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"The Librettist Wears Skirts": Female Librettists in 19th-Century Bohemia

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by

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"The Librettist Wears Skirts": Female Librettists in 19th-Century Bohemia

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By

Emma Taylor Parker

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ABSTRACT

"The Librettist Wears Skirts": Female Librettists in 19th-Century Bohemia

By

Emma Taylor Parker

When Antonín Dvořák received the libretto to the opera *Dimitrij* in 1881 he liked it so much that he asked to speak to "Mr. Librettist" right away. The answer, from the director of Prague's National Theater, was: "The librettist wears skirts." Dvořák quickly corrected himself and soon thereafter was introduced to Marie Červinková-Riegrová, his new *libretistka* (female librettist). Despite Dvořák's initial surprise he was not alone in working with a female librettist during this period of Czech history. Indeed, by the time Dvořák began composing *Dimitrij,* Bedřich Smetana had already composed two operas to libretti by Eliška Krásnohorská and was completing a third, and Zdeněk Fibich would compose three operas based on libretti by Anežka Schulzová in the 1890s. Although the female librettist was a comparatively common phenomenon in 19th-century Bohemia, few women were engaged in the work of creating the texts for operas elsewhere. In this dissertation I explore the cultural contexts that allowed for this high concentration of female librettists in Bohemia, the collaborations between composers and their librettists, and the reception of the works that resulted from these collaborations.

Building on the work of other musicologists who have established the historical narrative for Czech opera and examined the complex cultural politics of the waning Habsburg Empire, I place libretti and the composer-librettist collaboration at the center of my analysis. After providing biographical information, in some cases for the

first time in English, about the lesser-studied figures featured in my dissertation in Chapter 2, I present two case studies that center on the collaborations between Dvořák and Červinková-Riegrová, and between Fibich and Schulzová. In Chapter 3 I discuss Dvořák and Červinková-Riegrová's collaborations on *Dimitrij* and *Jakobín*. These works offer an informative juxtaposition that allows for an analysis of the conflicting demands of audiences in different parts of the multi-ethnic Habsburg Empire. Chapter 4 focuses on Fibich and Schulzová's work on *Šárka*, an opera that was almost universally praised for its music and widely criticized for its libretto. By looking at this opera I expose the implications of inventing traditions and histories through the lens of *Šárka's* reception. In the conclusion I offer several possible explanations for the phenomenon of female librettists in nineteenth-century Bohemia. Ultimately this dissertation explores the confluence of gender, national identity, and opera in a specific time and place, but has applications for all three topics in a variety of broader contexts.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In 1893 the dramatist Gabriela Preissová wrote to her friend, the librettist Marie Červinková-Riegrová, "These are the living trivializations, biases, biting, and acidity against intellectual working women in general."[1] Despite both women's unusual professional accomplishments, this quote sums up the challenges they faced as women doing work that spanned public (their work was published and performed in a public setting) and private (the work was conducted in a private setting). Both Preissová and Červinková-Riegrová were able to use their upper-middle class status and connections to Prague society to gain entry into the burgeoning Czech public sphere.

In the correspondence between Preissová and Červinková-Riegrová, which is discussed at more length in Chapter 2, we see many of the key issues that women confronted in late nineteenth-century Prague. Upper-middle class women like Červinková-Riegrová and Preissová were faced with a complex matrix of often-competing ideas as they found their ways through life. As women during a time when Czechs were striving to establish their own national identity, women were seen as having a critical role as mothers. Contemporary gender norms concluded that as mothers, women nurtured the next generation of Czech nationalists and, as such, were critical to the nationalist movement. In this role they were expected to pass on the

[1] Gabriela Preissová to Marie Červinková-Riegrová, Korutany, June 19, 1893. Housed in fond 220, inv. 34 at the Památník Národního Pisemnictví, Strahov Monastery, Prague.

newly canonized national mythology and instill a sense of national duty in their children.[2]

Sociologists Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias summarize five ways that women are traditionally involved in nationalism: as "biological producers," as "reproducers of the [normative] boundaries of ethnic/national groups [by enacting proper feminine behavior], by "participating centrally in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of its culture," as "signifiers of ethnic/national differences," and "as participants in national, economic, political, and military struggles."[3] Generally, the first generation of female Czech nationalists (Červinková-Riegrová's mother and her contemporaries) were more likely to ascribe to the first two methods of nationalist involvement. By the time Červinková-Riegrová and Anežka Schulzová, Zdeněk Fibich's librettist and the other *libretistka* (female librettist) discussed at length in this dissertation, were engaging in nationalist activities, however, women were more likely to have moved on to method three, cultural transmission.

Neither Červinková-Riegrová nor Schulzová ever had children. It is perhaps as a result of this fact that they engaged in significant social and literary activities. Indeed,

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[2] For more on this, see my analysis below as well as Joane Nagle, "Masculinity and Nationalism – Gender and Sexuality in the Making of Nations," in *Nations and Nationalism: A Reader*, ed. Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 110-130; *Woman, Nation, State*, ed. Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 1989); and Jitka Malečková, "Nationalizing Women and Engendering the Nation: the Czech National Movement," in *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann, and Catherine Hall (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 293-310.

[3] Yuval-Davis and Anthias, "Woman, Nation, State," 7-8, as summarized in Nagel, 120.

one could even posit that Schulzová consciously forewent the opportunity to have children by entering into an adulterous relationship with a much older married man; her devotion to Fibich and his art certainly ranked above any desire she might have had to procreate.[4] Without children, it can be argued that they instead focused her attention on a broader public of “children”: the Czech theater-going public. Through their literary works and libretti Schulzová and Červinková-Riegrová were able to fulfill their “motherly” duties by conveying the new national identity to the children of the Czech nation. Marie Červinková-Riegrová’s collaborations with Antonin Dvořák and Anežka Schulzová’s with Zdeněk Fibich are a key example of this unusual collaborative phenomenon.

In this dissertation I examine the previously unexplored intersection of the literatures presented above, the place where opera history, women’s history, and libretti intersect: the remarkable preponderance of Czech women writing libretti in the last three decades of the nineteenth century.[5] In order to more fully explore these issues I explore how two Czech composers of opera from the late nineteenth century, Antonín Dvořák and Zdeněk Fibich, collaborated with their female librettists, Marie

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[4] That said there is certainly no indication in either case that these women were interested in having children at all. Both were unwell for significant portions of their life and Červinková-Riegrová was in an essentially loveless marriage. It does, however, seem worth mentioning that in a time when women were expected to continue producing the next generation of Czech patriots, both of our *libretistky* were childless.

[5] Although feminist and librettist Eliška Krásnohorská wrote the libretti for Smetana’s last three operas, I ultimately had to leave her out of the current work due to a variety of circumstances. Were this dissertation ever to become a book, I would hope to expand its scope to include Krásnohorská’s work, which was pivotal in its pioneering qualities and in that it undoubtedly provided inspiration to the other librettists covered here.

Červinková-Riegrová and Anežka Schulzová. In so doing I expose the many cultural tensions underlying late nineteenth-century Czech culture as they apply to the operas created as result of these collaborations. What social and cultural landscape allowed for this unusual concentration of female librettists? How did the famously polemical Prague periodicals receive the works co-created by these women? These are some of the questions that I set out to answer in the chapters that follow.

A Concise History of Czech Opera

At this juncture it seems wise to present a very brief history of Czech opera, which necessarily simplifies the narrative. It is not my intention in this dissertation to present any comprehensive history; others have done this and this is not the project I seek to complete.[6] That said, the key points and assumptions should be laid out for context.

Although some Czech operas did exist prior to the Czech Cultural Renaissance of the nineteenth century, it was in the mid-1800s that Czechs first began writing opera in earnest. As Czechs endeavored to achieve autonomy from their Habsburg overlords, they strove to revive a distinct sense of Czech national identity that had been suppressed during the preceding three centuries of Habsburg Rule. One of the critical ways that these early Czech nationalists sought to redefine their culture was through the creation of a Czech opera tradition. This small group of intelligentsia (many of whom had had to learn the Czech language, having been raised as German speakers)

[6] For more comprehensive histories of Czech opera see John Tyrrell, *Czech Opera* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988) and Brian Locke, *Opera and Ideology in Prague* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006), discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

decided that opera was a way to simultaneously forge a musical tradition that could be connected to their nation and also to convey their new nationalist message and themes to a large audience, even if swaths of that audience were illiterate.[7]

With these goals in mind, the first major public works project of the Czech national revival was to build a grand National Opera house. These members of the national renascence quickly realized, though, that they were lacking an appropriate repertoire to perform in the new *Národní Divadlo* (National Theater). For this reason, in 1861 Count Jan Harrach established a contest to honor the best operas to be performed in the new opera house. *The Brandenburgers in Bohemia* by Bedřich Smetana won the contest, firmly establishing him as the standard bearer for Czech opera. The construction of the National Theater was a national event: the May 1868 ground breaking was attended by such political luminaries as František Palacký and his son-in-law F.L. Rieger, and the crowd of onlookers totaled 300,000.[8]

The nearly completed theater opened on June 11, 1881, in honor of Crown Prince Rudolf's marriage, with a performance of Smetana's *Libuše*, which had been completed for almost a decade, but reserved in anticipation of the new theater's opening. Its success was short-lived, however; the theater closed again in July 1881 for the finishing touches of construction. Then on August 12, fire broke out and gutted the theater, which was scheduled for its grand re-opening the next month. Czech audiences were undeterred, however. The fire was viewed as a national catastrophe and Czechs from all walks of life banded together to raise money for the reconstruction – almost

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[7] Tyrrell, 5.

[8] Tyrrell, 41-43.

750,00 zl were raised by the end of 1881, much of this from women's groups. The National Theater reopened November 18, 1883 (again with *Libuše*), and has been the primary opera house in the Czech Republic ever since, standing as a beacon on the banks of the Vltava River, its gold rounded roof gleaming in the sunlight.[9]

Female Librettists

Although female librettists existed prior to the nineteenth century and outside of Bohemia, the concentration of female librettists working with Czech composers during the second half of the nineteenth century is unprecedented. Three of the first prominent composers of Czech opera (Bedřich Smetana, Antonín Dvořák, and Zdeněk Fibich) each collaborated with a female librettist on at least three operas, and Leoš Janáček wrote operas based on texts by women, even if they were not his librettists. Notably, around the time of the French Revolution women played an unusually active role in the creation of French opera, as Jacqueline Letzter and Robert Adelson described in *Women Writing Opera*.[10] Although Jane Bowers and Judith Tick present a laudable history of women as composers throughout music history, their focus is on creation of music, not words, and they do not place great emphasis on women's

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[9] Tyrrell, 43-44 and Wilma A. Iggers, *Women of Prague: Ethnic Diversity and Social Change from the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Providence, RI: Berghan, 1995), 21. It gleams even more now after a recent renovation.

[10] Jacqueline Letzter and Robert Adelson, *Women Writing Opera: Creativity and Controversy in the Age of the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

involvement in writing libretti.[11] Here I attempt to fill in this gap in the scholarship by examining Czech female librettists' role in the creation of a Czech operatic repertoire.

A cursory examination of the annals of IMSLP's librettist archive reveals a surprisingly long list of female librettists, many working during the 19th century. That said, most of the women writing opera libretti in the 19th century were not working with particularly well-known composers. The most familiar names on the list are figures like Delius, Lálo, and Wolf, all of whom are known for their vocal and choral writing, but none of whom are remembered for their operatic contributions. Prior to the early twentieth century, the biggest operatic names with the highest concentration of libretti written by women are all Czech, a topic that has yet to be addressed in Anglophone scholarship. Here for the first time I examine the way the late development of Czech opera as a genre, when coupled with the 19th-century rebirth of Czech as a literary language led to the opportunity for women to be uniquely involved as librettists.

Literature Review

In the mid-to-late-1980s a new wave of American attention to Czech and Slavic works began to come from American musicologists. These musicological discussions of nationalism were roughly contemporaneous with a renewed interest in nationalism in the fields of history and political science. One of the primary tenets of these new studies on nationalism was its artificial nature. In 1983 historians Benedict Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm both set forward theories of nationalism that relied on the idea

[11] Jane Bowers and Judith Tick, eds., *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950* (Urbana and Chicago, Ill: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

that the nation was both based on a sense of shared history and that in most cases that history was established through artificial means. In Hobsbawm's version of nationalism this was the "invented tradition," which he defines as "both 'traditions' actually invented, constructed, and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and datable period...and establishing themselves with great rapidity."[12] Anderson's Marxist concept of "Imagined Communities," predicated less on ritual and more on shared quotidian experiences – that the nation was unified by the knowledge that anonymous masses all engaged in the same normal behaviors (in his example, reading the newspaper).[13] Anderson's belief that print-capitalism was a critical part of burgeoning national consciousness goes hand-in-hand with the Bohemian drive to revive the Czech language, which resulted in a new proliferation of periodicals in the mid-19th century.[14]

Historian Ernest Gellner put forth his own theory of nationalism in his 1983 *Nations and Nationalism*. In Gellner's theory the idea of a shared culture plays a critical role in defining a nation. Gellner posits that in order to form a viable nation, a centrally sustained high culture must pervade throughout the strata of society, and, in concert

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[12] Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

[13] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

[14] For Anderson on print-capitalism, see his Chapter 3, "The Origins of National Consciousness"; for more on the proliferation of Czech periodicals during the national revival see Derek Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia: A Czech History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 77-78.

with Hobsbawm and Anderson, agrees that this culture is generally an invented one, not one literally adopted, as Herder would have argued, from the *Volk*.[15]

I would argue that late nineteenth century Czech nationalism found itself in the middle phases of Gellner's concept of nation-building. Gellner argues that nations only fully come into existence "when general social conditions make for a standardized homogeneous, centrally sustained high culture, pervading entire populations, not just elite minorities," and that only when this condition is achieved "does it come to appear that any defiance of their boundaries by political units constitutes a scandal."[16] In the period at hand (roughly the last two decades of the nineteenth century), Czechs were beginning to establish a "centrally sustained high culture": they had successfully revived the Czech language, had, per Anderson's requirements for nationalism, successfully developed print capitalism through a vibrant and often contentious print capitalism in the form of journals, and were well on their way to establishing a "centrally sustained high culture" through the proliferation of Czech opera and music. Yet, because this cultural life was still so focused on Prague, they had yet to involve enough of the rural communities to overtake the power of Habsburg rule. The Czechs had yet to, as Gellner puts it, impose their "high culture on a society, where the majority of the population had previously been consumed by low culture."[17] They were

[15] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983).

[16] Gellner, 55.

[17] Gellner 57.

in the process of "eliminat[ing] the alien [German] high culture," and replacing it with their own Czech one.[18]

It would be easy to argue that the Czech national revival was primarily a linguistic form of nationalism. Although language was a critical point of commonality for the Czechs (and one of the reasons that the Germans felt they could exert superiority over the Czechs), I would posit that language was not the primary unifying factor for the movement. For one thing, since many of the revivalists, having been raised in middle class Habsburg homes, grew up speaking primarily German, many of them had to learn Czech as the movement developed. Given that fact, language was not a precondition for national unity. Moreover, given the linguistic diversity of the regions of Bohemia and Moravia, a shared language was not necessarily a fair assumption. Thus, although there was a strong linguistic element to the Czech national revival, I suggest the movement was primarily a cultural nationalism, rather than linguistic in keeping with Gellner, Hobsbawm, and others.[19]

Not long after these contributions from historians, musicologists like Richard Taruskin and Michael Beckerman began to question the existence of "Czech music" as an intellectual construct. In his groundbreaking article "In Search of Czechness in Music," Beckerman challenged the existence of "Czechness" as a musical quality and proved that nationalism, particularly in "Czech" music is more in the ears of the

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[18] Gellner, 57.

[19] Hobsbawm grants somewhat more credence to linguistic nationalism, but does caution that "we should beware of too much reliance on the literate" (53). Anderson, although outwardly embracing a more culturally-based type of nationalism, does require a fairly robust sense of linguistic unity given his reliance on print-capitalism as a critical element of developing the nation.

beholder than in the music itself.[20] For the first time music wasn't Czech (or Russian or Hungarian) because of the nationality of the composer. Rather, it was Czech because the composer intended it to be so and audiences interpreted it thusly. This generation of scholarship finally problematized the notion that "Czech music" was even viable as a concept, given the inherent othering implied by categorization of Czech music (one doesn't talk about Vivaldi as writing Italian music or Brahms as writing German music). In calling it "Czech music" (rather than just "music"), one suggested that, by definition, it was in some way different than mainstream. I take Beckerman's problematization of Czechness as a point of departure to examine the ways in which composers, librettists, and their critics and audiences would have viewed their own Czechness, and the way that conception of national and cultural identity figured into the creation and reception of their operas. Moreover, building on the ideas of invented traditions and cultures put forward by Gellner, Hobsbawm, and Anderson, I examine the potential impact of the invention of tradition on opera as with the case of the reception of Fibich's *Šárka*.

More recently musicologist Brian Locke's magisterial *Opera and Ideology in Prague* brought a more modern musicology to bear on Prague's cultural milieu.[21] Locke supplements John Tyrrell's work on the history of Czech opera by including copious reception history of the polemical arguments that took place in the Prague presses during the late nineteenth and twentieth-centuries, focusing more on the

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[20] Michael Beckerman, "In Search of Czechness in Music," *19th-Century Music* 10, no. 1 (1986): 61-73, http://www.jstor.org/stable/746749 (accessed May 13, 2016).

[21] Brian Locke, *Opera and Ideology in Prague.*

ideologies driving the reception of Czech opera, while simultaneously providing information and analysis about more modernist Czech works, which had been slighted by previous English-language studies. My dissertation focuses mostly on the period just before Locke's primary focus. Building on his reception history and ideological considerations, I add a discussion of the libretti, on which Locke places less emphasis, and creative processes involved in creating some of the works emanating into this polemical and politicized atmosphere.

The history of Czech musicology is complicated and has been significantly impacted by the recent history of what is now the Czech Republic. The musicologist, critic, and communist political figure Zdeněk Nejedlý cast a long shadow on Czech musicology. Beginning with the prolonged ideological battles described by Locke, Nejedlý continued to propagandize Smetana (and his heirs) and slander Dvořák (and his successors) first through polemical treatises in Czech periodicals and later though his official mouthpiece as high-ranking communist official in the Czech ministry of Education and Culture. As a result Czech musicology was dominated by Nejedlý's narrative about Smetana's superiority in defining the Czech musical tradition, at the expense of his perceived rival, Dvořák.

Czech musicologist Otakar Šourek did an admirable job in his attempts to counteract Nejedlý's influence. His four-volume biography of Dvořák is comprehensive[22]; yet, he and others working under Nejedlý's shadow exhibit an understandably defensive tone in their work as they fight to bring Dvořák up to the

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[22] Otakar Šourek, *Život a dilo Antonína Dvořáka* (Prague: Státní nakl. krásné literatury, hudby a umĕni, 1954-57).

same level of scholarly respect as Smetana. This polemical backdrop to Czech musicology means that all of the material produced during this period has to be weighed with the proverbial grain of salt, weeding through slander and defensiveness in order to find the facts.

Similarly, Jarmil Burghauser did laudable work on Dvořák for decades. His impressive thematic catalogue and biography (1996) began to break past the Nejedlian posturing of the communist years and serve as an invaluable resource to the modern musicologist working on Dvořák, in addition to providing a valuable catalog of Dvořák's works, which now each have a B number, for Burghauser.[23]

Today most Czech musicologists still only present their work in their native language, and most of this work has yet to be translated, leaving English speakers at a distinct disadvantage. Much of the extant work on Czech composers is now factually and ideologically out of date: as a result of changing tides in musicology, the last English-language biography of Dvořák other than David Beveridge's 1997 translation of Burghauser's brief biography,[24] is John Clapham's book from 1979[25]; the last English-language biography of Smetana was written by Brian Large and published in 1970, and there has never been a monograph-length treatment of Fibich in English.[26]

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[23] Jarmil Burghauser, *Antonín Dvořák: thematický katalog* (Prague: Bärenreiter Editio Supraphon, 1996); Jarmil Burghauser *Antonín Dvořák* (Prague: Supraphon, 1967).

[24] Jarmil Burghauser, *Antonín Dvořák: life and work,* trans. David Beveridge, ed. Milan Pospíšil (Prague: KLP, 2007).

[25] John Clapham, *Dvořák*. New York: Norton, 1979.

[26] Brian Large, *Smetana* (New York: Praeger, 1970). A more comprehensive discussion of the literature on Fibich can be found later in this chapter.

Turning to the topic of libretti, we have even fewer resources to rely on. Considering the importance of the libretto to an operatic work, there is remarkably little scholarship on the topic. Many opera scholars discuss libretti to some extent in their discussion of various composers or works, the most extensive have considered the collaborations between specific librettists and composers (Mozart and Da Ponte, Verdi and Boito); there have been fewer attempts, however, to write about libretti or librettists more generally. *Reading Opera*, the result of an interdisciplinary conference at Cornell in 1986 provides an idea of what libretto studies *could* be, even as it falls short of what one might hope to see.[27] This collection offers a variety of essays of varying levels of interdisciplinarity about the role text plays in music. Although the collection lacks a strong overarching theme and, as several reviewers have pointed out, is somewhat uneven in quality, it does at least point to an awareness of the lack of libretto scholarship in musicology, specifically, and the humanities more generally. Although one of the reviewers points to the novelty of this volume's interdisciplinarity, few works have embarked on similar projects.

One valuable more recent resource on the topic is the 2014 *Oxford Handbook of Opera*, which contains essays on a large number of topics relevant to opera.[28] Several present possible avenues for interpretation or study of libretti, and modes of considering the librettist's role in the process of writing opera. Particularly given the strong interdisciplinary wind that is currently blowing through American academia,

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[27] Arthur Groos and Roger Parker, eds., *Reading Opera* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

[28] Helen M. Greenwald, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Opera* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014).

now seems to be a time ripe for future more extensive interdisciplinary studies of librettists and libretti. Musicology would greatly benefit from having more theoretical models upon which to ground their discussions of libretti.

Histories of Czech Women

Czech authors have contributed a number of volumes about the role of women in society and the history of women in Czech society. A review of this literature is beyond the scope of the current study.[29] I will, however, provide a brief overview of a few resources of value to the non-Czech speaking scholar with general interest in the history of Czech women, as well as some more detailed information about the sources for one of the figures to be covered in more detail in Chapter 2.

Wilma A. Iggers' *Women of Prague: Ethnic Diversity and Social Change from the Eighteenth Century to the Present* examines a selection of notable women from the given time period.[30] For each woman she provides biographical context and then a curated selection of the woman's own writing or others' writing about her. Although Iggers' chapters provide well-selected examples that show slices of Czech history, the real value in her book lies in the introduction. Here, Iggers succinctly presents

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[29] A small selection of recent Czech literature about gender during this time would begin with: Milena Lenderová, *K hříchu i k modlitbě: Žena v minulém století* (Prague: Mladá Fronta, 1999); Milena Lenderová, *Eva nejen v ráji: Žena v Čechách od středověku do 19. Století* (Prague: Karolinum, 2002); Jana Malinská, *Do politiky prý žena nesmí – proč?: Vzdělání a postavení žen v české společnosti v 19. a na počátku 20. století* (Prague: Libri, 2005); Marie L. Neudorflová, *České ženy v 19. Století: Úsílí a sny, úspěchy i zklamání na cestě k emancipaci* (Prague: Janua, 1999).

[30] Wilma Iggers, *Women of Prague: Ethnic Diversity and Social Change from the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1995).

women's history in the Czech lands with ample context and a nuanced understanding of the political and social issues that prevailed at different times in history.[31]

Composers and Librettists

The literature on Dvořák is less foreign to most musicologists and is contained largely in materials that the casual searcher would find without trouble in a university library. The material on Marie Červinková-Riegrová, however, is both less accessible to the average scholar and also more applicable to those interested in topics other than opera. For those reasons a brief literature review of the sources I relied most heavily on seems apt here.

The biographical material available to the modern researcher on the two librettists with whom this work is primarily concerned differ dramatically in their scope and availability, and as a result, are equally problematic in different ways. As I will discuss in Chapter 3, the available primary source material on Anežka Schulzová is frequently one-sided and limited mostly to her activities with Zdeněk Fibich. As such, although the material is somewhat scanty, it is largely germane to the purposes of most musicologists interested in her libretti.

The case with Marie Červinková-Riegrová, on the other hand, is quite the opposite. The available source material about and by her is overwhelming in sheer volume and, as a result of her family's prestige and her many political and

[31] Helena Volet-Jeanneret's, *La femme bourgeoise à Prague, 1860-1895: de la philantrhopie à l'Émancipation* is another useful source, albeit less accessible to the Anglophone scholar. She focuses primarily on philantrophic and social organizations, but also addresses women's role in Prague society during this time period. Helena Volet-Jeanneret, *La femme bourgeoise à Prague, 1860-1895: de la philantrhopie à l'Émancipation* (Geneva: Editions Slatkine, 1988).

philanthropic activities, much of it is unrelated to her collaborations with Dvořák. The Rieger family papers are housed primarily in the archives of the National Museum in Prague. Červinková-Riegrová's fond includes, but is not limited to, letters, newspaper clippings, estate management ledgers, libretti drafts, and her extensive diaries. There is also a small fond related to Červinková-Riegrová at the National Literary Archive in Strahov.

Marie Červinková-Riegrová's diaries are an invaluable source to anyone interested in Czech culture, politics, opera, or women's issues in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Although many women kept personal diaries during this time, few were as diligent or had access to the figures and events that Červinková-Riegrová did, which make her diaries particularly remarkable. Her biographers all mention that she wrote in her diaries on a consistent basis from her adolescence to the end of her life. Although the entries from her girlhood are more personal, by the time she entered society and became more active in her family's public life she was making note of the social and cultural affairs of the time. Later in the 1880s Červinková-Riegrová began keeping two concurrent tracks in her journal: one was the more standard recounting of her (not-so-standard) daily life; the other tracked her father's political career, noting his activities and the way they were covered in the press. Although the diaries are available archivally in Prague, two volumes have also been published covering the years 1880-1886.[32] Although not technically a part of her diaries, Marie's

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[32] Marie Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I (1880-1884),* ed. Milan Vojáček, Helena Kokešová, Martina Maříková, Marie Ryantová, Jana Svobodová, Lucie Swierczeková, Zdeněk Vácha, and Luboš Velek (Prague: Scriptorium, 2009); Marie Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky II (1885-1886),* ed. Milan Vojáček, Luboš Velek, Helena Kokešová, Martin Power, Jana Svodobová, Lucie Swierczeková, and Zdeněk Vácha (Prague:

correspondence with her father, the Old Czech politician Austrian parliamentarian, F.L. Rieger, was so voluminous during the years that she lived at the family's country estate and he split his time between Prague and Vienna, that it is also a valuable depiction of their lives and activities. So far few, if any, Anglophone scholars have devoted much research to even the published *Zápisky*. I quote from the diaries at length in Chapter 3, but have mostly limited my analysis to passages pertaining to Červinková-Riegrová's libretto-writing activities. There is far more to be learned about Prague's cultural and political life and the female experience in 19th century Bohemia from these extraordinary documents.

In addition to archival sources this dissertation relies primarily on two biographies of Marie Červinková-Riegrová written by her contemporaries. The first, *Rieger, Smetana, Dvořák* was written by Libuše Bráfová, Marie Červinková-Riegrová's younger sister.[33] Bráfová's main aim was actually to defend their father from charges of anti-Smetanism. She devotes much of the book to showing that F.L. Rieger actually enjoyed Smetana's music and that his politics did not extend to the realm of music; rather, Rieger was merely an ardent supporter of *all* Czech music and was not overly interested in the polemics that took place in Prague musical life. Regardless of her father's political involvement, Bráfová had unfettered access and intimate knowledge of her family's life and her sister's collaborations with Dvořák. Ironically, despite her familial connection, Bráfová seems less biased than our second biographer, Božena Augustinnová.

Scriptorium, 2013).

[33] Libuše Bráfová, *Rieger, Smetana, Dvořák* (Fr. A. Urbánek, 1913).

In the preface to her more standard biography of Marie Červinková-Riegrová, Božena Augustinnová humbly states that somehow she was selected from among all of Marie's friends to write her biography and that she would do her best.[34] This work, written shortly after Marie Červinková-Riegrová's death, is useful in that it provides a standard chronological account of hre life. That said, Augustinnová frequently defaults to nineteenth-century levels of hyperbole that border on the absurd and so, many of her statements must be taken with a grain of salt. Moreover, she seems to have had incomplete access to Červinková-Riegrová's journals and papers and her accounts sometimes contradict those of Bráfová or Červinková-Riegrová herself. Nevertheless, Augustinnová presents perhaps the most balanced and concise overview of Červinková-Riegrová's life, giving more or less equal weight to all aspects of her life, unlike other sources.

The literature on Zdeněk Fibich and Anežka Schulzová is both less widely available and also presents some unique difficulties. The Czech Museum of Music (České Muzeum Hudby, hereafter ČMH) holds a small but rich *fond* of materials relating to Fibich's life and works, catalogued as S80. The documents pertinent to this study include contracts with Fibich's publisher Urbánek, short notes from Fibich to Schulzová, drafts of unfinished or unrealized Schulzová libretti, a handwritten draft of Hostinský's biography of Fibich, and other assorted correspondence. Additionally, there are some quirky mementos of Fibich's life and relationship with Schulzová. Included in this category is a lock of Fibich's famously thick chestnut hair, and a curious volume catalogued as "Památník" ("scrapbook"). In the "památník" one can

[34] Božena Augustinnová, *Marie Červinková-Riegrová: životopisný nástin* (Prague. Bursík and Kohout, 1897), n.p.

find fragments of quotes in various languages including Czech, German, and Latin, from a variety of sources, written in Anežka Schulzová's hand. Some appear to be original verses, although some are copies, notably a partial Czech translation of Shakespeare's "To be or not to be" speech from *Hamlet*. Also found pressed in the volume are leaves from the graves of famous personalities, including Chopin.

This long-established *fond* is helpful, in that it contains some correspondence and business documents, in addition to scores and sketches, but it is conspicuously one-sided. Given the adulterous nature of Fibich's relationship with Schulzová, the Fibich family has been reticent to share sources from their family archives, particularly those that pertain to this relationship. The possibilities of what could be held there are rich, and one hopes that the family may, at some point in the future, decide that enough time has passed and that the scholarly value of these materials outweighs any potential embarrassment that Fibich's affair with Schulzová might have caused.

Fortunately, the Schulzová family has been much more forthcoming with their family papers. The result of this is a recently obtained, newly catalogued addendum to Fond S80, the papers of Anežka Schulzová's grandniece Zdeni Schulz. This new trove of papers includes family letters detailing more of Schulzová and Fibich's relationship, including the family's frequent trips to spas and resorts, often with Fibich in tow. This collection adds charming nuance to the previously known details of the relationship and brings depth to our understanding of the Schulzová family and how Fibich fit into their family life.

The published monograph sources on Fibich fall into four main categories: works published during or just after Fibich's life by people who knew him, works

published around the time of the centennial of Fibich's birth, modern works by Czech scholars, and works by English-speaking scholars.[35] Primary among those who knew and wrote about Fibich are his librettist and lover Anežka Schulzová; his close friend and librettist, the critic and musicologist Otakar Hostinský; and his student, the critic, musicologist, and Communist Minister of Culture, Zdeněk Nejedlý.

Anežka Schulzová wrote two books about Zdeněk Fibich. The first, *Zdenko Fibich: Eine musikalische silhouette*, was written in 1898 under the pseudonym Carl Ludwig Richter and published by Fibich's publishing house, F. A. Urbánek.[36] Although Schulzová-as-Richter includes a brief biographical sketch at the beginning of the book, her work avoids discussion of Fibich's personal life after his childhood, and focuses largely on Fibich's musical works. The book has an impressive number of musical examples and some fairly significant musical analysis. Although Richter makes at best feeble attempts to appear unbiased, Anežka Schulzová appears only in passing as the librettist for Fibich's last three operas.

Although it was not published as a monograph until 1950, Schulzová's second book about Fibich, *Zdenko Fibich: hrstka upomínek a intimních rysů* [A Handful of Reminiscences and Intimate Traits] was written and originally published serially in the

[35] There are additionally, of course, vast numbers of periodical sources from Fibich's life and just after it, as well as some modern periodical source work by Czech musicologists and others. Although some of these periodical sources are cited in these two chapters, the source list in Jiří Kopecký's *Opery Zdeňka Fibicha z devadesátých let 19. století* is comprehensive and incomparable. I refer the interested Czech-speaking reader there. Jiří Kopecký, *Opery Zdeňka Fibicha z devadesátých let 19. století* (Olomouc, Czech Republic: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, 2008).

[36] Carl Ludwig Richter, *Zdenko Fibich. Eine Musikalische Silhouette* (Prague: Fr. A. Urbánek, Verlag böhmischer Musik, 1900).

journal *Květy* in 1902.[37] Here, Schulzová writes as herself, in Czech, with a significantly more personal and conversational bent. Although she, herself, rarely enters the discussion, the book is clearly written from the perspective of someone who knew Fibich personally and intimately, detailing his habits, thoughts, and also discussing his music. Interestingly, Schulzová reuses some of her own material about Fibich's operas almost verbatim from "Richter's" book, indicating that either "Richter's" identity was no longer a secret, or that she didn't care, at that point, after Fibich's death, if people figured out who "Richter" really was. Although Schulzová's unique role in Fibich's life offers valuable insights into Fibich's mindset and life, Schulzová makes absolutely no attempt to remain objective, and it creates an almost comically biased product at times.

In addition to being a musicologist, professor, and critic, Otakar Hostinský was Fibich's closest friend and the librettist for his opera, *The Bride of Messina*. He published his *Vzpominky na Fibicha* in 1909, the year before his own death. Hostinský's work includes more details about Fibich's biography than either of Schulzová's books do, and, naturally, puts more focus on the works on which he and Fibich collaborated. His jealousy and distrust of Schulzová comes through, but he is, by and large, a less biased author than either Schulzová or Nejedlý.[38]

Zdeněk Nejedlý was the third author with close personal ties to Fibich to make significant published contributions to Fibich scholarship. Nejedlý's shadow looms large over most mid-century Czech musicological scholarship, but his position as Fibich's

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[37] Anežka Schulzová, *Zdenko Fibich: hrstka upomínek a intimních rysů* (Prague: Národní Hudební Vydavatelství Orbis, 1950).

