

Zdeněk Fibich's Place in Janáček's Literary and Theoretical Oeuvre

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An acquaintance

It is presumed that Janáček was only occasionally aware of Fibich's personality and musical work. Whether this *a priori* judgement is correct can be determined by answers to the following questions: when and why did Janáček take an interest in Fibich and his music? And how highly did he esteem Fibich's music in the context of his own creative literary activity?

Leoš Janáček may have first encountered the music of Zdeněk Fibich while attending the Prague Organ School during the school year 1874–1875. One cannot exclude the possibility of an earlier acquaintanceship, but that would be almost entirely out of the question.¹ Vladimír Helfert, who mapped out Janáček's personal and artistic existence in detail from the beginning to 1888, the year of the composition of *Šárka*, concluded: "Among other Czech compositions, Janáček would have had an opportunity to become acquainted with Fibich's symphonic poem *Záboj, Slavoj, a Luděk* [Záboj, Slavoj, and Luděk] (15 March 1875), his *Violin Sonata in C major* (21 February 1875), and his melodrama *Štědrý den* [Christmas Day]."² This statement should be read with caution, for Helfert obtained his information from the journal *Dalibor*. The primary sources no longer exist, and the school notebooks into which Janáček occasionally entered personal remarks do not provide evidence of these events.

One could not fail to hear or to disregard the name of Zdeněk Fibich in the Czech world of music around 1875, as well as during the four years that young Janáček was

¹ During Janáček's adolescent years at the music foundation in Old Brno, the music of Zdeněk Fibich was not (and could not have been) part of the sacred performing repertory from which he would have selected works as choirmaster of the Old Brno choir, the repertory that he studied and directed. Fibich's works were not included and definitely were not part of the curriculum when Janáček was gaining his education and teaching at the Teacher's Institute.

² Vladimír Helfert, *Leoš Janáček. I. V poutech tradice* [Leoš Janáček: In Journeys of Tradition] (Brno, 1939), p. 101.

feverishly pursuing his musical studies in Prague—not only on the benches of the Organ School, but in Prague’s exhilarating musical life. Janáček was wholly and continually interested in Antonín Dvořák as a composer, but he may have perceived Fibich as a universal musical artist: he composes; he commands the literary pen; and he has at hand a knowledge of music of his own time and of the past as the basis of his well-informed judgement, published in *Dalibor*. The question remains open whether Janáček was familiar with the journal *Dalibor*, to which Fibich contributed reviews and also, for a time, was a contributing artist; in addition, one cannot disregard the fact that *Dalibor* diligently reviewed Fibich’s compositions, intentions, and publications. That was evidently the situation in Prague as it provided the twenty-year-old Janáček with countless stimuli.³ At the time when Janáček could have first met him—at a distance or close at hand, through writings or through music – Fibich was one of the most educated composers and favored the progressive, evolving faction of Czech music, yet he left no trace in Janáček’s memoirs; he is not mentioned in Janáček’s autobiography.⁴ But silence does not necessarily imply denial or forgetfulness.

Janáček as an interpreter of Fibich’s music

As choirmaster of the Brno Beseda and its leading dramaturge, Janáček intended to stage *Vesna* [Spring] in 1880 at the Beseda; for this reason he requested—as Vladimír Helfert states⁵—that scores be sent for this work. Fibich, who did not have the scores at hand, proposed a production of *Bouře* [The Tempest] and sent the scores of the work. *Bouře* was not produced because an English horn was not available; consequently neither *Vesna* nor *Bouře* was presented in 1880. Janáček’s only performance of Fibich’s music was a rehearsal and performance of the *March* from the opera *Nevěsta messinská* [The Bride of Messina] (14 November 1886).⁶ In contrast to the lackluster interest of the Brno Beseda Philharmonic Society in Fibich’s music, the first presentation of Fibich’s opera

³ The run of the journal *Dalibor* taken from the Brno Beseda lacks volume 3 (1875). This run was transferred to the library collections of the Ústav hudební vědy Filozofické fakulty Masarykovy university [Musicological Institute of the Philosophical Faculty of the Masaryk University]. This volume of the journal is available in the library of the Oddělení dějin hudby Moravského zemského muzea [Department of Music History of the Moravian Regional Museum] as a gift of Theodora Straková.

