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Smetana's reception in France between 1850 and 1939

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Abstract

Documented, among other sources, by the French music press and French music dictionaries, the slow and belated reception of Smetana's operas in France is out of step with his reception in the rest of Europe. Sixty-two years after its premiere, *The Bartered Bride* was the only opera by the composer and the only Czech opera performed in France before the Second World War, the Paris premiere of *La Fiancée vendue* taking place in 1928 at the Opéra-Comique. Three of Smetana's other operas were performed in France more than a century after their premiere. As a result, only four of Smetana's eight operas and a single Dvořák's opera have been performed in France to the present day, while Janáček's operas are a little better known and while the operatic output of composers such as Zdeněk Fibich is still unknown in France today. The reception of Smetana's operas was very poor at the end of the 19th century and often illustrated by simple ignorance. The first years of the 20th century changed the situation somewhat with the publication of the first monograph in French devoted to the composer. It was not until the independence of Czechoslovakia at the end of the First World War, more than thirty years after the composer's death, that French music critics began to take a real interest in Smetana. While Smetana's instrumental music is now fairly well known in France, his operatic output has never really made it into the standard repertoire in this country. The language barrier is only one of several explanations for this observation, and it is possible to speculate on the greater reception that Smetana's operas would have had in France if the composer's plan to stage *The Bartered Bride* in Paris in 1869 had been successful.

Keywords

Czech operas; France; Reception; music press; Bedřich Smetana; Antonín Dvořák; Leoš Janáček

Following the suppression of the Hussite movement by the Habsburgs in the 15th century, a policy of Germanisation was gradually implemented in the Czech lands. The Czech nobility was incorporated into the Austrian nobility only partly and 27 Bohemian leaders were executed on June 21st, 1621, at the Old Town Square in Prague. The Czech lands were also inhabited by nobility from abroad, not only from Austria, who acquired, among other things, confiscated property. The Czech language was eliminated from administration, literature, schools and universities. While the upper classes of society switched to German, the Czech language was discredited and assimilated into the language of illiterate peasants. A protagonist of the Czech National Renaissance, the composer Bedřich Smetana (1824–1884) contributed, through his vast lyrical and musical output, to the emancipation of the Czech language, culture and identity in the second half of the 19th century. His first two operas, *Braniboři v Čechách* and *Prodaná nevěsta*, were premiered to Czech librettos by Karel Sabina in 1866 at the new Provisional Theatre in Prague, an institution where Smetana served as conductor between 1866 and 1874. In total, the composer wrote eight operas in his native language, all of which were premiered by 1882.

The aim of this article is to study the reception of Smetana in France from the beginning of his career until the outbreak of the Second World War. The corpus studied includes the music press, music encyclopaedias and dictionaries, biographical and educational works relating to the history of music, etc. The first quick observation to be made is the profound ignorance of Smetana (and Dvořák) in 19th-century France. More than a dozen dictionaries and encyclopaedias published between 1860 and 1900 simply ignored his name. A change occurred at the beginning of the 20th century, particularly after the First World War. The creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918 marked a break in the French reception of Czech music in general and Smetana in particular.

While the *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* (1835–1880) devoted very little space to news about the Czech composer during the Second Empire and the early years of the Third Republic, *Le Ménestrel* (1833–1940) and *La Revue musicale* (1920–1940) were much more favourable towards him in the interwar period. The Paris premiere of *La Fiancée vendue* (*Prodaná nevěsta* / *The Bartered Bride)* was particularly late, taking place in 1928 at the Opéra-Comique, 62 years after its first performance in Prague. The first performance of this opera in France has already been well studied by Antoine Marès and by Kateřina Viktorová, and this article will focus mainly on the earlier period.[1]

[1] See Antoine Marès, "*La Fiancée* «mal *vendue*» ou la réception en France d'un chef-d'œuvre tchèque," in *Nations, cultures et sociétés d'Europe centrale aux XIX^e^ et XX^e^ siècles: Mélanges offerts à Bernard Michel*, ed. Catherine Horel (Paris, Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2006), 29–48; Kateřina Viktorová, "Promoting Smetana's *Bartered Bride* (*Prodaná nevěsta*) in Paris" / "Prosazování

After a first part devoted to the diffusion and translation of Smetana's operas in France, the following three sections of this article will deal respectively with the French reception of Smetana in music dictionaries and encyclopedias, in music periodicals and in histories of music. It is therefore the French perspective that will be systematically considered in this study.

