

The Opera *Šárka* by Zdeněk Fibich

Jiří Kopecký

The triad Smetana – Dvořák – Fibich was (in particular after the deaths of Fibich and Dvořák) deliberately and in biased way promoted and enforced by the music journalism, even though Fibich's work was less popular than that of Smetana and Dvořák. Fibich was turned, somewhat unnaturally, into a national hero, that is an ideal composer. The aim of this study is to show in Fibich's work both the merits and the shortcomings in his composition, and show his individual style without the need to exaggerate Fibich's contribution to Czech music.

Zdeněk Fibich (1850–1900) entered the nineteen nineties in a happy way. In 1892 he won recognition with his stage melodrama *Námluvy Pelopovy* [Pelops's Courtship], with his *Hippodamia* he attracted the theatre in Antwerp (1893). His relationship with Anežka Schulzova as his inspiration was developing well, he took up respected posts (he was a member of the Czech Academy, sat on the board for state examinations) but in the second half of the nineties he must have seen that he failed in reaching such a social position as could have been expected. His embitterment was also due to the breakup of his marriage and the fact that many of his foreign contacts which promised publication or performance of his works, mostly ended in nothing.

The opera, *Šárka* (1897), written for the National Theatre, is the second most commonly-performed work by Zdeněk Fibich and Anežka Schulzová. This opera is framed by two further operatic attempts – *Hedy* (1895) and *Pád Arkuna* [The Fall of Arcona] (1898), which did not find favour for various reasons; these two simply did not reach the artistic merits of their sibling. *Šárka* was the only one to take on life after its composition. Because of this, it is pertinent to look at the time surrounding the birth of this work, its actual genesis in comparison with contemporary works, and, last but not least, about the way the collaborators worked together. The latter is possible through both textual and musical analysis.¹

¹ This essay is a reworked version by the author dating from the time when I first kept a source-book concerning the life and work of A. Schulzová and Z. Fibich (see Jiří Kopecký, "Zdeněk Fibich,

Content of the opera:

Act One (the sacrificial grove at Vyšehrad):

Vlasta is contemplating the bitter lot of women after the death of Libuše. With the arrival of Šárka the atmosphere becomes brighter, the rest of the maidens are coming and Šárka appeals to them to fight for the lost rights. The men headed by Přemysl want to burn sacrificial offerings to the gods but Šárka demolishes the fire and is to be punished by death. Vlasta, however, succeeds in mollifying Přemysl, Šárka is allowed to stay alive and the rule remains in the hands of men. Šárka does not want to be reconciled with this state of affairs and brings herself into conflict with Ctirad. Now too, Vlasta interferes and prevents bloodshed but the girls' war can no longer be prevented.

Act Two (in a forest near Děvín):

The maidens celebrate their victory in war but Šárka wants to humiliate Ctirad. She resorts to a ruse. She has herself bound to an oak tree and wants to win Ctirad by compassion and her beauty. When the horn sounds the maidens hiding in the wood are to come to Šárka's assistance. The ruse fails, however, Šárka and Ctirad become subject to passion, Šárka tells Ctirad of her scheme and he himself sounds the horn. Ctirad is saved from the angry maidens by Šárka.

Act Three (the valley now known as Wild Šárka):

In order to save Ctirad, Šárka betrays her companions and brings men to the place where Ctirad is to be killed. At first she tries by appeals to set Ctirad free. In vain, strikes on the shields give a sign to the men to kill the revolting maidens. Šárka cannot bear the remorse and with a leap from the rock kills herself. Ctirad remains alone.

During the composition of *Šárka*, many unusual and somewhat distressing occurrences took place. Perhaps the result of this was that both composers entering a period of increased activity; simple and direct solutions to artistic problems plus procedures for continuity linked with accumulated experience took precedence over experimentation. On January 21st, 1896, Fibich began to compose *Šárka*; on February 12th, *Hedy*, his latest opera of that time, was premiered. Fibich and Schulzová agreed on the theme of *Šárka* probably during December, 1895; at the end of November, it seems that the administrators of the National Theatre set a price for comedies, operas and libretti by stating that "the subject matter of these works should, by necessity, be taken from Czech life, either in the present day, or from historical times. The deadline for these pieces is the end of April, 1897."²

jeho opera *Šárka* a Anežka Schulzová" [Zdeněk Fibich, his Opera *Šárka*, and Anežka Schulzová], *Hudební rozhledy* [Music Review], 57 (2004), No. 11–12, p. 56–58.