⁴ Adolf Veselý, *Leoš Janáček. Pohled do života i díla* [Leoš Janáček: a View of His Life and Work] (Prague, 1924).

⁵ Vladimír Helfert, *Leoš Janáček. I. V poutech tradice* (Brno, 1939), p. 241.

⁶ In order to provide full information about the performance of Fibich’s compositions in concerts at the Brno Beseda during his lifetime, let us add that his work for the mixed choir *Žádání* was performed on 2 December 1877 (when Janáček was in Leipzig), and that Kapellmeister Adolf Čech presented the *Idyla “Letní podvečer”* [Idyll: Summer Evening] in 1898. The Brno Beseda was not very interested in Fibich’s works after his death. The first Fibich performance after his death was of the melodrama *Vodník* [The Water Goblin] in December 1900. For dates and repertory see Karel

Šárka by the Prozatímní národní divadlo [the Provisional National Theatre] in Brno was greeted with a very enthusiastic, spontaneous response, particularly at its first reprise, where Master Fibich made an appearance (12 December 1898). Whether Janáček heard Fibich's *Šárka* for the first time in Brno (premiere on 2 December 1898) or a year earlier in Prague (premiere on 28 December 1897) will be determined by others.

Janáček's commentary on Fibich's works in literary reviews and analytical essays

Janáček examined a few of Fibich's works (compositions and editorial work) for public critical assessment. He wrote four reviews on Fibich's works: the *Missa brevis*,⁷ *Hudební album* [Music Album],⁸ *Hedy*,⁹ and *Šárka*.¹⁰ His knowledge of these works in all four reviews is apparently based on recently published scores rather than experience as a listener (although that possibility cannot be excluded).¹¹ Nevertheless, it is striking that in the timeliness as well as the expertise of his opinions Janáček clears Fibich's path to the podium, and not only in Brno.

The substance of Janáček's critical evaluation of Fibich works was compiled and published more than half a century ago by Bohumír Štědroň in his study "Zdeněk Fibich a Morava [Zdeněk Fibich and Moravia]".¹² His knowledgeable and undoubtedly objective perspective can now be expanded in the context of Janáček's entire creative activity as a critic, theoretician, and pedagogue. The musical works that generally interested Janáček were the ones that he analyzed in detail: they were the works in which he perceived one of the possible paths to truthful ["pravdivému" in Janáček's terminology] musical expression of dramatic action within a span of time and under conditions that were suitable to Czech prosody; they were the compositions that, despite all of the author's individuality, respected and evolved the mother tongue of musical development. One should not merely read his analyses of Dvořák's works. There are not many analyses, and he favored very few composers. As a musical reviewer and critic, he dealt with the usual repertory and new works that often did not surpass the mediocrity of the time. In such circumstances he

Sázavský, *Dějiny "Besedy brněnské" od r. 1860 do r. 1900* [The History of the Brno Beseda from 1860 to 1900] (Brno, 1900).

⁷ *Hudební listy* [Music Gazette], 2 (1886), p. 69–70, reprinted in: Theodora Straková, Eva Drlíková (eds.), *Leoš Janáček. Literární dílo* [Leoš Janáček: Literary Work] 1-1 (hereafter abbreviated to *LD I*) (Brno, 2003), p. 95.

⁸ *Moravské listy* [Moravian Gazette], 4 (30. 1. 1892), No. 9, reprinted in: *LD I*, p. 215.

⁹ *Hlídky* [Sentinel], 14 (1897), p. 594–605, reprinted in: *LD I*, p. 248.

¹⁰ *Hlídky*, 16 (1899), p. 36–41, reprinted in: *LD I*, p. 271.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 273.