[38] O. Hostinský, *Vzpomínky na Fibicha* (Prague: Nákladem Komorního Hudebního Závodu Mojmíra Urbánka, 1909).

student and friend (as well as being a close friend to Anežka Schulzová, particularly after Fibich's death), lends him particular credence in this arena.[39] Although as with all of Nejedlý's works, blind bias is at play, we must be grateful to him (and by extension, Anežka Schulzová) for sharing the information that Schulzová gave him in the years after Fibich's death. Using knowledge garnered from his conversations with Schulzová, his study of the documents she provided him, and his intimate familiarity with Fibich's music, Nejedlý published his *Milostný Deník* in 1925.[40] Although the book primarily focuses on Fibich's *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences* (the so-called "Erotic Piano Diary"), it contains significant details about Fibich's personal relationship with Schulzová, which Fibich's family certainly would not have shared. Especially in light of the Fibich family's reticence to share Fibich's papers, *Milostný Deník* is an invaluable source in any study relating to Fibich's relationship with Anežka Schulzová.

The second wave of significant published scholarship on Fibich came around the time of the centennial of his birth. In his introduction to Anežka Schulzová's volume, published in 1950, Ludvík Boháček even notes that the book would have been published sooner, had the war not prevented its publication, and that the editors then decided to hold the publication to coincide with the Fibich centennial.

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[39] A rampant supporter of Smetana (and by extension, Fibich), and a vitriolic detractor of Dvořák, whose impact was magnified by his official role in the communist Czechoslovak government from the mid-1940s through the mid-1950s, Nejedlý is a complicated and frustrating figure in Czech musicology. For more information see the introduction to this dissertation and also Brian Locke's incomparable *Opera and Ideology in Prague*.

[40] Zdeněk Nejedlý, *Zděnka Fibicha milostný deník: Nalady, dojmy a upomínky* (Prague: Nakladatelství Melantrich, 1948).

First in this wave of new Fibichiana was Mirko Očadlík's *Život a dílo Zdeňka Fibicha*, which appeared in 1950.[41] For the first time with Očadlík's work, we have a biography of Fibich written by someone who didn't know the composer personally (Očadlík was born in 1904). This resulted in a book that, while it was still colored by the polemical bias associated with most Communist-era Czech musicological work, is considerably more objective than those by Fibich's contemporaries.

In 1951, Artuš Rektorys published one of the most useful sources for the modern Fibich scholar, his massive two-volume *Zdeněk Fibich: Sborník dokumentů a studií o jeho životě a dilé* [A collection of Documents and Studios of his Life].[42] Although Rektorys did not add much original material, he did, however, comb through the voluminous Czech periodical matter from Fibich's life and collect reviews and notices about Fibich's work from the major Czech periodicals of the time, in addition to compiling biographical information and documents about the composer. Particularly given the tendency of Czech periodicals to serialize articles across several issues or even volumes of a journal, Rektorys' work is extremely useful.

Finally, in 1953 František Pala wrote his *Fibichová* Šárka*.*[43] This tiny book details the source material, composition, premiere, and music of Fibich's most famous opera. Although it is less than 70 pages long (and quite diminutive in size), Pala's work is valuable to anyone interested in *Šárka*.

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[41] Mírko Očadlík, *Život a dílo Zdeňka Fibicha* (Prague: Nakladateltsví Práce, 1950).

[42] Artuš Rektorys, *Zdeněk Fibich: sborník dokumentů a studií o jeho životě a díle* (Prague: Orbis, 1951).

[43] František Pala, *Fibichova Šárka* (Prague: Orbis, 1953).

Fibich has received considerably less attention in the years since his centennial, particularly in comparison to Dvořák, Smetana, and Janáček. With the end of the Second World War and, some years later, communism in Czechoslovakia, there was an influx of international scholarship about Fibich's more famous compatriots. Not so for Fibich. Even Czech musicologists seem less interested in Fibich than in other Czech composers. Fortunately, in the last fifteen years there have been significant strides in modern Czech musicological scholarship on Fibich. For example, musicologist Vladimir Hudec undertook the massive task of creating his *Thematicky Katalog* of Fibich's works, which was finally published in 2001.[44] The work, which includes impressive tri-lingual content, features perhaps the best English-language biography of Fibich and also provides a solid overview of his works. In addition, Hudec's work also includes a comprehensive bibliography of works about Fibich, which is a helpful starting point, particularly for those who are not Czech speakers.

Věra Šustiková-Ritterova, director of the ČMH, organized a centennial conference on Fibich in 2000 and has published extensively on Fibich, particularly his melodramas. Most importantly, Jiří Kopecký, professor at the university in Olomouc, whose monograph on Fibich in the 1890s is an invaluable resource on the topic.[45] Kopecký has also published a small volume *Zdeněk Fibich: Stopy života a díla* [Imprint of a Life and Works], which includes full text of many of the sources from Fond S80 and the Zdení Schulzová addition, with accompanying commentary and explanatory

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

[45] Jiří Kopecký, *Opery Zdeňka Fibicha.*

notes.[46] He is currently the most active Czech musicologist in the field of Fibich's operas and his relationship with Anežka Schulzová.

The smallest category of work on Fibich is the scholarship in English. No English-language monograph on Fibich exists, and even his presence in other works is fleeting, at best. Perhaps the English-speaker's first chance to learn about Fibich came in Gerald Abraham's 1968 *Slavonic and Romantic Music*.[47] The work is a collection of essays about various topics in Slavic and Russian music and includes a piece about Fibich's Piano Diaries. Although Abraham does not appear to have had access to any archival material, he does provide translations and summaries based primarily on Nejedlý's work, giving the first Anglophonic access to Fibich.

John Tyrrell is the other English speaker to have devoted any real thought to Fibich. His 1988 *Czech Opera* is the most important work of its kind, and although it doesn't dwell overlong on matters relating to Fibich, Tyrrell did give Fibich his due alongside other more (and less) famous Czech composers of opera.[48] Tyrrell and Judith A. Mabary also contributed the entry to the *Grove Dictionary* on Fibich, which is, alongside Hudec's biographical sketch, probably the most easily accessible comprehensive biography of Fibich in English.

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[46] Jiří Kopecký, ed., *Zdeněk Fibich: Stopy života a díla* (Olomouc, Czech Republic: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, 2009).

[47] Gerald Abraham, *Slavonic and Romantic Music: Essays and Studies* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1968).

[48] John Tyrrell, *Czech Opera*.

Chapter 2 presents biographical material and historical context regarding the two collaborations at the heart of this dissertation. Antonín Dvořák's biography is well represented in standard musicological reference texts, and Zdeněk Fibich's life has been documented well in several sources. Their librettists, however, have been discussed in English only in so far as their lives relate to the composers with whom they worked. As such it seems worthwhile to present a more full picture of Marie Červinková-Riegrová and Anežka Schulzová. This chapter explores the lives of these two women and how their lives intersected with their composer-collaborators. Here, I also present an analysis of Červinková-Riegrová's correspondence with her friend Gabriela Preissová, mentioned at the opening of this chapter. The letters between the two women touch upon many of the issues surrounding gender, national identity, and women writing professionally that recur throughout the case studies presented in Chapters 3 and 4.

Chapter 3 examines the collaborations between Marie Červinková-Riegrová and Antonín Dvořák on *Dimitrij*, a Russian historical epic grand opera, and *Jakobín,* a Czech village opera. Following his first successful collaboration with Červinková-Riegrová on *Dimitrij* in 1882, Dvořák spent six years contemplating Červinková-Riegrová's libretto for *Jakobín*, also completed in 1882, before finally composing the work in 1888. In this chapter I argue that Dvořák felt torn between his German supporters– notably, the composer Johannes Brahms, critic Eduard Hanslick, and his publisher Fritz Simrock, who wanted him to write a German opera – and Prague's cultural elite, who naturally hoped that his next opera would be a Czech one. Relying primarily on Červinková-Riegrová's diaries, correspondence, and the reception of her collaborations with

Dvořák, I reveal the ways that competing and often conflicting spheres of influence impacted Dvořák's operatic career and, by extension, his collaboration with Červinková-Riegrová.

In Chapter 4, I examine Zdeněk Fibich and Anežka Schulzová's greatest success, the opera *Šárka,* in more detail. I show that although Fibich's work was generally well received by reviewers, the same critics lambasted Schulzová for her alterations of a beloved national myth, which in their eyes constituted something akin to cultural treason. I ultimately reveal that the critics' need to defend their nation's culture served to create a blinder as to the actual history of the myth – one that had only been finalized in the first decades of the nineteenth century.

In my final chapter I draw some connections between the preceding chapters, examining issues that affected both collaborative pairs, even as their relationships and the resulting operas were incredibly different from each other. I also offer a few possible answers to the question of how these women were afforded the professional experiences that they had, even as the role of librettist seemed to be firmly coded as male in other operatic traditions.

With this dissertation I expose a fascinating intersection of culture, history, and gender that is unmatched in opera history. I explore the cultural and social milieu that allowed women to take on professional roles that had not been afforded them in other times and locales, and bring to light the success they helped their composers to achieve – in both cases greater operatic success than either composer had ever managed previously. Most of all, however, I tell the story of two truly remarkable women who

used their talents and creativity to provide a (mostly thankless) service to men, to opera, and (in their minds) to their nation.

Chapter 2: The Lives of *Libretistky* (and one Composer)

Most of the protagonists in this dissertation are relatively unknown outside of the Czech Republic. In fact, few Czechs know much if anything about Marie Červinková-Riegrová, let alone Zdeněk Fibich or Anežka Schulzová. These individuals' biographies play no small role (and, in the case of Fibich and Schulzová, a rather significant one) in their artistic output and, quite frankly, are interesting in their own right. For these reasons, in this chapter I outline the biographies of Červinková-Riegrová, Fibich, and Schulzová, highlighting the portions of their lives that will have the greatest import in the case studies that follow in Chapters 3 and 4. I end the chapter with a discussion of Červinková-Riegrová's friendship and correspondence with Gabriela Preissová, which elucidates several of the key issues confronting Czech women in the late 19th century.

Marie Červinková-Riegrová

Marie Červinková-Riegrová came from one of the First Families of the Czech national revival movement. Her maternal grandfather, Františék Palacký, wrote the first modern history of the Czechs written in the Czech language, the four-volume *Dějiny národu českého v Čechách a v Moravě* (*The History of the Czech Nation in Bohemia and Moravia*). Her father, František Ladislav Rieger was a highly respected Czech politician and delegate to the Habsburg Parliament in Vienna. The Palackýs and the Riegers – František Rieger, Marie Palacká-Riegrová, along with their children Marie, and younger siblings Bohuš and Libuše – lived together throughout Červinková-Riegrová's childhood and also played host to one of the most important cultural salons

in Prague. As a result, she was raised in a home that was consistently filled by the greatest Czech minds of their time.

Červinková-Riegrová's mother, Marie Riegrová-Palacká, in addition to growing up as the daughter of one of the most prominent Czechs of their time, had an impeccable musical upbringing. She studied with Smetana, and even though she didn't have especially fond memories of her time as his pupil, did not allow her experiences to incur upon her patriotic admiration for his works. She was an accomplished harpist and loved music when she was younger, although she gave up her musical hobbies after her father František Palacký's death in 1876.[49] A devout advocate of Bernard Bolzano's philosophical teachings, which promoted pacifism and the advancement of welfare for all, Marie Riegrová-Palacká instilled in her daughter a deep sense of duty and moral obligation to care for those less fortunate than her.[50] Although Riegrová-Palacká was a key proponent of educating her children (she was Marie Červinková-Riegrová's sole teacher for the first several years of her schooling, and continued to be her French instructor, even when other duties kept her from being the primary teacher),[51] she also wanted to be sure that they did more than just write, which she considered to be something of an indulgence.[52] Her own life was mostly devoted to

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[49] Bráfová, 16-19.

[50] Morscher, Edgar, "Bernard Bolzano", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/bolzano/>. Accessed May 6, 2016.

[51] Augustinnová,10.

[52] Bráfová, 46.

charitable causes, notably aid for poor women and children, and Marie Červinková-Riegrová carried these causes on after her mother's death. Červinková-Riegrová's close friend Anna Lauermannová-Mikschová described Mrs. Rieger as "an unspeaking woman with large, golden brown eyes, with a head inclined to one side, a woman who gave the impression that she was either an ill flower on the stalk, or that she was already a saint who had endured torture...respectable, like a picture of a martyr in the shadow of an old church," despite her obvious affection for her children.[53] Although Marie Červinková-Riegrová shared her mother's deep sense of philanthropic duty and piety, she had an even closer relationship with her father.

Červinková-Riegrová's father, František Ladislav Rieger was also an enthusiastic, if casual, music aficionado. Rieger was interested in art and music from his childhood and always delighted in anything Czech. According to his younger daughter Libuše Bráfová, Rieger never considered himself to be "staročeský,"[54] only just Czech. She writes that "I can confidently say from the moment of my earliest memories, music that was distinctively Czech was his favorite, and that it wasn't a coincidence, rather it was a civic duty in our family."[55] Bráfová also recalls that the Riegers did not subscribe to musical periodicals, and that Rieger and Marie Červinková-Riegrová had "little interest in theoretical discussions about music," even

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[53] Anna Lauermannová-Mikschová, *Lidé Minulých Dob: Kniha lidských a básnických osudů* (Prague: Sfinx, 1941), 10.

[54] Rieger was a key leader of the conservative staročech party.

[55] Bráfová, 21.

as they frequently discussed her operatic collaborations.[56] Although one of Bráfová's chief aims in writing her book was to defend Rieger's name from those who would call him anti-Smetana, these examples make it clear that Rieger was an enthusiastic, unpolemical, and only innocently political appreciator of music.

It was into this esteemed environment that Marie Červinková-Riegrová was born on August 9, 1854, the oldest of Marie Riegrová-Palacká and František Ladislav Rieger's three children. Her early biographer Božena Augustinnová aptly (if hyperbolically, as was her wont) describes the aura surrounding Červinková-Riegrová's childhood when she writes,

> This, of course, was not the surroundings in which children normally grew up. Puppets and toys lost their appeal rather quickly for the little girl whose quick-witted spirit and lively imagination were diverted by scenes in which her grandfather and father were shrouded in a halo of glory.[57]

Anna Lauermannová-Mikschová gives perhaps a slightly more realistic version of what the Rieger household was really like. She describes it as dark, drab, depressing, and lacking in color; Červinková-Riegrová's room was "furnished with a student's modesty" and she herself was "pale, fair-haired...with a high forehead and bland, as if shy, smile and ... clear blue somewhat mournful eyes."[58] Lauermannová-Mikschová also writes about their reverence for Grandfather Palacký, how they treated his study like a church, but how kind he was to them.[59] It is clear throughout her writings and from

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[56] Bráfová, 10.

[57] Augustinnová, 8.

[58] Lauermannová-Mikschová, 10.

[59] Lauermannová-Mikschová, 11.

what we know of Červinková-Riegrová's biography that she was deeply influenced by her family's socio-political background, which shaped her education and future writing and career.

Marie Červinková-Riegrová received an unimpeachable education befitting the eldest daughter of one of Prague's foremost families. She was homeschooled by her mother, the family's priest, Father Schneider, and several private tutors for most of her early years.[60] Later, when she enrolled in a girls' school, she was immediately placed into the highest class. She graduated July 31, 1868, and although her formal education was at an end, her learning did not stop there. With her father's encouragement, she continued to nurture her insatiable curiosity and love of learning. Augustinnová asserts, "We are clearly not exaggerating if we say that Marie [Červinková-]Riegrová, from the moment that she started to learn, did not stop working until her last breath."[61] And so, she spent the summer of 1868 at the Riegers' country estate, Maleč, absorbing knowledge from her father and grandfather and their rotation of esteemed guests.[62] When the Riegers returned to Prague in autumn 1868 Červinková-Riegrová

[60] Likely as a result of the fact that it wasn't until the 1860s that there were high schools that consistently taught in the Czech language; instruction in Czech wasn't even legal until the 1850s. Augustinnová does not give the details of the school that Marie Červinková-Riegrová attended, but it seems likely that it was a private school for girls. The first official girls *gymnasium* didn't graduate its first class until 1895. For more, see Derek Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia*, 90-91.

[61] Augustinnová, 10.

[62] Augustinnová, 16.

continued her studies at home, focusing on music, art, and languages. She read Pushkin and Chateaubriand in their original languages and also began to learn English.[63]

In the years following her graduation from high school, Červinková-Riegrová had several opportunities for international travel that were educational, but which also had the impact of broadening her horizons. In the spring and summer of 1869 the Riegers sent Červinková-Riegrová (who was more than a little reluctant to be separated from her tightly-knit family for the first time) to Frankfurt to perfect her German conversation and gain international experience. At the Krebs Institute for Young Ladies she surprised the director, who expected her to speak no German at all, by being one of the most accomplished girls there. Despite her linguistic aptitude, in Frankfurt Červinková-Riegrová struggled to fit in with the other girls (an international group of Germans, English, Americans, Russians, and a Romanian). She was offended that the other girls, lacking her extreme devoutness, did not show appropriate respect on Holy days, and she became irate when asked to write an essay about German men as national heroes.[64] This was just one instance of her early awareness that she was not like other girls.

Červinková-Riegrová was incredibly devoted to her journals and wrote in them regularly from her adolescence until her death. From her diaries and from the accounts of those who knew her, we can paint a relatively clear portrait of Marie Červinková-Riegrová's personality. She had a fierce sense of self-discipline and duty. Augustinnová writes that, although she was clearly a Palacká like her mother, she had her father's

[63] Augustinnová, 17.

[64] Augustinnová, 17-19.

"fiery temperament that urged her to action."[65] Anna Lauermannová-Mikschová described Červinková-Riegrová in a similarly conflicting manner, noting that she was someone who "tended toward self torture," but whom she was often able to coax out of the house, and when she did, was active, vivacious, and happy.[66]

Although the entire Rieger family was close-knit, Marie Červinková-Riegrová and her father had an especially tight bond. Bráfová speculates that their closeness may have originated from the fact that Rieger had trouble connecting to his son Bohuš, so he turned his attention to his elder daughter. Regardless of the reason for their closeness, Bráfová asserts that "I have never known a daughter to be more devoted to her father than Marie Červinková," a weighty claim coming from the man's other daughter.[67] Marie Červinková-Riegrová had nearly daily correspondence with her father when they were apart from each other, and even honed her language skills, learning Russian in addition to her already fluent French, Czech, and German, in order to help her father with his correspondence.[68]

From her youth Červinková-Riegrová found a kindred spirit in Anna Lauermannová-Mikschová, who would remain one of her closest friends until Červinková-Riegrová's death in 1895. The friendship was so close that Lauermannová-Mikschová's biographer, Miroslav Rutte, wrote that when Marie Červinková-Riegrová died, Lauermannová-Mikschová lost the only friend with whom she was close enough

[65] Augustinnová, 12.

[66] Lauermannová, 12.

[67] Bráfová, 47.

[68] Augustinnová, 31-32.

to be on a casual first-name basis.[69] Around age 11, Červinková-Riegrová, Lauermannová-Mikschová, and a few other girls founded a club that they called Děvín. Likely formed in response to Vojtěch Náprstek's American Ladies Club, founded in 1865 with the purpose of educating and liberating women, Děvín was named for the mythical fortress of Děvín, which was the women's stronghold during the War of the Maidens.[70] The club's goals were to educate and care for the poor and to protect women from men, although if Lauermannová-Mikschová had had her way, they would have officially advocated for hostility toward men.[71] Marie Červinková-Riegrová, the club President, called herself Vlasta, and was the editor and primary author of the club's publication, also called *Vlasta*. Lauermannová, also known as Šárka, was the club secretary.[72] Throughout the winter of 1866-1867 the members of Děvín carried out good deeds, helped their mothers, and published eight issues of *Vlasta*, which were written in Červinková-Riegrová's hand and included articles, stories, poems, and translations.[73] The club disbanded for the summer in April 1867 when the Rieger

[69] Lauermannová, 152. Rutte specifically refers to the Czech practice of "tykat"-ing, that is, using the informal pronoun "ty" to mean "you," rather than the more formal "Vy."

[70] For more on Náprstek's American Ladies Club, see Iggers, 17-20, and Volet-Jeanneret, 161-198.

[71] Augustinnová, 13, Lauermannová, 17.

[72] Augustinnová, 13-14. For more on the significance of the Maiden's War, Šárka, and Vlasta, see Chapter 4.

[73] Augustinnová, 14.

family decamped to Maleč for the season, and by autumn the other members had lost interest in the club.[74]

It would be easy to dismiss Děvín as a short-lived, childish venture, quickly discarded as pre-teen interests shifted. Yet if we look to Anna Lauermannová-Mikschová's memories of the time, we see that the club's influence was somewhat deeper. "We formed some kind of a realization about the fate of a woman's life," she writes,

> Many segments were missing in the chain of our dawning awareness, which would have enabled us to know how to entirely clasp the opportunity, but one thing appeared clear to us: women's position in society was secondary, limited only to the household, loving and bringing up children. – The second thing that appeared ambiguous, foggy, yet agonizing – was the very idea of one of the hardest cultural problems – a problem like harmonizing the laws of nature with ethics, or even the aesthetic needs of the human spirit. It was that question, which more cruelly affected women than men.[75]

At age 12 the girls already saw what society had in store for them.[76] What they could not yet know, though, was that they stood at a crossroads in the history of women in Prague. Their generation would go on to be the first generation of actively emancipated women in Prague, as compared to their mothers' more passive, domestic or philanthropic work. Červinková-Riegrová and Lauermannová would be among the first generation of women who were more likely and able to contribute to society through

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[74] Augustinnová, 15.

[75] Lauermannová, 17.

[76] Anna Lauermannová-Mikschová, worthy of her own book, lived until 1932. She went on to host one of the most lasting salons in Czech history, the roster of which reads like a "who's who" of Czech history. See Anna Lauermannová-Mikschová *Lidé minulých dob* and *O Babušce: na památku paní Anny Lauermannové (Felixe Tévera)*, eds. Miroslav Rutte and Karel Scheinpflug (Prague: Kruh Přátel, 1935).

their more public literary works. It seems likely that this unusual early self-awareness was one of the ways in which Červinková-Riegrová differed from other girls her age, making it difficult for her to relate to them.

Among other qualities that differentiated Marie Červinková-Riegrová from her peers was her near-ascetic sense of self-discipline, which caused her to have little patience for girlish frivolity. "She did not find true joy in amusement like other girls," notes Augustinnová.[77] Červinková-Riegrová herself was aware of her difference. She revealed, "I was invited to N. There were many girls there [;] we played and made a lot of racket. I was bored; when I came home, I wrote and read."[78] Later, when she made her debut in society she continued to write in her diary that she didn't know how to make small talk with people. "Empty society conversation not only didn't interest her, it wearied her," Augustinnová explains, "she didn't understand and could never make sense of the fact that amusement could be found in it."[79] She described one of the balls that she went to as fine and beautiful, but said that it left no impression on her and that it was kind of a let down in the end.[80]

After Červinková-Riegrová's first season out in society she realized that she despised the company of the vapid society girls she and Anna Lauermannová-Mikschová met at the balls, and so, kept largely to

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[77] Augustinnová, 12.

[78] Reprinted in Augustinnová, 12.

[79] Augustinnová, 26.

[80] Reprinted in Augustinnová, 24-25.

> a circle, who met at the hospitable home of her family, with society, whose education and sympathies were closest to hers. Not just figures from political life came to Dr. Rieger's, but also representatives from all branches of the nation's great work, writers, artists, scholars.[81]

Marie also developed an increased interest in the arts around this time. She took singing lessons with J.N. Maýr and enjoyed singing four-part music at home, and in the Františkaner Church choir in Prague.[82] In fact, it was this renewed interest in the arts, generally, and her connection to Maýr, specifically, that would be the direct catalyst for her collaboration with Antonín Dvořák.

The biggest development of this period of Marie Červinková-Riegrová's life, however, was meeting Václav Červinka. He came from a well-respected patriotic family with like-minded values (Červinka's father was also Bolzano devotee) and was well educated before becoming the estate manager at Maleč in 1872.[83] Although Augustinnová poetically describes the artistic and intellectual impressions Červinková-Riegrová and her husband had on each other, it also seems likely that, following her discontent with the Prague social scene, Červinková-Riegrová was attracted by the opportunity to spend more time at Maleč, rather than feigning interest in the newest fashions and gossip in Prague. 20-year-old Marie Riegrová married Václav Červinka in the chapel at Maleč on September 28, 1874.

The early years of the marriage were happy: full of music and collaborative creativity. Libuše Bráfová wrote that, "[Václav] Červinka was a good pianist and

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[81] Augustinnová, 25-26.

[82] Augustinnová, 26.

[83] Augustinnová, 27.

musician and had a lively sense for art," which endeared him to his wife. Although their first collaborations were light folk-like songs (one of which was deemed too political and confiscated by the police), they soon moved on to small operatic works.[84] Around the same time, Marie Červinková-Riegrová began to engage more with the literary scene in Prague, developing a closer relationship with the dramatist, poet, and politician F. V. Jeřábek, who she trusted to read and give honest feedback on her writing, of which she was hyper-critical and very reluctant to share.

Augustinnová and Bráfová differ on the details of how exactly the following events played out, but eventually, with encouragement from Jeřábek, F.L. Rieger, and Maýr, Červinková-Riegrová wrote the libretto to *Zmařená Svatba* (*The Thwarted Wedding*) and, instead of entrusting it to Václav Červinka as originally planned, it made its way to the composer Karel Šebor, who eventually composed the opera. Although Marie had originally intended the work, based on the French comedy *Le Petit Pierre*, to be performed at home as a Christmas gift for the family, it premiered February 24, 1879, 37 months after Šebor received the libretto at the Provisional Theater in Prague. Šebor, who was also an active member of the military at the time, and thus, often stationed in locales ill-suited for collaboration, frequently frustrated his librettist, but Rieger maintained his optimism that the work could be the next *Bartered Bride*, a work that he had loved from its first performance.[85] According to Bráfová, Rieger, "like all Czech patriots wished that Smetana would write another *Bartered Bride*."[86] If another

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[84] Bráfová, 48-9.

[85] Bráfová, 52.

[86] Bráfová, 21, 24-26.

composer happened to write that next *Bartered Bride* to a libretto by his daughter, that couldn't have been a bad thing, either.

Further delays on Šebor's part appear to have arisen when he heard that Marie Červinková-Riegrová was considering writing a new libretto. Encouraged by her apparent success and newly gained professional experience with *Zmařená Svatba*, Červinková-Riegrová began collecting sources and material for *Dimitrij* in 1877, finished her research in 1878, and completed her second major libretto in November 1880.[87] Although he was still tortuously completing work on *Zmařená Svatba*, Šebor expressed eager interest in composing *Dimitrij.* Červinková-Riegrová began preliminary talks with Šebor, but admitted to Maýr that she did not relish the idea of working with Šebor a second time. In addition to continued requests for changes to the libretto (which Červinková-Riegrová naively assumed would not happen with other composers), she was irked by Šebor's demand that every 10th performance of *Zmařená Svatba* be a benefit for himself, which Červinková-Riegrová claimed was "the best way to be sure it [the tenth performance]'s not given!"[88] Perhaps unsurprisingly, *Zmařená Svatba* closed after only nine performances.

Červinková-Riegrová ultimately requested that Šebor return her libretto for *Dimitrij*, and the material made their way to Antonín Dvořák, who worked on the opera during 1881 and 1882 before its premiere on October 8, 1882. Already, Dvořák was considering setting a comedic text next, and asked Červinková-Riegrová for a new libretto. She completed a first draft of the libretto for *Jakobín* in 1882, but Dvořák,

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[87] Augustinnová, 35-36.

[88] Bráfová, 73.

despite his request for the libretto, found himself hesitant to set a work that would not have the universal appeal of a Czech text. Finally, after a six-year delay including multiple revisions of the libretto, Dvořák composed *Jakobín* in 1888 and it premiered at the National Theater on February 12, 1889. I will return to this period of collaboration between Dvořák and Červinková-Riegrová in Chapter 3 for a case study of these two works and their geneses. They prove instructive as two very different works, both successful, but which raise complex issues regarding the reception of national identity abroad and Dvořák's divergent interests both in Prague and in a larger European musical landscape.

By the time Marie Červinková-Riegrová completed the libretto for *Jakobín* in 1884 she only had 11 years left to live; however, those 11 years were full of work. Beyond libretti she continued to write, but turned her focus more specifically to fiction and memoirs. The only exception was her 1888 translation of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* for the Prague premiere of the work, its first performance outside of Russia, which actually occurred before the premiere of *Jakobín*.

The majority of Červinková-Riegrová's last decade, both in her writing and in her life, was devoted to the betterment of others. In her last years she wrote biographies of Bernard Bolzano, František Palacký, and her grandmother, Terezie Riegrová (which Augustinnová claims is among her best works); additionally, she helped J.V. Jahn compile a book about her father and also wrote a book herself entitled *Notes from the Youth of dr. F.L. Rieger*, which Václav Červinka published after her death. She also wrote fiction that reflected the poverty and inequality she saw in her philanthropic work, which had intensified after her mother's death. "The author is

particularly successful," asserts Zdeněk Pešat, "in places where she dares to look at the lonesome environments of poor and poverty-stricken women, which she herself knew through her charitable activities. This experience saves some of her prose from the banality of contemporary mediocre women's reading material."[89] In addition to writing about the destitution she witnessed, Červinková-Riegrová gave lectures and carried on her mother's charitable duties as the city manager for the Protection Society and in other humanitarian operations.

After her mother's death in 1891 Červinková-Riegrová became even more devoted to her father, as well as increasingly lonely at Maleč and miserable in her marriage. She spent most of her time with Rieger, either in Vienna or Prague. When she was with her father in Vienna, she frequently watched his progress in Parliament from the gallery; when she was away from him, she sent daily dispatches of what was being written about him in the press. Augustinnová does note, however, that during this time, even as she was outwardly devoted to Rieger and helping his political career, Marie Červinková-Riegrová longed to do her own work and that some of her diary entries have an air of martyrdom about them. She writes, "For the last ten years of her life, mainly however from 1886-1891, she followed her father, step-by-step, recording his every word, every action, copying loads of letters with figures with whom her father was in contact, almost breathing her father's breath, laying down as his helper for things for which he didn't have time."[90] Rieger was similarly devoted to his daughter,

[89] Zdeněk Pešat, "Marie Červinková-Riegrová," in *Lexikon české literatury: Osobnosti, díla, instituce,* ed. Vladimír Forst (Prague: ACADEMIA, Publisher of the Československé akademie věd, 1985), 1:469-470.

[90] Augustinnová, 59, 61-63.

often facilitating her interactions with composers and even helping to complete revision of *Jakobín* after her death in 1895.

Although she had been unwell for many of her last years, the end came suddenly. Marie Červinková-Riegrová died of a brain embolism January 19, 1895. She was only 40 years old.

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A closer look at the correspondence between Marie Červinková-Riegrová and her friend, the dramatist Gabriela Preissová provides a microcosm incorporating many of the contemporary issues in late nineteenth-century Prague's cultural milieu: women's role in society, women's role in the creation of art and, as an extension, national identity; and the internal conflicts that arise from a multi-national empire like that of the waning Habsburg Empire.

By her adulthood Marie Červinková-Riegrová's close circle of friends expanded to include two other future Czech female intellectuals: Julia Fantová-Kusa and Gabriela Preissová in addition to Anna Lauermannová-Mikschová. As adults, the feminist and Smetana's librettist Eliška Krásnohorska wrote to Preissová and referred to "...your quartet of women bound by love (mere friendship doesn't count with you)," alluding to the close bond among the four women, which is also documented in the correspondence.[91]

Gabriela Preissová was born outside Prague in the town of Kutná Hora, but came to Prague to live with an aunt and uncle to go to school in the city. It was here

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[91] Tyrrell, 24.

that she was first exposed to many of the people and ideas that would influence her career as one of the leading literary proponents of Czech realism. At her aunt and uncle's home she encountered the notable feminist writers Eliška Krásnohorská and Karolina Světla, and she was taken to the Provisional Theater in Prague, where she was exposed to contemporary ideas and the newest musical and theatrical performances.[92]

Her marriage to the petty bureaucrat Jan Preiss took her to the far reaches of what Czechs considered their nation. She traveled among the small towns of rural Moravia and Slovakia with her husband, witnessing the lives, customs, and dialects of these people, who would later find their way into her writings. Her interest in collecting folksongs brought her into connection with the composer Leoš Janáček in the 1880s, establishing a relationship that would lead to his eventual adaptation of two of her works for the operatic stage.

During their adult lives, Červinková-Riegrová and Preissová, both often "exiled" from Prague thanks to their husbands' jobs, were in regular contact, particularly during the late 1880s and early 1890s until Červinková-Riegrová's death in 1895. Their separation from Prague and from each other led to their friendship's documentation in letters.