² "Látky k těmto pracím musí býti bezvýminečně vzaty ze života českého a sice buď nynějšího nebo historického. Lhůta k podání prací ustanovena jest do konce dubna 1897." Vypsáné ceny (neautori-

Fibich finished the score in March, 1897, and its premiere took place on December 28th, 1897. Its publication, resulting from an opera prize, occurred on March 3rd, 1900. Fibich was disappointed that his former student, Karel Kovařovic, was awarded First Prize for his work, *Psohlavci* [Dogheads]³; his disillusionment grew when he bargained on the support of his friend and librettist, Otakar Hostinský⁴, with whom he worked on *Nevěsta messinská* [The Bride of Messina]; he didn't consider either Kovařovic or Josef B. Foerster (with his opera, *Eva*), to be his main competition. In the end, it was Antonín Dvořák who was his main competitor; recently feted with his successes in America, Dvořák was now concentrating on opera, already Fibich's main area, during the last years of his life. In this regard, Dvořák expected—just like the impatient Fibich—complete and utter success.

Dvořák's "fight" with Fibich can be traced back to Dvořák's correspondence during the 1890s. For example, Mořic Anger wrote to Dvořák in February, 1895: "[...] Fibich is the poorest musical monster, who exists among us [...] Fibich was angry with you on your engagement at the Conservatoire; on the other hand, he had set up an 'opera bakery' – he submitted one unfinished opera – but the other one is already 'baked'; he has already composed two acts, and is about to start scoring. I am curious about *Bouře* [The Storm]; members of the National Theatre board expect nothing to come of it, that is to say, no success there."⁵

Fibich became a very confident composer thanks to the surprising success at the International Theatre and Music Exhibition, Vienna, in 1899, of *Pelops's Courtship*, a scenic melodrama. Furthermore, Hans Richter conducted his *Second Symphony*, dating from 1892, in Vienna. From then on, the National Theatre performed his operas, while foreign institutions of music, interpreters and critics began to grow interested in his work.

Šárka was a highly worthy product of this time and, at the same time, it formed his chief work during this happy and successful era. It is also a miraculous work, since it was not written from the highest motives and ambitions; nevertheless, it was this work that acquired its place in the repertoire of sopranos from the time of Růžena Maturová⁶, ranging through Emma Destinnová, Marie Podvalová and on to Eva Urbanová; it is still

zovaný článek) [Published prizes (an unauthorised article), *Dalibor*, 17 (23. 11. 1895), No. 44–45, p. 347.

³ František Adolf Šubert, *Dějiny Národního divadla v Praze 1883–1900* [The History of National Theatre in Prague 1883–1900], Part 1 (Prague, 1908), p. 441.

⁴ Otakar Hostinský, *Vzpomínky na Fibicha* [Remembrances on Fibich] (Prague, 1909), p. 176.

⁵ "[...] Fibich, to je ta nejbídnější nestvůra hudební, co u nás existuje, [...] Že na Tebe Fibich stran obsazení místa Tvého na konzervatoři měl vztek, to si můžeš myslet, zato má teď na opery zřízenou pekárnu – jednu nehotovou operu zadal – a druhou již peče – a má již 2 jednání komponované – a začne instrumentovat. – Jsem na *Bouři* ohromně zvědav, členstvo neočekává nic, totiž žádný úspěch." Milan Kuna, Ed., *Antonín Dvořák. Korespondence a dokumenty* [Antonín Dvořák. Correspondence and Documents], vol. 7 (Prague, 1999), p. 362–363.

⁶ See supplement : R. Maturová like *Šárka* in a costume of Mikoláš Aleš, 1895. Reprinted from: Artuš Rektorys (ed.), *Zdeněk Fibich: Sborník dokumentů a studií o jeho životě a díle* [Zdeněk Fibich: A Collection of Documents and Studies about his Life and Work], Part 2 (Prague, 1952), p. 472.

the only opera of Fibich that plays to international audiences to this day (as shown, for example, at The Wexford Festival of Opera, 1996).

There is a recurring motive in Goethe's thought that the greatest artistic works arise when the highest level of effort has not been given; Fibich's effort for this opera, as well as the even larger one by A Schulzová, to further Fibich's name abroad, are such examples of this. The National Theatre served as a stop along the way to this success, but not as the final arrival point (*Hedy* was to be heard in Halle an der Saale, *The Storm* and *Šárka* were both offered to Gustav Mahler, but without any result).