I. Diffusion and translations of Smetana's operas

In his work *Annals of Opera 1597–1940*, Alfred Loewenberg analyzed the international dissemination of over three thousand operas, including Smetana's eight operas.[2] By examining the data compiled by the German-British musicologist, it is possible to establish fairly accurate statistics on the diffusion of the Czech composer's output:

Table 1 Translations of each of Smetana's eight operas.
(Statistics compiled from the two-volume book *Annals of Opera 1597–1940* by Alfred Loewenberg.)

Opera title in Czech and English	Number of translations by language
Prodaná nevěsta / *The Bartered Bride* (1866)	24 translations in 20 languages: English (3), Italian (2), Russian (2), Bulgarian, Catalan, Croatian, Danish, Dutch, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Lettish, Lithuanian, Polish, Rumanian, Serbian, Slovenian, Swedish
Dalibor (1868)	10 translations in 8 languages: German (3), Bulgarian, Croatian, Flemish, Hungarian, Polish, Russian, Slovenian
Hubička / *The Kiss* (1876)	6 translations in 5 languages: German (2), Croatian, English, Polish, Slovenian
Dvě vdovy / *Two Widows* (1874)	2 translations in 2 languages: German, Croatian
Tajemství / *The Secret* (1878)	2 translations in 2 languages: German, Slovenian
Libuše (1881)	2 translations in 2 languages: Croatian, Slovenian
Braniboři v Čechách / *The Brandenburgers in Bohemia* (1866)	No translation
Čertova stěna / *The Devil's Wall* (1882)	No translation
Total: 6 translated operas	Total: 46 translations

In total, there are no fewer than forty-six translations of six of Smetana's operas before 1940, while his two operas *Braniboři v Čechách* and *Čertova stěna* have not been translated. Unsurprisingly, the most successful work is *The Bartered*

Smetanovy *Prodané nevěsty* v Paříži," in *Musicalia* 13, no. 1–2 (2021): 79–97 (English version), 98–115 (Czech version).

[2] Alfred Loewenberg, *Annals of Opera 1597–1940* (Geneva: Societas Bibliographica, 1955, 2nd ed.), 979–80, 983–84, 1000–01, 1036, 1059, 1072, 1091–92, 1100.

Bride, with twenty-four translations into twenty languages, far ahead of *Dalibor* and *Hubička*, which come in second and third place. This opera alone accounts for half of all translations and is also the only opera by Smetana to have been translated into French.

Table 2 Translations of Smetana's operas by language.
(Statistics compiled from the two-volume book *Annals of Opera 1597–1940* by Alfred Loewenberg.)

Language	Number of translated operas	Number of translations
German	5	8
Croatian	5	5
Slovenian	5	5
Polish	3	3
English	2	4
Russian	2	3
Bulgarian	2	2
Hungarian	2	2
Italian	1	2
Catalan / Danish / Dutch / Estonian / Finnish / Flemish / French / Lettish / Lithuanian / Rumanian / Serbian / Swedish	1	1
Total: 21 languages	Total: 6 translated operas	Total: 46 translations

By comparing the number of translations per language, it appears that Smetana's operas have been translated into twenty-one foreign languages, primarily German with eight translations of five operas, followed by Croatian and Slovenian, then Polish, English, Russian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, etc. The German language's first place is logical, as it was the second most spoken language in Prague and the Czech lands during Smetana's lifetime. In the same vein, the next three languages correspond to neighboring peoples or nations. In this ranking, French comes in last place, alongside eleven other languages, with only one translation of a single work. Furthermore, Loewenberg mentions performances of *The Bartered Bride* in German in Strasbourg on January 17th, 1895, i.e., during a period when the Alsatian capital was part of the German Empire, in French in Brussels on February 23rd, 1907, and then at the Opéra-Comique in Paris on October 26th, 1928.[3]

Joseph Colomb studied the dissemination of Czech operas in France. By compiling some of the data presented in his article entitled "L'opéra tchèque

[3] See also Nicole Wild and David Charlton, *Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique. Paris. Répertoire 1762–1972* (Sprimont, Mardaga, 2005), 256.

en France depuis 1945," it is possible to accurately account for the limited and belated dissemination of Smetana's operas in France:

Table 3 The first French performances of Czech operas premiered before 1960. (Statistics based on Joseph Colomb, "L'opéra tchèque en France depuis 1945," in *Histoire de l'opéra français*, ed. Hervé Lacombe [Paris, Fayard, 2022], vol. 3, 949–50.)