In Preissová's letters to Červinková-Riegrová, she routinely invites her and Anna Lauermannová-Mikschová to come to the countryside to visit her. In a letter dated July 21, 1892, Preissová writes, "Do you ever think of me? It would be so wonderful if you and Lauermannová could make a trip here. You would give me great joy and you would get to know a beautiful country, in which people are <u>still more</u>

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[92] Artur Zavodský, *Gabriela Preissová* (Prague: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1962), 17-18.

poetic than our Slovaks and Slavs. A pity that it is difficult to learn their regional sayings."[93] Iveta Jusová, in her work on Preissová's plays, argues that Preissová demonstrated a keen awareness of the heterogeneity of the Czech people through her use of these rural dialects in her plays.[94] One could argue that the preceding quote indicates an awareness of regional differences and an intention to expose others to this difference; yet, there is also an uncomfortable air of condescension about the way Preissová and others of the time, well-versed in Herder's idea of the *Volksgeist,* visit the peasantry as if visiting the zoo. Beyond Herder's influence, this can also be traced to the nineteenth-century interest in natural history and museum cultivation. Preissová's interest in her rural neighbors coincides with the planning for and construction of the new building of the Czech National Museum on Wenceslas Square in Prague, and with the Czechoslavic Ethnographic Exposition of 1895.[95]

In fact, Preissová was also involved in the preparation for this Exposition, inspired by the World Exposition in Paris in 1889. Her friend, the director of the National Theater, František Adolf Šubert, was in charge of organizing the exposition, and evidently had enlisted a reluctant Preissová to help with gathering folk relics from other bourgeois collectors in her area. In a letter to Červinková-Riegrová dated April 30, 1893, she writes, "Director Šubert asked me to beg the Moravian ladies to send

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[93] Gabriela Preissová to Marie Červinková-Riegrová, Kühnsdorf, July 21, 1892, PNP fond Marie Červinková-Riegrová, inv. 44.

[94] Iveta Jusová, Fin-de-Siècle *Feminisms: The Development of Feminist Narratives within the Discourses of British Imperialism and Czech Nationalism* (PhD diss., Miami University, 2000).

[95] Sayer, 124-127.

their collections for this museum, which [is] for the folklore exhibition...but...everyone wants to have his own 'personal museum' and would rather give money."[96] Here, again, we see the nineteenth-century tendency toward collecting and museum-ifying folk specimens. Preissová's collection activities are in keeping with the common nineteenth-century mindset that, per Herder, the peasantry was the key to rediscovering national identity, and the contemporary fear that modernity could destroy the folk history preserved in the rural areas of the countryside.

Writing to Červinková-Riegrová from Kühnsdorf in what is now Southern Austria, Preissová also describes an experience in which she was confronted by a foreign perspective on Czech identity. She writes that, "Recently a tactful lady without any bad thought asked me, 'Do Czechs also have Czech poetry?' Well, you see – but therefore, is it nevertheless the son or daughter of the small nation happier about that, how much more one loves one's mother homeland, more destitute than these other powerful [states]; where powerful people without wishes and sadness don't love each other as much."[97] This quote not only reveals something of what some non-Czechs thought of Czechs, but also of how one Czech viewed her own identity in comparison with other national and regional identities.

Preissová doesn't say who this "tactful lady" is, but it seems safe to assume that she is referring to an Austrian. Preissová makes a point of noting that the woman had the best intentions, but demonstrated total ignorance as to the existence of a Czech high art tradition, and a typical assumption of German linguistic superiority. Ironically,

[96] Gabriela Preissová to Marie Červinková-Riegrová, Oslavovany, April 30, 1893, PNP fond Marie Červinková-Riegrová, inv. 48.

[97] Gabriela Preissová to Marie Červinková-Riegrová, July 21, 1892.

this “tactful lady” seems to view the Czechs much as Preissová and the other Czech bourgeois intellectuals viewed the peasantry from whom they were collecting folklore.

Preissová's response is also informative in seeing how she viewed her own national identity, particularly in relationship to other nationalities. Her reaction seems to take pride in their small, incipient nation, pointing out that Czechs are happier in their difficult struggle for nationhood than citizens of other wealthier, more powerful nations who argue amongst themselves, unhappy even with their established nation. She suggests that those who have attained nationhood take it for granted and don't maintain their nation, whereas the Czechs are happy and, supposedly, unified in their desire for nationhood. This is a shrewd observation, perhaps tinged with jealousy, but does further complicate Iveta Jusová's assertion that Preissová was keenly aware of and interested in probing the heterogeneity of the Czechs. Indeed, it also reveals either a startling naiveté or ignorance of the contemporary political situation among the Czechs: by the early 1890s Rieger’s Old Czech party had lost their majority in the Austrian Parliament, replaced by the Young Czechs, who faced new schisms within their own party and similar problems to those faced by the Old Czechs during their period of power in the 1880s.[98] By the 1890s, even the Czechs were no longer unified in their quest for nationhood.

Beyond the larger-scale issues of nationalism, in Preissová's letters we can see the national conflict even within the microcosm of Prague, where Germans and Czechs co-existed in an atmosphere of some tension. This Czech-German conflict had an

[98] H. Gordon Skilling, “The Politics of the Czech Eighties,” in *The Czech Renascence of the Nineteenth Century,* Peter Brock and H. Gordon Skilling, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 273-4.

intimate effect on Preissová's life, as her husband Jan Preiss was of German background and spoke no Czech. Preissová was acutely aware of this difference and the treatment that it garnered her husband when they appeared together in Prague. In January 1893 she writes to Červinková-Riegrová asking if she has any ideas of places where Preiss could find private work in Prague so the couple could relocate there. She writes,

> My husband is a Slavophile – but a kind of sensitivity remains involuntarily inside him, as if somebody would blame him for being German. I think you can understand this feeling. He is a sensitive man without political, literary, and artistic interests, but he is honest and tender, and thus he feels a clear awareness, that also a good-spirited quiet German should not be humiliated in Czech society, when he doesn't have a single demand for anyone to notice him.[99]

She goes on to explain how uncomfortable it is for them when they appear in Czech-speaking Prague society and the other guests ostracize her husband because of his inability to speak Czech. These other guests certainly spoke German, but refused to accommodate Preiss by using the language that they viewed as a vehicle of their oppression. As we will see in Chapter 3, Marie Červinková-Riegrová was perhaps not the right person to petition on this case. The same tension between Czechs and Germans within the Empire played a key role in Červinková-Riegrová's collaboration with the Antonín Dvořák in the late 1880s, and Červinková-Riegrová had actively and, at times, assertively, lobbied for Dvořák to remain true to his Czech roots, discouraging him from writing a libretto in German.

Preissová also demonstrates her sense of international relations when she cajoles Červinková-Riegrová to go to the Polish Writers' Exposition in Lvov, in a letter

[99] Gabriela Preissová to Marie Červinková-Riegrová, Oslavany, January 12, 1893.

from July 1894. The Polish writers have specifically invited Preissová, in addition to expressing their hesitations to publicize their event in the Czech presses. Preissová writes to Červinková-Riegrová encouraging her to come along, saying, “Look, Marinko, political relationships for the pathway from Bohemia to Poland are of course grievous – but we women and we writers cradle almost even in our bosoms – a piece of this faith and ideal.”[100] Preissová shows a charming confidence that literature can cross the shaky international boundaries, particularly when parlayed by *female* writers, with the clear implication that they will do a better job than male authors at creating inroads with their Polish counterparts. Preissová enthusiastically invites Červinková-Riegrová and Lauermannová, mentioning that Šubert and the critic Jaroslav Vrchlický are also going. Preissová cheerfully encourages the trip, with the intention of forging new international friendships and professional relationships.

From the local to the international, Preissová's letters show an awareness of and interaction with the major issues of the developing and evolving Czech identity. These letters, though, can also be illustrative of the life of a working Czech female intellectual in the last decade of the 19th century.

Beyond providing a lens into the cultural and political issues of the day, the letters between Preissová and Červinková-Riegrová clearly served as a collaborative workshop in which they could share their current work privately and get feedback before submitting their work to (presumably male-dominated) public outlets. In February 1888 Preissová wrote to Leoš Janáček in response to a letter in which he

[100] Gabriela Priessová to Marie Červinková-Riegrová, Oslavany, July 20, 1894, in PNP fond Marie Červinková-Riegrová, inv. 47.

asked her to turn her story *The Beginning of a Romance* into an opera libretto. She wrote,

> I heartily regret that I cannot repay your trust and your request as I should wish to. I cannot write when and what I would like to, but must wait for my rare poetic moments – and so for this reason can never promise anyone a contribution … Should I write something in a musical genre of my own accord I certainly won't forget you.[101]

After rejecting Janáček's request for a libretto, Preissová *did* endeavor to find a librettist for him, although it took some time. Sometime in late March or early April 1891 she must have first written to Marie Červinková-Riegrová to offer her the project. In an undated letter housed in the PNP archive at Strahov she writes, "Yesterday I wrote you another letter, trying to persuade you on behalf of the composer L[eoš] Janáček to lyricize a text for a one-act operatic idyll, the subject of which is a staging of the (prose) *The Beginning of a Romance* – and this letter you might not read now, my dear." The reason that Červinková-Riegrová may not read the letter, and the source for the presumed date, is that Preissová is writing to express sympathy over the death of her mother, Marie Riegrová. Riegrová died March 21, 1891, so we can assume that Preissová must have written both of her letters sometime in the last week or two of March. Despite Marie Červinková-Riegrová's rejection of the proposed libretto, the fact that Preissová asked her, shows that she held Červinková-Riegrová's work in high esteem and trusted her enough to entrust her own work to her.

From the letters is it also evident that the women exchanged their work with each other. In a letter dated July 21, 1892, Preissová thanks Červinková-Riegrová for

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[101] Reprinted in Leoš Janáček, *Janáček's Operas: A Documentary Account*, ed. John Tyrrell (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), 23.

her book (presumably one that she wrote about her mother's life and philanthropy) writing,

> This reading was indescribably pleasant, a little bit [like a lecture] – where you interpret and instruct, judge and show, overwhelming with all of the flowers of your precious spirit, idealism, and thus in your own peculiar peace – In this you are truly in your field ...the field of your storytelling is less beneficial for you. [102]

Preissová is obviously intimately acquainted with Červinková-Riegrová's earlier writings and does not hesitate to put this new piece in context with them, noting differences and improvements.

Similarly, Červinková-Riegrová and Preissová corresponded about Preissová's new play *Ve stínu závodiště,* which premiered at the National Theater in Prague on February 7, 1893. In a letter from January 12, 1893, Preissová wrote to Červinková-Riegrová,

> There, you see how I like to listen to words sincerely, immediately I wrote to Mr. Dr. Šubert, so that the drama is not permitted to stand, so that I can still change something. When a male author is buried in his work, he then is already blind and doesn't see where bloating remains. I myself understood your changes immediately – and now I see clearly that there are misgivings there. [103]

Preissová clearly respects Červinková-Riegrová's opinions – in the paragraphs preceding the excerpt above she talks at length about Červinková-Riegrová's detailed suggestions regarding characterization and other technical elements of the play – and does not hesitate to make them, even if it means demanding changes from the director of the theater (not the director of the play!) less than a month before the premiere. Moreover, this excerpt again shows Preissová's somewhat outspoken view that women

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[102] Gabriela Preissová to Marie Červinková-Riegrová, Oslavany, July 21, 1892.

[103] Gabriela Preissová to Marie Červinková-Riegrová, Oslavany, January 12, 1893, in PNP fond Marie Červinková-Riegrová, inv. 35.

do many things more ably than men, from representing the nation at an international literary convention, to being able to see their own work and edit with a critical eye, even well into the creative process.

The last topic that comes up repeatedly in this correspondence is the complicated relationship that this new generation of Czech intellectual professional women had with their predecessors. Women like Božena Němcová, Eliška Krásnohorská, and Karolina Světlá certainly paved the way for the younger group that included Preissová, Červinková-Riegrová, Lauermannová, and Julie Kusá-Fantová, establishing women as valid contributors in the burgeoning Czech cultural public sphere. Yet, Preissová's letters also reveal conflicting views of first generation of Czech feminist professionals. Preissová and Krásnohorská clearly had a friendship. Preissová had actually gone to Krásnohorská *before* Červinková in her quest to find Janáček a librettist for *The Beginning of a Romance*. In an undated reply to Preissová, Krásnohorská wrote, thanking Preissová for the "unexpected surprise" of a request, but declining, reminding her that in an earlier letter she had already stated her intention to write no further libretti. She pleads, "I have given up every thought of the theater, I have said farewell to it and don't even want to hear about it. … It grieves me that I will be forced once again to experience its existence in person when Bendl's opera *The Child of Tabor,* with my libretto, is produced."[104] In the letter Krásnohorská affirms that she likes Preissová, but that nothing could convince her to write another libretto, after the bitterness she felt at the way her libretti for Smetana were received.

[104] Reprinted in *Janáček's Operas*, 24.

Yet Krásnohorská does not appear to have had unmitigated good will for Preissová. In an 1893 letter to Marie Červinková-Riegrová, Preissová writes that "Krásnohorská also convincingly wanted me to believe that Director Šubert does not wish me dramatic success, deep down, that he wishes that everything would fail – and she gave me this psychological evidence from personal conversation with him."[105] It seems extremely unlikely that this was true. Preissová and Šubert had a close relationship, and Preissová even received flack for her successes at the National Theater because some reviewers thought that she received special treatment as a result of her friendship with Šubert. Preissová obviously found Krásnohorská's insinuations improbable, as well, as the letter continues with the underlined exclamation, "This, however, I do not want to and will not believe..." Krásnohorská's motivations for telling Preissová this are unclear. Perhaps she was warning Preissová away from the stage as a result of her own bad experience with the presses, wanting to save Preissová from a similar reception, but it is also likely that jealousy could have been at play.

The ambiguous nature of the relationship seems to have gone both ways. In 1893 Preissová wrote to Červinková-Riegrová about a Russian article that had appeared in translation in the Czech periodical *Čas*, in which she refers to Krásnohorská and Světla as "witches." Preissová also has somewhat unkind things to say of Božena Němcová. In the same letter lambasting *Čas*, Preissová writes,

> Once they wrote that Božena Němcová is the creator of the best Czech realist stories, which we can pride ourselves on. Really, Božena Němcová. Recently in the Spring there was an article in *Čas*, some kind of watery fruit from B[ožena] Kunětická [the first female member of the Czech Parliament, and also a feminist

[105] Preissová to Červinková-Riegrová, January 12, 1893.

author and dramatist], and from that the end philosophy 'that woman can never write anything great and legitimate, and women's education has still not progressed, in order for a woman to refine and cultivate thoughts for herself,' and so on. Now how's that for logic. Božena Němcová wrote our best novel. Just she, who our writers study most at university.[106]

Again jealousy is afoot here, as Preissová was herself a leading Czech realist author, but there is another element to this response, beyond the evident jealousy. It seems that Preissová is already self-aware enough to recognize that she and her peers are the new generation of female intellectuals, and is indignant that the press continues to hold up an author whose pivotal work was 40 years old as the key representative of the genre.

Preissová was correct in thinking that she and her friends were the new female intelligentsia. It is important to note, too, that in that generational change, there was also a shifting mindset. Albert Pražák notes that Krásnohorská was a staunch nationalist, but that she was not "feminine" about it – that is, that she subjugated her desire for women's rights for the nationalist cause.[107] Preissová's thinking a few decades later had clearly progressed beyond this point, considering that she frequently wrote in ways that showed how women were denigrated by government agencies, and also had a clear sense of awareness of her own place in society both as a woman and a Czech.[108]

The correspondence between Marie Červinková-Riegrová and Gabriela Preissová exposes several of the key issues at play for women in Bohemia in the last

[106] Gabriela Preissová to Marie Červinková-Riegrová, Kirschenau, June 19, 1893 in PNP Fond Marie Červinková-Riegrová, inv. 34.

[107] Albert Pražák, "Česká spisovatelka v XIX. Století," in *Česká žena v dějinách národa* (Prague: Novina Praha,1940), 161.

[108] Jusová, 185-245.

decade of the nineteenth century. Anežka Schulzová, Zdeněk Fibich's librettist, was only six years younger than Preissová and 14 years younger than Červinková-Riegrová, but her cultural upbringing was, in a few key ways very different from Červinková-Riegrová and Preissová's. Indeed, in contrast to Marie Červinková-Riegrová's childhood in the Old Czech stronghold of the Rieger house, Anežka Schulzová was the niece to two of the most prominent Young Czech politicians. Despite this key difference, though, several of the same issues of national identity and gender echo through Schulzová's biography.

Zdeněk Fibich and Anežka Schulzová

Although the concept of a middle-class man openly taking a mistress was far more acceptable to nineteenth-century sensibilities than it is today, Zdeněk Fibich's adulterous relationship with his student and librettist Anežka Schulzová must have raised eyebrows. As we will see, the blessing of her socially well-positioned family clearly paved the way for Fibich and Schulzová's personal relationship to be accepted.

In the years that intervened between the premiere of *Jakobín* in 1889 and the premiere of Fibich and Schulzová's first collaborative opera *Hedy* in 1894, the Czech operatic climate had evolved slightly. Although Czech operas were not making the international headlines that their composers hoped for, there was no longer the dearth of Czech opera that faced Smetana and Dvořák in the late 1860s and 1870s. Despite the Czechs' continued subjugation to the Habsburgs (a fact that would not change until World War I), the frantic need to establish themselves as a discrete cultural unit had calmed a bit. Thanks to Smetana and Dvořák's efforts to create a Czech musical culture,

the following generations of composers, including Fibich and Leoš Janáček, focused less on creating "Czechness" in their music and more on taking Czech music to a new stage of its development. While Janáček would accomplish this more adeptly than Fibich did, we will see that Fibich was something of an awkward interloper in the generation between the traditional Czech nationalists Smetana and Dvořák, and the new Czech modernists like Janáček.

Although nobody would argue that Smetana and Dvořák's aims were purely selfless, it seems safe to say that Fibich's goals were significantly more geared towards international success than loyal service to the nationalist movement. Like Dvořák, Fibich composed operas throughout his career (albeit with a not insignificant detour to melodrama in the middle). Fibich, however, had less early success than Dvořák, despite a somewhat more illustrious education. Having studied with famous teachers internationally and having worked outside of the Czech lands, Fibich's interests were distinctly outward facing. Perhaps because of Smetana and Dvořák's successful establishment of a Czech musical culture, Fibich never felt the need to write with much significant musical "Czechness," and turned to Czech topics in his operas only twice: with his early opera *Blaník* and in the last decade of his life with *Šárka*.

Despite his disinterest in working with distinctly Czech topics, Fibich's most important operatic success came only, ironically, when he returned to Czech material with *Šárka* and a new librettist, his student-turned-lover, Anežka Schulzová. Schulzová, a daughter of a prominent and culturally well-connected Prague family began taking piano lessons with Fibich in the mid-1880s. By the early 1890s, their relationship had moved beyond that of teacher and student to a more intimate personal relationship.

Schulzová inspired a dramatic burst of creative activity in Fibich, and in addition to becoming the librettist for his last three operas, she also served as his muse and amanuensis in the last years of his life, particularly after he abandoned his wife and young son to move in with her. Here I provide an overview of Fibich and Schulzová's biographies, focusing on the intertwining of their lives and their collaborations – subjects which have not previously been the focus of English-language research – in order to set the stage for a more detailed analysis of *Šárka*, which follows in Chapter 4.

Zdeněk Fibich

Fibich was born December 21, 1850, in Všebořice, a small town south east of Prague near the mining city of Kutná Hora. His father was a forestry official for the Auersperg family, and Fibich grew up with a love of nature that continued to adulthood, when he was known to be greatly fond of butterflies.[109] Fibich first attended school in Vienna, his mother's hometown, and later transferred to the *gymnasium* in Prague's Malá Strana district. Having had music lessons from a young age, by the time he was in his early teens, Fibich had already written a number of pieces, including part of a symphony, which Hostinský reports that Fibich conducted himself at age fourteen.[110]

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[109] Tyrrell and Mabary, c.v. "Fibich, Zdeněk," Grove Music Online; Schulzová, 31.

[110] Otakar Hostinský, "Zdenko Fibich. Biografische Skizze," Fond S80, inv. 509, Národní muzeum v Praze – Muzeum české hudby hudebně historické oddělení, Prague. Hostinský's German-language biographical sketch refers to a "Symfoniesatz," and Tyrrell and Maybary confirm that this was part of a symphony in E-flat.

At age fifteen, Fibich began his serious musical education. He first went to Leipzig where he studied at the conservatory from 1865-1867 under the instruction of Ignaz Moscheles, E.F. Richter, and privately with Salamon Jadassohn. From Leipzig, Fibich went to Paris and then on to Mannheim, where he studied with Vinzenz Lachner before his return to Prague in 1870.[111] During this return to Prague Fibich wrote his first complete opera, *Bukovín*, to a libretto by Karel Sabina, librettist of Smetana's *Bartered Bride*.[112]

It was around this time that Fibich came to know the Hanušová family, who had three daughters: Anna, Betty, and Růžena. Fibich already knew Betty, an alto soloist at the National Theater, but he fell in love with Růžena, the youngest sister, and they married in February 1873.[113] Shortly thereafter Fibich accepted a teaching job at a choir school in Vilnius, and he and Růžena left for Lithuania in September 1873. While in Vilnius, Růžena became pregnant with twins, a boy and a girl, named Richard and Elsa. Unfortunately the difficult delivery claimed the life of Richard almost immediately and left Růžena very ill, so Fibich sent for her eldest sister Anna to come nurse the sick mother and her surviving infant. Tragically, Anna, too, became ill after arriving in Vilnius and soon died, prompting the Fibichs' return to Prague in late 1874. Upon returning to Prague, Růžena's condition worsened and she also perished, soon followed by her surviving child; before she died, however, she elicited a promise from

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[111] Hostinský, "Biografische Skizze."

[112] Tyrrell and Mabary.

[113] Nejedlý, *Milostný Deník*, 70-71; Tyrrell and Mabary.

the remaining Hanušová sister, Betty, that she would marry Fibich and care for him. Thus, Fibich came to marry a second Hanušová in the summer of 1875.[114]

Although Fibich's relationship with Betty was amicable – she bore him one child, a son, also named Richard, one year after their wedding – Nejedlý describes the relationship as hardly more than friendship.[115] Around the time of their marriage, Fibich's career began to take off, and so his focus was increasingly on composition and less on his marriage. Thanks to Betty Fibichová's career at the National Theater, Fibich had access to the best Czech singers of the day. Fibichová's presence in his life is reflected in the predominance of vocal music for contralto from this period, which Nejedlý calls "the true time of Mrs. Fibich" ("pravá doba paní Fibichové").[116] Much of the vocal music from the mid-1870s to the mid-1880s reflects Betty's voice, including large roles for her in *Blaník, Nevěsta Messinská,* and *Bouře*.

Anežka Schulzová

Although both Anežka Schulzová and Zdeněk Fibich had parents who were supportive of their creative cultural impulses, unlike Fibich's rural childhood, Schulzová grew up in a house on the island Žofin in the center of Prague. She was born on March 24, 1868, to Karolína and Ferdinand Schulz. The upper-middle-class family was extremely well connected, both culturally and socially. Karolina Schulzová's

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[114] Nejedlý, *Milostný Deník*, 70-74.

[115] Nejedlý, *Milostný deník*, 78. Fibich and Růžena's daughter Elsa had died shortly after Růžena's death in 1874. The Richard Fibich born to Betty Fibichová was Fibich's only surviving child.

[116] Nejedlý, *Milostný Deník*, 76.

brothers were the prominent Young Czech politicians and journalists Eduard and Julius Grégr. Although the Young Czech political platform advocated only for universal male suffrage, it seems likely that the more egalitarian views of the Young Czechs would have filtered down throughout Schulzová's childhood.[117] Ferdinand Schulz was a hard-working journalist, literary critic, editor, and amateur musician.[118] Their seven children were well educated, including instruction in music and languages. (In addition to Czech, Schulzová learned Latin, French, and German.)[119]

Schulzová was sickly throughout her life. As a child she fell through a glass door and injured her spine, confining her to bed for a considerable length of time (perhaps years, according to her brother Bohuslav's recollections). She spent her time on a low, wheeled bed that she could roll around with her hands.[120] Later in life she also suffered from rickets, stomach and head pain, arrhythmia, and anxiety.[121] Unable to be an active child, she developed an interest in books and languages, which contributed to her later career as a literary critic and librettist.

Anežka Schulzová grew up to have her own independent opinions about culture and politics, despite the cultural influences from her parents. Ferdinand Schulz was known for his book *Latinské babičky* (*Latin grandmothers*). He was also an active

[117] For more on the Young Czechs see Bruce M. Garver, *The Young Czech Party 1874-1901 and the Emergence of a Multi-Party System* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978).

[118] Kopecký, *Opery Zdeňka Fibicha,* 81-82.

[119] Kopecký *Opery Zdeňka Fibicha*, 80.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Kopecký, *Opery Zdeňka Fibicha,* 80, fn. 111.

contributor to the anti-Lumír movement, which meant he was rather anti-modern. Contrary to her father's literary leanings, Schulzová enjoyed the most modern works from France, such as the writings of Anatole France and authors of the skepticist movement. Additionally, she was quite drawn to what Nejedlý refers to as the "literature of the North" – Scandinavian writers like Henrik Ibsen – and was among the first in Czech literary circles to give much attention to these works.[122] Schulzová would later use the works of two Lumír authors – Julius Zeyer and Jaroslav Vrchlický – as sources for her libretto to *Šárka.*[123]

Descriptions of Anežka Schulzová reveal a woman who, as a result of her progressive upbringing, was vivacious and intelligent. Hostinský wrote that, "She was uncommonly educated, spirited, had life, a fiery temper and *fantasia*, yea, it can be said that she was exalted…"[124] Jiří Kopecký describes her as having had "[an] extraordinary education, and enough time and intelligence to orient herself well in her society. She was emancipated and, as a feminist, she was accustomed to the caricature-like view of society on the 'women's question.'"[125] From these two descriptions, we see a female figure far more educated and outspoken than her contemporaries, making her a somewhat extraordinary example of a nineteenth-century woman.

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122 Nejedlý, *Milostný Deník,* 89.

123 For a more detailed analysis of *Šárka* and Schulzová's sources, see Chapter 4.

124 Hostinský, *Vzpomínky na Fibicha*, 224. "Byla vzácného vzdělán, duchaplná, měla živou, vznětlivou letoru a fantasia, ba možno říci, že byla exaltovaná..."

125 Kopecký, *Opery Zdeňka Fibicha,* 79. "Anežce Schulzové se dostalo nevšedního zdělání, měla dostatek času i inteligence, aby se dobře zorientovala ve své současnosti. Byla emancipovaná a jako feministka si musela zvyknout na karikující pohled společnosti na 'ženskou otázku'."

More significant than what others thought, though, is how she conceived of herself – a possible reflection of her feminist leanings. Although we don't have diaries from Schulzová, we do have the description of a character from her unpublished libretto for *Nesmrtelnost*. Several of the characters in the libretto are easily identifiable as having played roles in Schulzová and Fibich's shared life (some by obvious descriptions, others by identifications in blue pencil made by Schulzová's younger sister Dagmar).[126] According to Kopecký, Pavel Marek is "most probably" based on the author herself.[127] Marek is described thusly: "(46 years old) Interesting appearance with a distinct profile. On the surface, irony and sarcasm, inside seethes and storms a life of disappointing love for all ideals, noble-minded and beautiful. Suppressed artistic creativity tempts him toward eccentricity. He is acerbic, bitter, with sudden explosions of wild humor."[128] It is certainly interesting to note that Schulzová's literary version of herself is masculine. It seems likely that Schulzová envied the freedoms granted to men that she did not have herself. As a progressive woman, she recognized her distinct disadvantage in life and resented it. By casting herself as a man, she grants herself equal footing with Fibich and the other men with whom she interacted in Prague's cultural circles.

Clearly the contradictory description cannot be taken entirely as truth – Pavel is both "interesting"-looking and "beautiful," "eccentric," yet "noble-minded," – but it gives us a rare glimpse into Schulzová's psyche (or the psyche of the person she

[126] ČMH, Fond S80, inv. 504.

[127] Kopecký, *Opery Zdeňka Fibicha,* 88-89; Kopecký, *Stopy život,* 7.

[128] ČMH, Fond S80, inv. 504.

imagined herself to be or wanted to be). Another fact worth mentioning is the character's age: 46. Schulzová wrote *Nesmrtelnost* in 1895. At that point, she would have been 29; Fibich, however, would have been in his mid-40s. One wonders, then, if Schulzová saw their age difference as some kind of barrier or flaw in the relationship and fantasized about its disappearance. In fact, the character based on Fibich, Jan Ruben, is 45, making Schulzová, in this literary fantasy, his senior.[129]

A Collision of Two Lives

Fibich and Schulzová met when eighteen-year-old Schulzová began taking piano lessons from Fibich in 1886. Their lessons expanded to include theory and orchestration in 1892. Although their first interactions were purely platonic, by 1892, although Fibich was still married to Betty Fibichová, the relationship with Anežka Schulzová had become personal and intimate, according to the information she shared with Nejedlý.

Both Nejedlý and Kopecký posit that Fibich's attraction to Schulzová originally stemmed from her position as his creative muse. It is almost universally agreed (even from Hostinský who had little praise for Schulzová) that Fibich's greatest period of musical success directly coincides with the deepening of his relationship with Schulzová, and that the 1890s, the last decade of his life, was his most productive.[130] For her part, Schulzová's interest was piqued by Fibich's work in the genre of

[129] ČMH, Fond S80, inv. 504.

[130] Kopecký, *Opery Zdeňka Fibicha,* 77.

melodrama.[131] Fibich was not the only one to find creative stimulation in the relationship. In addition to being the daughter of a journalist and author, Anežka Schulzová had been primarily a critic prior to her involvement with Fibich. Her libretti, however, Nejedlý asserts, were not the result of any real literary aspirations, but rather stemmed from the desire to put Fibich's musical impulses into words.[132]

Both Nejedlý and Kopecký attribute the Schulzová family's acceptance of Fibich's adulterous relationship with Anežka Schulzová to Schulzová's mother, Karolina. Kopecký writes, "Fibich's entry into the Schulzová family on Žofin wasn't a simple matter. The heart of this world was Anežka's mother… It was really she who made the relationship between Anežka and Fibich possible," and "made their relationship socially acceptable," although we are left to wonder how she achieved this.[133] Nejedlý's version of the events corroborates in his typically hyperbolic fashion. He describes the event thusly: "Fibich also begged her, imploringly, on his knees, not to destroy this beautiful thing that had bloomed in his life, and Paní Schulzová understood."[134] Regardless of the details, both Fibich and his relationship with Schulzová were embraced wholeheartedly by the Schulzová family, which is documented by the voluminous letters describing Fibich's presence on family

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[131] Kopecký, *Opery Zdeňka Fibicha,* 76.

[132] Nejedlý, *Česká moderní zpěvoha po Smetanovi* (Prague: J. Otto, 1911), 106. "Ani její libreto nevzniklo snad z vlastních literárních aspiraci spisovatelčiných, nýbrž z touhy dáti slovesné roucho tomu, co se vytvářelo ve Fibichovi ovsem především hudebně."

[133] Kopecký, *Opery Zdeňka Fibicha,* 81.

[134] Nejedlý, *Milostný Denik,* 101.

vacations and at family events, always affectionately referred to as “the maestro” (“mistř”).

The feeling was obviously mutual. Fibich developed close relationships with the family, which can be seen most clearly in his music. He was close with Schulzová’s brother Bohuslav, and also with her youngest sister, Dagmar, to whom he dedicated a set of children’s songs in 1895 (*Poupata*, Op. 45). Additionally, Fibich wrote a symphonic poem, *V Podvečer* (*In the Evening*, Op. 39, 1893, arr. for piano 1896) that describes the family and their life on Žofin. Later in his life, Bohuslav Schulz itemized the parts of the piece that represent different family members, and described how Fibich brought the final score to the family home with a few notes missing and asked the family to complete the missing parts.[135]

The 1890s was a time of intense personal change for Fibich. As his romantic feelings for Anežka Schulzová intensified, he began to feel increasingly smothered, both personally and artistically, in his marriage. These feelings came to a boiling point in 1897 when Fibich finally made the decision to leave his wife and move in with Anežka Schulzová.[136] In addition to, and partially as a result of, Fibich’s change of domestic situation, Fibich’s relationship with his closest friend Otakar Hostinský changed markedly as his relationship with Anežka Schulzová took on a greater role in his life. Nejedlý associates the works of Fibich’s middle period with Hostinský, and those of his

[135] Kopecký, *Stopy života,* 82.

[136] Despite the import of this occasion, Fibich appears have have attempted to play it off somewhat casually. After a vacation in the Alps that summer, he simply never returned to his home with Betty Fibichová and their son Richard, and instead went to his new home near the banks of the Vltava River, near both the Schulzová’s home on Žofin and also close to the National Theater.

late period with Schulzová. Nejedlý sees Schulzová as replacing Hostinský, in some sense, and from his letters, it is evident that Hostinský felt the same way.[137]

The dramatic change that Fibich enacted in his life is documented clearly in a pair of letters from October 1897, the first from Hostinský to Fibich and the second Fibich's reply. These letters are published in their entirety in Nejedlý's *Milostný Denik*, but they have never been reprinted in English translation. Their import to any study of this period of Fibich's life is immeasurable as they are the only direct expression of Fibich's rationale behind this life change.[138]

In his brutally honest letter to Fibich, Hostinský's hurt feelings are apparent, but he is also extremely understanding and tolerant, considering the circumstances. Hostinský only discovered Fibich's change of address when he went to Betty Fibichová's house and was told that Fibich no longer lived there. Hostinský begins by acknowledging that their relationship is not what it once was, "I know that your confidence in me in recent times is shaken: that is your fateful error, which is hard to bear, but for now I cannot do otherwise: with time you will be convinced that I have not changed in any way."[139] Hostinský goes on to say that Fibich's recent work has been some of his greatest and that he can't imagine why Fibich would want to make such major changes to his life when he has been so productive. He admits jealousy at

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[137] Nejedlý, *Milostný deník,* 93.

[138] This is perhaps unsurprising as Fibich was, mildly put, a reluctant letter writer. By the end of his life Anežka handled almost all of his correspondence, including business transactions, and just signed his name.

[139] Otakar Hostinský to Zdeněk Fibich, October 5, 1897, reprinted in Nejedlý*, Milostný Deník*, 109.

his friend's recent successes (Hostinský had been Fibich's previous librettist), but contends that he wants the best for him and that he feels that it is his duty as a friend to make sure that Fibich has really made the right decision. He says he doesn't presume to know Fibich's reasoning for making this decision, only that, "I don't advise, and neither do I try to dissuade – I only beg: in the interest of your artistic mission, that you have a talk in your heart and in your mind…."[140]

Fibich's reply is, understandably, somewhat sheepish. He begins by thanking Hostinský for his letter and reaffirming his devotion to the friendship, "which has always been dear to me and which I have never doubted."[141] He goes on to assure Hostinský that he has not come to this decision lightly, saying, "Clearly you know that at my age a man does not act frivolously according to impulses, immediate moods, and that he does not decide to completely change his life without mature consideration and without the conviction that this step that he is making is necessary."[142] Although Fibich's tone here is friendly (and uses the Czech informal pronoun "ty"), he also seems to be rebuking Hostinský, at least mildly, for doubting his decision to abandon his family and the rationale behind that decision.