¹² Bohumír Štědroň, "Zdeněk Fibich a Morava", in: Artuš Rektorys (ed.), *Zdeněk Fibich. Sborník dokumentů a studií o jeho životě a díle, II* [Zdeněk Fibich: A Collection of Documents and Studies of His Life and Work, Vol. II] (Prague, 1952), p. 296.

merely provides general information about a work or performance, and usually refers to their positive aspects and imperfections *in media res*. But when his intentions and those of the composer of the work he is reviewing are similar or make contact, he responds with a literal “flame of enthusiasm”. But he is bitterly disappointed when a composer does not continue in this vein. He supports his critical judgements with perseverance and amazing ferocity, drawing upon his own knowledge of the possibilities of communicating with music in time and space. And thus Janáček was drawn to Fibich’s music:

Pravý výraz nalezen pro tupou beznadějnost, ve které Hedy bloudí myšlenkami („V zelenavé hloubi, v šeru temné sluje“).

Dramatickému výrazu nijak není na újmu, že provedená delší forma skladebná (tzv. dvoudílná píseň), ve které v předvětí obvyklý kvartový spoj k V. stupni nahrazen v účinu podobným, avšak zajisté hodně otupělým spojením sextovým. Podobně při konci první periody nahrazuje se kvartový spoj k I. stupni spojením tritónovým podobného účinu.

Zcela moderní vzorná osnova!

Chudá stupnice výraznosti spojů harmonických ve větší skladbě dramatické brzy se vyčerpá. Co zbývá na vášně v jejich vrcholech? Tóniny, vzbuzené úsečnými osnovami souzvuků dopadají pak jako balvany na duši.

Hedy vrhá se k Juanovi, jehož spoutaného odvádějí do otroctví: („Miláčku můj!“). Povšimněme si, kterak v rychlém tempu ostrými spoji dopadá do hluboké stopy tóniny A tónina C. Do té zas padá tónina As a do ní se stejnou tíží tóniny Des, E, e. Natupo je ztepána a zkalena hladina mysli, jež pohlcuje i další tóniny A, C, F a to vše ani ne v jedné minutě. A co prožije skladatel? Jak málokdo to tuší!

Přirozené hudební nadání u nás Čechů ochraňuje skladatele naše od mnohé výstřednosti. [...]

Klasické uvažování času pro účiny harmonické jest v Hedy v převaze, ale vyzdvihuje obzvláště baletní část (II. jednání) a známou rybářskou píseň se vši plností nápěvů a určitostí rytmů. [...] Píseň [...] jest hudebně „soběstačný“ nápěv. Jest vítěznou písní celé skladby. Plné myšlení hudební ujednotilo ji v tónině, článkovalo ji protivou svých tvarů nápěvných v úměrnou periodu rytmů jasných po ohlašovaném měřítku (♪).¹³

[Truthful expression is suitable for Hedy’s mood of apathetic hopelessness as she wanders in thought (“In the green depths, in the twilight of the dark cave”).

Dramatic expression is never detrimental here to the subsequent compositional forms, such as the two-part song; in the antecedent, the relation of a fourth, from

¹³ Leoš Janáček, *České proudy hudební III. Dr. Antonína Dvořáka Zlatý kolovrat – Zdenko Fibich Hedy. Opera. Op. 43. Nakladatel Augustin František Urbánek v Praze*, in: *LD I*, op. cit., p. 248–258. In this and subsequent translated excerpts of Janáček’s quotations the translator has been sensitive to the nuances of the composer’s unique and idiosyncratic language, and she has made every effort to reflect it as faithfully and precisely as possible.

the fifth degree of the scale to the tonic, is replaced by an analogous construction, the extremely effective listless leap of a sixth. Also, at the end of the first period the relationship of the fourth degree of the scale to the tonic is replaced by a tritone, obtaining a similar effect.

An entirely exemplary modern arrangement!