Composer	Title of Czech opera	Premiere	First performance in France	Time between the two
Smetana	*Prodaná nevěsta / The Bartered Bride*	1866	1928 (Paris, Opéra-Comique)	62 years
Janáček	*Jenůfa*	1904	1947 (radio), 1962 (Strasbourg)	43/58 years
Janáček	*Z mrtvého domu / From the House of the Dead*	1930	1953 (radio), 1966 (Nice)	23/36 years
Janáček	*Příhody lišky Bystroušky / The Cunning Little Vixen*	1924	1957 (Paris, Th. Sarah Bernhardt)	33 years
Janáček	*Káťa Kabanová*	1921	1959 (Paris, Th. Sarah Bernhardt)	38 years
Martinů	*Juliette aneb Snář / Julietta*	1938	1962 (radio), 1976 (Rouen)	24/38 years
Martinů	*Veselohra na mostě / Comedy on the bridge*	1937	1964 (Vichy)	27 years
Janáček	*Věc Makropulos / The Makropulos Affair*	1926	1965 (Paris, Th. Sarah Bernhardt)	39 years
Smetana	*Dalibor*	1868	1968 (Strasbourg)	100 years
Dvořák	*Rusalka*	1901	1982 (Marseille)	81 years
Janáček	*Výlety páně Broučkovy / The Excursions of Mr. Brouček to the Moon and to the 15th Century*	1920	1986 (Lyon)	66 years
Smetana	*Hubička / The Kiss*	1876	1990 (Paris, Opéra-Comique)	114 years
Krása	*Brundibár*	1942	1993 (Paris, Festival du Marais)	51 years
Janáček	*Osud / Destiny*	1958	1995 (Paris)	37 years
Janáček	*Šárka*	1925	2001 (Lyon)	76 years
Smetana	*Dvě vdovy / Two Widows*	1874	2012 (Angers-Nantes)	138 years

Only four of Smetana's eight operas have been performed in France and no Czech opera by any other composer written in the 19th century has been performed in this country. It took 62 years after the premiere of *The Bartered Bride*

for it to be staged for the first time in France. This is an excessively long period in the European opera industry for an opera that was already widely performed internationally before 1900. The gap between the Czech premiere and the first performance in France was even longer for the operas *Dalibor*, *Hubička*, and *Dvě vdovy*, at 100, 114, and 138 years respectively, i.e., at least a century. By comparison, no fewer than eight operas by Janáček have been performed in France, but only one of Dvořák's ten operas, *Rusalka*, 81 years after its premiere, and none by Zdeněk Fibich, Josef Bohuslav Foerster, or Vítězslav Novák. In summary, the breadth of Smetana and Dvořák's operatic repertoire remains largely unknown in France to this day, and Janáček is the only composer whose Czech operas have enjoyed relatively widespread popularity, albeit belatedly, in that country.[4] In other words, Smetana and Dvořák owe most of their reputation in France to their instrumental music. While Smetana is still regarded today in the Czech Republic as the creator of national opera, in France he is simply considered a composer of symphonic poems.

II. Smetana's reception in French music lexicons and encyclopedias

An examination of music dictionaries and encyclopedias published in France in the second half of the 19th century confirms the limited and belated recognition of Smetana and Dvořák. There are no articles on these two composers in the works of Louis-Gabriel Michaud[5] (1843–1865), William Duckett[6] (1852–1860), Ferdinand Hoefer[7] (1852–1866), Gustave Vapereau[8] (1870), Félix Clément[9] (1878), Adolphe Bitard[10] (1878), Alexandre Bisson and Théodore

[4] See Joseph Colomb, *Janáček en France ou de l'indifférence à la reconnaissance. La réception française de la musique de Janáček* (Clichy: Les éditions de l'île bleue, 2014).

[5] *Biographie universelle (Michaud) ancienne et moderne* (Paris: Chez Madame C. Desplaces, 1843–1865, 2nd ed.), 45 vol.

[6] William Duckett, ed. *Dictionnaire de la conversation* (Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot, Fils et Cie, 1852–1860, 2nd ed.), 16 vol.

[7] Dr Hoefer, *Nouvelle Biographie universelle depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Firmin Didot Frères, Fils et Cie, 1852–1866), 46 vol.

[8] Gustave Vapereau, ed. *Dictionnaire universel des contemporains* (Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1870, 4th ed.).

[9] Félix Clément, *Les musiciens célèbres depuis le seizième siècle jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1878, 3rd ed.).