Fibich continues, explaining that although Hostinský saw the "results" of his new artistic inspiration, he didn't fully know the cause of the change. He describes how difficult the past few years had been, being fully impassioned by this almost violent

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[140] Hostinský to Fibich, in Nejedlý, *Milostný Deník*, 110-111.

[141] Zdeněk Fibich to Otakar Hostinský, Prague, October 6, 1897, reprinted in Nejedlý, *Milostný Deník*, 111.

[142] Fibich to Hostinský, in Nejedlý, *Milostný Deník*, 111-112.

inspiration, but fighting the urge to give himself over to it completely. "If you knew everything, you could hardly better judge the genuineness and force of this refreshment, which has through all of these last years of struggling, nevertheless maintained and uplifted my art. However finally I grew to the awareness, that in this constant fight I would have to be defeated. I felt how my soul was weakening, how my strength and creativity were destroyed."[143] Fibich specifically mentions the E- flat Major Symphony, the piano works, and *Šárka* as the key turning points in his recent career, and the pieces that led up to his decision to leave his wife. Near the conclusion of the letter, he once again strongly states his belief that if he had not made this decision any latent creative and compositional energy would have been destroyed: "I repeat to you in the name of this mission, that after firm, manly deliberation I act thus, as I have to act, if I have to save in myself art and bring to fruition everything that still slumbers within me," and reiterates that he truly believes this change will solve all of his problems and put an end to the misery that had plagued him in recent years.[144]

We can infer a few things from Fibich's statement here. One is that he feels some sort of moral imperative to engage in creative activity. Moreover, from the way Fibich describes it, this creative energy is almost a being unto itself, housed inside him, "slumbering" until the circumstances are right for it to be released. His use of the term "manly" to describe his deliberation could be interpreted a few ways. Given the context in this letter, though, it seems that he is defending his decision-making process to Hostinský. It was not an emotional decision. That is, by linking the idea of masculinity

[143] Fibich to Hostinský, in Nejedlý, *Milostný Deník*, 112-113.

[144] Fibich to Hostinský, in Nejedlý, *Milostný Deník,* 113.

with deliberation, he is implying that a lack of deliberation, i.e., a rash or emotional decision, would be coded as feminine. Given this assumption, we can see that Fibich is defending himself in two ways. One, Fibich has not been seduced by some siren (Schulzová); he made the decision for himself based on his own free will. Two, the decision was made based on thought, not feeling; he has not been emasculated, he is making the choice that is best for him and his art. Fibich ends by, once again, thanking Hostinský for his steadfast friendship and reaffirming his commitment to their relationship.

Beyond the incredible intimacy of the two letters, perhaps the most remarkable thing about them is that neither letter refers directly to the situation at hand. Anežka Schulzová's name never appears in either letter, nor does Betty Fibichová's. Hostinský never says how he found out that Fibich was no longer living with his wife and son, and Fibich never directly acknowledges his move. The entire exchange is carried out in terms of Fibich's career, creative expression, and their friendship. One wonders whether Fibich had compartmentalized this part of his relationship for interactions with Hostinský or whether, despite what he wrote to Hostinský, didn't feel entirely comfortable confiding in him. Perhaps, despite Fibich's obvious change of address to cohabitate with Schulzová, neither felt comfortable explicitly expressing this controversial move in writing. It is wildly evident from Fibich's notes to Schulzová that he was completely smitten with her; yet he never mentions love when describing his rationale to Hostinský, only creative passion, which is described in almost brutal terms, rather different from those associated with ardor. The two letters are simultaneously startlingly frank and maddeningly vague. Regardless, Fibich's reply to Hostinský is the

most direct source we have to gauge his emotional state at this critical point in both his personal and professional lives.

Although the friendship between Fibich and Hostinský continued, it is clear that these events changed their relationship, and Hostinský's writings about Schulzová often seem tinted with suspicion and jealousy. Overall, despite the dubious social acceptance of their adulterous May-September relationship, Fibich had no qualms about it whatsoever. He made no attempts to keep his relationship with Schulzová secret and didn't allow the gossip and criticism to affect him, because he felt that the artistic growth he derived from his relationship with her far outweighed the possible drawbacks.[145]

In its collection, the Czech Museum of Music has a series of short notes from Fibich to Schulzová, apparently written from rehearsals at the National Theater where he was the dramaturge briefly from 1899-1900 (many are on the back side of old rehearsal schedules), which partially document the depth of emotion Fibich felt for her. The notes show a middle-aged man in the throes of what seems almost a schoolboy's infatuation with a woman twenty years his junior. Almost all of these notes are undated, although several are clearly written during his final illness.

A representative example of these love notes begins with the following salutation: "My only delight, my more and more ardently beloved Čiči [his pet name for

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[145] Nejedlý, *Milostný Deník*, 104-105. "Nebylo to vše, co se zde udalo, vlastně docela nutné, samozřejmě? Fibich to také tak cítil a proto mu nepadaly vůbec žádné pohybnosti o správnosti nebo oprávněnosti toho, ani umělecké ani mravní. Proto se také se svou láskou nijak netajil."

her] and woman…"[146] At the end of this salutation he uses the word "žen[a]" to describe her. Although this could be translated simply as "woman," it is also the word for "wife," so could be an indication of the way he viewed their relationship. Regardless of the date, Fibich is very clearly entirely smitten with Schulzová. His note goes on to say, "I love you more than ever and know I will love you more every day… I look forward to you endlessly and long for a very lovely half day tomorrow and hopefully evening, if you would like!!!"[147] The missive ends, "I am your more and more strongly loving man [could also be translated as 'husband'], ZA-FF"[148] Several of the other notes in the collection are similar, peppered with underscores and multiple exclamation points after most sentences. Sadly, Schulzová's responses, if they existed, do not survive in the collection, but her staunch defense of and advocacy for Fibich both during his life and afterwards do attest for her feelings about him.

Tragically, Fibich's decision to finally leave his wife for Schulzová marked the beginning of the end of his life. The two lived together for just three years – from October 1897 until Fibich's death at the age of 50 on October 15, 1900. Schulzová describes the day of Fibich's death in somewhat maudlin, hyperbolic detail in her book *Zdenko Fibich: hrstka upomínek a intimních rysů*, which even the editors of the volume published in 1950 say is "published in [its] entirety, despite that there are some things with which we are not entirely in agreement."[149] Having described the ravens circling

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[146] ČMH Fond S80, Inv. 47.

[147] Ibid.

[148] Ibid.

[149] L. Boháček, introduction to Schulzová.

Fibich's home on the day of his death, she writes, "He died as he lived: quietly, unnoticed, and without the attendance and interest of the public," continuing to say that she believes "it is not an exaggeration to say that he lived and died a hero."[150] Despite the need to weigh Schulzová's accounts with the requisite grain of salt that her extreme bias towards her subject merits, her second book about Fibich does provide a uniquely (and often quirkily) intimate account of Fibich's personal life, not found in other contemporary sources. We know that, in addition to Schulzová, several members of her family were present at the time of Fibich's death. A letter exists in the ČMH archives in which Karolina Schulzová urges her son to hurry to Fibich's house as the doctor thinks the end of his life is imminent. Again, even at his death, we see the devotion of not only Anežka Schulzová, but her entire family, to their "mistř."

Sadly, Schulzová only outlived Fibich by five years. In a rare example of agreeing wholeheartedly with Nejedlý, Kopecký writes, "Anežka died of a 'broken heart' five years after Fibich's death."[151] In the five years between Fibich's death and her own, Schulzová valiantly fought an uphill battle to preserve Fibich's memory and music. She was met with indifference both from the general public and from artistic institutions like the National Theater and the Prague Conservatory.[152] Without Fibich, though, Schulzová's will to live seemed to wither. Both Nejedlý and Kopecký entertain long, poetic descriptions about how she died of a broken heart, notably as the National

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[150] Schulzová, 7.

[151] Kopecký, *Opery Zdeňka Fibicha,* 80.

[152] Ibid.

Theater prepared to stage a revival of *Hedy*, the work that Schulzová felt most closely embodied their relationship.[153] Unfortunately, the realistic description of Schulzová's death, as found in Stanislava Mazačová's entry in the Lexicon of Czech Literature (and buried deep in Kopecký's footnotes) is less romantic: an overdose of morphine. Both Mazačová and Kopecký note that it cannot be proved that Schulzová's death was a suicide, but Schulzová wrote to her brother in the last year of her life that she was feeling increasingly hopeless. On curative trips with her father, his health seemed to improve markedly and hers only declined. Anežka Schulzová died November 4, 1905, at age 37.

The Fibich-Schulzová Collaborations

In her memoirs of her time with Fibich, Anežka Schulzová divides his operatic output into two periods, divided by the melodrama trilogy *Hippodamie*. She says that the first period was heavily influenced by Wagner, for whom Fibich had a great deal of respect (she even goes so far as to call him a "strict Wagnerian"[154]), but that after *Hippodamie* came a second period of emancipation and artistic individuality with a "blossoming of musical elements."[155]

Most other scholars divide Fibich's career along the same lines, but with a different context. The other way to describe this operatic trajectory is the period pre-

[153] Even Kopecký seems to give in to Nejedlian excess here, emphasizing the fact that Anežka died exactly on her mother's name day, and the mixture of pleasure and pain Anežka felt as the National Theater prepared to perform the work closest to her (breaking) heart.

[154] Schulzová, 22.

[155] Schulzová, 51.

Anežka Schulzová and post-Anežka Schulzová. The two collaborated together on his last three operas – *Hedy*, based on an episode from Byron's *Don Juan*; *Šárka* based, as we will see, on events loosely drawn from Czech history and mythology; and *Pád Arkuna*, drawn from the history of how Christianity came to the Baltic region. Schulzová's presence is also vividly observed in Fibich's so-called "Erotic Piano Diaries," three sets of small piano works based largely around elements of Anežka Schulzová's body and mannerisms. Not coincidentally, these are the works for which Fibich received the most attention both at home and abroad; even the Fibich commentators who cannot agree on anything else agree that the last decade of Fibich's life was by far his most productive.

The couple's first collaboration was *Hedy*, based on Byron's *Don Juan*. The story focuses on Hedy and Don Juan's forbidden love, which is ultimately foiled by the return of Hedy's father Lambro and his band of pirates; the tale ends with Don Juan being taken away by the pirates and Hedy committing suicide. Schulzová calls it Fibich's "dearest" opera, and says that it was the "closest to his heart" with "an effusion of his most intimate feelings and thoughts."[156] As with her entire work, it is hard to tell from Schulzová's writing whether these were her feelings or his, but it's easy to understand why the couple would feel a special connection to the work. Schulzová and Fibich were still in the fraught early stages of a relationship that likely seemed impossible: Fibich was much older than Schulzová and married to someone else, and she was his student and the daughter of a prominent family; and yet, their love appears to have felt inevitable.

[156] Schulzová, 52.

The longing that Fibich and Schulzová felt for each other was a clear connection between their personal lives and Byron's story, and the music that Fibich wrote for *Hedy* immediately earned it the moniker of a "Czech Tristan"[157] In his biography of Fibich Mirko Očadlík notes that the second half of Act I and Act II of *Hedy* are among Fibich's best work, ascribing his success to the artistic fervor that Fibich derived from his intense love for Anežka Schulzová.[158] Although critical reception of the work was mixed, the love scenes were fairly universally praised, and even the reviewers who disliked the work pointed out the haunting solo for a fisherman at the conclusion of the opera as innovative and interesting.[159]

Many commentators view Fibich and Schulzová's third and final collaboration, *Pád Arkuna,* as the beginning of what could have been a new third phase of Fibich's operatic career. John Tyrrell and Judith A. Mabary point to the odd structure (the work features a prologue, *Helga*, set 20 years prior to the action in the three-act *Dargun,* which forms the majority of the work) and to the "conversational" and "chamber-like" style present, particularly in *Helga.*[160] Mirko Očadlík notes that *Pád Arkuna* takes a "new direction" for Fibich, taking a "searching journey, dissatisfied with the previous musical content of his operatic character."[161] He also claims that the elements most

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[157] Borecký in Rektorys, 172.

[158] Očadlík, 64.

[159] Notable among *Hedy*'s detractors is V.J. Novotný, writing for *Hlas Národa,* who claimed that the first act was "dirt poor" and the dialogue "trudge[d]...negligently." V.J. Novotný in Rektorýs, 168-9.

[160] Tyrrell and Mabary.

[161] Očadlík, 73-74.

characteristic of *Pád Arukna* are atypical of Fibich's prior style and, as such, is evidence of "Fibich's growth towards higher work.[162] Unfortunately, there were to be no further operas in this potential new phase of operatic activity for Fibich; in fact, he did not even live to see the work's premiere, dying 24 days before its first performance.

In Chapter 4 I examine Fibich and Schulzová's most successful collaboration, the opera *Šárka.* Despite the nearly unmitigated praise reviewers had for Fibich's music, Schulzová's libretto was met with significant critical opposition. Even as Fibich solidified his place as a Czech composer by writing an opera based on a traditional Czech founding myth, Anežka Schulzová discovered that seemingly small changes to what many saw as the property of their nation could result in harsh critical reactions.

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[162] Očadlík, 74.

Chapter 3: "The Librettist Wears Skirts" – An Analysis of Antonín Dvořák's Operatic Collaborations with Marie Červinková-Riegrová

Antonín Dvořák's "big break," internationally speaking, occurred when he was awarded the Austrian State Stipendium in 1877. This prize connected Dvořák directly with the critic Eduard Hanslick, who, in his letter notifying Dvořák of the award, recommended that Dvořák contact Johannes Brahms directly. He urged him to do so, saying, "After all, it would be advantageous for your things to become known beyond your narrow Czech fatherland, which in any case does not do much for you."[163] Although Hanslick himself had been born in Prague, he clearly thought little of his hometown's cultural potential and assumed that Dvořák would not find success without intercession from outsiders. Dvořák took Hanslick's advice, and his new contact with Brahms resulted in a relationship with Brahms' own publisher, Simrock. From that period onward, Dvořák often looked to Brahms, Hanslick, and Simrock for advice and critiques of his works in progress.

Although he was grateful for the exposure and advice provided by his new international network, Dvořák clearly felt torn between international fame and his own national identity. In his correspondence with these important stakeholders his sense of frustration is often palpable. He frequently reminds Simrock not to omit Czech titles for his pieces, and several times he seems irritated at Simrock's suggestion that he write more orchestral works along the lines of the popular *Slavonic Dances* or *Slavonic*

[163] Eduard Hanslick to Antonín Dvořák, Vienna, November 30, 1877, English translation in Clapham, "Dvořák's Relations with Brahms and Hanslick," *The Musical Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (April 1971): 242; German original in *Antonin Dvořák: Korrespondence a dokumenty* (Praha: Editio Supraphon, 1996), 5:87.

Rhapsody, which Dvořák at one point dismisses as "merry." Dvořák was more interested in developing his international reputation as a composer of operas. Here we see two of the key stumbling blocks that Dvořák faced in his quest to achieve international recognition for his work: his desire to retain his Czech identity, which was at odds with his craving for international recognition; and his wish for international recognition as a composer who happens to be Czech, as compared with attempts to market him as a novelty because his music was Czech.

Richard Taruskin summarizes the problem adroitly when he writes that, "Dvořák's Bohemianisms were at once the vehicle of his international appeal and the eventual guarantee of his secondary status vis-a-vis natural-born universals like Brahms. Without the native costume, a 'peripheral' composer would never achieve even secondary canonical rank, but with it he could never achieve more."[164] Musicologists like David Brodbeck and Margaret Notley have made extensive analyses of the complexities of Dvorak's reception in Vienna and its interaction with contemporary local and Imperial politics.[165] Here I build on these works and consider not just the Viennese critical take on Dvorak's position in the musical landscape of the Imperial capital, but also the ways that Czech figures – namely the conservative Czech politician F. L. Rieger and his daughter, Dvořák's librettist, Marie Červinková-Riegrová – influenced his decisions with regards to the direction of his operatic future. By considering the way in which Dvořák's decisions impacted his reception in Prague in

[164] Richard Taruskin, "Nationalism," in *Grove Music Online*. Accessed June 8, 2016.

[165] David Brodbeck, *Defining Deutschtum: Political Ideology, German Identity, and Music-Critical Discourse in Liberal Vienna* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) and Margaret Notley, *Lateness and Brahms: Music and Culture in the Twilight of Viennese Liberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

addition to his Viennese stakeholders, I expose the conflicted influences surrounding Dvořák during the 1880s as he worked on *Dimitrij* and *Jakobín*.

After his success in the 1877 competition, Dvořák's potential for international fame was brokered largely by non-Czechs like Simrock, Johannes Brahms, and Eduard Hanslick. Audiences and tastemakers alike found his orchestral works appealing and Slavic-ly novel. His operatic works, however, were less successful in a broader public: unlike instrumental music, which transcended the language barriers within the Habsburg Empire, Czech operas, imbued with linguistic meaning and cultural memory, were problematic outside of their homeland. Particularly given the political atmosphere in Vienna in the 1880s, Dvořák was highly unlikely to find success there (or, really, anywhere other than Bohemia) with distinctly Czech or Slavic operas; yet he had had little success with previous operas that had non-Czech characteristics in Prague.[166]

This chapter uses Dvořák's two operatic collaborations with Marie Červinková-Riegrová, *Dimitrij* and *Jakobín*, as a lens through which to examine the inherent conflict between Dvořák's yen for international fame and his own national identity. Taking Ernest Gellner's theory that culture is at the heart of national identity as a starting point, I examine the development and reception of these works, with special focus on Dvořák's contradictory influences: strong support for Slavic and Czech elements in his operas from those at home, and encouragement to diversify and shed his operatic

[166] Brodbeck's one foray into Dvořák's operas is to discuss how poorly the 1885 production of his opera *Selma Sedlák* (*The Cunning Peasant*) was received in Vienna. See Brodbeck,186-190.

"Czechness" from those with a more international perspective.[167] By examining these two works we can explore two operas written by the same composer-librettist pairing. By comparing the genesis and reception of the works we can see the different ways that Dvořák approached libretti and the pressure he felt when choosing a new libretto. We can also explore the differences in reception between *Dimitrij*, a work that was, while pan-Slavic, not specifically Czech and, therefore, less threatening to a Viennese public who felt threatened by a newly powerful Czech delegation to the imperial Parliament; and *Jakobín,* a work with such specifically Czech cultural undertones that it was unlikely to appeal to those outside of Bohemia. The works are contiguous in that Dvořák wrote no other operas in between his two collaborations with Červinková-Riegrová, but separate in terms of the amount of time he took between composing these two operas and the social and artistic contexts in which he was composing.

In order to fully understand the circumstances that left Dvořák feeling torn between a German audience and a Czech one it is instructive to consider the contemporary political landscape of the Habsburg Empire. In 1848, inspired by similar revolutions in other areas of Europe, Bohemians living in what was then the Habsburg Empire staged a failed revolt in an attempt to gain if not full nationhood, at least more autonomy within the Empire. This led, in the 1850s to an absolutist rule over Bohemia. During the 1860s and 70s the Czechs waged passive resistance against the Imperial government – they boycotted the Imperial Parliament and refused to send delegations to Imperial functions. In December 1867 Emperor Franz Joseph had signed a series of five compromise laws, intended to placate liberals, known as the December

[167] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism.*

Constitution.[168] By 1869, given slight Imperial motion towards liberalism and the failure of their passive resistance, Czechs returned to the Imperial Parliament.[169]

Despite the return to active engagement with the Habsburg Parliament, in the mid-1870s the Czech delegation began to splinter. The Old Czechs, led by F. L. Rieger, were generally wealthier and had more modest political goals, "to enfranchise the lesser groups of the bourgeoisie," without granting universal suffrage. The Young Czechs, led by the brothers Eduard and Julius Grégr, tended to be of more modest means, were more democratic and progressive and favored universal suffrage.[170] This political break was also reflected in contemporary culture. Dvořák, as a result of his connection to both Rieger and to Vienna was linked to the Old Czechs, while Smetana and Fibich were associated with the Young Czechs. This political split also extended to contemporary periodicals, most of which had either an explicit or implied political association.[171]

As a result of this schism within the Czech delegation to the Imperial Parliament, during the 1880s, the period encompassing Dvořák's collaboration with Červinková-Riegrová, "action was concentrated on nationalistic issues, such as language rights, of interest mainly to the middle class, and [the delegation] neglected more pressing economic and social questions of concern to the broader masses."[172] As

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[168] Brodbeck, 7.

[169] Skilling, 254.

[170] Skilling, 275.

[171] For more on this see Locke, 22-28.

[172] Skilling, 257.

David Brodbeck notes, "For the ever increasing numbers of officials and clerks (of whom the imperial bureaucracy required legions)...language, in particular, became an urgently practical question."[173] For the Germans, however, this desire for practical language rights (in a region that was, by this point, 2/3 ethnically Czech and 1/3 ethnically German),[174] came across as politically aggressive, and as such, anti-Czech sentiment fomented in liberal Vienna.[175]

In 1879 the new Prime Minister Eduard Taafe formed a new conservative government coalition known as the "Iron Ring," which consisted of German conservatives and most of the Czech delegation to Parliament, which, according to A. J. P. Taylor meant, "German hegemony in Austria was ended."[176] As a result, Czechs suddenly had significantly more clout in Vienna and the Germans, feeling threatened, began to exhibit a stronger German nationalism, asserting their linguistic superiority over the Czechs.[177] Around this time German "liberals began to redefine political identities and social conflicts in terms of a nationalist discourse that understood German identity as a matter of ethnicity rather than of liberal bourgeois cultural values."[178] As a result, the bifurcations between Germans and Czechs who had coexisted with relative acceptance of one another in Prague grew starker and anti-

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[173] Brodbeck, 84.

[174] Otto Urban, "Czech Society 1848-1918," in *Bohemia in History*, ed. Mikuláš Teich, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 206.

[175] Brodbeck 159.

[176] A. J. P. Taylor in Brodbeck, 11.

[177] Brodbeck 11, 18.

[178] Brodbeck 160.

Czech sentiment among German liberals in Vienna grew stronger. It was within this cultural and political context (with which Marie Červinková-Riegrová was directly involved as a result of her father's high position in Taafe's Iron Ring) that Dvořák and Červinková-Riegrová embarked on their collaborative efforts.

Although Dvořák and Červinková-Riegrová worked together on only two operas, the period of their collaboration began in the early 1880s and lasted until Červinková-Riegrová's death in 1895. Although the first, *Dimitrij* (1882) was incredibly successful, even receiving a glowing front-page review in the *Neue Freie Presse* from Eduard Hanslick, Dvořák was hesitant to use the next libretto that Červinková-Riegrová presented to him, *Jakobín*. The six-year delay that ensued between Dvořák's receipt of the libretto in 1882 and 1889 when the work finally premiered was, I argue, a result of Dvořák's conflicting spheres of influence. Brahms, Hanslick, and Simrock, Dvořák's German stakeholders were encouraging him to write his next opera for Vienna, while Červinková-Riegrová and her father, F. L. Rieger, led the Czech offensive to keep Dvořák's operatic premieres in Prague.

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Dimitrij's Development

Dimitrij is based on the historical events that happened during the conflict over who would succeed Boris Godunov as tsar of Russia. The inherently pan-Slavic (rather than strictly Czech) nature of the work made it a success both at home and abroad and garnered performances on the Czech National Theater tour to Vienna in 1892, in addition to a successful run in Prague. After a significant delay, Dvořák composed *Jakobín*, which premiered in 1889. Centered on the events in a small Bohemian village

when a count's estranged son returns from France, *Jakobín* is one of the crucial examples of the Czech opera subgenre of village opera, of which the most famous is Smetana's *Bartered Bride*. In the remainder of this chapter, I argue that even after Dvořák's first successful collaboration with Marie Červinková-Riegrová on *Dimitrij*, his hesitance to compose *Jakobín* stemmed largely from his inner conflict between fidelity to his Czech identity and his desire to achieve international renown as a "composer," rather than a "Czech composer."

Although Marie Červinková-Riegrová had some initial conversations with Karel Šebor (who had previously composed an opera based on Červinková-Riegrová's libretto *Zmařená Svatba*) about *Dimitrij*, she was already having second thoughts about working with him again.[179] In January 1881 she wrote to her father that, "I don't know who to send the text to[;] Šebor is a careless man and does not show himself, he earns money only by daily music and doesn't care about fame, yet he has acquired such great talent."[180] Even though she still considered working with Šebor, she allowed J.N. Maýr to give Dvořák a copy of the libretto.

In so far as there are entrenched legends about Marie Červinková-Riegrová's collaboration with Antonín Dvořák, the most common is perhaps that the composer assumed that the librettist of *Dimitrij* was a man and had to be corrected when asking to meet "him." According to Červinková-Riegrová's diaries this indeed is true. In her January 1881 diary she writes, "In the meantime came the news that Dvořák liked it [the *Dimitrij* libretto] very much and asked Maýr if he could speak with Mr. Librettist.

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[179] For more on Červinková-Riegrová's experience working with Šebor, see pp. 53-54.

[180] Reprinted in Bráfová, 74.

Maýr, who at first, had kept quiet about who that was, replied to him that the librettist wears skirts."[181] There is no indication that his new librettist's gender phased Dvořák at all, and maybe he shouldn't have even been surprised. By this point Smetana had already collaborated with Eliska Krásnohorská on two operas and was at work on a third.[182] Dvořák's misstep, though, is a reflection of the apparent standard elsewhere that librettists were men; Czech composers were really the only ones, at this point, who made a habit of working with female composers on a regular basis.

Marie Červinková-Riegrová first met with Dvořák on January 6, 1881, in a meeting arranged by Maýr, even though she had not yet ended her professional relationship with Šebor. The collaboration did not have an entirely confident start. Červinková-Riegrová and her father seemed a bit concerned that Dvořák was also entertaining the idea of composing a *Šárka* opera to a libretto by Zeyer and Sládka, and according to Červinková-Riegrová's sister, Libuše Bráfová, Dvořák had to overcome some initial misgivings about working with the Rieger family. Although, given our modern view of Dvořák as completely removed from Prague's artistic polemics it seems improbable that he would have had strong political concerns about the Riegers, Bráfová claims that only on this January 6, 1881, visit did Dvořák overcome some personal biases "against Rieger, and probably also against his daughter ... from the entire context it seems that maybe Dvořák cherished a blurry impression of

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[181] Marie Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I (1880-1884),* ed. Milan Vojáček, Helena Kokešová, Martina Maříková, Marie Ryantová, Jana Svobodová, Lucie Swierczeková, Zdeněk Vácha, and Luboš Velek (Prague: Scriptorium, 2009), 123.

[182] *The Kiss* premiered in 1876 and *The Secret* followed in 1878. *The Devil's Wall* would premiere in 1882.

contemporary political disputes about Rieger."[183] Perhaps *because* of his desire to distance himself from the political disputes of the Prague cultural scene Dvořák hoped to avoid any inherent political nuances of allying himself with the Riegers. Regardless of these possible prejudices, however, after overcoming any initial hesitation Dvořák might have had, he was very impressed with Rieger and the entire family soon became his friends. After this meeting, in fact, Červinková-Riegrová finally made up her mind to ask Šebor for the libretto back, despite her many "scruples about it and sorrow that [she] couldn't bring [herself]" to end their collaboration sooner.[184]

Both Červinková-Riegrová and her father developed quite favorable impressions of Antonín Dvořák as a result of their early meetings. "I like Dvořák," she wrote,

> "He is enormously good natured and natural; he is not married to spending every moment whistling in society or suddenly reflecting and ceasing to talk. He is passionately in love with music... Whenever he discusses music, a deep wrinkle splits his brow, and it becomes still deeper. Dvořák does not conjecture about himself, international fame does not impact him; he remains natural, like he was before. It seems to me that in everything he does he is enthusiastic."[185]

Interestingly, F.L. Rieger, in his description of Dvořák, also points to Dvořák and considers him "natural." He even calls him a "Natur-Mensch." "Dvořák is an unusual man," Rieger claims. "He is apparently a great, good-natured guy, like a 'Natur-Mensch'. ... He has a lively sense for beauty, and he is a musician in every vein. For that he is very natural. He appears to have no arrogance and he pronounces his views completely

[183] Bráfová, 79.

[184] Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I*, 125. Marie later mentions that Šebor's reply to her request for the return of the *Dimitrij* materials moved her, noting "such a pity, that talent."

[185] Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I*, 157.

openly."[186] It would appear that Dvořák's lack of pretention and artifice had charmed the Rieger family, as it had many others. Thereafter Dvořák was a regular and cheerful guest at the Rieger home, delighted if he found Červinková-Riegrová there. When she was at Maleč, her brother Bohuš was their frequent messenger.[187]

After this first meeting, according to Božena Augustinnová's account, Červinková-Riegrová "willingly agreed to a few changes that [Dvořák] asked for," and happily returned to Maleč in February of 1881 where she "immediately proceeded to work towards the desired improvements in the wintery peace and quiet."[188] Marie Červinková-Riegrová's own account is somewhat less rosy than Augustinnová's. She confessed to her diary after the meeting that she worried about Dvořák's tendency to ask many others for opinions about his work, noting that, "Dvořák showed it to some of his acquaintances, like Novotný, who sometimes makes him believe some not very wise things."[189] She resigned herself to more work on *Dimitrij*, bemoaning the "disagreeable" work that would be required to revise the libretto.

Dimitrij is the story of "The Pretender": the supposed son of Ivan the Terrible, come to claim the Russian throne after the death of Boris Godunov. Simply put, the plot revolves around the fight for succession between Dimitrij the Pretender (supported by the Poles) and Boris Godunov's heirs, supported by the Boyars. Dimitrij arrives with the Polish army, and manages to convince his "mother" Marfa (Ivan's widow) to

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[186] Reprinted in Bráfová, 80.

[187] Bráfová, 80-81.

[188] Augustinnová, 36.

[189] Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I*, 125.

support him, even though she knows that he is not really her son. In Act II, Dimitrij marries Marina, a member of the Polish nobility, but then almost immediately professes his love to Xenie, Boris Godunov's daughter, whom he has just saved from Polish molesters. Having declared his love to Xenie, the two then reveal Šujský (leader of the Russian Boyars) and conspirators who are attempting to expose Dimitrij as a pretender. Šujský is arrested, but Dimitrij later pardons him, at Xenie's request. Dimitrij rejects Marina and goes to discuss his love with Xenie. Unbeknownst to the two lovers, Marina overhears their entire conversation. In the original version of the opera, at this point Marina brutally murders Xenie, although, as we will see, this was later removed. In the end, Dimitrij is exposed as a pretender and Šujský kills him. Although to modern audiences, unfamiliar with the historical events at the core of the opera, the plot may seem convoluted and confusing, to contemporary audiences, the story would have been at least somewhat familiar, not least because of contemporary popular versions of the story by Ferdinand Mikovec and Friedrich Schiller. The work is, at face value, the perfect balance between Dvořák's desire to be both a Czech and international composer: inherently Slavic enough to appeal to Prague audiences, particularly during a time in which the Pan-Slavic movement was popular, but not so closely tied to Czech culture that it would alienate international (i.e., German) audiences.

Dvořák and Červinková-Riegrová met for a second time when he visited her at the Rieger country estate, Maleč, in April at which point he requested only minor changes. "I promised Dvořák of course, everything that he wanted," she wrote of his visit. "I'm pleased that he doesn't want any substantial changes... In general he likes

Dimitrij very much and is looking forward to it."[190] At this point *Dimitrij* was still a five-act opera in the traditional French grand opera format. Dvořák had had a bad experience with a similar format in his previous opera *Vanda*, and was hesitant to return to it. Červinková-Riegrová begins her entry noting, "It's always niggling away at the back of his brains that it's five acts." [191] Although the work would become a four-act opera in later versions, she mentions being happy that he didn't force her to cut the fifth act at this point, and the first run of the work would feature the original fifth act.

Despite her earlier gripes about Dvořák's habit of consulting with others about his work, as they continued to develop *Dimitrij*, both Červinková-Riegrová and Dvořák sought advice from trusted colleagues. Marie showed her libretto both to F. V. Jeřábek and to V. V. Zelený, who would later write an extended review of the completed opera for the journal *Dalibor*. Dvořák consulted with various critics, and apparently had plans

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[190] Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I*, 155. The same entry describes their walk up a hill near Maleč where they viewed the Walpurgis night bonfires, in one of the loveliest and happiest sections of Marie's diary. "After tea, during which Dvořák was enormously more than satisfied with coffee and white bread with butter, we went to Kubátku. We all sat down for a while in the forest, then, when it got dark, we went up the hill. The view of the light around the country was lovely. It was warm and silent – the countryside dotted with lights on all sides, until in the distance they faded away like will-o'-the-wisps. Dvořák was enraptured. Whenever he likes something he begins to whistle. Into this still rushed boys with broomsticks, yelling, bellowing closer to us, a blaze of brooms illuminated the forest and the gamekeeper's lodge and a thousand sparks glittered..., falling on all sides, silhouettes of dark figures, a blaze compared to the forest, cries and lively motions of children, the picture was lovely. Every now and again around the country in the night silence sounded distant cries resounding from one hillock to another, then again music from afar. We couldn't get enough of the sight. It was completely dark when we descended, to the silvery mines, then fires lighted our way, burning somewhere on a nearby hill, they were seen as shadows of trees in groves. And after the walk back everywhere were more fires, oscillating bones. I don't think I've ever had such a good Walpurgis Night.