The inadequate expressivity of these harmonic relationships for dramatic purposes is soon exhausted. What, then, is left for moments of intense passion? Notes invoked by brusque, patterned harmonies fall like boulders on one's soul.

Hedy rushes towards Juan, who is being led into slavery in chains ("My darling!"). Let us observe how abrupt chordal relationships are used in a rapid tempo: A modulates to C.

And then it returns to Ab, with insertions of heavy Db, E and e.

The result is an emotional, darkened passage which also absorbs A, C, and F – and all of this activity takes place in barely a single moment. And how does a composer experience this passage? Hardly anyone expects this! The natural musical gift of the Czech lands protects our composers from many eccentricities. [...]

The classic use of time for harmonic effect comes to the fore in *Hedy*, particularly in the second-act ballet and the well-known fishing song, with a melodic fullness and rhythmic sureness [...] (musical example with underlying text: "The winds blow from the chilly sea"). Even here, the song is musically self-sufficient as a melodic structural factor. It is the victorious song of the entire composition. Many musical thoughts inflect it in the key, articulate it in counterbalance with melodic forms and proportional, clear periodic rhythms after the passage in which it is reprised (♩).]"

We certainly do not obtain much general information about Fibich's opera *Hedy* from Janáček's assessment of this work; his evaluation is focused on the effects of the harmonic progressions, and how the composer attains dramatic expression as a result. To decipher correctly the meaning of Janáček's review, we must take into consideration the preceding theoretical passage in which he consolidated and at the same time justified his judgement of Dvořák's *Zlatý kolovrat* [The Golden Spinning Wheel] and Fibich's *Hedy* (he assessed both works in a single report, one of a series written for the literary monthly *Hlídky*.)¹⁴ In this theoretical-didactic passage, Janáček discusses his concept of harmonic progressions, the gradual decay of their sound in reverberation, and their esthetic effect: "*Beru za míru hudebních myšlenek hutnost ruchu duševního, jenž odpovídá jednomu v čase dokonale vyznělému spoji souzvuků úplných obsahem*".¹⁵ "I consider the measure of musical thought to be the substance of the psychological activity that corresponds to the reverberation

¹⁴ The analytical essays in which Janáček made critical evaluations, primarily of recent Czech compositions, were published from 1879 to 1899 in the literary monthly *Hlídky* under the collective title *České proudy hudební* [Czech Musical Currents].


¹⁵ Leoš Janáček, "*České proudy hudební III. Dr. Antonína Dvořáka Zlatý kolovrat – Zdenko Fibich Hedy. Opera. Op. 43.*" (*Nakladatel Augustin František Urbánek v Praze*), in: *LD 1*, op. cit., p. 253.

time (the time in which the sound decays to inaudibility) that fully merges one harmony with the next.”

The substance of psychological activity is the moment one harmony falls into another, mingling with the fading notes of the preceding harmony. That is the climax, that famous Janáčekian *spletna*, the chaotic moment that forms a connection between two harmonies. The substance of *spletna* consists in the totality of these harmonies; in other words, the frequencies of their notes. But its esthetic effect is first evident when the *spletna* as a harmonic progression begins to resolve, an instant between the outset and completion of the progression. Janáček infers—and, to prove his point, invokes folk music—that the time needed to complete this natural action within a composition (the fading of a harmony, the time span that it takes for the substance of the *spletna* to resolve), is one second, approximately a half-note. According to Janáček, observing this time span is also useful when presenting “lahodných, rytmicky bohatých a v hudebním ohledu soběstačných nápěvů” [“delightful, rich rhythms and musically self-contained melodies”].¹⁶

Although we have spent much time on only one of Janáček’s essays on Fibich’s work, let us examine it as *pars pro toto* at greater length. And not only because it would be foolish merely to repeat Štědroň’s interpretation of Janáček’s assessment. What is new is the essential fact that Janáček, as a dramaturge, most importantly analyzes the dramatic expression of Fibich’s operas in detail. There is a joyous exclamation of discovery over a short melody that corresponds to Janáček’s speech-melodic [nápěvné] theory of melody:


You shout in terrible suffering along with Hedy: “Miláčku můj! Juane! Můj choti!”
[“My darling! Juan! My husband!”]