Fibich underestimated the exact, explicit and consistent power of ideas about Czech opera; it was the same for his librettists Otakar Hostinský, Jaroslav Vrchlický and Anežka Schulzová. Czech audiences did not favour Lumír's generation of cosmopolitan prejudice in favour of world themes; it was linked to the period of the vague "nightmare" of Wagnerianism. Otherwise, Hostinský argued avidly about the harmlessness of foreign themes; but the ideas about *Šárka* of only one critic, Karel Knittl, reflected the partial vanity of the composer's efforts, by writing "We have a right to call Fibich 'ours'."⁷

Direct intentions to write a successful and representative Czech opera, plus, at the same time to obtain a set price, worked favourably for the artistic style of the work. Fibich's financial situation at this time had never been so good, evidently. In the end, *Šárka* was a calculated risk, which worked out. His letter, dated August 11th, 1896 and written from the Attersee by A. Schulzová to the publisher, František Augustin Urbánek, demonstrated the anticipated position of *Šárka* within the Czech operatic repertoire: "In my opinion, *Šárka* will be a truly national opera, which will help establish my position as a Czech composer."⁸

If we admit to man being a sign of the "flower of evil" (as proposed by Thomas Mann in his novel, *Doctor Faustus*), then circumstances, both pleasant and fortunately manageable, which occasioned the work's birth, helped contribute towards a sense of artistic worth for this work.

To explain further: the composition of *Šárka* was followed by considerable psychological stress following on the marital crisis of Zdeněk and Betty Fibichová. Fibich left his family on September 17th, 1897; he tried to explain the reasons for his behaviour in a letter to Hostinský on October 6th, 1897 by writing: "It is embarrassing for me to admit that I cannot listen to my own pieces, if I didn't want to be the cause of upsets and scenes [...] I finished *Šárka* with hectic tensions, which affected all my powers, so that I was not able to work on some larger piece [...]."⁹

⁷ "Fibich je náš, můžeme nyní plným právem zvolati." Karel Knittl, "Šárka", *Dalibor*, 20 (5. 1. 1898), No. 10–11, p. 70–73; here p. 71).

⁸ "Dle mého názoru bude Šárka pravou národní operou, jež má upevniti mé místo jakožto českého skladatele." (České muzeum hudby [The Czech Museum of Music], S 80/69).

⁹ "Až trapno jest mi doznati, že dospělo to tak daleko, že nesměl jsem ani slyšeti vlastní svá díla, nechtěl-li jsem vydati se výstupům a scénám, [...] Po horečnatém napětí všech sil, jímž jediné dospěl jsem k dokončení 'Šárky', nebyl jsem již s to, abych ze oněch poměrů mohl vůbec pracovati na nějakém větším díle." Zdeněk Nejedlý, *Zdenka Fibicha milostný deník* [Zdeněk Fibich's Love Di-

Fibich was not the only composer to attend to compositional activities during the summer months; he regularly went to the Alps. From there, his correspondence serves as a worthy source of information and an irreplaceable testament of his creative working. During the composition of *Šárka* in 1896, he spent his summer holiday for the first time with A. Schulzová, as well as others in the Schulz family; this break took place from July 16th to August 31st, 1896. His correspondence, of which the Fibich family has only published a few documents, consequently contains many gaps; but it is still possible to see his work step by step.¹⁰ Schulzová's correspondence is another matter, and helps fill in some of the gaps. Zdeni Schulz, the granddaughter of Bohuslav Schulz, Anežka's brother, provided me with several letters, memorial essays and photos, one of which is from A. Schulzová, dated on the reverse side, February 16th, 1895; it is to be found in this essay. The process of the birth of *Šárka* is consequently possible to construct in a complete way from these two main sources, as follows.

On July 27th, 1896, Fibich notified his wife and son, Richard, "I have already completed the instrumentation/scoring of the Introduction to *Šárka*, and the second Act has been started."¹¹ Furthermore, on August 20th, he mentioned, "I have worked hard on *Šárka*, which will surely turn out nice." (written from the Attersee to Doxany).¹² A letter from Karolina, the mother of Anežka, who was also the sister of Julius and Eduard Grégr, was sent from the countrified Attersee to the urban world of Žofín; they are full of Grégr's supporting comments. For example, he wrote that "Master Fibich works hard here; every day, he writes three to four pages" (undated letter);¹³ "[...] I can also let you know that Anda can score as well; she has already orchestrated a part of *Šárka*. Her health is growing better and has begun to take lunch now without bad effects to her [...]"¹⁴ The letter of A. Schulzová acknowledges this same information in a letter addressed to her brother, Bohuslav, and his wife; the illness that A. Schulzová suffered from appears to have been rickets.

