his reverence for the mysteries of growth and renewal. But perhaps he feels closest kinship of all with the birds, for they, like he, are God’s musicians.”

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82 Tausky, *Janáček: Leaves from His Life*, 77.
The Owl Motif

The hooting of an owl refers to Silesian folklore, in which it foretells misfortune and death. If one manages to chase the owl away, misfortune will also stay away. Janáček notated its hooting several times; once as a falling minor third in his feuilleton “When Little Birds Go to Sleep” (1927) (Ex. 58).

![Example 58. Speech melody snippet of an owl from the feuilleton “When little birds go to sleep.”](image)

Another snippet in a major third was notated in his study on the speech melodies of children (Nápěvky dětské mluvy, published in Český lid, Nos. 13–15 in 1904, 1905 and 1906; LD1: 313–328) (Ex. 59). The same motif appeared as well in Janáček’s treatise “Naturalism in art”, with a descriptive text: “The owl mourns at night with its hollow” (Ex. 60). The rhythmic proportions are the same as the previous examples.

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84 Tausky, Janáček: Leaves from His Life, 107.

85 Ibid. 182.

Example 59. Speech melody snippet of an owl from Janáček’s study “Nápěvky dětské mluvy”.

The most famous quotation of the owl hoot is in the last movement of the first book of the piano cycle “On an Overgrown Path”, entitled “The Barn Owl Has Not Flown Away!” The motif of the owl is almost identical with Janáček’s snippets of owl calls (Ex. 60). A resemblance of the motif can be found in the third and fourth movements of In the Mists. (Ex. 61)


Example 61. In the Mists, movement III, measure 30, and movement IV, measures 117, 118.
In the feuilleton “Strolling” (1927) Janáček notated the hooting of an eagle-owl, which has a very different call from the previously mentioned owl. It is a falling perfect fourth with a stressed first note (Ex. 62). The descending perfect fourth interval is believed to be the cell that structured the whole third movement of *In the Mists* cycle (Ex. 63).

![Example 62. Speech melody snippet of an eagle-owl from the feuilleton “Strolling”.

Example 63. *In the Mists*, movement III, measures 1, 2.

The “Alarmed Hen”

A unique figure appears in the left hand in measure 21 of the sonata’s second movement, which transforms into becoming the predominant cell of the following section. The rhythmic element of the motif resembles one of Janáček’s transcriptions of *Ulekaný splepic*, that he notated in his notebook during the year 1897 (Ex. 64). *Ulekaný splepie*

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literally translates into “an alarmed hen”\textsuperscript{89}, which refers to a certain anxiety and fear that the hen experienced. This translation differs from another source that translated it as “a kneeling hen”, which this author has discovered to be a misreading of Janáček’s original handwriting, and which falsely claimed that the description was \textit{klekaná slepice}, instead of \textit{Ulekaný slepice}.

\textit{Example 64.} Speech melody snippet from Janáček’s feuilleton of 1897, notating \textit{Ulekaný slepice}, “an alarmed hen”.

\textit{Example 65.} Sonata, movement II, left hand, measure 21.

Similarities between Janáček’s snippet of the hen and the piano figure in measure 21 are found in the rhythmic composition of both examples and which consist of two rhythmic values: short and long notes that alternate consecutively, starting and ending on a short note. The rising intervallic leap from short to long notes in both figures and a leaning on the long/high notes are also common elements these examples share. The piano figure

\textsuperscript{89} Vainiomäki, “The Musical Realism of Leoš Janáček,” 181.
appears at first in measure 21 in the left hand (Ex. 65) which does not necessarily suggest the intense emotional content of the hen’s call, but it definitely adds nervousness and distress to the music. The tension increases gradually until the figure dominates the entire texture unceasingly, starting from measure 34. Even the right hand’s line includes elements of this figure in partial augmentation (Ex. 66, Ex. 67).