[191] Červinková-Riegrová *Zápisky I*, 131.

to show *Dimitrij* to Otakar Hostinský, but thought better of it, pronouncing that, "Those guys are more Wagnerian than Wagner himself!"[192] Although Dvořák does not explicitly mention the tension between Czech and German in the context of his dig at Wagnerism, it seems likely that at least on some level Dvořák had thought better of exposing his Slavic work to a critic he viewed as Germanic.

When *Dimitrij* was finally completed to both Červinková-Riegrová's and Dvořák's specifications, however, further problems arose. Dvořák was in a feud with Maýr, who he asserted never gave his operas their due, and threatened to bypass a Prague premiere and take *Dimitrij* straight to Vienna.[193] Particularly given the closure of the Czech National Theater following a fire, a Viennese premiere would have boasted a much more prominent location than Prague. Červinková-Riegrová, Rieger and others, however, had concerns that if the work premiered in Vienna with a German text it would be "lost" to the Czechs and not considered a Czech work, and that the inherently Slavic nature of the work (based on a Slavic text by Mikovec and written in Czech about a conflict between Poles and Russians) would be ruined in translation.[194]

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[192] Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I*, 157.

[193] Bráfová, 90.

[194] Bráfová, 101-102 and earlier. Whether Dvořák actually would have been able to mount a production in Vienna is an entirely different question. As Alan Houtchens discusses in "The Proposed Performances of 'Vanda' and 'Rusalka' in Vienna," although Dvořák spent much of 1879 and 1880 in talks with Jauner in Vienna, and despite Dvořák's great optimism and his feeling that Vienna's artistic atmosphere was rife for a Slavic opera, the production never materialized. Given his recent failure to have *Vanda* performed there, it seems highly improbable that he would have been successful in mounting a different Slavic opera in Vienna less than two years later, particularly an untested new work.

On December 10, 1881, Červinková-Riegrová wrote about her diplomatic approach to convincing Dvořák not to pull the plug on the Prague performances. Recognizing, perhaps, the improbability of a Vienna premiere materializing, she claims, "I am trying to talk him out of it, but I'm only making very mild objections... it would be unreasonable to oppose him firmly, [and] this leaves me a last resort if the performances [in Prague] were really threatened."[195] She continues to express her true feelings about the possibility of her work being co-opted for Viennese audiences. "I have always written in Czech and for Czechs," she wrote, and did not want

> thus to become almost unwittingly an author for the German world. ... I think that Dimitrij will be a good opera – what have we come to, if the Germans think they own it, that it was written for them? For what, then, would this writing be, and what would I have to look forward to if not the thought that I put my name down on my opera, which helps to honor *our* musical artistic output?[196]

In this excerpt we can see both sides of Dvořák's professional life presenting him with a conflict: the desire to get what he feels is his just international acclaim, as promoted by Jahn and others in Vienna on one side; and Marie Červinková-Riegrová's unwillingness (even if here it is expressed mostly privately) to see her work claimed by the German-speaking Viennese audiences.

Červinková-Riegrová loathed her role as the mediator in the feud between Maýr and Dvořák, but was even less happy with the idea of her opera being performed for the first time in Germanic Vienna. In her journal she mentions going back and forth between the two men and finally getting them in the same room, albeit begrudgingly. Her entry from May 21 reads,

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[195] Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I*, 226.

[196] Ibid.

> In the afternoon I was...with Dvořák at Maýr's. It wasn't very pleasant. Maýr didn't want to yield on anything... That role of mediation is highly unpleasant. Then Dvořák grumbled a lot about Maýr behind closed doors and I, of course, defended Maýr[;] however, the truth is still that Maýr doesn't know how to work with people... it's irritating... mainly he needs to behave less abruptly to writers and composers; everyone is enemies."[197]

Finally, after considerable discussion, *Dimitrij* premiered at the New Czech Theater on October 8, 1882.[198]

Dimitrij's Reception

Dimitrij was met with glowing reviews from all sides. Consider the various write-ups from the pro-Dvořák periodical *Národní listy*, the pro-Smetana paper *Dalibor,* and Hanslick's *feuilleton* from the Viennese *Neue Freie Presse,* which illustrate the relative opinions of the various contemporary journalistic factions. Although all three reviews are overwhelmingly positive, each reviewer's individual position (as well as that of his journal) colors the tone and focus of their respective reviews.[199]

Unable to contain their excitement long enough to write and publish the official review *Národní listy* published a one-paragraph blurb on the day after the premiere, which asserted that:

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[197] Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I,* 277.

[198] In addition to the discussion about where the performance was to take place, *Dimitrij* faced further challenged after it was finally decided that the work would premiere at the New Czech Theater. Because the theater had no heat, performances had to be cancelled during cold weather, which caused concern about the October premiere date.

[199] For more on the ideological slants of the various Prague periodicals of the day, see the first two chapters of Brian Locke's *Opera and Ideology in Prague*.

> Dvořák's new opera *Dimitrij* was met with decisive, overt success. The theater was crowded in all areas, and the audience was in a truly festive mood. Immediately, the overture was met with thunderous applause, and already after the first act there were loud calls for the composer... Besides the interesting music, contributing to the outcome is the impressive skillfully worked libretto of paní Červinková (daughter of Dr. Rieger) and the rich, unusually colorful staging, especially in so far as it concerns the costumes.[200]

This was followed up the next day with a more detailed (and still effusive) review, praising all aspects of the production. The reviewer again announces the "decisive success" of the work, and goes on to call it "a triumph...an excellent enrichment of our musical literature and a precious addition to the repertoire of Czech opera."[201] He continues with compliments for the libretto and librettist, before even turning to the music or the composer, proclaiming that, "It is without dissent one of the best libretti that we have."[202] Given the relatively small number of Czech libretti in the early 1880s, this is perhaps not the praise it might seem to be; but for a librettist having her work performed publicly for only the second time, this was quite the success for Marie Červinková-Riegrová.

Unsurprisingly, the reviewer latches on to the pan-Slavic themes of *Dimitrij*, noting that "Dvořák identifies excellently with...the national spirit" and that "a whole row of sung and orchestral numbers exudes Slavonic spirit."[203] Likely as a result of the pan-Slavic overtones of the work and *Národní listy*'s pro-Dvořák slant, even given some

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[200] *Národní listy,* October 9, 1882, no. 275, 5.

[201] *Národní listy,* October 10, 1882, no. 276, 3-4.

[202] *Národní listy,* October, 10, 1882, no. 276, 4.

[203] Ibid.

obvious flaws in the opera, their reviewer had essentially nothing negative to say about *Dimitrij*.

Z. Z. Zelený's three-part review of *Dimitrij* for *Dalibor*, while overwhelmingly positive, is rather more balanced and thoughtful than other contemporary critiques of Czech opera. Written at least in part having witnessed only a dress rehearsal (the first section was published before the premiere, the latter two after), but after having read the libretto draft that Marie Červinková-Riegrová shared with him, Zelený takes pains to not only evaluate *Dimitrij* for its own merits, but also to put it in the context of Dvořák's operatic career. Zelený highlights the progress Dvořák has made, especially with regard to declamation, since his previous foray into grand opera, *Vanda*.

The discussion of Červinková-Riegrová's libretto is contained primarily in the second part of the review, which was published on October 10, 1882, two days after the opera's premiere. Although Zelený points out a few areas that he finds lacking in the libretto, he has mostly complimentary notes for Červinková-Riegrová. He praises her characters as "clearly conceived and consistently drawn," noting "the libretto for *Dimitrij* is true drama, at many times also truly dramatically written."[204] He justifies several of his mild criticisms of her work by pointing out that this was her first libretto for a grand opera, mentioning that it is "appropriate to admit that also in scenic execution she proved her skillfulness and inventiveness, startlingly," even if her stage directions need some work.[205]

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[204] Z. Z. Zelený, *Dalibor*, October 10, 1882, vol. IV, no. 28, 226.

[205] Ibid.

Zelený goes on to praise Červinková-Riegrová's "original diction," celebrating that, "in contrast to jargon [found] namely in hackneyed old opera translations, her speech is healthy and fresh, like freshly cut grass, against the threadbare theatrical decorations."[206] He does, however, point out that the flip side of this "fresh" diction is that "a few places resemble insufficiently polished improvisations, in which some details give a less favorable impression in an evening in the theater than they perhaps did to the author before writing." This mild rebuke is immediately followed by the justification that "this is perhaps explained by the scanty previous theatrical work."[207]

Zelený ends his discussion of the libretto by saying that

> We can sum up our entire opinion about the libretto to *Dimitrij* thusly [:] that its solidity, liveliness, and, in essence, well-ordereness, indeed has great merit with Dvořák's work. If we compare it to the libretto to *Braniboři, Vanda*, and even *Dalibor* (*Libuše* cannot be compared), it is possible to say that there is no other among our greatest significant opera libretti as well-chosen.[208]

Dalibor was a frankly pro-Smetana journal, established by the critic Otakar Hostinský, a noted supporter of Smetana, established with a blatantly Young Czech perspective, so its praise of Dvořák's work (closely associated with Old Czech politics by dint of Rieger's tangential involvement) was significant, particularly given the favorable comparison with Smetana's operas. In fact, Zelený culminates his review of *Dimitrij* with another, even more overt reference to Smetana, asserting that Dvořák had followed all of the rules Smetana set out for the composition of Czech opera, that he had achieved the paragon of Czech opera and that "Dvořák has also reached the

[206] Zelený, 226.

[207] Ibid.

[208] Ibid.

destination on his journey."[209] Although it is possible that Zelený's friendship with Marie Červinková-Riegrová impacted his opinion of the opera, it does not change the fact that *Dalibor* had almost entirely positive thoughts on the new Dvořák opera – an apparent contradiction to its Smetana-centric position.

A week after the premiere perhaps the most balanced review appeared in a more prominent international publication by a more prominent reviewer. Eduard Hanslick's "Feuilleton" on *Dimitrij* appeared on the front page of the *Neue Freie Presse* on October 17, 1882. Although Hanslick's review was similarly as thoughtful and balanced as Zelený's, from his Viennese perspective, he was less interested in presenting a nuanced contextual portrait of Dvořák's work in a Czech context than in exposing his Viennese audiences to new works by a composer familiar to them as a composer of instrumental music rather than opera.

Hanslick's interest in Dvořák and his own relationship to Prague is complex. Hanslick had been born and grew up in Prague. At this time, as David Brodbeck has shown, Germans and Czechs still coexisted in an environment that would later be much more bifurcated by linguistic divisions. Although Hanslick later remembered the Czech-speaking bourgeoisie as one that was culturally dependent on Germans, during this *Vormärtz* (pre-1848 revolution) period, Brodbeck elucidates that Bohemians "showed little in the way of ethnic loyalties."[210] Brodbeck also asserts that, along the way, Hanslick had to make a conscious choice to embrace the German half of his own identity, Germanizing the spelling of his name (which was originally Hanslik). Indeed,

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[209] Zelený, 226.

[210] Brodbeck, 28.

Hanslick clearly conceived of himself as German by the time he was a prominent critic; yet, unlike some of his contemporaries who believed that certain genres were the property of German composers, Hanslick was willing to accept the music of non-German composers as "German,'' if they exhibited "German" characteristics.[211] Indeed, Brodbeck argues that early in Dvořák's career Hanslick intentionally distanced Dvořák from his Czechness in his criticism in an attempt to encourage his acceptance on the merit of his music, rather than his nationality.[212] Later, he relaxed these attempts, instead, playing on "popular assumptions as a means by which to subvert them."[213] It is this Hanslick that we see in his review of *Dimitrij.*

Hanslick begins his review by saying that, "A Czech grand opera, the premiere of which I recently had the opportunity to attend, excited an unusual degree of interest for musical devotees."[214] Hanslick goes on to identify Dvořák as "a Prague composer, whose... 'Legends' and 'Moravian Duets'" have made him famous both in Germany and England.[215] Hanslick notes that Dvořák's operatic profile, up to this point, had been low, and that only two of his earlier works were available in German translation, and those were "cheerful, unpretentious *Singspiele*."[216] He then, however, asserts, "Dvořák

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[211] Brodbeck, 17.

[212] Brodbeck, 151.

[213] Brodbeck, 172.

[214] Hanslick, "Feuilleton," in *Neue Freie Presse*, October 17, 1882, 1.

[215] Ibid.

[216] Ibid.

has completed a far superior assignment in his new grand opera *Dimitrij*."[217] Later in the review, Hanslick also describes the atmosphere of the premiere, which took place in the New Czech Theater. He mentions that the audience paid "exemplary attention" until "the last note," even though the theater, which had only just concluded a matinee, was "insufferabl[y]" hot, and the opera of "an uncomfortable duration."[218]

Like the others reviewers, Hanslick praises the libretto warmly. "The libretto, which is about the story of 'False Dimitrij,' is penned by a talented young woman, Frau Marie Červinka [sic], the daughter of the known Czech leader Rieger, in which her precise knowledge of the Russian tale is documented for good measure in a prologue." He continues, positing that, "The ambition to keep the story intact as much as possible appears to have been foremost for the librettist; she used the Schiller fragment almost not at all and only very sparingly...the setting of the same by Heinrich Laube."[219]

Much of Hanslick's extensive review is devoted to what he calls a "makeshift telling" of the opera's plot.[220] Particularly given Hanslick's mention of familiar versions of the same story by Schiller and Laube, it initially seems surprising that he would spill so much ink on detailed plot summaries; at the conclusion of his summary, however, he makes his reasoning clear, noting that Červinková's version "strips" the story of its "pure political and constitutional trappings," leaving "an indestructible dramatic kernel

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[217] Hanslick, 1.

[218] Hanslick, 3.

[219] Hanslick, 1.

[220] Hanslick, 2.

that virtually provokes dramatic treatment."[221] After a sentence to praise Dvořák's talent, "rooted in the innate and skilled familiarity with Slavic music," Hanslick returns to Červinková-Riegrová, noting "the highly cultured creator of the libretto without a doubt has demonstrated talent and dexterity."[222] He then turns to his criticisms of *Dimitrij*.

After his praise of Marie Červinková's talent, Hanslick cautions that, "these compliments do not indeed rule out some thoughts against her libretto."[223] Hanslick's main criticisms (and indeed, the bulk of his review as a whole) are focused on Červinková-Riegrová's libretto. His main complaints fall into two categories: character development and motivation, and length and pacing.

Hanslick's criticisms regarding character development are mostly psychological. He warns that,

> the constant psychological fluctuations of the three main characters seem risky. We see Marfa in the first and fourth acts completely battling the same conflict of feelings between knowledge and ignorance of her son. Marina suddenly overturns the contemptuousness and animosity against Dimitrij in the name of love, and after that, deadly hate... With regards to the hero himself, that he is without psychological fluctuations is entirely unthinkable; therein lies the tragedy of this character, who originally, from his right, his high descent, is solidly assured, and later this thought will be crazy... both halves of Dimitrij's mental state must be more sharply and obviously distinguished.[224]

Given the wealth of patently unbalanced sopranos and highly implausible plotlines in 19th century opera it seems a bit unfair to single Červinková-Riegrová out for her

[221] Hanslick, 2.

[222] Ibid.

[223] Ibid.

[224] Ibid.

characters' psychological shortcomings, but the criticism is a fair one. Hanslick's more urgent complaint, though, is Xenia's brutal assassination in Act IV. He writes that it is "poorly motivated" and "hateful." He claims that the motivation for her murder "suffices for jealousy, but certainly not for assassination." He posits that if Marina had immediately revealed Dimitrij's deception, it would have made sense, but that "Marina knows nothing more of Xenie other than that Dimitrij pardoned Šujsky for her sake. That suffices for feelings of jealousy, but certainly not for assassination."[225] Worse than the lack of motivation, though, is, according to Hanslick, the detriment of the audience's sympathies. He claims that "The assassination of Xenie, shocking and unnecessary, had the upsetting result that the entire sympathy of the audience looks towards this lovely innocent victim, and Dimitrij's demise, the true tragic catastrophe, leaves us relatively unmoved."[226] Motivations aside, the audience's distaste is the true problem with Xenie's brutal murder, and one that Marie Červinková-Riegrová took to heart.

Hanslick then turns to what he calls "technical thoughts," about the work's length and pacing. He regrets that "in each of the last three acts we encounter more or less exhausting length," which he claims lessens the impact of the work. He notes that in places where the action is most urgent, the libretto features "long reflections, dialogue or monologue, upon which the composer naturally proceeded to linger long and diffusely."[227] Hanslick does an admirable job illustrating this problem with an example from "directly before the catastrophe." Hanslick sets the scene,

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[225] Hanslick, 2.

[226] Ibid.

[227] Ibid.

> The Patriarch holds Marfa before the cross to swear. Everything waits in the breathless tension of the most critical moments; the Patriarch lowers the cross again, as a shooter readies the gun, and – an imposing ensemble number develops, bright and peaceful before us, a worthy piece of music that we in this moment, however, do not have the patience to enjoy.[228]

He continues, pointing out that although Dimitrij has two duets each with Marina and Xenia, there are no duets among the ladies themselves.[229]

Hanslick concludes this section with a defense of his criticism of *Dimitrij* by stating that, although "the same consideration would often be overlooked in such gifted authors," Červinková-Riegrová and Dvořák are so talented and modest that they will "gladly understand some subsequent shortenings and alterations, for these practicalities will improve the lively impression of the performance. Thereby will the quality of the success and dissemination gain immeasurably."[230] In fact, Dvořák and Červinková-Riegrová were of the same mind, in at least some ways. In a footnote, Hanslick mentions that he found out that subsequent performances after the premiere already featured "considerable cuts" and "even more illustrious success."[231]

On the topic of Dvořák's music, Hanslick has somewhat less to say, but is almost entirely positive. He notes that "Dvořák's *Dimitrij* is rich with beautiful and original music, the work of a true, considerable talent," and explains that the portions of the music that are influenced by Slavic character need no alterations. He also compliments the "dramatic power" of Dvořák's music, mentioning that he thinks the text setting and

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[228] Hanslick, 2.

[229] Ibid.

[230] Ibid.

[231] Hanslick, 2, fn.

phrasing are also good, "guessing by my very faulty knowledge of the language...[for which reason] this report must register of course only as a snapshot of a first impression, not as an actual critique."[232] In this excerpt we can see that, if there was ever any question, Hanslick does not consider himself Czech: his assessment of the Slavic character of *Dimitrij* is definitely that of an outsider and, like many other middle-class denizens of Bohemia under the Hapsburg Empire, he spoke "only enough Czech to make [himself] understood by domestic servants, workers, and peasants."[233]

Hanslick ends with a summary of the importance of this success to the Czech people and Czech art, saying,

> I was especially pleased for this modest but talented composer, as the audience broke out into a deafening jubilation after every act and would not tire of calling for Mr. Dvořák. For the absolute worth of the artwork such success in Czech theater will mean about as much as the furor of a Hungarian national opera in Pest [presumably, as the closer regional capitol to Vienna, a more relatable example than the somewhat more remote Prague]. It seems important to me that scores of German friends of music have concurrent favorable opinions [in order that] they will quickly become fond of Dvořák's opera and that it will have a trial period on our great stages.[234]

Hanslick's good will toward Dvořák is evident here, as he delights in his mentee's success and hopes for the further dissemination of his work. Despite the anti-Slavic atmosphere in Vienna at the time, he appears optimistic that the work would be well received in his adopted hometown.[235] Indeed, Hanslick was widely seen in

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[232] Hanslick, 3.

[233] Hanslick, from his biography *Aus meinem Leben*, quoted in translation in Brodbeck, 26.

[234] Ibid.

[235] It wasn't. *Dimitrij* was featured in the 1892 National Theater tour to Vienna and tanked next to works by Smetana.

Vienna to be "fanatically taken by Dvořák," and it was rumored that groups like the Vienna Philharmonic programmed Dvořák's works at the expense of other composers in order to curry Hanslick's favor.[236]

In Dvořák's quest for international success, it would be hard to top this endorsement. Hanslick was one of, if not *the* leading music critic of his time[237] and his review of *Dimitrij* would certainly have enjoyed an audience reaching far beyond Vienna. Hanslick's review feels generous and genuine, which is notable given the pressure that he, Simrock, and Brahms were putting on Dvořák to write a new opera for Vienna. As we will see, although Hanslick praised *Dimitrij* in print, privately he was less supportive.

Although she had received glowing reviews from all sides, Marie Červinková-Riegrová wrote in her diary on October 16, 1882, how unmoved she was by all the acclaim and success. By this point in her diaries it is evident that her marriage has become strained almost, at times, to the point of estrangement, and it seems obvious that she was suffering from what would today be considered some form of depression

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[236] Brodbeck, 261, 171. Brodbeck suggests that Hanslick's positive views on Dvořák were in some way connected to his own Czech heritage. Given that one of Brodbeck's key points about Hanslick was his own denial of his Czechness in favor of self-conscious *Deutschtum* ("Germanness"), this argument seems perhaps less than convincing. Brodbeck also claims that Hanslick was less inclined towards Dvořák's "tragic" operas, yet his review of *Dimitrij* from its Prague premiere is, as I have shown, overwhelmingly positive. Hanslick was, per Brodbeck, absent from the 1892 International Exhibition of Music and Theater in Vienna where *Dimitrij* paled in comparison to the success of *The Bartered Bride*, presented in German translation, which, according to contemporary criticism, benefitted from the linguistic superiority of its translation. Brodbeck, 256, 277.

[237] Brodbeck confirms this, noting that contemporary critics had no need to identify that the "He" to whom they referred was Hanslick. Brodbeck, 15.

and/or anxiety. She arrived in Prague early in October with the exact date of the premiere still somewhat uncertain, and still making slight changes to the text. Although she attended some rehearsals shortly after her arrival and seemed to enjoy them ("The music truly moved me. It is magnificent....In many places it is exceedingly effective, beautiful..."[238]), she soon declares, "I have made up my mind that I won't go to rehearsals again except for the final dress rehearsal," which seems to be a result of some anxiety that attending them caused her.[239]

Perhaps more surprising than that declaration, though, was the complete radio silence in her diary between the premiere on October 8, and her next entry, which did not appear until October 16. On that day she didn't even address the premiere, confessing that, "We're here again in silent solitude, but this time the transition [from Prague to Maleč] is hard and my thoughts disquieted. Lots of past memories keep coming to mind, some that I can't get rid of, and it makes me cry." Her only explicit mention of the opera is when she ponders the fact that, "It is strange how little I remember about the performance, about the recognition and praise that I have received. I am indifferent to everything... My imagination, I would say, is ill and overwrought."[240]

After another uncharacteristically long pause between entries, there is a brief note on October 24, followed by a more substantial entry on October 25 in which she finally seems emotionally able to describe the events surrounding *Dimitrij*'s first

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[238] Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I*, 307.

[239] Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I*, 308.

[240] Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I*, 315.

performances. She begins by narrating her experience attending the final rehearsal on October 8 where she was introduced to Hanslick ("a rather small, strong man, his head is almost bald, a curved aquiline nose, enormously bright and penetrating eyes – altogether something stern, although elegant, but not overly *gemütlich*.") and Simrock ("a very interesting face, although with German characteristics, but in a pleasant way").[241]

Despite her earlier assertions that she had trouble remembering the performance, Červinková-Riegrová describes the premiere in noticeably more detail than is typical for her:

> In the evening was the first performance of Dimitrij. We went by foot, we had [box] no. 4 on the right in the parterre, with us was Mrs. Lauermannová, next to her were Bohuš and Václav, also Bohumila with the Hančovýs. ... I entered the theater with Father. The theater was packed, really hot (receipts from that day were 1200). On the second side in the first floor Hanslick, Simrock, and Barnabáš were in a box, the Dvořák family in another box. The telling of the story was exceedingly magnificent and the performance successful. Soupkup sang better than we had anticipated. After the first act the applause was enormous, calling for Dvořák. When Act II began after the first [set] change there was applause, and then others hissed, and so the applause died down; it was so as not to disturb the music, which had not stopped playing – but after the end of Act II the applause was particularly loud and the calls were repeated after every act.[242]

She sums up her thoughts on the evening with the understated comment that "I was not, on the whole, excessively upset,"[243] although she does express some frustration when noting that after the performance ended, "Dvořák did not show up [to greet her], which I didn't like. Lauermannová was delighted by the performance. Only Vrt'áko and

[241] Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I*, 319.

[242] Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I*, 319-320.

[243] Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I*, 320.

Ferda Náprstek came to our box. We went home again by foot and chatted for a nice minute."[244] By the time Červinková-Riegrová found herself able to write this summary of the evening, her parents had come to visit her at Maleč, so it is possible that she had some help with remembering the details that she earlier had had such trouble recalling. Regardless of how they came to her, however, the level of detail in this passage is uncharacteristic for her. Detailing how they arrived at the theater and where everyone sat is not in keeping with the usual style of her journaling, and is perhaps the best indicator of the importance that she granted the evening, belying the true feelings behind her repeated assertions that she "wasn't too upset" by the performance. Červinková-Riegrová also attended the second, shortened performance of *Dimitrij*, which, she noted, featured "Considerable cuts and the thing benefitted from it, the performance was much shorter, only until 10:00. ...it was a nice atmosphere, the performance was much better, the applause sufficient. Count Harrach visited us in the box. He liked the opera immensely. I was happier after this performance than after the first..." [245] Following the two performances, she escaped Prague.

Writing on October 25, she confesses,

> October 14 after returning to Maleč. Here everything is quiet, peaceful, Bohuš and Václav are waiting for me. I left the whole time with Bohuš well and talked a lot, which helped me a good bit, because the stay there was hard for me. I cried often and a lot, in this uncertain, difficult mood, that I felt only solitude, grief, loneliness. Neither my success nor the acclaim, which I hear I have already received from all sides, has moved me very much, and I was not comforted, no matter how aware I was of course of my success.[246]

[244] Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I*, 320.

[245] Ibid.

[246] Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I*, 321.

Her account is heartbreaking, but remarkably detached and without much self-pity. Regardless, she did not allow herself to wallow in her despair.

Despite the depression she suffered and the acclaim she received from her work, Červinková-Riegrová gave herself very little time to recuperate from the emotional strain of the premiere. By October 18 she was already talking with Dvořák about the scenario that would become *Jakobín* and beginning to contemplate reworking the entire fourth act of *Dimitrij* as a result of the indirect feedback Hanslick offered in his review. Although at first she was reluctant to make changes to the work, which she already felt was finished, Červinková-Riegrová was eventually moved by the fear that a good work would be weakened by its libretto (a perennial problem with Czech operas), and spent February and March of 1883 working on substantial changes.[247]

The Jakobín Dilemma

Before *Dimitrij* even premiered, Dvořák was already looking for a new opera, and Marie Červinková-Riegrová had one at the ready. It's difficult to say precisely what her impetus for beginning work on *Jakobín* was. Augustinnová claimed that Dvořák approached Marie Červinková-Riegrová and requested a comedic libretto, and that, despite Červinková "not [feeling] a call to comedy in herself," Marie was inspired by a piece by Zelený in *Osvěta* and developed the scenario that would become *Jakobín*.[248]

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[247] Augustinnová, 38.

[248] Ibid.

Many aspects of this story seem quite believable. Neither descriptions of her from friends or Červinková-Riegrová's own thoughts in her diaries present her as fun-loving or light-hearted. In fact, the least believable aspect of Augusinnová's version is that Dvořák would think Červinková-Riegrová would have a sense for comedy.

Červinková-Riegrová's journals, however, present a slightly different version of events. Although she doesn't mention how she came up with the idea for *Jakobín* (at this point, called *Příjezd panstva*, or *The Arrival of the Aristocracy*), she mentions spending time on the scenario as early as November 1, 1881.[249] Then in mid-December she says that she told Dvořák the plot and that he had expressed mild interest, but that he was hoping for something different. She recalls that,

> "he asked if it was original, that some of the situations etc., already seemed familiar to him, reminiscent of other operas, that he would rather something new, original, something that hadn't been done before, that would stick out as a lively contrast, like *Carmen*... It seems like he would rather something non-Czech, but rather universal, decidedly it cannot be something rural."[250]

Little did she know that this was to be the first of many "I like it, but..." conversations she would have with Dvořák about *Jakobín*.

Červinková-Riegrová worked quickly and had already sent an entire scenario to Jeřábek in Prague in February 1882. She incorporated his feedback before showing the libretto to Dvořák, who requested further changes, including replacing all of the recitative with dialogue, which caused her to rewrite entire scenes. The libretto for *Jakobín* was complete by 1884, but Dvořák, who had always been conflicted about the work, dragged his heels for almost six years. The summary of Dvořák's correspondence

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[249] Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I*, 216.

[250] Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I*, 226.

with Červinková-Riegrová during these years is repetitive with only slight variations: Dvořák likes the libretto, but he's too busy writing works for England; Dvořák likes the libretto, but its appeal will be limited to audiences outside of Bohemia; Dvořák likes the libretto, but wouldn't you like to write something a bit more "fantastic and romantic"?

In Dvořák's delay with *Jakobín* we can certainly infer some sense of the conflict in which he found himself. The most successful librettist he'd ever worked with had written him a perfectly reasonable Czech libretto that Prague audiences would love, but his foreign stakeholders were simultaneously pressuring him to write a work for Vienna and a larger German-speaking audience. Evidently he was torn between the advice he was receiving from abroad, which would further his international success, and the encouragement that came from Bohemia to continue writing works that would endear him to more local audiences.

Dvořák's foreign supporters constantly pressured him to abandon Czech opera and Czech texts in favor of German ones. In 1882 as Dvořák was hard at work on *Dimitrij*, Simrock and Hanslick seemed to be tag teaming to convince Dvořák to write on a German text. In June, Hanslick wrote:

> If as a sincere friend and warm admirer I may dare to put forward a suggestion it is as follows: you should seriously and painstakingly make yourself acquainted with good German poetry and also set some *German* poems to music. The world also expects from you big vocal works, and these can hardly be entirely satisfactory if they are not inspired by German poetry. I think you ought not to persist in setting only Czech texts for a very small public, while your *big* public is fobbed off with bad translations, which may easily lead to your work being misjudged.[251]

[251] Eduard Hanslick to Antonín Dvořák, June 11, 1882, quoted/translated in Clapham, "Dvořák's Relations with Brahms and Hanslick," 242.

Hanslick sets up Vienna as a foil to Prague. He establishes Vienna as a cosmopolitan German-speaking city where Dvořák will find much larger and more sophisticated audiences to champion his works. Moreover, although Hanslick is not explicit on this point, there is also certainly the assumption that if Dvořák were to write German works for Vienna they would be far more marketable across the rest of the German-speaking world, unlike the "bad translations" of his Czech texts.

Hanslick does not stop there, though. He goes on to urge Dvořák to relocate, asserting that,

> "Above all I feel it would be a great advantage for your entire artistic development as well as for your success if you were to live for one or two years away from Prague, and best of all probably in Vienna. This would not mean that you would become a renegade. But after such great initial successes your art requires a wider horizon, a German environment, a bigger, non-Czech public."[252]

We see in this quote that Hanslick had little or no respect for Prague and its cultural milieu, despite having been born and educated there. John Clapham summarized Hanslick's world view well when he wrote that, "...we may sense that Hanslick, the German-speaking native of Prague who had made Vienna his home, regarded the Czech capital as a city with a decidedly provincial outlook, as indeed it was, and consequently a cultural backwater."[253] He viewed the Czech language as linguistically inferior, asserting that Smetana's operas "will surely disappear" without German translation, but was able to distance Dvořák from his Czechness as a result of his compositional abilities. He considered works with "German" traits to be German, regardless of the composer's nationality, and clearly places Dvořák in that category. It is evident that,

[252] Hanslick to Dvořák, June 11, 1882, translated in Clapham, "Dvořák's Relations," 242.

[253] Ibid.

despite his beliefs regarding the superiority of the German language, he still prizes the quality of the music over words. As we saw previously, he did not criticize *Dimitrij* on purely linguistic bases, only suggested that it would be more broadly appreciated if it were more accessible, i.e., in German. At one point Hanslick writes that the "national element [in Dvořák's music] is negligible; it is thus comforting to note that in Czech music German is, as ever, the language customary in the land." He even goes on to link Dvořák to the quintessentially German composers Mendelssohn and Beethoven.[254] Hanslick, was, apparently, genuinely interested in promoting Dvořák's music. He was not alone, however, in his belief that Dvořák would find greater success if he wrote for a German-speaking audience.

At the same time Dvořák was also receiving pressure from Simrock to turn to German works. In October 1882, around the time of *Dimitrij*'s premiere, Simrock wrote, "You let yourself be too influenced by the gratification of your Bohemian brothers, dear friend. Only consider that all of it is only outwardness and that only Germany has helped you and only can and will help you further."[255] Simrock here is clearly indicating a belief that Germans are linguistically and culturally superior to Czechs, as he tries to save Dvořák from his own "Czechness." The subtext is that not only will Dvorak reach a much broader audience if he turns his attention "outward," but also that he, Simrock, as a superior German, knows what's best for Dvorak, the (implied, inferior) Czech. Simrock, like Hanslick, is willing to grant Dvořák access to the

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[254] Hanslick in Brodbeck, 154.

[255] Fritz Simrock to Antonín Dvořák, October 18, 1882, in *Korrespondence and Dokumenty*, vol. 5, 401-2.

broader audience unlocked by embracing Germanity, but it would seem at the price of acknowledging German superiority. Although we frequently see Dvořák stand up to Simrock in their letters to each other on smaller matters (and he cannot have been entirely thrilled with the condescension dripping from Simrock's comment about only Germans helping him), he also cannot have been unmoved by this assertion that his best shot at international fame came from outside of Bohemia.

Dvořák, however, was also being pressured from within Bohemia. In summer 1883 Marie Červinková-Riegrová wrote to the translator Jan Řehák (who was translating *Dimitrij* into German) about Dvořák, "...his German friends would rather advocate German texts, and Hanslick supposedly declared to someone, 'He must write on a German text.' I, of course, look forward to, if I can – my best efforts are – thwarting the Grand German plans for him."[256] Here again, we see Marie Červinková-Riegrová working behind the scenes with the hopes that Dvořák will remain true to his Czech roots, rather than succumbing to the appeal of German (and, by extension international) fame.