[10] Adolphe Bitard, *Dictionnaire général de biographie contemporaine française et étrangère* (Paris: Maurice Dreyfous, 1878).

de Lajarte[11] (1884), Paul Guérin[12] (1884–1892), Jules Trousset[13] (1885–1891), François Desplantes[14] (1889), Charles Dezobry, Théodore Bachelet and Eugène Darsy[15] (1889), Louis-Nicolas Bescherelle[16] (1890), Camille Flammarion[17] (1894–1898), Augustin Gazier[18] (1898), etc. For example, François Desplantes and Félix Clément studied 41 and 112 composers respectively in their works on "famous musicians," but Dvořák and Smetana are omitted from the tables of contents. Similarly, both composers are absent from Alexandre Bisson and Théodore de Lajarte's *Petite encyclopédie musicale*, and there are no Czech or Bohemian schools in the table of contents, but German, Italian and French schools are included.[19]

In the second edition of his *Bibliographie universelle des musiciens*, published in eight volumes in Paris between 1860 and 1865, the Belgian musicographer François-Joseph Fétis also ignored the names of Dvořák and Smetana.[20]It was not until the two supplementary volumes edited by Arthur Pougin in 1881 that their names appeared. In the first supplementary volume, Dvořák is misspelled as "Dorozk" and the entry devoted to him is very short: "contemporary composer, had an opera entitled *Wanda* performed at the Czech Theatre in Prague in April 1876."[21] On the contrary, Smetana's surname is spelled correctly in the second supplementary volume, even though his first name has been Frenchified to

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[11] Alexandre Bisson and Théodore de Lajarte, *Petite encyclopédie musicale* (Paris: A. Hennuyer, 1884), vol. 2, *Histoire générale de la musique ; Biographie des compositeurs, virtuoses, etc.*

[12] Paul Guérin, ed. *Dictionnaire des dictionnaires* (Paris: Librairie des imprimeries réunies, 1884–1892), 6 vol.

[13] Jules Trousset, ed. *Nouveau dictionnaire encyclopédique universel illustré* (Paris: À la librairie illustrée, 1885–1891), 6 vol.

[14] François Desplantes, *Les musiciens célèbres* (Limoges: Eugène Ardant et C[ie], 1889).

[15] Charles Dezobry, Théodore Bachelet, and Eugène Darsy, *Dictionnaire général de biographie et d'histoire* (Paris: Librairie Ch. Delagrave, 1889, 10th ed.).

[16] Louis-Nicolas Bescherelle, *Dictionnaire national ou dictionnaire universel de la langue française* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1890, 2nd ed.), 4 vol.

[17] Camille Flammarion, *Dictionnaire encyclopédique universel* (Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1894–1898), 8 vol.

[18] Augustin Gazier, *Nouveau dictionnaire classique illustré* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1898, 23rd ed.).

[19] Bisson and Lajarte, *Petite encyclopédie musicale*, vol. 2, ix.

[20] François-Joseph Fétis, *Bibliographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique* (Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot Frères, Fils et C[ie], 1860–1865, 2nd ed.), 8 vol.

[21] "Dorozk" [*sic*], in Fétis, *Bibliographie universelle des musiciens*, supplément et complément publiés sous la direction de M. Arthur Pougin (Paris: Librairie de Firmin-Didot et C[ie], 1881), vol. 1, 299: "compositeur contemporain, a fait représenter sur le théâtre tchèque de Prague, au mois d'avril 1876, un opéra intitulé *Wanda*." This quotation from a French text, like the following ones, is provided here directly in English translation.

Frédéric, and the entry devoted to him is no less than 60 lines long. It is signed Jean Batka (J. B.) with a footnote by Arthur Pougin (A. P.):