The A’ section starts on measure 47 in sff instead of p as indicated in the A section.
A shorter version of the ‘alarmed hen figure’ is integrated in the left hand as a response to the theme, the repeated bass notes in the figure reinforce the gravity of unchanging fate. (Ex. 68).

[Image: Example 68. Second movement, measures 53 to 61.]

Articulation

**Marcato**

Janáček is very specific in his articulation markings. He notated them carefully and accurately. One of his most frequently used is the *marcato*, notated in the shape of a wedge and is apparent in many of his speech melody snippets as well. They usually serve to add a rigorous, strict character to the motif. They were undoubtedly pronounced in a very articulate manner, almost in exaggeration (Ex. 69, Ex. 70 and Ex. 71) especially when coinciding with definitive keywords like ‘no’, ‘evil’, ‘must disappear’ or the screech of a bird. In the description of one of the snippets Janáček wrote that he was frightened by the screech of a startled bird of prey: “Takvititi!”
Example 69. Speech melody snippets from the collection “My Lháčovice” (1903).  

Example 70. Speech melody snippets from the collection “Whitsunday 1910 in Prague.”

Example 71. Speech melody snippets from the feuilleton “Last Year and This Year” 1905.

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90 Tausky, Janáček: Leaves from His Life, 233.

91 Ibid. 264, 266.

92 Ibid. 242, 251.
Examples of *marcato* motifs are found throughout Janáček’s piano works. For instance, a characteristic *marcato* motif appears in measure 4 of the first movement of the sonata (Ex. 72) and reappears several times throughout the movement. In the first movement of *In the Mists*, a *marcato* sixteenth note is placed in the right hand at the end of a legato phrase in measure 25 (Ex. 73). Another *marcato* motif figures prominently in the second movement between measures 30 to 38 (Ex. 74).

*Example 72. Sonata, movement I, measures 1-4.*

*Example 73. In the Mists, movement I, measures 19-25.*
Example 74. In the Mists, movement II, measures 28-30.

The way Janáček wanted the marcato notes to be interpreted is specified in one of his articles about his cantata “Amarus”: “with a powerful swing, as if the wedges marked above the notes stabbed you to the heart.”⁹³ He was referring to a B chord in the orchestra’s accompaniment of the word A-ma-rus of the phrase: “Amarus Lived”. The chord’s articulation is marked as a short-marcato, \[ \text{ marcato } \].

**Slurred Staccato**

Another articulation mark that is employed frequently by Janáček is the slurred staccato. For instance, in the third movement of the cycle *In the Mists*, the main motif is articulated as follows (Ex. 75):

In the Mists, movement III, main motif.

It is also found in the first movement’s development section of the sonata, measures 40 to 42, 50 to 52 (Ex. 76).

Corresponding articulation may be traced back to Janáček’s speech melodies, which are particularly prominent under the category of birds. Janáček’s observations went beyond human speech; he was also fascinated by the sound of nature. He would notate what he heard from birds, dogs, and not only animals, but also the sound of water and fountains, as well as the sound of ‘sun beams’! ⁹⁴

In these examples Janáček transcribed the sound of a hen that “[…] started crying. It was full of pain and sounded like a premonition.” (Ex. 77) He added suggestive subtitle to the phrase: “Oh, is this it? ….”

⁹⁴ Tausky, Janáček: Leaves From His Life, 89.
Janáček resumes: “Suddenly, a transition was heard, high in thin harmonics, like struggling beams of sunlight.” (Ex. 78) It is not clear whether he meant by this statement that the sound was coming from the bird or coming from the struggling beams of sunlight in the realm of his imagination.

Another snippet from a hen is followed by Janáček’s comment “She philosophises” (Ex. 79)

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95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid., 87.
These examples all employ the articulation of the slurred staccato, which may have been used by Janáček in order to specify the particular sound of birds as he imagined it, emphasized and sharp but not shortened, articulated but not accented.