In addition, it is known that Fibich's "famul", Otakar Ostrčil, participated in the scoring of *The Fall of Arcona*. Schulzová was actually Fibich's student; she took lessons in piano and music theory from him. It is surprising but obvious that she learnt orchestration from him, too. "We look after our health, and *Šárka*; but the bigger results come for the latter! [...] Once you see all that I have written in the score, Bodíček, you will have the greatest

ary] (Prague, 1949), p. 112–113. Same about Fibich wrote same on the 20th September, 1897 to his wife, when he wished to get a divorce – see Vladimír Hudec, *Zdeněk Fibich* (Prague, 1971), p. 160.

¹⁰ Věra Šustiková, "Problematika Fibichovy korespondence" [Problems of Fibich's Correspondence], in: Stanislav Tesař (ed.), *Kritické edice hudebních památek III* [Critical Editions of Monuments of Music] (Olomouc, 1999), p. 81–83.

¹¹ "Mám již celý úvod Šárky instrumentován a též druhé jednání začat."

¹² "Pracoval jsem mnoho na Šárce, která bude jistě moc pěkná."

¹³ "Mistr Fibich zde pilně instrumentuje na Šárce každý den uděla tři až čtyry strany."

¹⁴ "[...], také Vám mám zdělit že Anda už umí také instrumentovati už dnes instrumentovala kousek Šárky. Také s jejím zdravím se to lepší už začíná obědvat, bez zlých následků."



Růžena Maturová as Šárka

A. Rektorys (ed.), *Zdeněk Fibich. Sborník dokumentů a studií o jeho životě a díle* [Collection of Documents and Studies about his Life and Work], vol. 2, Orbis (Prague, 1952), p. 472.



Anežka Schulzová in the second half of 1890s
National Museum – Czech Museum of Music, signature ZS 2, collection Zdeněk Fibich

respect. We have already completed sixty-two pages [...] We decided resolutely that we will spend a year here in Attersee, and will write an opera, and you will just have to come and be one of our guests [...].”¹⁵

A. Schulzová became known as a theatre critic and translator. She published in the magazines, *Květy* as well as *Zlatá Praha*, the latter being edited by her father, Ferdinand Schulz. A literary historiographer, Georg Brandes, opened her mind to expressivity. As a consequence, she often read in Danish and French, but also knew German, English and Latin. When Anežka sustained a serious injury of the spine, her father dedicated a great deal of time to developing her talent for languages. Co-operation with Fibich meant that Schulzová advanced from writing “literature based on literature” to producing original literary activity. In addition, by writing a libretto for an opera, it means that music helped form a “safety barrier” in her efforts.

An ambitious Anežka instructed herself firstly by writing a critique of *Hedy*, but then fell back on top inspiration from great authors, listened to the “Zeitgeist” as well as absorbed Czech nationalist feelings. A wedding scene in *Hedy* did not find a warm acceptance; it is a dramatic, large ballet on a grand scale. Hence there was a scrape concerning taking out the wedding scene from the conception of *Šárka* (see ČMH, S 80/505). Fibich had already managed to compose a large portion of *Šárka*, including Vlasta’s recollection in the first act (see ČMH, a manuscript of a piano extract, called S 80/94); however, in the end, he did not use them. There is a possible explanation: Fibich turned down Karel Pippich’s libretto for *Vlasty skon* [Vlasta’s Death] by reason of its dangerous approximation to Wagner’s *Walküre*. The portion, mentioned above, could be in direct competition with Smetana’s *Libuše*; instead, he devised *Vlasta* as the place of sacred peace for Brünnhilde. Consequently, we can say that a character from the Přemysl dynasty moved directly from Smetana to Fibich. A musical and topical relationship between the operas *Libuše* and *Šárka* is undeniable, and we cannot decide if the relationship was strengthened by a need to overcome the youthful uncertainty of a novice librettist, or if the plan to create a Smetana Fibich synthesis was a calculated action, following the dream for a successful opera; or, it may simple have become a tribute to Smetana.