> SMETANA (Frédéric), distinguished conductor and composer, was born in Bohemia on March 2nd, 1824. Gifted with rare musical talent, it was only after much prayer that he managed to persuade his father to let him follow his inclination. In 1848, he became a pupil of the famous Proksch, one of Prague's most renowned theorists and piano masters. In 1846, he met Robert Schumann and his wife, who introduced him to the works of Johann Sebastian Bach. Two years later, he opened a music school in Prague, and married a highly skilled pianist, Miss Catherine Kolar. In 1850, he organized interesting quartet evenings, and in 1856, when Liszt came to Prague to attend the planned performance of his Graner Mass, Mr. Smetana was in daily contact with this illustrious man, whose advice gave his talent an unexpected boost.
>
> During the latter year, Mr. Smetana was appointed, through Dreyschock's good offices, as conductor of the Gothenburg Philharmonic Society in Sweden. So he went to that city with his wife; unfortunately, the harsh climate of the country proved fatal for her, and she fell seriously ill. Mr. Smetana rushed to take her back to Bohemia, but the illness had progressed to such an extent that the unfortunate woman died during the journey, in Dresden, and her husband could only bring her mortal remains back to Prague. Having resumed his post in Gothenburg, Mr. Smetana left that city for a long trip to Sweden and Germany (1861), after which he returned to Prague, where he was engaged as principal conductor at the National Theater. Here, he staged several successful operas, all based on Bohemian texts. Unfortunately, in 1874, a particularly painful infirmity for a musician forced the artist to give up the duties he had fulfilled with real talent: he had become completely deaf.
>
> Among Mr. Smetana's compositions for piano is an *Allegro capriccioso* in B minor dedicated to Dreyschock, and among his symphonic works is a solemn march performed in Prague for the 300th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth. As for his operas, *Dalibor* and *The Kiss*, the latter is considered to be his best*.
>
> J. B. [Jean Batka]
>
> * Here, I believe, are the precise dates when Mr. Smetana's dramatic works were performed: 1° *The Brandenburgers in Bohemia*, January 5th, 1866; 2° *The Bartered Bride*, May 30th, 1866 Dreyschock, as conductor of the Goth; 3° *Dalibor*, 1868; 4° *The Kiss*, 2 acts, December 1876; 5° *The Secret*, 3 acts, September 18th, 1878.
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> A. P. [Arthur Pougin][22]

[22] "Smetana," in Fétis, *Bibliographie universelle des musiciens*, supplément et complément publiés sous la direction de M. Arthur Pougin (1881), vol. 2, 525–26: "SMETANA (Frédéric), chef d'orchestre et compositeur distingué, est né en Bohême le 2 mars 1824. Doué de rares dispositions musicales, ce ne fut cependant qu'après de longues prières qu'il parvint à décider son père à lui laisser suivre son penchant. Il devint alors l'élève, en 1843, du célèbre Proksch, l'un des théoriciens et des maîtres

This notice is very informative due to the identity of the first author, who was none other than Ján Nepomuk Batka (1845–1917), a music critic, lawyer, and archivist born and based in Pressburg (now Bratislava), and a long-time friend of Franz Liszt. Batka highlighted Smetana's encounters with Robert and Clara Schumann and Franz Liszt, and emphasized his work as a conductor and composer of Czech operas at the National Theatre in Prague, while Pougin listed the names of five operas by Smetana composed between 1866 and 1878. The influence of foreign composers on Smetana was perhaps presented with an implicit form of condescension. In 1881, *The Bartered Bride* was still not considered in France to be Smetana's greatest success in the operatic genre. Smetana's symphonic poems and chamber music were simply ignored. The spelling of the names of Smetana's operas was approximate or incorrect (*Dalibar*, *Les Branibor en Bohême*). However, musicographer Arthur Pougin (1834–1921) is still recognized in France today as a fine connoisseur of the history of opera, which once again reflects the lack of knowledge in France of the Czech repertoire at the end of the 19th century, just three years before Smetana's death.

The first fifteen volumes of the *Grand dictionnaire universel du XIX^e^ siècle* were published under the direction of Pierre Larousse (1817–1875) in Paris between

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de piano les plus renommés de Prague. En 1846, il fit la connaissance de Robert Schumann et de sa femme, grâce auxquels il se familiarisa avec les œuvres de Jean-Sébastien Bach. Deux ans après, il ouvrait à Prague une école de musique, et il épousait une pianiste fort habile, M^lle^ Catherine Kolar. En 1850, il organisa d'intéressantes soirées de quatuor, et en 1856, lorsque Liszt se rendit à Prague pour assister à l'exécution projetée de sa messe de Gran, M. Smetana fréquenta journellement cet homme illustre, aux conseils duquel sont talent dut de prendre un essor imprévu. / Dans le courant de cette dernière année, M. Smetana fut engagé, par l'entremise de Dreyschock, comme chef d'orchestre de la Société philharmonique de Gothenbourg, en Suède. Il se rendit donc en cette ville avec sa femme ; par malheur, le climat rigoureux du pays fut fatal à celle-ci, qui tomba gravement malade. M. Smetana s'empressa alors de la reconduire en Bohême ; mais le mal avait fait de tels progrès que l'infortunée mourut dans le cours du voyage, à Dresde, et que son mari ne put que ramener ses restes mortels. Étant allé reprendre son poste à Gothenbourg, M. Smetana quitta cette ville pour faire un grand voyage en Suède et en Allemagne (1861), après quoi il revint à Prague, où il fut engagé en qualité de premier chef d'orchestre au Théâtre-National. C'est là qu'il fit représenter plusieurs opéras, tous écrits sur texte bohême, et qui obtinrent du succès. Malheureusement, une infirmité particulièrement douloureuse pour un musicien vint, en 1874, obliger l'artiste à résigner des fonctions qu'il remplissait avec un véritable talent : il était devenu complètement sourd. / On cite, parmi les compositions pour le piano de M. Smetana, un *Allegro capriccioso* en *si* mineur dédié à Dreyschock, et parmi ses œuvres symphoniques une marche solennelle qui fut exécutée à Prague pour le trois-centième anniversaire de la naissance de Shak[e]speare. Quant à ses opéras, *les Branibor en Bohême*, *la Fiancée vendue* (1866), *Dalibar* (1868), et *le Baiser*, ce dernier est considéré comme le meilleur (1). / J. B. // (1) Voici, je crois, les dates précises de la représentation des ouvrages dramatiques de M. Smetana : 1° *les Branibor en Bohême*, 5 janvier 1866 ; 2° *la Fiancée vendue*, 30 mai 1866 ; 3° *Dalibar*, 1868 ; 4° *un Baiser*, 2 actes, décembre 1876 ; 5° *le Secret*, 3 actes, 19 septembre 1878. / A. P."