Rhetorical Devices

There is no clear evidence that Janáček studied and knew in depth the baroque rhetorical devices, but his fascination and life-long passion for speech and his belief in the power of expression through speech curves and intonation offer what the author believes to be sufficient reason to connect in this study the old rhetorical devices of the Baroque era to Janáček’s musical figures. His intuition guided him in achieving similar results as stated by Robin Holloway: “Janáček can surely be seen as the ultimate composer of the [baroque] Affect in whom music becomes the medium for expression so immediate as to transcend the linguistic metaphor to become in itself the thing that feels and moves.”

Anabasis and Catabasis, Exalting and Humiliating (see page 35)

Anabasis is defined by Barel in his Musica Poetica guide as an ascending musical passage which expresses ascending or exalted images or affections, and it could accompany text that has ascending images or thoughts, such as in “He ascended into heaven.”


99 Bartel, Musica Poetica, 179.
Whereas the *Catabasis* is a descending musical passage which expresses descending, lowly, humble, servile, or negative images or affections.\(^{100}\)

In the first movement of Janáček’s piano sonata, measures number 3, 5 and 7 contain three attempts to achieve higher registers, designating the A-flat as starting point; the first interval reaches a fifth but settles into a fourth, the second one reaches a sixth but settles into the fifth, while the third one reaches a seventh to settle into the sixth. (Ex. 80) This draws an overall motion of rising, which may claim its roots back to the *Anabasis* device.

Moving on to the beginning of the second movement, the note E-flat in the right hand may be considered a starting point from which intervals fall by increasing magnitude; in measure 1 the E-flat falls until it reaches a B-flat (a fourth), in measure 2 the E-flat falls to A-flat (a fifth), then in measure 3 the E-flat takes a longer route until it arrives on G-flat in measure 4 (a sixth). This observation may postulate a connection between these two sections of the two movements in which the motion of the melodic contour is inverted (Ex. 81). This portrays an overall motion of falling, which may be rooted in the *Catabasis* device.

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\(^{100}\) Ibid., 214.

*Example 80. Sonata, movement I, measures 3-7.*
In majority of Janáček’s works, traces of motifs that have been intensified/augmented/inverted/or altered in a way or another are frequently distributed throughout the given work. In his operas, for example, he could reuse one or more motifs in different Acts.

**Superjectio** (see page 35)

This device occurs when a note slides upwards or downwards by a second from a consonance to a dissonance or from a dissonance to a consonance. It is particularly often applied in compositions of lamentation or humility. The embellishment is only to be executed in connection with accented syllables, except in those words where it is appropriate to accent the last syllable.

The second part of the main melodic line in measures 2, 3 and 6, 7 in the fourth movement of *In the Mists* employs the *Superjectio*. The line contains three notes which outline a descent of a major second then perfect fourth intervals. However, a note of a whole step or a half step lower from the second beat’s note is applied to add a lamenting effect to the line (Ex. 82). The same device is employed in measure 32 to 46.

*Example 81. Sonata, movement II, measures 1-4.*
Dubitatio

A device used to provoke an uncertain sentiment. It is musically expressed in two forms: (1) through an indecisive modulation, or (2) through a lingering on a certain point in the music (see page 38). This device is prevalent in the presto section of the second movement of *In the Mists* (Ex. 83).

The placement of the low A-flat with a fermata after a long silence preceded by a figure of quick thirty-second notes, also being based on an unresolved diminished chord
causes an arousing of a doubtful sentiment, its function is very close to the function of the *Dubitatio* device.

It is also observable in the sonata’s second movement, when Janáček applies long quarter notes at the end of the bars, and half note chords at the end of the phrases. Those long notes create a state of stillness and of suspension, they suggest a feeling of being lost in time and without direction, the vision is unclear and confusing.