Vladimír Karbusický referred to a relationship “on a limit of quotation identity” between Wagner’s Brünnhilde and Smetana’s Libuše.¹⁶ Karbusický compared Libuše’s prayer for gods (the first scene of the Act 1) and a meeting of Brünnhilde and Siegmund, “Todes – Verkündigung” (the fourth scene of the Act 2, see example 1) and he made out two motive styles, which musical “guarantee” mysterious godship, majesty, celebration, a variation of keynote with fifth (tonic – dominant – tonic figure) and bass skips across a bar (more generally – beginning on the unstressed step). An introductory Vlasta’s monologue

¹⁵ “Pěstujeme jen naše zdraví a Šárku, však u této poslední má naše péče větší výsledek! [...] Bodičku, až uvidíš, co já všechno psala do partitury, tak budeš mít nehorázný respekt! Už máme 62 úplně hoto-
vých stran. [...] Pevně jsme si ustanovili, že zde v Attersee my strávíme celý jeden rok a napíšeme
zde operu a pak musíte zde být našimi hosty.”

¹⁶ On relation to Libuše – Walküre see Vladimír Karbusický, “Smysl a význam v hudbě” [Sense and
Meaning in Music], *Hudební věda* [Musicology], 31 (1994), No. 1, p. 54–62; here p. 61.

from the first act musically presents legal Libuše's successor (example 2). If Vlasta tends to C major in the Act 1, she achieves "maledictory" atonality in the greatest flutter at the meeting Šárka in the Act 1 (example 3).

Example 1

Brünnhilde (trägt Schild und Speer in der einen Hand, lehnt sich mit der andren an den Hals des Rosses, und betrachtet so mit ernster Miene Siegmund).

3. Hr. Fg. Ob. Kl. Fg. Siegmund!

Example 2

Andante, molto sostenuto.

Harm. pp Timp. Archi ppp Harm. mf ppp

Example 3

Šárka.

Vlas - to, Vlas - to! Ty mě slyš! Ty vel - ká bylas vždy a

šlo - chet - nál Vlasta.

Co ří - či ješ - tě chceš? Ty

srd - co své, v němž poms - ta sva - tá sto - lec vztý či - la, jsi bíd - ně zneu - ctí - la

kla - mem otravným, jenž z ženy činí ro - bu mužovu! *3 Harm. 3*

As Smetana could not escape evoking a “Ride of the Valkyries” in his tone poem, *Šárka*, so Fibich did not avoid a *Walkürenritt* either; *Šárka* was raised a fighter along with her companions. A rebellious fanfare motive sounds in the introduction of Act 2 (example 4), and Siegfried, as though on cue, rushes into the scene – quite rudely and without restraint (example 5).¹⁷ Siegfried, who was Wagner’s ideal of a natural man, came up at

¹⁷ F. Pala drew attention to a connection—above all situational—between *Šárka*’s Act 2 (a fizzy forest,

first sight, surprisingly, as a musical depiction, let us say, of Amazons, as represented by the character, Šárka.

Example 4

Allegro con fuoco.

Musical score for Example 4, 'Allegro con fuoco.' The score is in 6/8 time and features a piano introduction with a violin and harmonica (Vni., Harm.) and a trumpet (Tr.). The piano part is marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The violin and harmonica part is marked with a forte (f) dynamic and a trill (tr.) ornament. The trumpet part is marked with a forte (f) dynamic and a trill (tr.) ornament. The score is written for piano, violin, harmonica, and trumpet.

Example 5

Musical score for Example 5, featuring vocal and piano parts with lyrics. The score is in 6/8 time and features a vocal part (S.) and a piano part. The vocal part is marked with a forte (f) dynamic and a trill (tr.) ornament. The piano part is marked with a forte (f) dynamic and a trill (tr.) ornament. The score is written for voice and piano.

(auftretend.)
(entering.)

S. Hoi - ho! Hau' ein! hau' ein!
Hoi - ho! Come on! Come on!

Vi. Tr. più cresc.

(lachend.)
(laughing.)

S. Friß ihn! friß ihn, den Fra-tzenschmied! Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha
Bite him! Bite him, the bastard smith! Hu ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha

(Mime'n entsinkt vor Schreck das Schwert; er flüchtet hinter den Herd: Siegfried treibt ihm den Bären überall nach.)
(Mime drops the sword in terror, and flies behind the forge. Siegfried pursues him everywhere, setting the bear on him.)