1865 and 1876. There is no article on Smetana or Dvořák in volume 14[23] (1875) or in Supplement 1 (1877). We have to wait until Supplement 2 (1890) to find an article on Smetana and another on Dvořák. The article on Dvořák comprises 25 lines,[24] compared to only 14 lines for the article on Smetana:

> SMETAND [*sic*], Czech composer and pianist, born in Leitomischl on March 2nd, 1824, died in Prague on May 12th, 1884. Pupil of J. Proksch, then director of the Philharmonic Society in Gothenburg and first Kapellmeister at the Bohemian National Theater in Prague from 1866 to 1874. He is one of the leading exponents of national music in Bohemia. His compositions include *Wallenstein's Camp*, *Richard III*, *Vysehpad* [*Vyšehrad*] and *Libusa* [*Libuše*], as well as the operas *The Brandenburgers in Bohemia*, *The Bartered Bride*, *Dalibor*, *The Secret*, etc.[25]

In 1890, the spelling of the composer's name is incorrect and the biographical note is very short, although the composer, who has already been dead and buried for six years, is presented as one of the protagonists of musical life in Bohemia. *Libussa* (*Libuše*) is placed in the genre of symphonic poems, despite the fact that this term is not used, and not in that of operas, which once again reflects a lack of knowledge of the Czech repertoire in France. No mention is made of Smetana's late deafness. An academic reference work in France, *La Grande Encyclopédie* was published in 31 volumes in Paris between 1885 and 1902. It includes a 13-line article on Dvořák,[26] which is spelled "Dvorzak," but none on Smetana. In 1899, Georges Humbert (1870–1936), professor of music history at the Geneva Conservatory, proposed a translation of Hugo Riemann's dictionary of music. For once, the names of both composers were spelt correctly, no doubt due to the German origin of this work. The article on Smetana[27] has 36 lines,

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[23] Pierre Larousse, ed. *Grand dictionnaire universel du XIX^e^ siècle* (Paris: Administration du Grand dictionnaire universel, 1875), vol. 14 (S–Testa).

[24] "Dvorak," in Larousse, *Grand dictionnaire universel du XIX^e^ siècle* (1890), vol. 17, 1115.

[25] "Smetand" [*sic*], in Larousse, *Grand dictionnaire universel du XIX^e^ siècle* (1890), vol. 17, 1848: "SMETAND, compositeur et pianiste tchèque, né à Leitomischl le 2 mars 1824, mort à Prague le 12 mai 1884. Élève de J. Proksch, puis directeur de la Société philharmonique à Gothenbourg et premier maître de chapelle au Théâtre-National de Bohême à Prague de 1866 à 1874, il dut quitter ces fonctions par suite d'infirmités. Il est l'un des principaux représentants de la musique nationale en Bohême. Nous mentionnerons parmi ses compositions : *le Camp de Wallenstein*, *Richard III*, *Vysehpad* et *Libusa* et les opéras *les Brandebourgeois en Bohême*, *la Fiancée vendue*, *Dalibor*, *le Secret*, etc."

[26] "Dvorzak" [*sic*], in *La Grande Encyclopédie* (Paris: H. Lamirault et C^ie^, 1892), vol. 15, 155.