Janáček writes about this state in one of his short essays entitled ‘Silence’ during a visit to his hometown, dear to his heart, Huvaldy in 1919. He writes:

> When you look into the shallows of Ondrejnice in the Hukvaldy district you see – only water. Nothing is alive there – no fishes, no frogs. The sun is high in the sky, but the atmosphere is void – […] This year’s summer! Quiet, silent. Even one’s thoughts become silent too, longer and longer silences between them – and suddenly one hears a ringing in the ear. […] It is not the painful tone which Smetana heard continuously ringing in his ear. It is the sound of silence, of creative inaction, laziness, tiredness, a pensive mood. It is a pedal note, which can only be dispelled by an upsurge of creation. […] My eyes wander over the distant country. The mist mixes with the smoke of the factories. The gloomy village of Kaznicov looks as if it were painted in dark colors. All is quiet. Again, the tone of silence, inactivity, laziness, emptiness? Perhaps tiredness? I sit here lost in my dreams.101

This statement can considerably inspire the performer, particularly when playing the suspended notes in which it would be advisable to dwell on this “pensive mood”, to find in every note the stillness of the water, the void atmosphere, the lifelessness, the tiredness, the emptiness, the gloomy doubtful vision and the dark colors.

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101 Tausky: *Janáček: Leaves from His Life*, 72-74.
Abruptio

Janáček employed another technique at the end of the first movement of the sonata (Ex. 84), that has a similar function of a rhetorical device called Abruptio.

Abruptio is a sudden and unexpected break in a musical composition. It is often found towards the end of a composition (right before the cadence) or in the middle of a passage. This device was used in speech in order to arouse attention.

Example 84. Sonata, movement I, measures 106-110.

It is also evident in the beginning of the second movement of In the Mists. The short figures evoke a stuttering speech that is being interrupted repeatedly. Imagining the phrases of the opening as human utterances, the last syllables of the words stop on a downbeat, unusual in the Czech language in which words or phrases usually to end on an unstressed beat. This can lead to a possibility of analyzing these small figures as words that have been interrupted by misty thoughts, or doubts, and when they resume, the motion is once again suspended. The stops are not sharp and rhythmic ones since Janáček’s pedal markings are sustained through the rests; the collection of interrupted figures then form one large entity that has essentially been submerged in a cloud of foggy thoughts. These figures could also be understood as references to birds’ melodies if parallelized with Janáček’s transcription of robins. In his Introductory words at the opening of the Conservatoire in Brno 30
September 1919, he speaks about a pair of robins, “[h]appily they hop about my garden. How lovely now in the autumn are their gentle voices!

Why do I always return to them? I want such composers, robins, who compose out of the very necessity of their being, who can fill the skies with explosions of sound, but also those who know the value of silence.” The pauses are observed here in between the notes, similar to the pauses of the opening chords of *In the Mists’* second movement (Ex. 85).

![Example 85. In the Mists, movement II, measures 1-6.](image)

**Anaphora** (see page 37)

Anaphora or Repetitio is the repetition of certain words and expressions through which the oration is given great emphasis. When the affection is intensely moving and calls for a concise argument, it does not suffice to say something only once, but rather it should be repeated two or three times, thereby ensuring the proper understanding of the word’s emphasis.

In Janáček’s speech melodies, many are notated as repetitive figures. He often notated these figures as transcriptions of the sounds of nature. A goldfinch which remained at his home for 14 years was an exceptionally good singer, and Janáček notated its singing,
with some of the captions specifying the number of times the goldfinch repeated its melody.

In Figure 1 of (Ex. 86) Janáček notates the motif and explains: “Three times repeated”.

![Figure 1 and Figure 2](image)

Example 86. Speech melody snippets from his article “Young Mr. Starling”.

In Figure 2 he adds his own imaginative text: “When will’ee? When will’ee?”. Then in Figure 3 he notates three melodies with a subheading: “The tone of an ordinary conversation had these melodies: [...] always three times repeated”.

Janáček’s repetitions of figures in his piano works were rarely identical, he would usually repeat his figures to increase intensity or inversely lessen tension.

Several motifs in the second movement of the sonata are clear examples of the anaphora device; such as the motif in measure 18, which is repeated in measures 19 and 20 (Ex. 87). In measures 30 and 31, a short motif is also being repeated for four times while growing in intensity (Ex. 88). The opening of the same movement is, as well, an example of Janáček’s use of the anaphora device in his music (Ex. 89).