As Dvořák dawdled making his decision about whether or not to compose *Jakobín*, Marie Červinková-Riegrová contemplated the consequences of retrieving her libretto from him and giving it to someone else. In late 1882 she wrote that, "I don't want to break up with him, his operas go out in to the world and I wouldn't like it if he fell back on German librettists. It easily could be."[257] Červinková-Riegrová found out exactly how easy that could be on a trip to Vienna in early 1883. F. L. Rieger had had

[256] Quoted in *Korespondence a dokumenty*. Vol. 1, 355.

[257] Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I*, 333.

conversations with Baron Hoffman, the stage manager at the Court Opera in Vienna, in which he revealed that Hanslick had a scheme to get Dvořák to write a German opera. Hanslick, apparently, was refusing to promote *Dimitrij* in Vienna (despite his overall positive opinion of the work published in his extensive review in the *Neue Freie Presse*), in the hopes that Dvořák would write an opera with a German libretto instead. Rieger also reported that apparently Hoffman himself had sent Dvořák three German texts to consider and that Hoffman had heard that Dvořák would be glad to receive the texts and that he was planning to compose to a German libretto.[258]

In her direct correspondence with Dvořák, however, Červinková-Riegrová was usually more circumspect. When they were first discussing work on *Dimitrij*, Dvořák wanted to show the work to Hostinský and asked if she would make a German scenario for it. She declined, saying that she felt the Germans would not judge her impartially.[259] We may also recall that although she was vehemently opposed to a Viennese premiere for *Dimitrij*, she opposed Dvořák only mildly, keeping her more assertive denial as a last resort.[260] Eventually, however, she had to speak more frankly.

In August 1887, three and a half years after sending Dvořák the first complete draft of the *Jakobín* libretto, Marie Červinková-Riegrová had had enough. On the first she wrote to him insisting that he either decide once and for all that he would compose *Jakobín* or return the materials to her so she could offer them to someone else. The

[258] Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I*, 352, 356.

[259] Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I*, 131.

[260] Červinková-Riegrová, *Zápisky I*, 226.

letter is worth quoting at length, both for the unusually assertive tone Marie employs and for the insight it provides into her mindset about her role as a librettist:

> You, however, write to me further, that you are deciding to compose "Jakobín," yet, in your "deciding," sir, you are constantly trying to dissuade us. I think that in this it all comes down to what you yourself like. If you do not have real interest in "Jakobín," as that is necessary to the success of this musical work, then please do not be embarrassed and return the libretto to me without delay. If you get a libretto that dissuades you from "Jakobín," one that satisfies you better, I would congratulate you heartily. You pronounce further wishes that I would write you another libretto that is romantic and fantastic. Although I have this other work in front of me, which I have already been preparing for a long time, nevertheless I also have a great respect for musical art. I especially believe that I would be willing to try at something that could enthuse you to the work, *which would be created to honor Czech art and the Czech name*, but if you do not find anyone else, who would accommodate you better than I [?] But for this work *anima* and desire are necessary and in the past I have had this, when I knew that you had begun "Jakobín." I wrote this libretto long ago as well, for your wishes. You approved my scenario and libretto, you spoke up in favor of it with great praise so many times, you wanted to compose it and then you changed your mind and said that you would especially betray the music critics. Now, why have I written a new libretto?[261]

She goes on to ask him how he would feel if a theater commissioned an opera from him and when he presented it to them and said they wouldn't put that one on, but that he should write another and maybe they'd stage that. "Consider it yourself," she urges, "whether you would have great desire to write that second opera."[262] In this passage Červinková-Riegrová reasserts her commitment to creating Czech opera for Czech audiences, almost as if it is a patriotic duty rather than a hobby for personal fulfillment. The subtext of her comment is clearly that her loyalties to the Czech nationalist cause make her willing to continue to work on libretti for Dvořák even though she has other

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[261] Marie Červinková-Riegrová to Antonín Dvořák, Maleč, in *Antonin Dvořák, Korespondence a dokumenty*, vol. 6, 130-32.

[262] Ibid.

more important work that she could be doing. She essentially tells him that he should either write this Czech opera or, if he is so inclined, look for German texts elsewhere.

Červinková-Riegrová ends her letter by asserting that the critics have some bias against her. "For that matter, I don't know what I did to deserve the conspicuous disgrace of musical circles," she proceeds,

> When I wrote "Dimitrij," they tried to dissuade you, as much as they could, and then when it was given they wrote very complimentarily about it in *Tagblatt,* in *Bohemia*, in *Neue Freie Presse*, even in *Národní listy*... Now, when you want to compose "Jakobín," again they all try to dissuade you strenuously. From this I must conclude that these about whom you write are deliberately averse to me – why, I don't know – but even if I wrote the best libretto, I think that they still wouldn't like it. Why, then, do I incur the risk of their criticism? Unless it is wiser to leave the writing of libretti to other people, which of your libretti would not disgrace you? And if I invent some very effective story, I may try to work with it single-handedly so that I don't have to take into consideration the good or ill will of the music critics.[263]

Here Červinková-Riegrová allows her frustration with Dvořák's flip-flopping about *Jakobín* to mingle with her suspicions that the critics have something against her. It seems unlikely that her suspicions of bias against her are personal – both of her libretti for Dvořák were praised in the press and she had warm personal interactions with Hanslick on several occasions – and that if, indeed, these biases do exist, they are more likely to be a result of Dvořák's stake-holders wishing him to write to a German libretto, which, by 1887, they surely knew would not come from Marie Červinková-Riegrová's pen. Her assertiveness hit its mark. Dvořák's reply to Marie Červinková-Riegrová doesn't appear to exist (or it's possible that they discussed it in person), but he clearly made his decision. He began work in earnest in autumn 1887, and by March

[263] Marie Červinková-Riegrová to Antonín Dvořák, Maleč, in *Antonin Dvořák, Korespondence a dokumenty*, vol. 6, 130-132.

13, 1888, he wrote to Antonín Rus, his friend and frequent correspondent, that he had completed Act I.[264] By November of that year he had completed the opera, and it premiered at the National Theater on February 12, 1889.

Dvořák was obviously hesitant to write a specifically Czech opera that would not appeal to international audiences. Of Dvořák's inner turmoil regarding the decision about *Jakobín*, John Clapham wrote:

> "At heart he was a nationalist, devoted to Bohemia and proud of its culture and folklore. Furthermore, he possessed the typical Slavic dislike for Teutonic superiority and domination, under which his fellow Czechs had suffered... The demand for an opera by Vienna was enticing, but in reality Dvořák was left with no choice at all. His conscience told him that he must remain true to his own nation, and therefore he must renounce the idea of seeking fresh laurels by writing works for German opera houses."[265]

This interpretation of nationalism as a moral imperative is in keeping with contemporary views on nationalism. In 1882 Ernest Renan wrote that the nation was "a spiritual principle," that required a shared history and a will to maintain a national heritage.[266] Dvořák certainly recognized the potential for nationalist importance in music, writing to Simrock in 1885 that:

> "Still what have we two to do with politics – let us be happy that we can give our service in the cause of beautiful art! And nations[,] which possess and represent art will, we hope, never perish, no matter how small they are! Forgive me but I wanted to tell you that an artist also has a native land in which he must have faith and a warm heart."[267]

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[264] Antonín Dvořák to Antonín Rus, Prague**,** *Antonin Dvořák, Korespondence a dokumenty*, vol. 2, 316.

[265] Clapham, "Dvořák's Relations," 250-2.

[266] Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?" in *Becoming National: A Reader*, eds., Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996), 48-49**.**

[267] Dvořák to Simrock, Vysoká, September 10, 1885, in *Antonín Dvořák: Korrespondence a dokumenty,* ed. Milan Kuna (Praha: Editio Supraphon, 1988), 2:91-92. The multi-

Dvořák's ideas that art is a critical element of a nation's identity is in keeping with historian Ernest Gellner's idea that culture homogeneity is at the heart of a nationalist movement. Gellner argues that, "A high culture pervades the whole of society, defines it, and needs to be sustained by the polity. *That* is the secret of nationalism."[268] Although Gellner's ideas would likely strike historian Benedict Anderson as elitist – his Marxist theory of nationalism is predicated on populism and an "instinctive consciousness," rather than the leadership of a learned elite[269] – if we consider that opera has the potential to reach even less literate masses, one can begin to see a compromise. Opera is often considered an elitist genre, available only to the wealthiest strata of society; however, the fact that on more than one occasion members of all echelons of Czech society banded together to fundraise for the National Theater tells us that Czechs of all stripes valued opera as a part of their national identity, and that Czech opera was in some ways more populist.[270] By their willingness to make financial sacrifices in the service of a national opera theater, this "imagined community" placed culture at the heart of their "instinctive consciousness" and need to create a national identity.

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lingual nature of the Habsburg Empire, as we will see, lead to complicated instances of forced bilingualism for most of Prague's intelligentsia. By the period in question, the Habsburg Goverment allowed for "External" communications (those interacting with those outside of the Imperial government) to be in local languages, but figures, like Dvořák, who wanted to engage with anyone outside of Prague (and even many people who did live Prague) were required to be fluent in German in addition to Czech.

[268] Gellner, 18.

[269] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities.*

[270] Iggers, 21; Tyrrell, 42-43.

Dvořák's decision to compose *Jakobín* can be seen as closely tied to his desire to help in forging a Czech national identity. The very genre of village opera seems predicated on Herder's theory that national identity is preserved in *das Volk* – the peasantry, protected from the industrialization and modernism found in cities in their rural milieu. Indeed, the idea that only the peasantry preserved the Czech language was clearly a part of Czech consciousness when Hanslick wrote that middle class Czechs in the mid-nineteenth century only spoke enough Czech to communicate with their servants.[271] Many members of an international audience would not pick up on some of the subtler elements of "Czechness" that pervaded village operas, but Dvořák's sense of national loyalty was too strong. Even though the most influential members of his international network were pushing him to look outside of Bohemia for new material, Dvořák ultimately decided in favor of a new Czech opera.

That said, there was also likely another doubt hanging over Dvořák's reticence about *Jakobín*. Marie Červinková-Riegrová had crafted a fine example of a Czech village opera, which would certainly invite comparisons to *The Bartered Bride*. Although Dvořák carefully eschewed the polemical battles instigated by the Prague presses, which pitted him against Smetana, it seems likely that Dvořák would have had at least some slight hesitation about writing an opera that would be so evidently in the shadow of the composer who invented the genre of village opera. In what follows I suggest that, perhaps to mitigate potential comparisons to *The Bartered Bride*, in *Jakobín* Dvořák endeavored to advance the genre of the village opera by adding nuance to the themes introduced by Smetana, which, some 20 years later, were beginning to become clichéd.

[271] See fn. 233 above.

Jakobín as Village Opera

Village operas, a uniquely Czech operatic subgenre, have rural settings with casts composed largely of peasants. In the most traditional sense, they are usually comedies, although later contributors to the genre, such as Leoš Janáček, began to bring more serious elements to their village operas. These works feature music reminiscent of the music performed in real Czech villages. Most include traditional-style Czech dances, if not actual folk music quotations, and sometimes even instrumentation similar to that found in Czech bands. John Tyrrell writes that village opera depicts "comic intrigue within the enclosed society, but some operas provide a fuller picture of the society itself, its occupations and hierarchies."[272] Červinková-Riegrová's libretto focused significantly on those social hierarchies in *Jakobín*, which Dvořák seized as an opportunity to both distance himself from Smetana's ur-village opera, and also to bring more nuance to the genre, even if it meant that some non-Czechs might not fully understand these nuances.

The action unfolds in a "small town in Bohemia, in time of the Great French Revolution, in 1793."[273] The primary plot line focuses on Bohuš, "The Jacobin," and his wife, Julie, who have been living in France. As the opera opens, they are returning to Bohuš's hometown after a long absence, hoping for reconciliation with his father, the Count. The secondary plot revolves around the town choirmaster, Benda, and his

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[272] Tyrrell, 156.

[273] František Bartoš, *Souborne vydani děl Antonína Dvořáka,* trans. R. F. Samsour, ed. Otakar Šourek, ser. 1, vol. 10 (Prague: Státní hudební vydavatelství, 1966), xiii.

daughter, Terinka. Terinka is in love with a young villager named Jiří, but is also being romantically pursued by the Burgrave, a much older nobleman.

After his initial hesitation to compose *Jakobín*, the work later seemed to become one of Dvořák's pet projects. In an 1882 letter to Simrock, he wrote that he composed *Jakobín* for "his own joy and pleasure,"[274] and Klaus Döge emphasizes the nostalgia that Dvořák associated with it. The work contains many parallels to Dvořák's own youth growing up in rural Bohemia. As a young man, he was sent to the nearby town of Zlonice to study with Anton Liehmann, who was the town organist and music teacher, a man very much like Benda. Liehmann also happened to have a daughter named Terinka with whom Dvořák is known to have sung duets.[275] It was likely very easy for Dvořák to connect with the characters in Červinková-Riegrová's libretto, which probably contributed to his deep conflict over whether or not to write *Jakobín*. One can easily imagine his assertion to Simrock as defense of his decision to compose *Jakobín* rather than one of the proffered German libretti.

In *Jakobín*, the concept of the musical Czech and the power of music are both prominent. One of the main characters, Benda, is the village music teacher and choir director, known as a *muzikant.* His daughter, Terinka, and her beau Jiří, are both talented, valued singers in the village. Julie and Bohuš are also both skilled musicians and are coded as sympathetic, serious characters by their rich, lyrical arias and duets. In the opera's emotional conclusion, Julie is able to reconcile Bohuš and his estranged father, the Count, by singing a lullaby that Bohuš's dead mother used to sing to him as a

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[274] "Noch zu [seiner] Freude und zu Privatvergnügen." Klaus Döge, *Dvořák: Leben, Werke, Dokumente* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1991), 241.

[275] Döge, 241 and 57.

child. This resolves one of the primary dramatic issues in the opera, enabling a happy ending.

The idea of the Czechs as a musical people dates back to the infancy of musicological research when the grandfather of music history, Charles Burney, travelled to Bohemia and reported that it was the "conservatory of Europe." While Burney's assertions have become something of a cliché, this cliché is firmly based in reality. Historically, the village teacher in Czech villages was also a musician who provided not only general education to the village children, but also musical education to all members of the community. The Czech word for this unique career path is "muzikant" or "kantor," which dates to the eighteenth century and at that time encompassed "every practical music maker regardless of whether he performed art music, band music, or folk music."[276] Musicologist Michael Komma notes that this term was redefined over time, carrying a derogatory connotation during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as it generally connoted more of a common musician than a skilled performer or composer.[277] Tyrrell, in his discussion of the musical Czech, explains that these music teachers kept the Czech language and culture alive during the period of Hapsburg cultural repression and calls the village music teacher and the idea of Czech musicality "one of the most potent of all Czech nationalist myths," a fact of which Dvořák could not have been ignorant, since, as Tyrrell goes on to point out, this

[276] Michael Komma, *Das Böhmische Musikantentum* (Kassel: Johann Philipp Hinnenthal-Verlag, 1960), 81.

[277] Ibid.

trope was “zealously cultivated” during the nineteenth-century cultural revival.”[278]

One of the most important and beloved scenes in this work is the opening of Act II, which also demonstrates the importance of music to the plot of *Jakobín*. In this scene, Benda is leading a choral rehearsal for an upcoming performance in which many of the villagers are involved and in which Terinka and Jiří will both play prominent roles. This scene, the literal and figurative center of the opera, epitomizes the idea of the musical Czech. We see a music teacher involving many of the townspeople in musical activity, working together toward a common goal. The scene can often feature musicians on stage in a traditional Czech band accompanying the rehearsal, which further exemplifies the idea of the musical Czech village. This scene, although beloved to Czech audiences, is one of the many that Dvořák surely had in mind in his hesitations about composing *Jakobín*. The cultural associations with the scene – the traditional Czech band, the image and indeed the very idea of the *muzikant* and the significance of communal music making – all had the potential to alienate non-Czech audiences. The Viennese public, in addition to believing their own works to be linguistically and culturally superior, would likely have had a hard time relating to the action. Czechs would have understood the centrality of village music-making to society and interpreted the Burgrave’s perceived threat to the success of Benda’s play seriously, as it was intended; German audiences, unable to relate to the cultural milieu, might have interpreted the drama surrounding the possible cancellation of a small-scale village play farcically.

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[278] Tyrrell, 162-3.

The importance of music in society is also demonstrated when various threats to Benda's performance arise. At one point, Jiří and Terinka threaten not to perform, which is deeply distressing to Benda, who responds to their threat, "O, Jiří, Terinka! My dear one! My darling! I shall die of despair! Distinguished guests are invited; such disgrace before the *world*! One Benda in *Bohemia*!"[279] This response speaks to both the importance of music, but also emphasizes Benda's nationalist pride in his music. The demise of his performance would signal not only personal failure, but also failure to be a good Bohemian. Later in the act**,** the Burgrave attempts to conscript Jiří and Benda rushes to Jiří's defense:

> **Burgrave** *to the schoolmaster, looking threateningly at Jiří*: I shall not remain in debt! I'll have him recruited today!
> **Benda**: No, no, I beg you! My tenor, my very best voice!
> **Burgrave**: Other good singers can soon be found!
> **Benda**: Ah, tenors are such very rare birds! No, no, no, I beg you...Spoil the ceremony, he's to sing the genius—you do not know it?…I don't want to lose my tenor!
> **Burgrave**: Listen now--who will take his part--the tenor's--I'll sing it myself!
> **Benda**: He will sing!
> **Burgrave**: Well, are you surprised? I, the Burgrave, can I not do what he can do?
> **Benda**: He's a tenor!
> **Burgrave**: I will sing the tenor!
> **Benda**: But your voice! *aside* He'll make me mad! *To the Burgrave* You've a bass voice!
> **Burgrave**: You think I don't possess a voice? If I shout with all my strength, everything shakes in the dust-am I to convince you,...
> **Benda**: What a *horror*! He'll make me mad! *He knows nothing about music but wants to sing!* What shall I do?[280]

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[279] Marie Červinková-Riegrova, *Jakobín*, trans. Joy Turner-Kadečková, in notes to Antonín Dvořák, *Dvořák: The Jacobin* (Qualiton Imports Ltd, 2006), 106. Emphasis mine.

[280] Červinková-Riegrova, *Jakobín,* 134-140. Emphasis mine.

This exchange is important on several levels. It shows that, as much as Benda wants Terinka to marry the Burgrave in order to better their social situation, the chance that his performance could be ruined causes him to consider abandoning the socially beneficial union. Furthermore, it emphasizes both Jiří's talent and the Burgrave's lack thereof. In a time when musicality was very much associated with Czechness, this is a strong contrast.

Elements of class conflict are mostly manifested in the relationship between Jiří and the Burgrave. Although *Jakobín* includes the types of characters who usually live in Czech village operas, John Tyrrell points out that it brings in elements of social conflict by including members of the nobility, which is one of the ways that Dvořák expands the typical borders of village opera.[281] Jiří is a talented musician (and hence, very Czech), while the Burgrave is pompous and bumbling (not Czech). But if one examines their dialogues and the way they are treated, more elements of social conflict emerge. In the introduction to the critical edition of *Jakobín*, František Bartoš points out that Jiří is "a representative of the oppressed class."[282] The Burgrave totally dismisses his subjects, threatening to hang them all and touting himself as their "lord" who is "authority itself." He frequently taunts Jiří with the promise of conscription, at one point imagining "how fine you would really look, yes, indeed, in a white coat!"[283] Furthermore, Benda is very interested in Terinka marrying the Burgrave, despite his odious personality, because of the guarantee for upward social mobility. As Benda

[281] Tyrrell, 155-6.

[282] Bartoš, *Jakobín,* ix.

[283] Červinková-Riegrová, *Jakobín,* 42, 52.

constantly kowtows to the Burgrave, he frequently brushes off Jiří, going as far to call him "pig-headed one" even though he knows that his daughter is truly in love with Jiří.[284]

This brings us to Dvořák's musical depictions of his characters, one of the main ways in which he establishes the social divisions in the village. There is a marked contrast between the music that Dvořák writes for the village characters as compared to the music written for the nobility. Wolfgang Ruf has identified these two styles as *Volk* and *Obrigkeit* (authority).[285] The *Volk* idiom is clearly associated with the villagers. While there are always brass fanfares to announce the arrival of the Count and his nephew Adolf, the *Obrigkeit* music is best observed by looking at the music associated with the Burgrave.

The Burgrave is characterized musically by stately, dotted rhythms, often marked *staccato*, reminiscent of learned-style genres. His first entrance is announced by a change in tempo marking from *Allegro* to *Tempo di Menuetto*, and while his music sometimes features spurts of romantic lyricism, his aria is stately and the *Tempo I* always features dotted rhythms and a pompous tempo. The aria also ends with a blatant IV-V-I progression, which harkens back to an older style of music.

The Burgrave's Act I, Scene 6 aria ends with a IV-V-I progression, which is much more evocative of earlier musical traditions than Dvořák's typical style. Furthermore, in the next scene, the Burgrave, recognizing Jiří's musical talent, attempts to match

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[284] Červinková-Riegrová, *Jakobín*, 130.

[285] Wolfgang Ruf, "Dvořák's 'Der Jakobiner' – eine realistische Oper?" in *Musical Dramatic Works by Antonín Dvořák: Papers from an International Musicological Conference, Prague, 19-21 May, 1983*, ed. Markéta Hallová, Zuzana Petrášková, and Jarmila Tauerová-Veverková (Prague: Česka Hudební Společnost, 1989), 102.

Jiří's musicianship with absurd coloratura. While the cadenza-like passages would be impressive in another story from a different setting, in the context of the village opera, they come across as ridiculous and out of place. As the Burgrave is fumbling through the "wrong" dance with Terinka in the square, Jiří is singing an aria in the style of a folk song, which only serves to further emphasize their contrasting social roles. He sings a song appropriate to both his station in life and to the setting, while the Burgrave attempts to insert his nobility and authority into the village setting with awkward results.

Dvořák further characterizes the Burgrave as "un-Czech" with his inabilities when it comes to singing and dancing. As the Burgrave competes with Jiří for Terinka's affections, he follows Jiří's lead and attempts to woo her through song and dance. However, while Jiří is young, virile, and agile, the Burgrave is older and less skilled. He even admits to being unable to dance, telling Terinka sheepishly upon offering her a dance, "There was a time—perhaps I still know how..."[286] This inability is, in addition to being unattractive to Terinka, downright un-Czech. Furthermore, whereas Jiří's music is either lyrical and beautiful, or clearly based in folk music, the Burgrave is consistently musically characterized with pompous arias in the learned style, which do not match Jiří and Terinka's lyricism. When he attempts to dance with Terinka, his dance is more of a minuet/indoor dance than a village/outdoor dance. Jiří and the Burgrave even have a musical "rumble," which, in some productions, involves the Burgrave being forced into a beer barrel, calling up another powerful symbol of Czech

[286] Červinková-Riegrova, *Jakobín*, 22.

nationalism.[287]

Bohuš and Julie are able to ingratiate themselves to the villagers, particularly Benda, by evoking the importance of music both personally and nationalistically. They appeal to Benda, saying,

> **Julie:** We are artists—we thought we'd come here to the renowned friend of music...
> **Benda:** So, so! You've world experience. Do you know—what art really is, what music means and are you versed in singing?
> **Julie:** We're Czechs-and you would ask us if we can sing?[288]

Just after this exchange, Bohuš and Julie sing a moving duet about how music sustained them during their time of exile from the village. This embodies their musicality in two ways. Textually, it speaks to the power of music, saying, "From the depths of our souls we sang a loved *Czech song* to ourselves and gloom disappeared from our souls, sorrow left our lonely hearts...*Only in song, only in song, did we find sweet relief and peace!*"[289] Additionally, the duet is lyrical and stirring, which adds validity to their claim as musicians. This is no ditty that a crowd of beer-drinking villagers would sing; it is an intensely emotional, musically charged piece. Yet, the lullaby that Bohuš and Julie sing *is* reminiscent of folk music. In this way Dvořák subtly code Bohuš and Julie as a musical bridge of the village social divide. While Bohuš is of noble birth and, by the end of the opera, has returned to this elevated social status, he and Julie have lived much of their adult lives in exile in France, presumably living somewhat more humbly.

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[287] Tomas Hanus. *Jakobín.* Brno State Opera, 2002. Youtube video http://vodpod.com/watch/327952-Dvořák-jakobin-3-of-14 (accessed 6 June 2010). Similarly, the Devil in *The Devil and Kate*, has similar problems establishing his "Czechness," especially when it comes to dancing. See Derek Katz, *Janáček Beyond the Borders* (Rochetster, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2009), 70.

[288] Červinková-Riegrova, *Jakobín,* 114.

[289] Ibid., 116. Emphasis mine.

Although Bohuš and Julie are musically defined as somewhat socially ambiguous throughout the opera, Dvořák consistently characterizes them as musical from the very first scene of the opera. As they make their first entrance just after the beginning of the opera they "enter...deeply moved" by the chorale emanating from the village church on the square.[290] Their duet literally singing the praises of music only furthers this characterization.

Dvořák also portrays musical "Czechness" with his inclusion of a polka in the opera's finale. This dance, popularized in the mid-nineteenth century, is believed to have originated in Bohemia and is characterized by simple duple meter, strong downbeats, combinations of eighth and sixteenth-note patterns, and often grace notes and dotted rhythms.[291] While there are conflicting stories about the origins of the polka, it has been widely accepted for centuries as a Czech dance, which has been a point of nationalistic pride for many years, and, more importantly, came to be a marker of Czechness for foreign audiences, as well.[292] Beyond its Czech origins, the polka became an easily accessible nationalist symbol as a dance that was "a town dance with country elements...[uniting] social dance with Czech folk elements."[293] This is a particularly important aspect of the polka for its role in the cultural revival of the mid-nineteenth century. As country folk moved to the cities, the polka was a way to marry their new lives in the city with their old lives from the country, and the dual origins of

[290] Červinková-Riegrova, *Jakobín*, 2.

[291] *Oxford Music Online,* s.v. "Polka."

[292] Tyrrell, 216.

[293] Tyrrell, 227.

this dance made it accessible to a wider slice of Czech society. Thanks to its mid-century popularity and nationalist connections, it is only natural that Smetana would have included a polka in the inaugural Czech village opera and, as Derek Katz has pointed out, whatever Smetana included in *The Bartered Bride* immediately became symbolic of Czechness in opera, at home and, eventually, abroad.[294] Thus, Smetana's inclusion of a polka in his pioneering work forever made it a nationalist symbol in Czech opera, specifically, and more generally in Czech music. Furthermore, Dvořák included musical tropes that, while somewhat vague and generically "folksy," had been used by Smetana to recall rural Czechness, such as the use of open fifths in imitation of the *duda*, or Czech bagpipe. Even for Dvořák's non-Czech audience members, these elements would have been recognizable markers of Czechness, thanks to Smetana's example.

Dvořák's most obvious polka in *Jakobín* follows the "Ballet" in Act III, Scene 8. It prominently features wind instruments and violins, which can be interpreted as an imitation of the traditional Czech village band, and the triangle, which is often a part of Dvořák's instrumentation at moments that are coded as nationalist. The Polka is further "Czech-ified" by its inclusion of G#s in the bass line, the Lydian fourth in the key of D, which mimic the drone of the *duda*.[295] Additionally, Dvořák includes a section in Act III, Scene 7 that features a traditional Czech dance, the Sousedská.[296] Significantly,

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[294] Katz, 69.

[295] John Clapham has discussed Dvořák's imitation of *dudy* in "Dvořák and folk-music," *The Monthly Musical Record*, 86 (1956): 138.

[296] "Sousedská" means "neighborly" in Czech and is a dance similar to the *ländler,* in slow triple time *Oxford Music Online*, s.v. "Sousedska."

it was often used as a traditional wedding dance, so Dvořák's inclusion of this dance in the finale of his opera is likely to signify the resolution of the Burgrave/Jiří/Terinka love triangle and Jiří and Terinka's impending nuptials. Unlike the polka, the significance of the Sousedská is a reference that would have been lost on non-Czech listeners.

Dvořák's nuanced incorporation of folk elements can be interpreted as his attempt to further the genre that Smetana pioneered. John Clapham asserts, "Dvořák made fewer direct borrowings from folk songs than Smetana, but their indirect influence on him was much stronger."[297] For example, in *The Bartered Bride*, Smetana directly quotes the folksong "Sedlák*,* sedlák," whereas Dvořák only employed common folk characteristics in his music.[298] Clapham cites the repetition of short melodic fragments, specifically mentioning the introduction to *Jakobín* as an example of Dvořák's imitation of traditional Bohemian folk music. He points out that, "elements of folksong became entirely assimilated in his musical personality alongside other elements of style derived from totally different sources."[299] These more subtle inclusions of folk-like material can be interpreted as part of Dvořák's endeavor to bring more nuances to the genre of village opera, distancing him from Smetana's now clichéd example.

One of the places in the libretto that is most conducive to treatment in the folk

[297] Clapham, "Dvořák and folk-music," 134.

[298] John Clapham, "The National Origins of Dvořák's Art," *Proceedings of the Royal Music Association* 89th Sess. (1962-63): 83.

[299] Clapham, "Dvořák and folk-music," 138.

style is Terinka's Act II aria, "Na podzim v ořeší," which was added in the 1897 revision of the opera.[300] The text is a love song with strong emphasis on the natural:

> In autumn's hazel shrubs,
> love no longer gives joy,
> love that belongs only to the young world;
> only in springtime does real love blossom.[301]

These lyrics, which strongly mimic Czech folk song lyrics, are the perfect set-up for Dvořák to write a beautifully folk-stylized melody, and it seems as if this is what he intends to do. The first verse of Terinka's aria begins with a drone introduction in the bassoons on open fifths, a sonority strongly indicating the Czech bagpipe and rural Czech life. The vocal line is diatonic, has clear phrasing, and is often grounded in triads and arpeggios (see Example 1).

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[300] Since these revisions took place after Marie Červinková-Riegrová's death in 1895, František Rieger wrote the text for Dvořák.

[301] Červinková-Riegrová, *Jakobín*, 90.

Example 1
Act II, Scene 2, *Andante con moto*[302]

However, at the beginning of the second verse, Dvořák apparently can no longer refrain from lyricism. The first phrase of Terinka's second verse makes it appear as if this is going to be a strophic aria, but by the second phrase, Dvořák derails, bringing in more lyrical and virtuosic material from Terinka's Act I duet with Jiří. The drone that was originally in the bassoons has been ceded to the low strings, and the moment of folk music has ended.

Another similarly eschewed opportunity for *faux* folk music is the lullaby sung by Julie to soften the Count's heart in Act III. The words, once again, provided Dvořák with ample opportunity for folksiness with lyrics such as:

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[302] Antonín Dvořák, *Jakobín,* Op. 84 (Prague: Orbis, 1952), 181.

Little son, my flower,
My great joy, my whole world,
and my heaven!
How your poor mother prays
to our god in heaven,
for your good!

Additionally, the piece is set up as folk music as it is heard third-hand: Julie learned it from Bohuš, who learned it from his mother. This element of oral tradition certainly calls for folk music. However, again, Dvorak only halfheartedly commits to this idea. The song is simply accompanied with strings and a prominent harp line, but the melody is almost immediately chromatic and becomes almost virtuosic by the end (Example 2).

Example 2
Act III, Scene 5, *Andante Cantabile*[303]

Jakobín's Reception

Although Dvořák's early operas are no longer popular even with Czech audiences, even by the early 1880s when *Dimitrij* premiered, a new Dvořák opera was

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303 Dvořák, *Jakobín*, 299.

a highly anticipated event. Hanslick noted in his review of *Dimitrij*'s premiere that "the interest of musical devotees" was "excited to an unusual degree,"[304] and Karel Knittl refers to the "feverish near-suspense with which not only artistic circles, but also lay people have always wait for the first performance of the maestro's new work."[305] By the time *Jakobín* appeared in 1889, then, the excitement was approaching frenzy. *Národni listy* published a piece of not inconsiderable length on the day of the premiere, noting that, "It has been a long time since news has captured...the complete attention of theater audiences to this extent," mentioning that the oratorio *Svatá Ludmila* had been their only taste of Dvořák's dramatic music (for which they "had to settle") in the six years that had elapsed since *Dimitrij*.[306] Although Dvořák was taking an apparently calculated risk by disregarding advice to write a German opera, the Prague public's thirst for his new Czech work must have been gratifying.

Indeed, the National Theater had been undergoing a dry spell with regards to new Czech opera. Although in the 1888-1889 season there were new productions of both Dvořák's *Selma Sedlák* and Smetana's *Hubička*, with the exception of Fibich's *Bride of Messina* in 1888, one has to look back to the 1886-1887 season to find more than a new production of a previously performed Smetana or Dvořák work.[307] That said, with

[304] Hanslick, 1.

[305] Knittl, *Svetozor*, March 8, 1889, no. 15, vol. 23, 179.

[306] *Národní Listy*, Feburary 12, 1889, no. 43, 3.

[307] 1886-87 saw the premieres of works by Ladislav Zavrtal and Jindřich Hartl in addition to Svata Ludmila and new productions of *Dalibor* and *King and Charcoal Burner.* 1885-86 was somewhat stronger for comparatively recognizable Czech composers, including a new work by Kovařovič, a new production of a Bendl work, and premieres by Klička and Hřimaly.

regards to foreign premieres, *Jakobín* was in good company. 1888-89 also saw first performances of works by Glinka (*Life of the Czar*), Gounod (*Faust*), Offenbach (*Tales of Hoffmann*), Rossini (*William Tell*), and Tchaikovsky (*Eugene Onegin*, featuring a Czech translation by Marie Červinková-Riegrová). This all goes to say that although Czech audiences had been deprived of new native works for several years, they had no shortage of operatic options.

Such was the interest in *Jakobín* that the *Národní Listy* article from the day of the premiere went on to detail in some detail the composition process (Dvořák worked mostly "in peace and privacy" at his country home Vysoká), and the public's interest in the work, noting that

> ...yet, sometimes news appeared about the development and stature of the piece. When the score was finally handed in to the theater and bulletins from the theater office announced the distribution of roles, the first rehearsals, preparations, contents of the libretto, etc., interest did not ebb, as often happens on other occasions, but rather grew. The legend of Dvořák has firm foundations. Also, overseas they do not remain calm, but show interest in the new Czech work, [even] before first winning success on domestic stages.[308]

The author also mentions that Dvořák himself attended almost all rehearsals ("with selflessness and love") and that the casting was with his blessing, "which means that the current personnel is the most appropriate."[309] He goes on to say that he had attended an invited dress rehearsal and judged "the entire work [to have] poetry...carefully prepared in all ways, the musical parts studied as a model of

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[308] *Národní Listy,* February 12, 1889, no. 43, 3.