[27] "Smetana," in Hugo Riemann, *Dictionnaire de musique, traduit d'après la quatrième édition, revu et augmenté par Georges Humbert, professeur d'histoire de la musique au Conservatoire de Genève* (Paris: Librairie académique Didier, 1899), 774–75.

compared to 71 lines for the article on Dvořák:[28] the ratio is double in favor of the younger composer. Smetana's first name is Germanized: Bedřich is replaced by Friedrich. For the first time, several instrumental works are mentioned at the end of the article, after the list of the composer's eight operas, whose titles are translated into French, namely four symphonic poems, two other works for orchestra, two string quartets, a piano trio, a large number of pieces for piano, and choirs. In the genre of symphonic poetry, Smetana is presented as "a staunch supporter of the Liszt-Berlioz-Wagner school," that is, as a follower of the New German School and a proponent of program music.

French equivalent of Hugo Riemann's *Opernhandbuch* (1887), the *Dictionnaire des opéras (Dictionnaire lyrique)* by Pierre Larousse and Félix Clément was revised and expanded in three editions in 1869, 1881, and 1905. Smetana's eight operas are listed under a single entry in the first edition, four entries in the second edition, and ten entries in the third edition:[29]

Table 4 Smetana's operas in three editions of Pierre Larousse and Félix Clément's *Dictionnaire des opéras*.

Exact title of the opera (premiere)	1869	1881	1905
Braniboři v Čechách / The Brandenburgers in Bohemia (1866)	*Brambori v cècach* [sic] / *Les Brandebourgeois en Bohême*	*Brambori v cècach* [sic] / *Les Brandebourgeois en Bohême*	*Brambori v cècach* [sic] / *Les Brandebourgeois en Bohême*
Dalibor (1868)		*Dalibor*	*Dalibor*
Hubička / The Kiss (1876)		*Ein Kuss / Un Baiser*	*Le Baiser* *Ein Kuss / Un Baiser* *Kuss (Ein) / Un Baiser*
Tajemství / The Secret (1878)		*Das Geheimniss / Le Secret*	*Das Geheimniss / Le Secret*
Prodaná nevěsta / The Bartered Bride (1866)			*Prodana nevesta* [sic] / *La Fiancée vendue*
Dvě vdovy / Two Widows (1874)			*Les Deux Veuves*
Libuše (1881)			*Libussa*
Čertova stěna / The Devil's Wall (1882)			*Certova stena* [sic] / *La Muraille du diable*
8 operas	1 opera	4 operas (4 entries)	8 operas (10 entries)

[28] "Dvořák," in Riemann, *Dictionnaire de musique*, 215.

[29] Pierre Larousse and Félix Clément, *Dictionnaire des opéras (Dictionnaire lyrique)* (Paris: Administration du grand dictionnaire universel, 1869), 723; Larousse and Clément, *Dictionnaire des opéras* (1881), 723, 726, 845, 910; Larousse and Clément, *Dictionnaire des opéras* (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1905), 108, 170, 284, 323, 379, 500, 633, 648, 763, 907.

Spelling mistakes, most often the absence of accents, are systematic in Czech titles. Linguistic indecision prevails and is symptomatic of a lack of knowledge of this repertoire. In the first edition, the title of the only opera mentioned is given in Czech and French. In the second edition, the four operas have three titles in French, two in Czech, and two in German. In the third edition, the eight operas have six titles in French, four in Czech, and three in German. In this latest edition, it is worth noting three unnecessary duplicates of *The Kiss*, probably without the new French authors (Larousse and Clément having already passed away) being aware of their error, which testifies to their unfamiliarity with the Czech opera repertoire in 1905. There are no articles on *The Bartered Bride* in either the 1869 or 1881 editions. While the entry devoted to this opera is very short in the 1905 edition, the first of the three entries dedicated to *The Kiss* is more detailed:

> *Kiss* (*The*), a comic opera in three acts, posthumous music by Smetana, performed with great success at the Imperial Opera in Vienna in February 1894. This work features popular Czech melodies that the composer, himself Czech, treated with exquisite taste and artistry. The charming music of Smetana, who was a first-rate artist, overshadowed the notable weakness of the libretto of *The Kiss* and carried the work to success.[30]

This is the longest of the ten entries. The entry devoted to the opera *The Secret* mentions the disability from which the composer suffered at the end of his life: "This composer has been deaf for several years and has not interrupted his work."[31]

III. Smetana's reception in French music periodicals

The *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* (1835–1880) was one of the most important music journals published in 19th-century Europe and the leading French music periodical. Founded by German-born publisher Maurice Schlesinger, son of Berlin music publisher Adolph Martin Schlesinger, this weekly magazine was characterized by its pro-German editorial policy. A systematic review of

[30] Larousse and Clément, *Dictionnaire des opéras* (1905), 108: "BAISER (le), opéra-comique en trois actes, musique posthume de Smetana, représenté avec beaucoup de succès à l'Opéra impérial de Vienne en février 1894. On trouve dans cet ouvrage des mélodies populaires tchèques que le compositeur, tchèque lui-même, avait traitées avec un goût et un art délicieux. La musique charmante de Smetana, qui était un artiste de premier ordre, a d'ailleurs fait passer condamnation sur la faiblesse insigne du livret du *Baiser* et a emporté le succès."