Example 88. Sonata, movement II, measures 30, 31.
A different execution of *anaphora* in Janáček’s music is a technique that distinguishes his compositional style, called the *fifths series* and defined as the repetitive appearance of a motif while transposed a fifth (or fourth) higher or lower and played in different registers. In the Czech language the pitch levels of a neutral conversation usually lie within an interval of a third, but when the phrases are spoken in an excited manner, the span widens and rises higher to an interval of fifth. In some cases, the fifth/fourth series can mirror a decrease in excitement.

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One example of this device appears in the second movement of *In the Mists*, measures 17, 18 and 19. The left hand *stretto* figure starts with A-flat, then D-flat and the last one starts with A-flat (Ex. 90)

![Example 90. In the Mists, movement II, measures 17-19.](image)

Another employment of the device can be found in measures 55 to 62 (Ex. 91).

![Example 91. In the Mists, movement II, measures 55-62.](image)

The coda of the same movement contains similar motifs as those in measures 55 to 62, but the transposition between these motifs becomes narrowed to an interval of third as
noticed in measure 86 to 101, which reflects the switch from an agitated conversation to a more neutral one (Ex. 92).

*Example 92. In the Mists, movement II, measures 84-101.*
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

What particularly distinguishes Janáček’s music is its connection with living elements; his theory is derived from sources that do not change over time or locations. Humans will always use speech to express their feelings and the sounds of birds and animals will always fill the horizon with expressive motifs and phrases.

This explains why baroque rhetorical devices can be identified in Janáček’s music even though the baroque era predated Janáček by hundreds of years. It is the unity of thought that has persisted through the centuries; it is from the same well of “interest in human speech” that Janáček and baroque composers had drawn, and which led to similar results despite the extensive period of time that separated them.

The influence of the Czech language on Janáček’s music is greatly evident in many respects: the stress on the initial syllable, the non-lowered last syllable, the short and sharp inflection, the independence of long vowels from short vowels – these are just a few examples. However, it would be unfair to limit Janáček’s music to just a number of linguistic rules. His insistence on regarding speech melody snippets as windows into one’s soul, served the purpose of revealing the emotions behind the word regardless of its lexiconic meaning. This personal belief of Janáček was discernable throughout his writings and may explain why he would notate the sound of water and street noise, or transcribe the sounds of birds and animals and assign to them imaginative texts.

In order to obtain a thorough understanding and appreciation of Janáček’s music, and consequently achieve a convincing interpretation of it, it is indispensable to consider his music in the context of nature and to develop the skill of attentiveness in every
surrounding. The pitch inflection of the speaking voice is another inspiring resource. This inflection may differ or may have common features from one language to another, but no matter what the language is, the speaking voice is in itself an instrument and may be perceived as one manifestation of art among several others.

Truth in ‘speech’ and ‘melody’ were Janáček’s main concern and focus. His passion for folk music originated firstly in his love for speech and for melody. He was astonished at how truthful and intuitive a Moravian folk lyrical phrase can be, to a point at which it breaks all metric and modal rules in order to ensure a musical delivery of the phrase as close as possible to a spoken one. Despite Janáček’s fascination with speech, a knowledge of the Czech language is not going to guarantee a comprehensive interpretation of Janáček’s music. However, listening to all languages, specifically Czech and more particularly the Moravian dialect, will definitely help in gaining better acquaintance with the intonation and phonetics of the language. Janáček did not quote his collected speech melodies in any literal way in his works; however, the effort and time he invested in the collecting process was tremendous, hence its influence in his music.

Suggestions to Performers

The following is a series of suggestions that may prove helpful in interpreting Janáček's piano works. Apart from the first point, the remaining suggestions are conclusions reached by the author based upon the research that has been conducted in this study.
Equal Semantic Importance

When the texture constitutes a simultaneous presentation of several opposing lines—a device known as “Polyphony of Emotions”—it is important to pay equal attention to each line; without layering them in a manner that gives priority to one over another nor dividing the texture into accompaniment and theme. “…all these lines have equal semantic importance”\(^\text{103}\), and emphasize the conflicting emotions of the musical content.