B1. dazu

f più f

a sunset, a moonlit summer evening, etc. František Pala, *Fibichova Šárka* [Fibich's Šárka] (Prague, 1953), p. 47) and Wagner's Siegfried in Act 2 [scene 2, Siegfried im Waldweben]. Julius Zeyer's poem reminds us of Siegfried, the story of the meeting between Dobrovoi [Citrad's father], and the mythal Trut [a motie of dragonish blood and understanding of natural sounds]. See Julius Zeyer, "Ctírad", in: *Vyšehrad /Kruh epických básní* [Vyšehrad /The Circle of Epic Poems/] (Prague, 1880), p. 139–191, with special note of page 143. The librettist naturally did not use this motive.



The poem with the same name as that by Jaroslav Vrchlický, became an obligatory source for Schulzová among her several workings of a myth about Šárka.¹⁸ Anežka Schulzová almost copied several pieces from the poem; but, more importantly, is the fact that Schulzová showed discipline in her construction of the rhyme in her work – perhaps inspired by Vrchlický or a “constrained” competition. In *Hedy*, the author used different meters, while in *Šárka*, Schulzová made do with a pentameter trochee verse without rhymes. The “Wagnerian”, Fibich, considered verse-form too constricting, whereas prose could not be used by this proclaimed innovator and artistic aristocrat, since he would consider it as too “prosaic”. As in her other libretti, Schulzová again drew from the experience of the traditional romantic operatic arsenal of effects and feelings when writing *Šárka* (these include fatal love, revenge, treachery, madness). Furthermore, she did not stick to any operatic stereotype. She used a pragmatic, simply sophisticated balancing of larger units, which goes beyond Wagner and original great opera through the indispensable utilization of a choir, which is a direct result of required nationalistic local colouring as in Mozart’s *Marriage of Figaro* [Le Nozze di Figaro] in order to make it a theatrical sure-fired hit; in *Šárka*, almost every scene has its symmetrical and diametric opposite: for example, a big “Siegmond-Sieglinde” love affair in the second act is framed by girls’ choir; in the first and third act, a male choir is pitted against a female choir; a female choir, with Ctirad (tenor) at the end of the second act, is changed to a male introduction with Šárka (soprano) in the third act; and a central scene in Act 2 is evoked by a final love duet.

The opera, *Šárka*, stands as both a stylistic and psychological representation of the era. The utilization of musical material from his piano cycle, *Nálady, dojmy a upomínky* [Moods, Impressions and Reminiscences], plus a change of myth (love, lust, betrayal of Šárka as her co-belligerent) clearly revealed Fibich as following Ctirad and Schulzová, in *Šárka*. They flogged the final scene for every dramatic effect imaginable. Anežka did not hide help from Shakespeare’s bloodiest play, *Macbeth* (for example, mad Šárka is pursued by figures of dead girls, and she even speaks the same words as Shakespeare’s

¹⁸ Jaroslav Vrchlický, “Šárka”, in: *Mythy* [Myths] (Prague, 1949), p. 9–43.

witches). Šárka is shown as a vampire; this way, Schulzová could envisage Vlasta as a personification of law, as well as resisting unfavourable processing of Czech legends by German authors.¹⁹ The breaking, aching epoch of the year 1900 corresponds to the nihilism of Hynek Mácha's character (as spoken by Šárka, for example, when she says: "No salvation, no saving!").²⁰

The number of motives, which the librettist worked out, can seem embarrassing; but, the need of an example saved Schulzová from a literary "edge", which she easily achieved and created on her own. Her play, *Nesmrtelnost* [Immortality], serves as a good example (ČMH, S 80/504), which takes forceful signs of literary "illnesses" of the fin-de-siècle, including stylization and mystifying procedures, narcissism and so on.²¹ This change of identity was not a problem for Anežka. A popularizing book about Fibich was published under the penname of Carl Ludwig Richter [Prague 1900]. The play, *Immortality*, signed by another penname K. Dosi, showed Schulzová as stylised followed of Pavel Marek, who stands by a neglected composer, one Jan Ruben (who may correspond to Z. Fibich).