Could you visualize this vocal rhythm  as a free melodic idea with three areas of high notes?”



But its impact catches Janáček by surprise; in the same register with equal durations,



Hedy cries in pain:  – with a melodic idea from another source. “Here is not musical self-sufficiency, but rather truthfulness in free melody of speech.”¹⁸

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

¹⁸ [“Není tu soběstačnosti hudební, ale je tu pravdivost divoké melodie mluvy.”] *Ibid.*, p. 258.

One can similarly refer to Janáček's appraisal of *Šárka*¹⁹ as quite complex, formed without reference to the composer's personal ideas, based on logical objectivity. Perhaps when Janáček *ad acta* put aside his own *Šárka* and set to work on *Její pastorkyňa*, he was ready to appraise the dramatically truthful—effective—passages in Fibich's *Šárka*, and to reveal its architectonic gaps which, in his opinion, resulted from an overabundance of concepts that were not given enough time to sound and function properly. Janáček summarizes Fibich's compositional techniques in these words:

Ne k široké náladě, ale ku každému obratu myšlenkovému přikloňuje nový tvar hudební [...] Není možná, aby vystačil duch lidský na tolik krásy, na tolik původnosti, kolik by sta užitých motivů spotřebovalo. Ze spousty tolika jinakých drobků myšlenkových vyznívá několik – více však než v ostatních operách skladatelových – teplých, nevyumělkovaných nápěvů [...] Fibich přiklonil se v této opeře k lahodným nápěvům složitějších forem hudebních. Otevřeně praví, kde hledá vzory, po nich touží: dává vyznění ojediněle motivu Smetanovu z Libuše při slovech Přemysla: „Kde tě hledat má mé zoufalství, má láska, moje touhy?“²⁰

[Not to produce one extensive mood, but in correspondence to every conceptual turn a new musical form is inflected [...] It is not possible that the human soul could absorb so much beauty, so much originality, the combination of a hundred motives. That plethora of so many differing conceptual details produces several – moreover, more than in other operatic compositions – instances of warm, unprocessed melodic material [...] In this opera, Fibich relied upon delightful melodies in complicated musical forms. He openly reveals where he seeks the models he wants: at times he invokes a motive from Smetana's *Libuše* at Přemysl's words: “Where to search for you in my despair, my love, my desire?”]

The entire essay, particularly the independent closing summary, is concerned with Fibich's luxuriant invention, the abundance of his musical ideas and his continually new musical forms. Janáček particularly prizes the group of four “self-sufficient, absolute melodies”. He closes with the words: “Fibich is a philosophical soul; he is not familiar with rhythmic wit.”²¹ Bohumír Štědroň²² concludes that Janáček is being discreet in his critical formulations. But is that true?

¹⁹ Leoš Janáček, “České proudy hudební. Šárka. Zpěvohra o 3 jednáních. Slova od Anežky Schulzové. Hudbu složil Zdenko Fibich” [Czech Musical Currents. Šárka. Opera in three acts. Libretto by Anežka Schulzová. Music Composed by Zdeněk Fibich], *Hlídky*, 16 (1899), p. 36–41, reprinted in: *LD I*, p. 271.

²⁰ *Hlídky*, 16 (1899), p. 36–41, reprinted in: *LD I*, p. 273–275.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

²² Bohumír Štědroň, “Zdeněk Fibich a Morava”, in: Artuš Rektorys (ed.), *Zdeněk Fibich. Sborník dokumentů a studií o jeho životě a díle, II* (Prague, 1952), p. 296.

Janáček did not find Fibich's *Missa brevis* entirely acceptable.²³ It did not conform to his support of the sacred music reform movement at the time; in addition, the moods of certain parts of the mass were not appropriate for Janáček, who was very well conversant with the sacred repertory, above all in its contemplative aspects. But despite his personal reservations about the composition, he recommends it for Czech choirs as being much more valuable for their repertory than pieces imported from Germany.