Endings of Phrases

It is very common among pianists who have been classically trained to intuitively taper off musical phrases and release them softly. In much of Janáček’s compositional style, musical phrases tend to maintain or even grow in their intensity as they progress through to their end. This is of course not suggested as a fixed rule to be applied over all Janáček’s phrasings, but a concept that the performer is invited to bear in mind in the context of the composer’s interest in speech melodies, and to be attentive to all the markings in the music scores.

Pedal

Pedaling in Janáček’s works is another exhaustive topic that could offer more extensive research. In the scope of this paper, however, it is necessary only to mention the employment of the pedal as it relates to the speaking quality of the musical phrase. Janáček’s original pedal markings do not cover each work entirely, but he applied them where he meant to deliver, in particular, an intended imagination of sound. The author examined Janáček’s employment of pedal in his piano works and postulated two usages of

\(^{103}\) Kundera, *Testament Betrayed*, 185.
the pedal that frequently occur in his piano music: 1) over the rests, 2) and with the long pedal notes of the bass.

The first usage of the pedal is observed in several sections of the sonata and *In the Mists* as in (Ex. 93), (Ex. 94), (Ex. 95) and (Ex. 96):

*Example 93. Sonata, movement I, measures 107-110.*

*Example 94. Sonata, movement II, measures 1-3.*

*Example 95. In the Mists, movement I, measures 115-116.*
Notice the sustained pedal through the rests in all above examples. The nature of these rests may allude to the kind of silence Janáček called “the sound of silence” and be characterized by the “pensive mood”. He also described it as “[…] a pedal note, which can only be dispelled by an upsurge of creation.” (see page 86). Following Janáček's indication carefully creates a kind of blurred suspension of motion which effectively achieves a pensive mood and which otherwise could be lost if one cut the pedal for the sake of a more clear sense of the pulse or more clearly defined phrases. Releasing the pedal would prevent the rests from creating these moments of a pensive mood. Moreover, the placement of notes and rests in respect to strong or weak beats may serve less the purpose of the creation of a syncopated character and more to emphasize the stressed and unstressed notes.

In the fourth movement of In the Mists, a release of the pedal is marked during rests in a few locations throughout the movement, but Janáček alternates between these two methods of sustaining (Ex. 97) or releasing (Ex. 98) pedals during rests which may indicate that Janáček intentionally varied his pedal usage.
Concerning the second usage of the employment of the pedal, it will be left for a separate further research, since it does not relate substantively to the current study.

**Dramatic Perception**

The dramatic content manifested in Janáček’s compositional style may be the direct consequence of his interest in speech melodies. As an opera composer he stressed the importance of analyzing the melodic curves and contours of human speech, for the purpose of discovering the dramatic patterns that underlay them. For this reason, and as a concluding point of this study, it would be advisable to approach the piano sonata and *In the Mists* not so much from the virtuosic but the dramatic standpoint. From this perspective, one can imagine in these works a whole cast of characters interacting on several levels who
are frequently in disagreement one with another – be it separate individuals or contrasting characters within an individual psyche. There are frequently two main characters; a solid unchanging one, represented as a forceful power such as a political or social authority, or fate, and another opposing entity. The forceful entity is typically characterized by repetitive figures, especially those made up of well-defined rhythmic units and sharp articulations. The opposing entity appears in different forms: sometimes rebellious and revolutionary, sometimes passive and submissive. There are also moments of reawakening or moments of resignation. The opposing entity frequently appears in rising intervals typifying moments of resistance against the stronger power, and alternated with falling intervals until a point is reached when full strength is attained and the music displays a dramatic confrontation (sonata, movement I, measures 17-21, and In the Mists, movement II, measures 28-38). Sometimes these confronting moments end in screaming trills (Sonata, movement I, measure 21 and 86); at other times the endings exhibit quality of insistence or resistance (Sonata, movement II, measure 43). The opposing entity also appears in weaker form in melodies narrow in intervallic range, and are suggestive of a lamenting and yearning emotional response (In the Mists, movement I, the opening material of the right hand).
Art as a Response to Oppression