Fibich's access of his musical predecessors verges on the danger of decadence. However, the use of musical material from *Moods, Impressions and Reminiscences*, did not suit a private play, with its secondary meanings, because the "pieces" fit together with lyric dramaturgy of the opera. Wagner's conception of Šárka – high dramatic soprano standing opposite Přemysl [Mood, number 219] and Ctirad [Impression number 295, Remembrance number 352],²² who sings a melody, before sighting Šárka; this melody is originally one of Hostinský's *36 nápěvů světských písní českého lidu ze XVI. století* [36 Profane Songs of the Czech People dating from the 16th century] (see examples 6 and 7).²³ Šárka is really the only one character in the opera who is the subject of a concise leitmotiv. In addition, Leoš Janáček appreciate Fibich's wildness of speech, as used in the opera, *Hedy*.²⁴

¹⁹ Alexandr Stich, "Tradiční romantické motivy v české hudbě a poezii druhé poloviny 19. století (Šárky)" [Traditional Romantic Motives in the Czech Music and Poetry in the 1st Half of 19th Century (Šárkas)], in: *Od Karla Havlíčka k Františku Halasovi* [From Karel Havlíček to František Halas] (Prague, 1996), p. 130–151; with particular reference to p.150–151.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

²¹ Luboš Merhaut, *Cesty stylizace (Stylizace, "okraj" a mystifikace v české literatuře přelomu devatenáctého a dvacátého století)* [Ways of Stylization (A Stylization, "Periphery" and Mystification in the Czech Literature in the Fin de siècle)] (Prague, 1994), p. 82.

²² See Zdeněk Nejedlý, *Zdeňka Fibicha milostný deník* [Zdeněk Fibich's Love Diary] (Prague, 1949), p. 278.

²³ A. Schulzová had to show good literary skills in the case of using pre-existing music from *Moods, Impressions and Reminiscences*.

²⁴ Leoš Janáček, "Hedy Zdeňka Fibicha" [Zdeněk Fibich's Hedy], "Šárka", in: Artuš Rektorys (ed.), *Zdeněk Fibich: Sborník dokumentů a studií o jeho životě a díle* [Zdeněk Fibich: A Collection of Documents and Studies about His Life and Work], Part 2 (Prague, 1952), p. 306–310, 311–318.

Example 6

Proč ka - li - na v stru - ze sto - ji?...

Example 7

Mě - síc bí - lý v dou - bra - vi - nu

lesklým ští - tem má - vá.

Fl.

pp

Cl.

Cor. ingl.

Archi

The tendency of the following generations to be “for” Wagner or “against” him, was typical and produced tensions. The author of *The Bride of Messina* made a mistake by joining free declamation to a “new” melody in the 1890s; he masterly proved to use this wealth (Ctirad’s singing from “Yes, I hated!” is an illustration of the gradual waste of syllabic elaboration) plus when Šárka mentions “poison of betrayal has already poisoned his blood”. One note is just not enough for one syllable when Ctirad’s passion increased (see example 8).

Example 8

Ctirad (těžce, s namahavě tajenou, propukávající vášní.)
Allegro moderato.

A - no, ne-ná-vi-děl jsem! Já ne-ná-vi-děl, Šár-ko,
 krá - su tvoí! Ó sly-šíš, zášť jsem měl ku vl - nám ka - de - ři,
 z nichž ší - je bě - lost - ná ti sví - tí ja - ko kvě - ty bí - lé
 z tem - ných hlu - bin vod, a zášť, — zášť jsem měl

mp
p *Arehi*
mf
p
p
Arehi

Example 9



Example 10



Und es ist ja gar nicht unmöglich, und ich halte es für wahrscheinlich, daß das merkwürdige Überleben großer Werke, ihre relative Dauerhaftigkeit über Jahrtausende hinweg, dem zu verdanken ist, daß sie auf dem schmalen, kaum erkennbaren Pfad von Nicht-Zeit geboren wurden, den das Denken ihrer Schöpfer zwischen einer unendlichen Vergangenheit und einer unendlichen Zukunft dadurch geschlagen hatte, daß es Vergangenheit und Zukunft als gerichtet, gewissermaßen gezielt auf sie selbst anerkannte – als *ihre* Vorgänger und Nachfolger, *ihre* Vergangenheit und *ihre* Zukunft –, wodurch sie eine Gegenwart für sich selbst schufen, eine Art zeitlose Zeit, in der die Menschen zeitlose Werke schaffen können, um mit ihnen ihre eigene Endlichkeit zu transzendieren.²⁵

This quotation, from her book, *The Life of the Mind*, by Hannah Arendt, can, perhaps too abstractly, but pertinently, serve as the conclusion to this article. Fibich and Schulzová needed Kafka's "battle-field" during the period of *Šárka*, where there are no rules of time. They appreciated what happened, they plan what will happen and they were able to manage these contradictory powers into a productive "now". In *Šárka*, it is evident and paradoxically said, that in the contemporary present, authors had enough time to think over pivotal questions of unity, were not in a hurry with its final shape and were not under time pressure to produce.