Janáček's commentary on Fibich's compositional language in his theoretical works²⁴

In the light of his stylistic orientation and aesthetic ideals as well as his entire artistic persona—it was not Zdeněk Fibich who would affect Janáček's contemplations about the evolution of opera. Examples from Fibich's work do not appear in his "exact method of composition". In his complete theoretical work (*Nauka o harmonii*) [Harmonic Theory], in other studies which are intended as a psychological course in creativity, physiology, acoustics and phonetics, in a collection of lectures about compositions, and last but not least in his historical-theoretical excursion into history and contemporary music with their practical and theoretical disciplines, he often demonstrates a word with a musical comparison and musical example. When grouped with Mussorgsky, Smetana, Dvořák, Chopin, Mozart, Rubinstein, Strauss and others, Fibich is mentioned last. And even then, only in passages in which Janáček contemplates the question of emotion and what he calls the imprint of consciousness—the basis of the various phases of compositional work, ranging from one's perception of a stimulus to its musical depiction and, according to Janáček, its complexity:

Každý skladatel má svůj lis myšlenek. Čím více se blíží onomu přirozenému–samovolnému (automatickému) v mluvě, tím je hodnotnější. Čím bližší je přepychový klíč – tím srozumitelnější hudba. Čím více nápadů, tím lépe. To je můj lis, moje metoda (nápad). Víím, když je ticho, že slyším jen tón svého vlastního ucha. V poloze této, tenké chvění – proti němuž je pavučina provazem. To ticho buď šetřím nebo tomu tichu se „přepychem“ hudebního umění přibližuji poměrně. [...] Tato úměrnost výrazu tónového k výplni vědomí do každé vteřiny je mi zákonem. Ne tón víc, ne méně po vteřinách, než po živé motivaci je přípustno. Touto úměrností skládám a píši hned do plnosti partitury. Ten klíč úměrnosti znát a mít! Je u skladatelů různý (Mahlerovy tuby!). Kaan, (Blodek), Dvořák, Fibich.²⁵

²³ *Hudební listy*, 2 (1886), p. 69–70, reprinted in: *LD 1*, p. 95.

²⁴ See the collected critical edition of Janáček's theoretical work: Leoš Faltus, Eva Drlíková, Svatava Příbáňová, Jiří Zahradka (eds.), *Leoš Janáček. Teoretické dílo* [Leoš Janáček: Theoretical Work], 1-1, 1-2 (hereafter abbreviated to *TD 1* and *TD 2*), (Brno, 2007–2008).

²⁵ For the source of this quote see note 24, *TD 2*, s. 316 (VII. Komplikační skladba) [Complication Composition].

[Every composer has his own conceptual imprint that enables him to come close to a natural (automatic) spontaneity in speech, that makes it more valuable. It brings him nearer to the key to abundance – and thus to more intelligible music. The more ideas, the better. This is my imprint, my idea. I am aware that when it is quiet I hear only a note in my own ear. There is a delicate trembling – in comparison, a spider's web would be a rope. I either endure this silence, or approach it with “a wealth” of musical art. [...] This artifice of expressivity in tone, of filling one's consciousness every second, is something I need. Not a note more or less per second than is admissible to one's vivid imagination. I compose with this sense of proportion and write it immediately into the complete score. To know and have this key to a sense of proportion! Various composers have it (Mahler's tubas!). Kaan, (Blodek), Dvořák, Fibich.]