[309] Ibid.

accuracy, direction led with total selflessness and knowledge."[310] The significance of this rhapsodic piece can be summed up by the author's conclusion, which states that, "There has never been a custom in this journal of anticipating the judgment of a premiere; the first presentation is set for this evening and it should be clear to anyone who is an admirer of Czech art music that this is the best Antonín Dvořák."[311]

Given this stellar preview report, it will come as no surprise that the following day's *Národní Listy* review was exuberant. In fact, the reviewer even implies that "anyone who is anyone" was at the premiere, when he opens his review by asking, "Do I have to describe the powerful impression, the celebration of the composer, the enthusiasm on stage and in the audience?" He proceeds to admit that, unable to withhold judgment any longer, he "would rather confess immediately that Dvořák fulfilled the most courageous hope that *Jakobín* meant a decisive step forward in the creation of masterful action on the field of dramatic music."[312] Even though the work was an original creation, based only loosely on a work by Lortzing, unlike the reviews of *Dimitrij*, this review includes only minimal hints at the plot, leading one to believe that the pre-premiere hype must have included a more substantial plot summary.

The body of *Národní Listy*'s review begins by addressing the two criticisms that had most frequently been leveled against Dvořák in his previous operatic works: "neglecting dramatic moments" and "excessive concessions to absolute music at the cost of dramatic impact," and quickly announces that Dvořák has "avoided" these

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[310] *Národní Listy,* February 12, 1889, no. 43, 3.

[311] Ibid.

[312] *Národní Listy*, February 13, 1889, no. 44, 3.

criticisms in *Jakobín*.[313] After this brief nod to objectivity, the reviewer veers off towards extravagance, opening his next paragraph with, "Indeed, in *Jakobín* Dvořák appears to be the chosen one." He continues, praising "[t]he brilliance of creativity, youthful zeal, unflagging melodic lushness, the rich polyphony, realistic liveliness of coloratura[;] everything that could be asked of a modern composer is in abundance with Dvořák."[314] The reviewer's florid praise extends in the next two paragraphs to encompass the orchestra, melodies (which receive bonus points for apparently being inspired by national music), the qualities that make the music seem uniquely Dvořák-ian, and Dvořák's ability to "open all the strings of the listener's spirit... [to cause the listener to] stop, as if blissful, the resulting feeling pleasant." He further notes that "Dvořák has his compelling strength of enthusiasm and warmth of feeling, which brings even the most cold-hearted listeners to be swept away, enraptured, and enchanted to the most revered heights in which they are surprised by the ordinary world, where a man feels a spirit in himself, the breath of God."[315]

His praise for the libretto is noticeably less effusive than for the music, but given the spotty history of Czech libretti, can be considered high praise. He begins by claiming that "[t]he libretto offers the composer an abundance of satisfying moments." He continues by noting that,

> Although the characters are not new, and the librettist skillfully modeled the situation on Lortzing, nevertheless, they are well-chosen selections, and consistently carried out. The diction is noble and thus, we are obliged to the

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[313] *Národní Listy* February 13, 1889, no. 44, 3.

[314] Ibid.

[315] Ibid.

author, who not long ago earned the not insignificant credit of a very nice translation of the libretto to *Onegin*, sincere thanks also for this new work.[316]

In the final paragraph our reviewer does manage to note one place for possible improvement, but quickly returns to effusion, asserting that "With a composer whose spirit is as flexible as Dvořák's, there is no need for more than knowledge and good will to sprout new blossoms in these scenes."[317] He ends with the grand declaration that "the day of the first performance of *Jakobín* [will remain] a happy memory in the history of the National Theater and in Czech musical art."[318]

Karel Knittl's review for *Světozor,* either out of personal taste or the fact that his next edition wasn't put out for almost a month, was somewhat more temperate, although still almost entirely positive. In discussing the anticipation of any new Dvořák opera, and especially *Jakobín*, Knittl writes that, "We look forward to it, we anticipated that the new Dvořák opera would include many musical pearls of precious value, that it would reveal many shining pages of his creative spirit, and also that it will provide sufficient material for discussion about significant news with regard to composers, and also with regard to Czech art."[319]

One key difference between the review in *Národní Listy* and Knittl's thoughts for *Světozor* is that Knittl places decidedly more emphasis on the music. Again, likely because he has had more time to craft his thoughts, Knittl cites specific lines from the opera and calls out many more specific numbers or scenes for particular praise,

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[316] *Národní Listy,* February 13, 1889, no. 44, 3.

[317] Ibid.

[318] Ibid.

[319] Knittl, 179.

notably the Act II Rehearsal Scene, which is one that continues to draw attention even from modern scholars as, as Knittl called it, "the peak." He also charmingly notes that Dvořák "does not avoid counterpoint and plays with themes like a frolicking boy with a ball," demonstrating a somewhat more sophisticated grasp on both language and musical knowledge.[320] Knittl had a demonstrated anti-Smetana record (and, as such, was pro-Dvorak), but even given his stance in Prague's culture wars, his review engaged with more larger aesthetic and ideological views than any of his colleagues'.[321]

Most importantly for our purposes, though, Knittl also places considerably more focus on the nationalistic worth of a work like *Jakobín* and a composer like Dvořák. Knittl avers that Dvořák "again shows his experienced hand in a simple narrative situation, which abounds plentifully in the life of <u>our</u> people. He is a <u>national</u> composer in the best sense of the word."[322] He ends his concise review with further musings on the importance of opera to a nation's identity:

> Dvořák's *Jakobín* is an exquisite work in Czech artistic life, particularly up to this point, in so far as it is a new document of truth, that every important and constantly living artistic action proclaims and must proclaim the spirit of the nation in which and for which it was born. Verdi's *Otello* is an Italian product and we truly honor it, that's why we admire Wagner's tetralogy, Glinka's *Life of the Tsar*, or Tchaikovsky's *Onegin*. What benefit would counterfeit foreign muses be? We use a drastic comparison: Would it seem that our Wenceslas Square would be better if it did not thrive on Czech limes [the national tree], but rather on foreign Plane Trees? – *Jakobín* is a Czech work.[323]

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[320] Knittl, 179.

[321] Locke, 33.

[322] Knittl, 179, emphasis mine.

[323] Knittl, 179.

In this way, Knittl demonstrates a clear understanding of the intrinsic value of a national opera to its nation – and an appreciation of that value to foreign nations, as well. He appreciates *Otello, Ring des Nibelungen, Life of the Tsar, and Eugene Onegin* as both entertaining to him as a foreigner and valuable to Italy, Germany, and Russia, respectively, for the inherent national value that speaks the "truth" and "spirit" of their nations. If, as Gellner suggests, the accumulation of a high culture and cultural knowledge is a hallmark of nationalism, here Knittl is emphasizing that this particular pre-condition for nationhood has been achieved.[324]

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It is impossible to know what would have happened had Dvořák turned down Marie Červinková-Riegrová's offer of *Jakobín* in favor of one of the proffered libretti from Vienna. We do know, though, that despite Dvořák's valiant efforts to promote his operas, they never achieved much success outside of Prague. Although three of his operas (including *Jakobín*) are still performed frequently at the National Theater in Prague, the others are not. Only *Rusalka* has become an even occasional player on the modern international opera stage, and that only recently. *Dimitrij* enjoyed regular performances throughout the rest of Dvořák's life and up until World War I, but has since fallen out of favor, last performed at the National Theater in 1966.

Dvořák never composed the German opera that Simrock, Hanslick, and Brahms so fervently encouraged him to consider. It's hard to imagine Dvořák, a national symbol of Bohemia in himself, writing operatic music for a different nation well. In fact, when

[324] Gellner, 8.

Jeannette Thurber urged him to write an opera on the Hiawatha story during his stay in America, he never progressed past some sketches, which were later folded into his ninth symphony, "From the New World." Although Dvořák was apparently able to find a foreign voice in orchestral music, Dvořák's feelings of national responsibility to Bohemia gave him pause. Even if his hesitations about writing an American opera might likely have stemmed partially from his imperfect mastery of English, which would not have been a problem in German, it is tempting to imagine that, despite his fluency in German and proficiency in English, Dvořák felt he could not communicate his operatic impulses accurately in any language other than his native Czech.

Hypotheticals aside, it seems that even though Dvořák was not open with Marie Červinková-Riegorvá regarding his hesitation to compose *Jakobín*, his reasoning can be deduced from his correspondence with others and Červinková-Riegrová's writings about Dvořák. Although by all accounts Dvořák was a reasonably humble man, he was certainly interested in international exposure. The simultaneous suggestion that he write operas to German libretti from those who were most able to broker him fame outside Bohemia, and the presentation of a perfectly reasonable but very Czech libretto from his most successful librettist to-date seems to have positioned Dvořák between the proverbial rock and hard place. Although he tried to convince Marie Červinková-Riegrová to come along on his quest for international fame, as a member of one of the most politically influential Czech families, she could never have risked her family's Czech pedigree to write a non-Czech libretto. Without Červinková-Riegrová's support and with consideration of his own national identity, Dvořák had to turn away from his

external stakeholders. When it came down to it, Dvořák could not forsake the country that formed his identity and provided the inspiration for his most successful works.

In the next chapter on Zdeněk Fibich we will see that Dvořák was not the only Czech composer of this era to experience this conflict between the local and the global in opera. In his own collaborations with Anežka Schulzová, Fibich endured a similar tension between his desire to be a composer rather than a Czech composer and the need to achieve local success before finding global fame.

Chapter 4: A Case Study of the Sources for and Reception of Zdeněk Fibich and Anežka Schulzová's *Šárka*

By the time Anežka Schulzová and Zdeněk Fibich chose the Šárka story for operatic treatment, it already had an extensive history. Sources detailing events surrounding the myth of Šárka, the warrior maiden, date to the 1100s, and the story itself was an entrenched part of the Czech national consciousness by the mid-19th century. Based partially on events accepted as fact and partially on later elaborations and imaginations of specific events, Šárka's story, perhaps more so than her famous "prababička" (great-grandmother or "ur-mother") Libuše's, is one that evolved across decades and even centuries, as Czech ideals and circumstances changed. In order to fully understand the context for the Šárka story, it is necessary to provide some background about the founding mythology that was central to Czech identity in the 19th century.

The origins of what is now Prague and the Czech Republic are traced to a princess and powerful seer called Libuše. Libuše was the youngest of King Krok's three daughters. The king selected Libuše as his successor, but his subjects claimed that as an unmarried woman, Libuše was unfit to rule on her own. Libuše had a vision in which she imagined a plowman named Přemysl in his field. She said that he would be her husband. King Krok's subjects agreed that if they were able to prove that Libuše's vision was true, and that if they could convince Přemysl to come serve as her consort, they would consent to Libuše becoming queen. King Krok sent emissaries from his court to go in search of Přemysl, and sure enough, when they returned, they had with them Přemysl. And so, Libuše became queen.

Under Libuše's rule, the Czech lands knew great prosperity. Libuše's people followed her to a spot on a hill, overlooking the Vltava river, where she declared that there, on the threshold (or "prah" in Czech), there would be a great city, Prague (Praha, in Czech). And, as Libuše foresaw, it happened: on the spot where she foresaw Prague, Libuše's people built a great fortress called Vyšehrad (the remnants of which still exist in Prague), and the great city was erected. As we will see, variations of this story date back to the earliest recorded histories of the Czech people. So iconic is Libuše's story that when a new grand opera was needed to celebrate the opening of the National Theater in Prague, Bedřich Smetana composed an opera about Libuše, which is still performed every season at the National Theater and on ceremonial occasions.

The Šárka legend was connected to this inheritance, and was a popular choice for composers and writers during the Czech national revival. It derives from these Czech founding mythologies, but from an episode known as the War of the Maidens. Although versions of the story vary, the basic plot outline is similar in all: Following Libuše's death, war breaks out between men, led by Přemysl, and women, led by Vlasta, over the succession to Libuše's throne.[325] Šárka, a warrior maiden, seeks revenge on the (male) warrior Ctirad. With her band of Amazon warriors, Šárka devises a trap to capture Ctirad, which involves the maidens tying her to a tree in the forest and then hiding nearby. Ctirad comes along and rescues Šárka, who proceeds to seduce him. When Ctirad lowers his guard, Šárka sounds her hunting horn and the

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[325] Vlasta, much like Šárka herself, is a character who is, over the evolution of this myth, at times heroic, at times romantic, and at times villainous, and as such, can be hard to categorize. She is consistently portrayed, though, as the leader of the Amazon army and something of a de facto heiress to Libuše. For more on this see Jitka Malečková, "Nationalizing Women and Engendering the Nation."

Amazons emerge from the surrounding woods and capture Ctirad. From here, versions diverge. In some iterations of the story Šárka's seduction, originally a pretense, gradually becomes true love and she has already genuinely fallen for Ctirad by the time the maidens emerge to capture him. In other versions, her sympathy and love is aroused later when Ctirad is taken back to the maidens' stronghold at Děvín Castle. Regardless of the version, the love story never ends well: one or both of the star-crossed lovers is always dead.

Most versions of the Šárka story portray Šárka as scheming and manipulative.[326] She tends to be a rather flat character in the traditional telling of the story, one who is only out for revenge, or as a woman who cannot control her emotions and falls for Ctirad out of some kind of feminine failing. Schulzová's Šárka, however, is a more nuanced character with more realistic (in as much as characters are realistic in opera) emotions than in prior iterations of the tale. As we will see, by making Šárka a more relatable character, Schulzová incited the ire of many Czech critics. I argue that although Fibich found his greatest success with *Šárka*, Schulzová's efforts were less lauded because of her willingness to tinker with material that others considered the property of the nation.

Pre-Modern Source Material for Šárka

The basis for the Šárka myth appears in one of the earliest sources detailing Czech history: the account by Cosmas of Prague, written in the twelfth century.

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[326] The three versions considered most seriously here are: Alois Jirásek, *Legends of Old Bohemia,* trans. Edith Pargeter (London: Paul Hamlyn, 1963); Jaroslav Vrchlický, *Šárka* (Prague: Albatros, 1973); Julius Zeyer, *Šárka* in *Dramatická Díla* vol. 2 (Prague: Nákladem České Grafické Akciové Společnosti, 1905)

Cosmas, a high-ranking cleric in Prague, wrote his account in Latin, a further indication of his elite status. In the introduction to her translation of *The Chronicle of the Czechs*, Lisa Wolverton writes that Cosmas' account is "pretentious and political, uneven and inspiring, capacious and markedly focused. It seeks to define the Czechs as a nation through history, compel them to think about their political culture, and urge reform, justice, and responsibility."[327] Cosmas' account doesn't mention Šárka or Ctirad. It does, however, tell the Czech founding myth of Libuše, made famous by Smetana, which is the immediate precursor to the action that occurs in the standard telling of the Šárka story. Cosmas' treatment of the Libuše tale is detailed, albeit conflicted, but he mostly glosses over the ensuing conflict between women and men.[328]

The next key moment in the telling of the Maidens' War happens in what the National Library of the Czech Republic calls the "Chronicle of the So-Called Dalimil."[329] The unwieldy title refers to the fact that the author of this tale remains unknown, but modern scholars generally acknowledge that it was not Dalimil. (Nevertheless, the document is still commonly referred to as the Dalimil Chronicle, and as such, will be referenced thusly here.) Today Cosmas' *Chronicle of the Czechs* and the Dalimil Chronicle are typically presented as foils to one another. Cosmas wrote in Latin as a respected high-ranking clergyman, while the author of the Dalimil Chronicle wrote in

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[327] Lisa Wolverton, Introduction to *Chronicle of the Czechs* by Cosmas of Prague (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 3.

[328] Cosmas of Prague, *The Chronicle of the Czechs*, trans. Lisa Wolverton (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 49.

[329] *Tales from the Chronicle of Dalimil: the Paris Fragment of the Latin Translation*, eds., Alena Ježková and Zdeněk Uhlíř, trans., Kateřina Millerová and Sean Mark Miller (Prague: Gloriet, 2006).

Czech and from a perspective that identifies him as someone who was decidedly more middle class.[330] It is in the Dalimil Chronicle that the specific incident involving Šárka and Ctirad makes its first appearance.[331]

During the Renaissance, the Utraquist chronicler Václav Hajek z Libočan derived his own *Kronika česká* (*Chronicle of the Czechs*), which František Pala identifies as the source upon which Alois Jirásek most closely relied for his 19th-century telling of the Šárka myth.[332] Based primarily on the Dalimil Chronicle and the early 16th-century chronicle of Mikulaš Konáč z Hodišková, Hajek z Libočan was one of the first writers to begin to develop the characters in the Šárka myth, giving names to many secondary characters and fleshing out the plot more than his predecessors.[333]

In the intervening Hapsburg years, the story of Libuše and Ctirad garnered little attention. As Jitka Malečková points out in her essay "Nationalizing Women and Engendering the Nation: the Czech national movement," the Libuše story had a vibrant history, even making appearances in non-Czech arenas. When the Maidens' War was addressed, the focus was often on Vlasta, and then, particularly during the seventeenth

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330 Alfred Thomas, *Prague Palimpsest: Writing, Memory, and the City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 21-26.

331 The Libuše story is one that has, throughout its history, been treated sometimes as myth, sometimes as history. Most scholars seem to acknowledge that, regardless of the details of the telling, there is some truth to at least the existence of such a person. The somewhat sudden appearance of Šárka, Ctirad, and Vlasta in the Dalimil Chronicle and the greater variations in the telling of the events lead most scholars to believe that this particular incident in the Maidens' War was invented to flesh out the sketchy details of the historical event.

332 František Pala, *Fibichová Šárka* (Prague: Orbis, 1953), 8.

333 Pala, 4-6.

and eighteenth centuries, she was frequently portrayed as a ridiculous or farcical character.[334] Around the time of the beginnings of the National Revival, however, this focus began to shift. As Czechs began to contemplate their emancipation from the Hapsburgs more seriously, they found the idea of Vlasta and her Amazon maidens appealingly democratic.[335]

The famed forged manuscripts of Dvůr Králové and Zelená Hora, "found" in 1817 and 1819, respectively, contained more detailed accounts of both the Libuše and Maidens' War stories. According to historian Derek Sayer, "the consensus in much later Czech commentary is that irrespective of their dubious origins, the manuscripts contain poems of high literary merit that made a positive contribution to the development of the Czech national culture."[336] The importance of these documents in forming a Czech national consciousness led to the increased popularity of these stories in literature, drama, and the incipient arena of Czech opera, even after they were openly acknowledged to be forgeries.[337] In this way the Czech revivalists participated in what Ernest Renan and Benedict Anderson both see as critical parts of the establishment of a nation: forgetting.[338] Although in Renan's and Anderson's theories of nationalism this forgetting is more closely associated with forgetting the violence that often accompanies the forging of new nations, in this case, it can also be a

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[334] Jitka Malečková, 299.

[335] Thomas, *Prague Palimpsest*, 31.

[336] Sayer, 146.

[337] Malečková, 299-300.

[338] Renan, 49, and Anderson, 187-206.

forgetting of the recently invented traditions that came from the manuscripts. In keeping with other more recent theories of cultural nationalism by Hobsbawm and Anthony Smith, there is also a critical need to establish a historical continuity to support a nation's invented traditions. According to Smith much of this shared historical past is often mythological, but as long as people unify around the shared mythology, the veracity of the shared history is irrelevant.[339] In Sayer's estimation, the probably forger of the documents "was also an undoubted *buditel* [revivalist/awakener]. ... in the Czech nineteenth century the line between the two was not always clear."[340]

This resurgence in interest in the female founders of a Czech nation also coincided with the 19th-century idea (not limited to the Czech lands) that women, as mothers, were the key to creating new Czech nationalists by inculcating their children with the nationalist ideology from a young age.[341] This critical mass of renewed interest in the topic, brought about by the desire for political autonomy made the mid-19th century ripe for a new wave of Šárka stories.

19th-Century Source Material for Šárka

[339] Anthony Smith, *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2000), 20.

[340] Sayer, 147.

[341] In *The Bohemian Body*, Alfred Thomas also presents an interesting argument about the issue of women as the symbols of new nations during this time. He points to France's Marianne and Britain's Britannia as positive exemplars of this idea, but also notes that smaller countries, like Ireland and the Czech lands, which were perceived as weaker, were also associated with women in a more pejorative sense. Alfred Thomas, *The Bohemian Body: Gender and Sexuality in Modern Czech Culture* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007). See also Jitka Malečková "Nationalizing Women and Engendering the Nation" and Joane Nagel, "Masculinity and Nationalism."

This brings us to the accounts of the Šárka story that would have been contemporary to Fibich and Schulzová. There are three primary sources: a lyric poem by Jaroslav Vrchlický, an epic poem by Julius Zeyer, and a children's story by Alois Jirásek. Although the three all share the same basic narrative framework, they each exhibit nuanced differences from each other, and more importantly, differences from the version of the story that Anežka Schulzová would tell her in libretto.

Alois Jirásek's *Legends of Old Bohemia* first appeared in 1893.[342] Intended to introduce children to the most important historical and mythological tales of their nation, Jirásek's tales are still familiar to Czech children today. Of Jirásek's historical fiction, Derek Sayer writes that, "Simultaneously the past becomes a living presence and contemporary agendas [i.e., of constructing a shared historical past] gain enormous, even if largely spurious, historical depth."[343] Of the three 19th-century versions, Jirásek's telling of the Šárka myth is the one that is most different from the others. Likely as a result of his differing rhetorical purpose (to educate children, rather than to entertain adults), Jirásek's Šárka is the flattest character of the three contemporary literary versions. Less complicated than either Zeyer or Vrchlický's protagonists, Jirásek's Šárka never has any real emotions for Ctirad and never feels remorse for tricking him into blowing her hunting horn for himself, thus ensuring his

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[342] Pala claims that the publication of Jirásek's stories was the event that piqued Schulzová's interest in doing a project focusing on the Maiden's War. That said, his claim here seems to be based on Schulzová's on writings and the work that most closely addresses *Šárka* (the German book by "Richter") doesn't really address her sources for Šárka, making Pala's claim a bit dubious. Pala, 28.

[343] Sayer, 131.

capture by Šárka's army.[344] Moreover, Jirásek's main characters have never even met prior to the story, as evidenced by Ctirad introducing himself to Šárka.[345] There are some commonalities with the other 19th-century versions of the Šárka tale, though. Like Vrchlický's version, the story is set at noon on a hot summer day, and like Zeyer's version, Libuše's consort Přemysl plays a key role in the action.

Julius Zeyer and Jaroslav Vrchlický, both members of the anti-modern *Lumír* literary movement, have more similar treatments of the Šárka myth, both in comparison with each other and with Schulzová's libretto. Zeyer's poetic version of Šárka also features Libuše's consort Přemysl as the leader of the male army, and his version also opens with a ceremony around Libuše's tomb. According to Czech musicologist František Pala, Zeyer was the first to apply elements of romanticism to the characters in the story who, as a result, are more relatable and feel more realistic.[346] Zeyer's Šárka is, to an extent, conflicted about her loyalties, and as in Schulzová's libretto, betrays her Amazon sisters to Přemysl in order to save Ctirad.[347] The biggest difference between Zeyer's version and Vrchlický's is in the secondary characters. Vrchlický's epic poem is less connected to the Libuše story in that he does

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[344] Jirásek, 68.

[345] Ibid.

[346] Pala, 12. Leoš Janáček used Zeyer's libretto as the basis for his first opera, although the work was not performed until 1925 (three years before Janáček's death), due to a disagreement between Janáček and Zeyer. See John Tyrrell, s.v. "Leoš Janáček," in *Grove Music Online.*

[347] Pala, 13.

not feature Přemysl, and his Vlasta, leader of the Amazons, is cruel and jealous, wanting Ctirad for herself.[348]

Schulzová's libretto owes more to Zeyer than it does to Vrchlický, but they do share some key commonalities. Most notably, Vrchlický creates an intense build-up to what becomes, in Fibich's opera, the critical Act II love scene. Vrchlický does this through textual repetition of two key phrases: "Noonday heat fell on the deep woods," and "Thunder glints in her eye, however, Ctirad doesn't see."[349] The textual repetition does not occur in Schulzová's libretto; Fibich, however, accomplishes the same long dramatic build up musically.

It is likely apparent now that, despite aghast critical reaction to the changes Anežka Schulzová made to the "authentic" version of the Šárka myth, the literary scene of the 1890s featured (conservatively) three distinct, at least partially contradictory versions of the tale, rendering it virtually impossible for Schulzová to avoid changing at least small elements of each. Although I have identified various points of conflict among the three literary versions and between those versions and Schulzová's libretto, it seems wise to summarize the story as it appears in Fibich and Schulzová's opera:

Act I opens just after the death of Libuše. The women, particularly Vlasta, are mourning her death, particularly given that Libuše's consort, Přemysl, has taken over and has not included women in his new government. Šárka arrives and encourages the women to fight for their rights. The men arrive to perform a sacrifice, which Šárka interrupts, offending the men and heightening the tension between the armies,

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[348] Pala, 29.

[349] "Žár polední pád na hluboké lesy..." and "však v jejím černém oku blesk mihl se – žel, neviděl jej Ctirad."

although both Přemysl and Vlasta discourage conflict. The women feel that one warrior, Ctirad, has been particularly hostile, and thus, pledge to seek revenge on the men in general and Ctirad in particular.

When the curtain rises on Act II, outright war has erupted between the women and the men. As the women arrive at a meeting place in the forest, each brings news of their respective victories. Šárka hears that Ctirad will be out alone, seeking revenge, and so, sets her trap. She convinces Vlasta to allow her to stay back with a small group of women. As the Amazon army departs for their castle, Šárka has her helpers tie her to a tree in Ctirad's path, and then sends them to hide in the woods, awaiting the sound of her trumpet. When Ctirad arrives and sees Šárka, he immediately cuts her bonds, and the slight misgivings Šárka had had about her task become outright regret, as the two immediately (and operatically) fall in love with each other, leading to Fibich's famously lush Act II love duet. As Šárka contemplates her new love and Ctirad's fate, she urges him to flee the trap, but Ctirad bravely blows the horn himself and the women emerge from hiding. Rather than killing him immediately, as had been their plan, Šárka begs the women to spare him, so they instead take him back to their castle, Děvín, as prisoner.

Act III introduces Šárka the traitoress. In a desperate attempt to save Ctirad, Šárka has betrayed the women's plans and led Přemysl and his army to Děvín. As Act III begins, we see them arriving to rescue Ctirad, who is to be executed that day. As the women bring forth their prisoner, Šárka emerges and begs them to spare his life. When the women refuse, Přemysl and his men emerge from their hiding places and, after a short battle, the women are overpowered, and Ctirad is freed. Although Šárka and

Ctirad enjoy a brief reunion, Šárka is soon overcome by guilt at her betrayal and, after seeing the ghosts of her fallen sisters, she plunges to her death over a rocky cliff.

Although the Šárka that we meet in Zeyer's rendition of the story is a rounder character than either Jirásek or Vrchlický's protagonists, Schulzová's Šárka is both genuinely in love with Ctirad and willing to actively betray her colleagues in order to save the man that she loves. Zeyer's Šárka turns to Přemysl, but not until after it is too late and Ctirad is already dead. In contrast, Schulzová's Šárka takes both her own fate and that of Ctirad under hand so that she can save him. As a woman, Schulzová was likely much more able to connect to her heroine than any of her male predecessors were. Moreover, as an emancipated 19th-century woman, Schulzová probably had dramatically different ideas about the ways in which a woman could take control of her own destiny. Although we have no way of knowing whether Schulzová saw any of herself and Fibich in Šárka and Ctirad, her heroine is by far the most relatable of the iterations of Šárka from this time period. By creating a flawed, yet sympathetic protagonist out of a character who had previously been at worst, manipulative and genocidal, and at best, victim to her own emotions, Schulzová, as we will see, created a problem for Czech audiences and critics.

Fibich and Schulzová's Šárka

Fibich and Schulzová were not actually the first to bring Šárka to the musical stage. In fact, František Pala credits Smetana's treatment of Šárka in his eponymous tone poem from *Má Vlast* (and, of course, his ceremonial opera *Libuše*) as the factors most critical to the 19th-century revival in interest in the Czech founding mythology.

Pala also posits that the most popular 19th-century character tropes surrounding Šárka evinced from Smetana's interpretation.[350] This is easier claimed than proven, however, as the program for Smetana's tone poem exists in several versions. Smetana's plan was to have the author V. V. Zelený write the programs for *Má Vlast.* Smetana sent an eight-line *précis* to Zelený for adaptation, but Smetana was never happy with Zelený's interpretation, so today Smetana's *précis* is more often provided than Zelený's, and it's hard to say what audiences at the time would have considered to be "Smetana's version" of the events.[351] Moreover, as the program was never acted out on stage, it seems even stranger that this should be the authoritative Šárka for the 19th century. It seems likely that Pala's devotion to the Smetanaian line of Czech music lineage has brought undue weight to the importance of Smetana's Šárka.

Fibich and Schulzová began work on their own version of *Šárka* in January 1896 -- even before their previous opera *Hedy* had premiered. The reason for this was that in November 1895, the leadership of the National Theater had announced a new prize for an opera dealing with Czech life, past or present, with submissions due in April 1897. According to dated scores, Fibich finished a first draft of the first act in June 1896, a draft of the second act in September of that year, and had a complete draft by March 10, 1897.[352] Although the contest winner was not decided until February 1899,[353]

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350 Pala, 9-10.

351 František Bartoš, Introduction to *Má Vlast* by Bedřich Smetana, translated by Joy Kadečková (Prague: Muzeum Bedřicha Smetany v Praze, Státní Hudební vydavatelství, 1966), XXXIII.

352 Jiří Kopecký, *Opery Zdeňka Fibicha*, 198.

353 Although *Šárka* was a finalist, Kovařovic's *Psohlavci* won*.* Kopecký, *Opery Zdeňka*

Šárka premiered at Prague's National Theater on December 28, 1897, and was an immediate success. The critics delighted in Fibich's decision to return to a Czech topic, and praised his music for its melody, folk style, Czechness, and, perhaps the greatest praise, its Smetana-ness.[354]

Thanks to the established cultural memories of the Šárka myth, however, Anežka Schulzová's treatment of the beloved story was met with decidedly mixed reactions. In what can be interpreted as Renan's intentional forgetting in order to forge a national unity, Czechs seem to have already forgotten the fact that the Šárka story they now considered authoritative was really a recent construct, and viewed the liberties Schulzová took as something just short of high cultural treason.

In a review for *Světozor* František Hejda writes:

> Miss Anežka Schulzová, who already provided Fibich with the text to his last opera *Hedy*, worked on the material about Šárka and Ctirad. This work remained, after the premiere of the opera, an object of controversy. And not without justification. The authoress improved the legend herself – and let us say off the bat: rather freely. We're not saying that it isn't artistic. … Šárka, for the benefit of the theater, changes her actions from [those of] vindictive revenge to [those of] a man-hungry Amazon in love and on fire for Ctirad's passionate love, looking to free herself; [she] doesn't set out to kill him in the forest at the sound of the treacherous trumpeting, rather, thinking later of her wickedness, sacrifices herself to death. From this emerges a second attempt to exaggerate the tragic guilt of the heroine and in exactly that light, and thus, the ethical requirement of the text has to be accommodated.[355]

Fibicha, 251.

[354] Kopecký, *Opery Zdeňka Fibicha,* 250. The critical landscape of Prague during this time was, mildly put, complicated, and to address the intricacies of the political and polemical goings on here would be to do it a great injustice. For more on this subject see Brian Locke, *Opera and Ideology in Prague.*

[355] František Karl Hejda, "Divadlo a Hudba (Šárka)," *Světozor*, vol. 32, no. 9, pp. 106-7.

Hejda makes a clear effort to be balanced in his analysis of Schulzová's adaptation. He goes on to cite her explanation for the changes she made, which mentions that, lacking a true historical record of the events, she asserts her right to interpret the material in her own way.[356] Having done his due diligence, however, Hejda goes on to lambast Schulzová's decisions as "impossible" and "misguided":

> It is impossible to accept this argument without reservations. With regards to poetic license there would be nothing to object to, as long as there were no significant changes to the essence of the plot, and fixed, traditionally, as it is here in this catastrophic fable. And we believe that the legend set out here to work and thus, in order that her catastrophe would remain, in essence unchanged. … It seems to us rather casual and obviously misguided, if one changes events in succinct words contained in the story of this opera, *the music of which acts fully and with authorization to become the property of the nation*.[357]

Here, Hejda touches on what he sees as a conflict of intentions between Fibich and Schulzová. Hejda interprets Fibich's goal for *Šárka* as the creation of a musical gift for the Czech nation, in which case, Schulzová's blatant changes to a beloved national tale would counteract that aim. He sees *Šárka* as the beginning of a new period of "nationalization" for Fibich, who had previously eschewed the blatant nationalism of his predecessors, Dvořák and Smetana.[358]

Hejda was not alone in interpreting Fibich's work as a grand step towards developing his "Czechness." In his review for *Národní listy*, Jaromír Borecký also mentions the Czech character of *Šárka*:

> Fibich thought, felt, and expressed himself as a Czech artist. "Šárka" is a Czech national work of art and stands as his own folk trait above all of

[356] Hejda, 107.

[357] Ibid. Emphasis mine.

[358] František Karl Hejda, "Divadlo a Hudba (Šárka)," *Světozor*, vol. 32, no. 10, 119.