This study has determined that Janáček’s music expresses several psychological states, most notably the state of oppression. In the previous chapter, a few compositional devices and motifs which were incorporated by Janáček in his music, were presented as expressive tools to depict feelings of helplessness towards oppressive entities and powers, as well as to depict moments of confrontation and critical battles. Furthermore, most of Janáček’s operas and vocal works are based on stories of figures who faced a certain kind of oppression in their lives: Jenůfa suffered moral oppression by society; Amarus was oppressed by the idea of death and original sin; convicts were suppressed under the power of authority and fate represented by the Siberian prison camp in From the House of the Dead. And among the instrumental works, the piano sonata is an example of a response against an act of oppression by the Austrian government, as well as by fate when Janáček experienced the emotional shock from the death of the young worker to whom he dedicated the work.

From a broader perspective, the acts of oppression that were prevalent in this region of the world during the initial years of the 20th century may have found expression as a dominant theme in several artistic works of the period. For example, Franz Kafka (1883-1924) a Czech novelist who expressed the sense of suppression and subjugation in his literary works, best represented in “Metamorphoses” when the main character of the novel was transformed into a bug! Exhibited throughout the novel as a humiliated creature, unable to express its feelings, its loudest scream could not even be heard.

An older figure is the Russian author, Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881) who believed that human suffering is unavoidable and was concerned with the psychological
motive behind the commission of crimes which, according to Vogel, seemed to be derived from the “instinct of a man persecuted by fate to rebel at least once in a desperate outburst of freewill, only to find himself in a state of yet more terrible oppression.”

It seems that the political and social circumstances of that time of history overwhelmed the population with imposing and authoritative rules. These rules were at certain point confronted by opposition, commonly in the form of criminal acts and led to further oppression. However, artists’ manner of rebellion could be couched in their artworks. Despite its passive appearance, art emboldened its creators, as well as its beneficiaries, to free themselves from the chains of oppression, even if that freedom was not immediately realized. In the case of Janáček, art was the authentic expression of his truest feelings during all the struggles he went through in his life. His letters, articles and interviews cover most of his life phases, and they reflect the development of his perception of life. It can be diagrammed by a rising curve that starts at the bottom from a point of desperation and exhaustion, and reaches its conclusion in a state of optimism and satisfaction. In his seventy-second birthday celebration, Janáček delightfully declared to his guests:

…[I]t occurred to me to ask myself what actually is the power of art? There is something in it, a sort of vibration string which sounds everywhere and links us together wherever we may be. Let us be grateful that it binds us and enables us to be strong, defiant and steady in the face of everything we encounter. […]

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I never look back, only forward. You should all do the same. And you will be as happy as I am today.\textsuperscript{105}

In order to fully appreciate and understand Janáček’s piano works, readers of this study are advised and encouraged to immerse themselves in Janáček’s vocal works such as: “Amarus” cantata for soprano, tenor, baritone, chorus & orchestra (1897); “Elegy on the Death of my Daughter Olga” Cantata for Tenor Solo, Mixed Choir and Piano (1903); 53 Moravian Folk Poetry in Songs for voice and piano (1908); the song cycle “The Diary of One Who Disappeared” for tenor, alto, three female voices and piano (1920), and his operas. The dramatic intensity and pure expressiveness evoked by melody, texture, rhythm, phrasing, articulation, text and structure are excellent examples of how Janáček’s compositional techniques grew from the same seed: a lifelong search for the truth and beauty that underlie human speech.

\textsuperscript{105} B. Štědroň, \textit{Janáček: Letters and Reminiscences}, 191.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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