Fibich comes to his aid with a passage from *Hedy*: “*Potůček, zurčení potůčku, zurčení potůčku od rána do rána*” [Little brook, murmuring brook, murmuring brook from dawn to dawn]. This example is sometimes mentioned as the only one in which Janáček admits the capability of music to express objective feeling in what he calls complex composing.²⁶ But let us return again to Janáček's Fibich and his classification of musical-dramatic forms:

Jdeme-li cestičkou vývinu opery, která hledá vzory motivů pro zpěv na mluvě lidské, snadno by se mohlo přijít k mylnému náhledu, že prostou mluvou s orchestrálním doprovodem (výrazem) jsme na vrcholu vývinu opery – a to by byl melodram. Avšak při bedlivém uvážení shledáme:

1. Skladatel melodramu nesložil dílo celé.
2. Melodram zůstává do svého provedení nedokončeným.
3. Provádí-li se pak dílo, nastává každým okamžikem pro posluchače trapný moment, že slyší harmonický nesmysl, tj. musí se přihodit, že nápěv mluveného slova je co chvíli neodůvodněný spoj se slyšeným souzvukem v orchestru. V opeře musí být zpěv notován, kdežto v melodramu, kde není notace předepsána, slyšíme recitovat jednou hlasem vyšším, podruhé zase nižším a podobně, což s průvodem orchestru dává harmonický nesmysl! Jako skladatel musím vědět a povědět všechno, co a jak má v mém díle přesně znít! – Jestli si v melodramu nejsme vědomi nepříznivých harmonických dojmů, je toho jen ta příčina, že návykem od dětství pozorujeme a vnímáme toliko smysl řeči, ale nikoliv její melodii!

Malé melodramy jsou tudíž jen zábavné hračky! Vážnou uměleckou prací není melodram nikdy! Mimo možné harmonické disonance, které se obzvláště na prostých, obyčejných souzvucích odrážejí, trpí melodram i tou vadou, že hudební skladatel nemá ani pokdy stačit s pravým, plným hudebním výrazem rychlému slovu v mluvě. V melodramu potkáváme se s měkkostí výrazovou, která lehce hraničí na směšnost!

²⁶ *Ibid.*, TD 2, p. 172 (B. Skládání).

[When we take the path of operatic evolution which seeks motivic patterns for singing or speaking characters, we could easily come to the erroneous idea that mere speech with (expressive) orchestral accompaniment is the culmination of operatic development – and that would be melodrama. However, after careful consideration we find that:

1. The composer of a melodrama did not compose the entire work.
2. A melodrama is not completed until it is performed.
3. When the work is performed, every instant becomes an awkward moment for the listener who hears harmonic nonsense; that he must infer that the musical realization [nápěv] of the spoken word has, at the moment, an unjustified connection with the audible harmonies in the orchestra. Song must be notated musically in opera, whereas no musical notation is prescribed in melodrama. We hear a high voice recite and then a lower voice, and so on, which makes no sense with the harmony provided by the orchestra! As a composer, I must understand and communicate everything that I have in my work so that it sounds precisely! – If we do not notice awkward harmonic impressions in melodrama, it is because we are accustomed from childhood to observe and perceive the sense of speech rather than its contour! Small melodramas are consequently only entertaining playthings! A serious work of art is never a melodrama! In addition to the possibility of harmonic dissonance that reverberates even in simple, everyday harmonies, melodrama suffers from the problem that the composer is not given enough time to cope with honest, flowing musical expression for rapid words in speech. We encounter tender expressivity in melodrama that borders on the ridiculous!]

Conclusion

I have attempted to demonstrate the fact that although the music of Zdeněk Fibich was not in the forefront of Janáček's interest as a music critic and theoretician, he repeatedly devoted attention to it. He incorporated it into his own conceptual system of compositional praxis naturally, as a matter of course, as a member of the generation that was closest to him in compositional structure.²⁷ It is more than probable that Janáček's judgement of Fibich's work was not conclusive. Let us compare his 1897 evaluation of *Hedy* with a remark from a letter to Zdenka written on 5 May 1916: "I reached the boat at evening. I brought the Janáček's with me. But they bored me. We saw the opera *Hedy*. They were 'overwhelmed by the beautiful music', but it is so dry, that it makes the tongue stick!"²⁸

A full quarter century after Fibich's death, after the long-silenced affair of Fibich and Schulzová, Janáček is brought back to life—in waves of fiery exaltation to Kamila

²⁷ Otakar Jeremiáš, *Leoš Janáček* (Prague & Brno, 1938), p. 6.