Translated by Michaela Maříková and Greg Hurworth

Die Oper *Šárka* von Zdeněk Fibich

Zusammenfassung

Die Entstehung der Oper *Šárka* (1896–1897) von Zdeněk Fibich ist in eine Lebensphase gefallen, die auf einem ersten Blick keine Schaffung des gegen die Zeit widerstandsfähigen Kunstwertes garantiert hat. Eine gespannte Familieatmosphäre kulminierte und Fibich hat seine Gattin und seinen Sohn verlassen, er versuchte die Beziehung mit seiner Librettistin Anežka Schulzová legitimisieren. Fibich hat diese Oper nach den Regeln des von Prager National Theater verkündeten Wettbewerbes geschrieben,

²⁵ Hannah Arendt, *Vom Leben des Geistes*, Bd. 1 *Das Denken* (München, 1979), p. 206 ["A je konečností možné a zdá se mi pravděpodobné, že podivuhodné přežití velikých děl, jejich relativní trvalost po tisíciletí, pochází z toho, že se zrodila v malé, stěží patrné stezce ne-času, kterou mezi nekonečnou minulostí a nekonečnou budoucností vyšlapalo myšlení jejich autorů tím, že minulost a budoucnost uznali jako nasměrované, v jistém smyslu jako zacílené na sebe – jako na své předchůdce a následovníky, svou minulost a svou budoucnost –; tím vytvořili přítomnost pro sebe samé, druh času bez času, ve kterém jsou lidé schopni tvořit nadčasová díla, aby jimi překročili svou vlastní konečnost."] Hannah Arendtová, *Život ducha*, 1. díl *Myšlení* (Prague, 2001), p. 229.

deswegen musste er bestimmte Begrenzungen annehmen. Der Autor der auf antische Stoffe (die Oper *Die Braut von Messina*, Librettist O. Hostinský nach F. Schiller, die Trilogie der szenischen Melodramen *Hippodamie* nach dem Text J. Vrchlickýs) und auf weltberühmte Fabeln (die Oper *Der Sturm*, Librettist J. Vrchlický nach W. Shakespeare, die Oper *Hedy*, Librettistin A. Schulzová nach Lord Byron) geschaffenen musikdramatischen Werke hat sich gezwungen ein tschechisches Sujet zu akzeptieren. Der Mangel an der Zeit und ein psychischer als auch sozialer Drang auf einer Seite und eine reiche künstlerische Erfahrung des Komponisten und der Librettistin und ein Hinterhalt in störungsfreien Lösungen sowohl in etablierten Vorbildern (das Prinzip der Symmetrie und des Kontrasts, B. Smetana, R. Wagner) auf der anderen führten zum Entstehen des Werkes, das im Rahmen der Gemeinschaftschöpfung Fibichs die Stellung einer der im Repertoire stabilen Kompositionen erobert hat.

Opera *Šárka* Zdeňka Fibicha

Shrnutí

Vznik opery *Šárka* (1896–1897) Zdeňka Fibicha spadá do doby, jež na první pohled nezaručovala vytvoření proti času odolné umělecké hodnoty. Vyvrcholila napjatá rodinná atmosféra a Fibich odešel od manželky a syna, snažil se legitimizovat vztah se svou libretistkou Anežkou Schulzovou. Operu psal na základě vyhlášené soutěže Národního divadla, proto musel přijmout jistá omezení. Autor hudebně dramatických děl na antické náměty (opera *Nevěsta messinská*, libretista O. Hostinský podle F. Schillera, trilogie scénických melodramů *Hippodamie* na text J. Vrchlického) a látky světové literatury (opera *Bouře*, libretista J. Vrchlický podle W. Shakespeara, opera *Hedy*, libretistka A. Schulzová podle lorda Byrona) byl nucen přijmout český syžet. Nedostatek času a psychický i společenský tlak na straně jedné a na druhé straně bohatá umělecká zkušenost skladatele i libretistky a opora v nesehlávajících řešeních i ustálených vzorech (princip symetrie a kontrastu, B. Smetana, R. Wagner) vedly ke zrodu díla, které si v rámci celé Fibichovy tvorby vydobylo postavení jedné z repertoárově nejtrvalejších skladeb.