> Fibich's previous musical-dramatic creations. So that anywhere we admire in more detail, everywhere shows Czech colors. The main sound of this peculiarity lies in beautiful, clean sung declamation of words; the melody of language and the rhythm of language cause this decisively in the music and support its originality. [359]

Karel Knittl also asserts the "Czechness" of Fibich's *Šárka*, although he begins by asking, "Is 'Šárka' truly a work of the Czech spirit? The composer took care with the entire spirit of the seductive subject, created upon it musical vestments, which nobody can deny is the Czech folk costume. Fibich discusses in 'Šárka' the musical language of our country."[360]

Other reviewers have at least mild rebukes for the alterations, as Jaromír Borecký did in *Národní listy*:

> "The dramatic treatment of the legend, only preserved in the coarsest rendition, requires in any case a certain adaptation. I think, however, that it would have been more appropriate to achieve this necessary adaptation in a more faithful to the legend, well-developed additions from its source, rather than markedly arbitrary changes, to think people already rather deeply carved in their traits."[361]

He goes on, though, to admit that, "the author of this libretto has presented the material, she has created drama that is relatively adroitly constructed and effective. The characters are sketched simply, but drawn truly in their great musical contours treated well."[362]

As ever, Nejedlý defended the artistic decisions Schulzová and Fibich made about *Šárka*, writing that:

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[359] Borecký in Rektorys, vol. 1, 211.

[360] Knittl in Rektorys, vol. 1, 215.

[361] Borecký in Rektorys, vol 1, 203.

[362] Borecky in Rektorys, vol. 1, 204.

> It appears also in the daring changes to the legend, for which Fibich and his librettist, of course, asked permission for well thought-out reasons. Šárka in the legend tricks her Ctirad into really depriving himself of his life; Fibich's Šárka wants only to render, but then alone succumbs and submits to Ctirad's love. Thus, this was needed for the erotic drama, which had also been Šárka. These artistic changes to historical material or to the legend are clearly improvements, if they are grounded in reasoning, as in this case.[363]

Nejedlý, however, cautions against viewing *Šárka* in an overly nationalistic light. He notes that,

> "It is clear that Šárka is more Czech than "Bouře" or "Hedy," because truly, it has a Czech subject, and therefore, also the music, characterized by the ancient Czech life, must have, of course, a more Czech character (objectively) than an opera from Modern Greek life. We may not, however, on this basis of this "Czechness" forge Šárka as a weapon against foreign works..."[364]

In this assertion, though, Nejedlý (probably inadvertently) goes against the composer's own thoughts on the matter. In a letter to his publisher Urbánek dated 11 August 1896 Fibich wrote, "According to my view *Šárka* will be a truly national opera, which will strengthen my place as a Czech composer."[365] In this quote we have a rare window directly to Fibich's own thoughts on this work, particularly, and his place in Czech opera history, more broadly.[366] Here he makes it blatant that his desire to win the National Theater's prize stemmed not only from the desire for recognition, but also for the ensuing fame and success that would follow. Although he does not state it directly,

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363 Zdeněk Nejedlý, *Česká moderní zpěvohra po Smetanovi* (Prague: J. Otto, 1911), 114.

364 Nejedlý, *Česká moderní zpěvohra,* 112.

365 Zdeněk Fibich to F. A. Urbánek, ČMH Fond S80, Inv. 69. Emphasis his.

366 Fibich famously hated writing letters – the majority of the correspondence from this period between "Fibich" and Urbánek found at the ČMH is actually written in Anežka Schulzová's handwriting.

Fibich's more cosmopolitan attitude and his emphasis on the word Czech could also indicate his desire to stand out as a Czech composer on the international operatic scene.

Our best idea of what Schulzová thought of her own work emits from a somewhat complicated source: Schulzová's own book about Fibich, written under a pseudonym. "Carl Ludwig Richter" writes of *Šárka*,

> "The opera's libretto – from the same author as the libretto for *Hedy* – is based on the mythical saga of the Bohemian Amazons and the fabled Maiden's War in Bohemia. The treatment is simple but strong and effective [;] it brings a few truly original moments and offers the music rich opportunities for powerful booms and for gorgeous word painting. Particularly the main scene in the second act, for which the material for musical adaptation was well chosen…brings also dramatically an *aparte* and new situation. The characters have a particular relief, the conventional and cut and dried are avoided."[367]

Although Schulzová must have tempered her own feelings to disguise "Richter's" identity, we can draw a few conclusions based on what she does say. Whereas others viewed her interpretation of the Šárka legend as bastardization of a national treasure, Schulzová saw it as "original" and an opportunity to showcase Fibich's compositional abilities. Also of note is her assertion that "the conventional and cut and dried are avoided" when it comes to the characters. It's difficult to tell whether she means "conventional" in terms of operatic convention or the conventional treatment of the characters in the Šárka story, but it is worth noting that she draws particular attention to the characters, rather than the plot or wording.

With the hindsight afforded to modern interpreters, it is easy to see that Schulzová was likely highly impacted by the personal connection she felt between

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[367] Carl Ludwig Richter, *Zdenko Fibich. Eine Musikalische Silhouette* (Prague: Fr. A. Urbánek), 210.

herself and Fibich and Šárka and Ctirad, two pairs of forbidden lovers. By making her Šárka a more complex, human character, Schulzová strengthened the bond between her heroine and herself. She made a character who was traditionally viewed as manipulative and treacherous, sympathetic and beholden to human emotions. In so doing, she simultaneously deepened the character and dismayed many Czech critics.

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I have already laid out one possible reason that contemporary critics and audiences were so incensed at Schulzová's alterations to the Šárka myth: that the myth had already formed a critical part of their shared national history and invented traditions. Hobsbwam tells us that, "the object and characteristic of 'traditions' including invented ones is invariance." [368] Renan agreed, stating that a nation requires a "shared history and a will to maintain heritage."[369] And so, in changing elements of the story, Schulzová is violating the invariant nature of the forged national historical narrative and testing the Czech will to maintain that heritage in favor of a more nuanced operatic narrative.

Another question that could be raised, though, is how audiences and critics were able to compartmentalize their disdain for the libretto from their generally positive feelings about Fibich's music. One is that the Czechs were somewhat accustomed to poor libretti by the turn of the century. Throughout contemporary criticism on Czech opera there are frequent remarks about Czech composers' inability to procure acceptable libretti – for every work by Eliška Krásnohorská, Otakar

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[368] Hobsbawm, 2.

[369] Renan, 52-53.

Hostinský, or Marie Červinková-Riegrová, there were many others that were plagued by a host of problems. Perhaps this is understandable: the idea of the Czech libretti was still a relatively new construct and, as such, librettists were necessarily inexperienced. With that said, however, Czechs were used to the idea of enjoying the music they heard even if they found the underlying plot and words disagreeable.

Another possible answer to this question comes from the consideration of authorship of an opera. Musicologist Julian Rushton discusses the primacy of a composer with regards to authorship of an opera when he notes that it is "entire natural" to consider Rossini's characters rather than attributing them to his librettist Tottola.[370] Indeed, in modern criticism the primacy of the composer over the librettist is rarely questioned. Although nineteenth-century critics tended to grant more attention to the libretto than is typical today, there was still the assumption that authorship fell with the composer, rather than being shared with the librettist. In this case, it seems feasible that Czech commentators considered the music more important and, therefore, were able to in some way overlook what they saw as Schulzová's misdeeds since they were secondary to Fibich's music. Moreover, Rushton goes on to suggest that, "...while admitting that the words are usually written before the music, and can have a great impact on what music is actually composed, opera criticism can still argue for the primacy of music...even with full comprehension of the words...the audience mainly comes to listen to the singers and the orchestra."[371] He also muses

[370] Julian Rushton, "Characterization," in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera,* ed. Helen M. Greenwald, 338.

[371] Rushton, 340.

that even when one has the words to an opera at hand either in the form of a printed libretto or, in modern opera houses, projected as surtitles, "such helpful practices...only enhance the sense that the words, or detailed understanding of the words, lie half outside the performance of opera."[372] If we accept Rushton's claim that words are in some sense distanced from the music in opera, even given their inextricable link, it is possible to imagine that critics either saw the music as so much more important than the words that they played a much greater role in the evaluation of opera, or that critics were enamored of the music when in the theater and only stopped to consider the plot, and by extension, Schulzová's libretto, after leaving the theater when they wrote their reviews. If this were the case, one could see a way that the experience of enjoying the music and that of taking the time to evaluate the opera's narrative would take place in temporally distant situations and, as such, provide the starkly contradictory attitudes the critics had to Fibich's music in comparison with Schulzová's libretto.

Conclusion

Several key moments came to a head in the nineteenth century: the desire for national autonomy led to a nationalist interest in *das Volk* and their folk mythology, in an attempt to unify a national community. And yet, even as Czechs (and other Central European peoples) strove to find themselves in these primeval tales that defined their nation, they bristled against the changeable nature of these objects to which they turned for stability and unity. Contemporary theories of nationalism by Renan and

[372] Rushton, 340.

Herder were so predicated on the idea of a shared history that any attempt to disrupt this historical narrative was jarring and unwelcome.

Furthermore, alongside the desire to find the folk mythology of a nation was the desire to create a national body of literature. As a result myths were codified in literary versions of their past selves, enshrined in national libraries, and in a remarkably short time, institutionalized national memory. Fairytale theorist Jack Zipes describes this moment, saying, "As a *literary text* which experimented with and expanded upon the stock motifs, figures and plots of the folk tale, the fairy tale reflected a change in values and ideological conflicts in the transitional period from feudalism to early capitalism."[373] So when Vrchlický, Zeyer, and Jirásek made national myths literary it was suddenly possible to see Schulzová's version of Šárka as "wrong," rather than as an interpretation. With the codification of the Šárka story (even as the literary versions had some variance among them), the tales went from being public to private, from flexible to immutable. National property is not as easily altered when it is written down in a manner accessible to anyone literate, rather than as an oral tradition.

The idea of using opera to promote nationalist messages was not a novelty in Europe or even in the Czech lands. The Czech National Theater was among the first projects in a concerted effort to create uniquely Czech spaces during the cultural revival of the 1860s. Indeed, the idea of a shared historical narrative was so important in the realm of Czech opera that Smetana withheld his grand opera *Libuše* for ten years so that it could be the first opera to be performed in the new National Theater and, as such, be canonized as part of the newly invented Czech tradition.

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[373] Jack Zipes, *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 10. Emphasis in original.

Yet, by the time Fibich was active, times were changing. Fibich was clearly drawn to cosmopolitanism and modernism – the future of opera, particularly internationally—but Czech topics still remained the most popular at the National Theater. Fibich's choice of *Šárka* as an operatic subject was a clear attempt to woo Czech audiences after the lukewarm reception of his earlier more cosmopolitan operas and melodramas. While in some ways this choice could appear to be looking back to the overt nationalism favored by Fibich's older colleagues Smetana and Dvořák, perhaps Fibich saw some inherent possibility for modernism in the Šárka tale.

Czech folklore is actually rife with strong female characters. Unlike other countries where important women tend to be purely symbolic, the Czech mythology that was revived in the mid-nineteenth century features several active female protagonists. In most cases, though, these characters fall short of being truly strong characters. Ur-mother Libuše has all the trappings of a strong female leader, but she isn't allowed to lead until she has a husband. Šárka is about to take the fate of her entire gender in hand, but then her feminine weakness leads to her inconvenient love for Ctirad, and eventually the betrayal of her gender and her own suicide.

What makes the case of Fibich and Schulzová's treatment of the myth different, though, is that Schulzová's Šárka cannot remain vindictive and manipulative; rather she is affected by the eminently human emotion of love. Given the renewed interest in early Czech history in Czech culture at large and Fibich's desire to woo a Czech audiences with a new opera based on a Czech topic, it is easy to see why the Šárka story would have been appealing to him. When combined with the personal situation in which Fibich and Schulzová found themselves at the time (and their history of

interest in doomed lovers with *Hedy*), Fibich and Schulzová's unique take on a Czech "classic" is considerably less surprising than it seemed to their contemporaries.

Even though many critics had little praise for Schulzová's libretto, the general response to *Šárka* was overwhelmingly positive. It would appear that just as critics were quick to forget their own country's invented history, they were equally quick to forget their loathing for Schulzová's libretto. Although Schulzová and Fibich collaborated on three operas together, *Šárka,* is the one that is most familiar to Czech (and to a limited degree) foreign audiences. There have been 11 new productions of *Šárka* since the 1897 premiere performances for a total of nearly 400 performances at the Czech National Theater (most recently in 1979). Despite the contemporary criticism regarding the alteration of the source material, Fibich's only mature opera to focus on a Czech topic endeared him to audiences and solidified his (and Anežka Schulzová's) position in the Czech music canon.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In the late 19th century opera was a key aspect of the formation of a Czech national identity and composers writing Czech opera during this time had to grapple with a complicated matrix of competing influences as they navigated their artistic courses. As we have seen, both Zdeněk Fibich and Antonin Dvořák had to make difficult decisions about the trajectory of their careers that would impact their reception both in Bohemia and abroad. The bifurcated nature of the Czech cultural milieu – both the existence of separate Czech and German-speaking society in Prague and, to a greater degree, the multi-nationality of the waning Hapsburg Empire – resulted in often contradictory factions controlling the success, fame, and legacy of Czech composers during this period.

By the 1880s and 1890s, the idea of opera in the service to nationalism was no longer new. Smetana's early examples in *The Bartered Bride* and *Libuše* established respective precedents for defining "Czechness" in opera both musically and with regard to subject matter. As we saw in Chapter 3, that which Smetana included in his operas were almost automatically wrapped into the ideas of what defined Czech opera and Czech music, more generally. Yet, of course, musical nationalism is in the eye of the beholder. Richard Taruskin articulates this concept well when he writes that

> Nationalism should not be equated with the possession or display of distinguishing national characteristics – or not, at any rate, until certain questions are asked and at least provisionally answered. The most important ones are, first, who is doing the distinguishing? And second, to what end? Just as there were nations before there was nationalism, music has always exhibited local or national traits (often more apparent to outsiders than to those exhibiting them). Nor is musical nationalism invariably a matter of exhibiting or

> valuing stylistic peculiarities. Nationality is a condition; nationalism is an attitude.[374]

In the preceding chapters I have shown how nationalism was sometimes a choice and sometimes something that was thrust upon composers. Czech composers like Dvořák and Fibich were frequently caught between their audience's desires for music that they (the audience) felt was distinguished by Czech characteristics, even as the composers sought to cultivate a broader audience without being tethered to musical "Czechness." In this way, when composers like Dvořák wrote music that was coded as "Czech" it was intended for an audience that was seeking "Czech" music, not necessarily the music that the composer felt was a true expression of his own national identity. In this way, per Taruskin's ideas, the music was often distinguished as Czech by someone other than the composer (or, at the very least, the composer was bending to demands for music that the audiences would distinguish as Czech).

As we saw with Dvořák, once international stakeholders like Simrock, Hanslick, and Brahms latched on to Dvořák's more Slavically inclined music, they wanted nothing else, even when it held the composer back from writing the music that he wanted to write and when it limited his reputation to that of a "Czech" composer. In Fibich's case, his operatic success was once again tied to his Czechness. Despite his endeavors to write music that would have international appeal, Fibich was unable to appeal to Czech audiences until he composed a uniquely Czech opera, *Šárka*. Unlike Smetana, Fibich had to work harder to earn his status as "Czech" composer – he did not set out to be a nationalist composer, rather

[374] Richard Taruskin, s.v. "Nationalism," *Oxford Music Online*.

fell to it when it became clear that nationalism was what his audiences wanted. Thus, here we see composers demonstrating "national" traits both for outsider and insider listeners. Perhaps most importantly, though, is the idea that composers were not purely "national" or purely *not* national. As musicologist Marina Folova-Walker has argued, national style is not "homogeneous." Rather, it "present[s] an assemblage of distinct styles that sometimes correspond to local color, but at other times do not, according to the composer's preference."[375] Not even Smetana wrote music that was exclusively national – at times, composers strike a nationalist tone and at others they don't. Neither of the composers considered here should be considered purely on the basis of the presence or absence of perceived nationalism in their music. It is merely one aspect of their compositional output.

In this final chapter, I will draw some connections between the conflicts discussed with regard to individual composers; I will also suggest some ideas about how and why the phenomenon of the female librettist came to exist and thrive during this period in Czech opera in a way that it has not at any other point in opera history.

Dvořák

Unlike Fibich, Antonín Dvořák's music received a good deal of attention outside of his native Bohemia. Beginning with his successes in the Austrian State Stipendium competition in the mid-1870s Dvořák's was a familiar name internationally, primarily for his symphonic work. As David Brodbeck has pointed out, even though most of the works Dvořák originally submitted for the stipendium competition were not

[375] Marina Frolova-Walker, "The Language of National Style," in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald, 160.

particularly "Czech," the judges especially latched on to the *Moravian Duets*, and, as a consequence he became popular especially those with what foreigners considered "Czech character."[376] Although this international renown was certainly a victory for Dvořák, as I showed in Chapter 3, it was also a cause of deep conflict for him, who found himself pulled in opposing directions by his various factions of stakeholders.

Dvořák's external supporters including Fritz Simrock, Eduard Hanslick, and Johannes Brahms, encouraged him to focus on composing works that would be commercially successful with an international audience. This included works similar to those that had won him several Austrian State Stipendia in the 1870s, music that was simultaneously self-consciously and externally recognizable as Czech or Slavic, like the *Slavonic Dances* commissioned by Simrock in 1878. Although Dvořák was grateful for the success, he soon began to feel that the works that appeared Slavic to others felt hackneyed and inauthentic to him. In his letters to Simrock Dvořák's disinterest in composing these works is clearly accompanied by frustration at being pigeonholed by his "Czechness." Not coincidentally, Dvořák's most successful works outside of Bohemia were primarily instrumental (with the exception of his *Stabat Mater*). Although Dvořák hoped to be seen as a composer of opera, without the Czech language barrier his instrumental works were more open to interpretation, and less endowed with conscious meaning that could be misunderstood or alienating to non-Czech audiences.

Knowing that Dvořák was keen to write more opera, his Austrian network encouraged him to write a German opera. Dvořák was presented with numerous

[376] Brodbeck, 143-145.

German libretti and promises that if he set one of these texts it would unlock the German-speaking world (that is, Vienna and beyond) and international fame as a composer of opera. It was also implied that, should Dvořák compose a German opera, it would likely be a much greater commercial success than his Czech operas, which were limited by their language in terms of financial gains. Even though the promise of more operatic opportunities, Dvořák's desire to nurture his international relationships, and certainly (although tacitly), the prospect of greater financial reward were very attractive to Dvořák, the idea of composing a German opera also caused him grave concern.

To Dvořák, writing a German opera would have equated to turning away from his Czech identity, homeland, native tongue, and supporters. As I showed in Chapter 3, Dvořák spent several years contemplating the possible benefits and drawbacks of composing a German opera, weighing the proffered German libretti against Marie Červinková-Riegrová's libretto for *Jakobín*. Although his foreign friends had power, his local supporters were certainly far from impotent. Indeed, during this period F.L. Rieger still held considerable sway in Vienna.

Rieger and his daughter, Marie Červinková-Riegrová fervently hoped Dvořák would compose another Czech opera. That it was Červinková-Riegrová's libretto at stake was certainly a factor in their desire, but it was not the only reason that they hoped to keep Dvořák firmly in the Czech opera camp. The Riegers and their colleagues in Prague were well aware of Dvořák's international fame and had a vested interest in maintaining his reputation as a Czech composer. They knew that as long as Dvořák wrote Czech music and opera he could continue to bring greater fame to Bohemia. This

would, by extension, strengthen the burgeoning Czech cultural identity and operatic tradition and identity. They worried that, if Dvořák wrote in German, he would be "lost" to German audiences and the esteem that his works earned would go to Vienna, rather than home to Prague. Moreover, Marie Červinková-Riegrová clearly saw her work on libretti as patriotic duty. It is clear from her letters and diaries that, particularly by the period when Dvořák was dawdling with *Jakobín*, she considered her other work (charitable organizations, other writings, especially as they pertained to her father and his career and legacy) of much greater import than writing libretti. She persisted, however, with libretti because of her conviction that good Czech operas could strengthen her nation's identity and musical tradition. Červinková-Riegrová evidently thought that Dvořák's priorities when it came to opera should be similar and, as I demonstrated in Chapter 3, did not hesitate to make her feelings known when the circumstances called for it.

Fibich

It can be difficult, sometimes, to remember that Zdeněk Fibich was only 9 years younger than Antonín Dvořák. Particularly in musicology's standard narrative about Czech music, Dvořák is firmly associated with music that was self-consciously Czech while still being absolute music, and as such, generally becomes a line item in simplified discussions about Czech nationalist music or the Absolute vs. Program debate of the mid-1800s. This is partially a function of the aforementioned musicology party line, which generally limits the discussion of Czech music to its role in the nationalist movement. As Richard Taruskin has pointed out, much of our modern

musicological narrative in America is based on the works of the German musicological diaspora that arrived in America around the time of World War II. As such, the standard narrative tends to reflect a German bias, which presents German music as the standard. Given this framework, Czech music tends to be "othered," and presented in contrast to German music, rather than on account of its own merit.[377] Needless to say, that narrative doesn't allow for any discussion of Fibich. In some ways this might actually be fortunate for Fibich. Although he is virtually absent from non-Czech musicological discourse, on the rare occasion that he *is* discussed, his legacy is much more aligned with modernism. Fibich is, accurately, portrayed as a composer who consciously avoided the "traditional" Czech music of Smetana and Dvořák in favor of a more cosmopolitan, modern compositional style.

Indeed, Fibich was essentially uninterested in engaging with the more standard Czech topics in music. His works do not feature homages to folk music and, after an early operatic foray with *Blaník* (incidentally, also with a female librettist, Eliška Krásnohorská), Fibich eschewed Czech topics in his operas until his collaborations with Anežka Schulzová at the end of his career. Moreover, although Dvořák wasn't especially young when he first attained success, Fibich's most noteworthy works came in the last decade of his life, which coincided with the beginning of a turn towards modernism in Czech culture and music. Ergo, while Dvořák established himself as a composer and built his reputation in the 1860s and 1870s when self-conscious Czech nationalism in music was en vogue, Fibich's musical persona didn't gain much publicity prior to the end of the century when nationalism was no longer as popular, but

[377] Richard Taruskin, s.v. "nationalism," *Oxford Music Online.*

modernism had yet to fully convince Czech audiences. As I discussed in Chapter 4, as a result, Fibich falls into a somewhat awkward intermediary period in Czech music, leaving him out of even many Czech musicological narratives.

Another factor that has contributed to our modern conception of Fibich's place in Czech musical history is likely that he, like Smetana, spent some years outside of Prague early in his career. After completing his education abroad, Fibich briefly returned to Prague, married, and then accepted a job in Vilnius, where he spent several years teaching. This kept him out of Czech consciousness at a time when other composers would have been working on building their reputations at home. Although Smetana, too, spent time outside of Bohemia at an analogous point in his career, as Locke points out, Smetana's exile was necessitated by the absolutist Bach-ian political environment in the Habsburg lands at the time, while Fibich's absence was more opportunistic.[378] As such, in contemporary Czech consciousness, Smetana was the victim of political circumstances that forced him into exile, while Fibich chose to leave of his own volition.

Upon Fibich's return to Prague he struggled to make inroads with Prague cultural institutions like the conservatory and the National Theater. Fibich's being slighted was certainly at least partially political: by the time he returned from Lithuania, Dvořák's star was on the rise and, consequently, Prague's cultural life aligned itself with the Dvořák camp. Although it may have been more a result of Zdeněk Nejedlý and his cronies positioning Fibich as the heir to Smetana, rather than Fibich's own adherence to his predecessor, Fibich was, by this point, firmly aligned

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[378] Locke, 18.

with the Smetanian line of Czech music and, as such, largely excluded from the most important cultural institutions.

Although Fibich did write instrumental works and melodramas that garnered praise, and his second marriage to Betty Fibichová granted him access to the National Theater, ultimately Fibich did not achieve operatic success until he turned to a Czech topic with *Šárka*. The irony of this situation, of course, is that because of *Šárka's* "Czechness," although it remains Fibich's most popular work in the Czech Republic, it failed to attract the international prestige that Fibich had spent his career trying to cultivate.

From these two examples the primary issues confronting Czech composers in the latter half of the nineteenth century become clear. Both Fibich and Dvořák were faced with the competing desires to achieve international fame as composers, specifically in the realm of opera. Although both went about it differently, they both ultimately saw their best path to success as coming from Czech audiences. Fibich struggled to break into Prague's cliquey cultural world for years before finally finding operatic success with an opera based on Czech founding mythology. Dvořák reluctantly turned down international opportunities to compose *Jakobín*, even though he knew before setting pen to paper that it was unlikely to earn him renown outside of Bohemia.

Phenomenon of Female Librettists

The Czechs didn't have a corner on the market, per se, when it came to female librettists. That said, it is striking that amongst the sea of male librettists working in

Italian, German, and French, in the ranks of Czech librettists females are so strongly represented. Although there is certainly no way to prove conclusively why this might be the case, I do have several ideas to propose as contributing factors to the high percentage of female *libretistky*.

When I began this work I had a (rather naive) theory that while Czech men were busy establishing the political and military aspects of the new Czech nation, the women were behind the scenes constructing opera libretti like some kind of late 19th-century Rosie the Riveter figures. Although the bulk of this theory was, of course, quickly disproved, the smallest kernel of the idea – that women were writing libretti because there were no men to do it – was true. In order to understand why this was the case, we should dip once more into the history of Bohemia.

Prior to the Habsburg rule over Bohemia, that region had a thriving culture. The Renaissance was truly a boom time for what is now the Czech Republic. Primarily as a result of the rule of the beloved Emperor Charles IV (namesake of a plethora of Czech places and institutions and, as late as 2005, still considered the greatest Czech of all time),[379] Prague was home to a vibrant cultural and intellectual life: building works projects like the grand castle complex and connected St. Vitus' Cathedral were under way, there was a rather advanced public plumbing system, and Charles University was founded as one of the oldest in Central Europe. When the Hapsburgs invaded and enfolded Bohemia and Moravia into their huge multi-national empire, things began to

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379 Česká Televize, "Největší Čech," http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/specialy/nejvetsicech/oprojektu_top100. Accessed May 13, 2016. Interestingly, the competition was originally won by fictional Renaissance man Jára Cimrman, but he was disqualified on the basis of his never having actually existed. Somewhat surprisingly Dvořák came in 8th place, over Smetana's 11th place. Unsurprisingly, Fibich did not make the top 100.

change. Although the great buildings and institutions remained and Rudolf II even moved the Imperial residence from Vienna to Prague in 1583, the Czech language was suppressed. All official, legal, and governmental business was conducted in German and soon the Czech language became one that was spoken primarily by the peasantry.

Fast forward to the dawn of the Czech national revival in the early 19th century: Czech nationalists knew that one of the first things they needed to do was revive the Czech language, as a movement for a German-speaking Czech nation seemed unlikely to engender any great success. Although this movement to revive the Czech language was ultimately successful, it was not an easy or quick task. At the time, all members of the educated intellectual upper classes were raised to speak German and many (including Bedřich Smetana) had to be taught Czech as adults. Indeed František Palacký (Marie Červinková-Riegrová's grandfather) originally wrote his great history of the Czechs in German.

Thus, by the time opera entered into the plan for establishing a new Czech cultural and national identity, modern Czech as a language was still in its toddler-hood. Many Czech composers had little experience setting Czech texts to music,[380] and there were few Czech authors. As such, unlike the operatic traditions in other more established (or, in Italy's case, less oppressed) nations, there was no body of national literature to draw upon for Czech opera composers; the first great Czech novel, Božena Němcová's *Babička*, had only been published in 1855. As a result of the relative dearth of material upon which to base Czech libretti, Czech opera as an institution had little room to be choosy in terms of who their librettists were. Czech composers weren't

[380] Which Smetana's librettist Eliška Krásnohorská pointed out in a scathing, but instructive piece published in *Hudební Listy* called "On Czech Musical Declamation."

turning away from a phalanx of male Czech authors who were offering them libretti; they were simply accepting any libretti they could get.

Even as the Czech national revival grew in strength, it was still something of a fledgling venture. Prague's intelligentsia was a small, yet mighty group. In the writings of the time the same handful of names appear over and over because the social opportunities for Czech speakers were limited. Everyone knew everyone and they all met regularly in the salons (including that of the Riegers and the Palacký's, and later, at the home of Marie Červinková-Riegrová's friend Anna Lauermannová-Mikschová) of Prague. Politicians, philosophers, philanthropists, painters, and the literati all socialized together. Although the first generation of female Czech nationalists (like F.L. Rieger's wife, Marie Riegrová) mostly saw their role in the nationalist movement as being connected to philanthropy and mothering, their daughters began to engage more actively outside of the home.[381] Social groups like Vojtěch Náprstek's American Ladies Club, founded in 1865, and others that arose in Czech cities in the 19th century offered opportunities for women to attend lectures, socialize with other women, and share their own ideas.[382] Their attempt to have their work made public could be done in a semi-private way.

Most importantly for the phenomenon of the female librettist, though, is the timing of the advent of mature Czech opera. By the time Czechs arrived on the operatic scene, Italians, Germans, and the French had had established operatic traditions for over 200 years. These other operatic traditions began well before the Enlightenment

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[381] Malečková, 297**.** For more on this, see the Introduction to this dissertation and fn. 2 above.

[382] Ibid. For more on the American Ladies Club see fn. 72 above.

began to challenge previously unquestioned ideas about gender and the role of women outside the home. By the mid-1800s when the first *libretistky* were active Jane Austen, Mary Shelley, and the Brontës had already established literature as a safe semi-public career for women to take. Although it brought their work out of the domestic sphere, since the work could be completed in the home, it seems likely that this kind of work was less shocking than the idea of middle-class women taking on careers outside the home. Moreover, the first great Czech novel by an author of any gender was Němcová's *Babička*. If the first great Czech author was a woman, it seems only natural that many of the first Czech librettists would be women, as well.

Although Eliška Krásnohorská and Marie Červinková-Riegrová certainly saw their work on libretti as a part of their national duty, it would seem that in the end, the time was simply ripe for the female librettist in Bohemia. Czech opera was developing in a time when it was becoming acceptable for upper-middle class women to engage in more public literary work. Since previously there had been no Czech librettists at all, there was no associated expectation that it was a male-dominated role; and since there was no established body of Czech librettists, it was anyone's game to get in to. The answers may seem less striking than a 19th-century woman wielding a pen against a solid background, a la Rosie the Riveter; yet, these are the most likely answers as to why we see this relatively unmatched level of female involvement in the creation of libretti during the second half of the nineteenth century in Prague.

Avenues for Future Scholarship

Even though within the realm of opera history Czech opera is a relatively small body of work, the development of Czech opera as a genre was so inextricably linked to the cultural and political happenings of its day that it serves as a useful example of larger interlocking issues of gender, national identity, and the evolution of musical works. With this in mind, I present a few definite opportunities for future musicological work.

In general, many of the musicological works on Czech music and Czech opera have become outdated, both in terms of available information, incorporation of newer scholarship, and the changes within the field of musicology toward a more interdisciplinary, less positivistic attitude toward our subject. There are no recent monographs in English (or even German) on any of the composers included in this work even tangentially. Although the biographical monograph is no longer trendy in musicology, the available sources, although valuable in their own right, are nearly hopelessly out of date at this point. They include mythology that has long since been disproved by newer research and none, save Klaus Döge's German-language biography of Dvořák, have been published since the fall of Communism and subsequent greater ease of access to Czech archives. New biographies on the great Czech composers coming from a 21st-century mindset, freed from the polemical shadows of the age in which these composers lived and the political ones of the time in which many of our extant biographies were written would make the modern musicologist's life considerably easier. They would eliminate the need to weigh each source with the appropriate grain of salt and read between the lines to see what each source wasn't

saying and interpret the ideological language that colored much of Czech musicology pre-1989.

Most especially, nobody has ever written a monograph in English on Zdeněk Fibich. Although given his relative lack of popularity even in the Czech Republic this is perhaps understandable, his life was fascinating to the point of being interesting even to those without a background or interest in musicology or Czech history. Dvořák's life, which was exponentially less dramatic, has merited numerous biographies and even fictional treatments. A Fibich monograph could take many forms. It could be a less academic biography for a more general audience, including information about his music, but more as it pertains to his life, leaving out the denser, theoretical analyses. If one were writing for a more musicologically-inclined audience, but one without as much interest in Czech music, a Fibich monograph could be slanted in the direction of Wagner, examining Fibich's interest in and relationship to Wagner's works and theories, and the impact that Wagner had on Fibich's music. Although ideally this could be a monograph in and of itself, to appeal to an even broader musicological audience, this could be a work that focused on Wagner's influence on Czech composers (including also Smetana and Dvořák) or Wagner's influence on foreign composers including a larger international slate. Fibich's melodramas are also a fascinating and under-explored aspect of his career in particular and Czech music more generally. Although Judith Mabary has done some work in this area, a more extensive study would certainly be welcomed and would be of interest and use to many working on a variety of topics, not limited to Czech music.

Having done a large amount of translation for this project I know that it is an exhausting, frustrating, difficult (and often, thankless) task. That said English translations of even outdated Czech musicological works would be invaluable to Anglophone musicology. Although these works are now long out of date, their value as both period pieces and as works written by those much closer to the subject matter temporally would be immeasurable. Translations of more recent Czech works, such as Jiří Kopecký's exceptional works on Fibich would also be of immense value to the American scholar interested in Czech music. Although it is impossible to know what could happen were these works more accessible to American musicologists, it is tantalizing to think of the possibility of greater interest in Czech music with less of a language barrier.

We have come to an interesting threshold with regards to Czech opera. At this point, much that is knowable about 19th and early 20th-century Czech opera is known. There are few new discoveries to be made in that arena. Likewise, thanks to the incomparable work of scholars like John Tyrrell and Brian Locke we have a solid grounding in the history of Czech opera as a genre and an institution. Where do we go from here? One obvious direction is a more interdisciplinary one. It would be fascinating to see work that endeavored to make a more musicological interpretation of the intersection of politics and Czech opera, something that Robert B. Pynsent did in the 1970s, but without much attention to the works themselves. More work on the evolution of Czech national mythology and the ways in which it was expressed in music and opera could also be an interesting exploration.

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