²⁸ Svatava Příbáňová (ed.), *Thema con variazioni* [Theme and Variations] (Prague, 2008), p. 184.

Stösslová—in his correspondence (Brno, 20 May 1928): “Today I came to a better understanding about that Prague gentleman and Anežka-hunchback. She was the youngest of four sisters [...] Fibich died at the right time; they say that he had enough of that hunchback and their relationship would have been over [...] Enough! What is that? I do not understand it at all. I did not like her so much that it was great love, love unto death. I had foreseen it [...] No, enough of that, I cannot and do not know how to imagine it!”²⁹ And still later, from Luhačovice (19 July 1928): “We spoke about Fibich and Anežka. They say that she was ugly at night and grasped him in her claws. And I know that my dusky and beautiful Kamilka like a dark night [...]”³⁰ Nor only did Fibich’s music grasp Janáček’s thought with its claws, but also with quiet fellowship, a thirst for life! Instead of providing details, I pose a question: to what extent were these two composers alike in their literary writings and professional opinions?

Translated by Judith Fiehler

Die Position Zdeněk Fibichs im literarischen und theoretischen Werk von Leoš Janáček

Zusammenfassung

Die bisherige Meinung, dass Janáček der Persönlichkeit Fibichs und dessen musikalischem Schaffen nur ausnahmsweise seine Aufmerksamkeit gewidmet habe, kann man nach einer ausführlichen Untersuchung seines literarischen und theoretischen Werkes nur bestätigen. Obwohl das Schaffen Fibichs (Janáček analysierte und beurteilte vor allem dessen Opern *Hedy* und *Šárka*) nicht im Zentrum des Interesses von Janáček stand, wusste er dessen unbestrittenen Qualitäten zu schätzen, sei es, was die Dramaturgie des Werkes betrifft, wie auch in Bezug auf seine eigene Auffassung von der Proportionalität, der ästhetischen Kriterien und dramatischen Wirkung einer Oper. Die Beurteilungen Janáčeks sind eigenartig und spiegeln sein bereits gereiftes kompositorisches Denken sowie auch seine langjährige Praxis eines Musikkritikers wider, dem die Objektivität bei der Beurteilung der Werke anderer Komponisten nicht fremd war.

Übersetzt von Vlasta Reittererová

²⁹ Svatava Příbáňová (ed.), *Leoš Janáček: Hádanka života* [Leoš Janáček: Life’s Riddle] (Brno, 1990), p. 357–376.

³⁰ “Mluvili jsme o Fibich-Anežce. Byla prý jako noc ošklivá a držela ho drápy. A já znám svou Kamilku černou a krásnou jako tmavá noc [...]” *Ibid.*, p. 413.

Místo Zdeňka Fibicha v Janáčkově literárním a teoretickém díle

Shrnutí

Původní předpoklad, že vnímání Fibichovy osobnosti a jeho hudební tvorby se zdá být u Janáčka záležitostí spíše výjimečnou, lze po detailním přehlédnutí Janáčkovy literárního i teoretického díla potvrdit. Ačkoli Fibichova tvorba (analyzoval a posoudil především jeho dvě opery *Hedy* a *Šárku*) nebyla v ohnisku Janáčkovy zájmu, dokázal ocenit její nepochybné přednosti a to jak z hlediska dramaturgie díla tak i z pozice svého pojetí míry, vyznění a estetického účinku dramatického výrazu. V osobitosti Janáčkových posudků se zrcadlí skladatelovo již zcela vyzrálé kompoziční myšlení a současně s ním i dlouholetá praxe hudebního kritika, jemuž objektivní pohled na dílo není cizí.

Keywords

Leoš Janáček; Zdeněk Fibich; changes of reception.