[31] Larousse and Clément, *Dictionnaire des opéras* (1905), 500: "Ce compositeur est atteint de surdité depuis plusieurs années et n'a pas interrompu ses travaux."

the "Table alphabétique des noms" in the annual volumes published between 1858 and 1880 revealed the absence of Smetana, with the exception of the years 1866, 1868, and 1879. The periodical's interest in Czech musicians was already apparent in the early 1860s. The activities of conductor František Jan Škroup, spelled "François Skraup," is reported in the July 22nd, 1860 issue, and his obituary in the February 16th, 1862 issue presents him as the former conductor of the Prague theater between 1847 and 1857, and as the composer of "the first Bohemian opera," *Dráteník*.[32] In the November 13th, 1864 issue, there is mention not only of a performance of *Les Huguenots* in Czech at the "théâtre bohême" in Prague in memory of Meyerbeer, but also of a remarkable local tenor named Véko, known for having turned down lucrative offers from German theaters in order to devote his talent solely to his homeland and to singing in the Czech language.[33] The first mention of Smetana, spelled "Smetaxa," in the *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* dates from January 21st, 1866, and concerns the premiere of his opera *The Brandenburgers in Bohemia*:

> *Prague*. – The capital of Bohemia, now home to a national theater, saw the premiere on the 5th of this month of *The Brandenburgers in Bohemia* (*Brambori v Céchach*) [*sic*], a Czech opera by Mr. F. Smetaxa [*sic*], which has been the subject of conversation for so long. The audience particularly admired the ensemble singing and the originality of the local color, in which artistic and national elements are equally predominant. The success of the premiere, conducted by the composer himself, was resounding; the maestro and the performers received warm applause and were called back two or even three times at the end of each of the three acts of the piece.[34]

It should be noted that the incorrect spelling of the composer's name is also reproduced in the alphabetical table of names in the annual volume: "Smetaxa (F.)." This is therefore not simply a typo, since the error was not subsequently identified and corrected. The June 10th, 1866 issue briefly mentions the creation

[32] "Chronique étrangère," *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* [*RGM*], July 22, 1860, 263; "Nouvelles," *RGM*, February 16, 1862, 56.

[33] "Nouvelles," *RGM*, November 13, 1864, 366.

[34] "Chronique étrangère," *RGM*, January 21, 1866, 23: "*Prague*. – La capitale de la Bohême, aujourd'hui en possession d'un théâtre national, a vu, le 5 du courant, la première représentation des *Brandebourgeois en Bohême* (*Brambori v Céchach*), opéra tschèque de M. F. Smetaxa, qui a été si longtemps le sujet de toutes les conversations. On y a admiré surtout l'ensemble des chœurs et l'originalité de la couleur locale, où l'élément artistique et national prédominent également. Le succès de la première représentation, dirigée par le compositeur lui-même, a été des plus complets ; le maestro ainsi que les artistes ont été chaleureusement applaudis et rappelés deux et même trois fois à la fin de chacun des trois actes de la pièce."

of *The Bartered Bride*: "*Prague*. – A comic opera in the Czech language, *Podrana nevesta* (*The Bartered Bride*), was performed on May 30th to great acclaim; the author, a Bohemian musician, is named Smetana."[35] Similarly, the premiere of *Dalibor* is briefly reported in the May 31st, 1868 issue: "*Prague*. – A new opera in three acts by conductor Smetana, *Dalibor*, was successfully performed at the Neustaedter Theater."[36] The October 8th, 1871 issue mentions the moderate success achieved in January by *The Bartered Bride* in Saint Petersburg,[37] while the October 12th, 1873 issue announces that two operas by Smetana are in preparation at the National Theater in Prague, namely *Two Widows* and *Libuše*. This last opera is spelled "Libuscha."[38] The first performance of the opera *The Kiss*, reported in the December 24th, 1874 issue, provides an opportunity to mention the composer's disability: "Prague. – […] A new opera in two acts, *Ein Kuss* (*The Kiss*), received a warm welcome at its premiere. It was composed by the Czech composer Smetana. This artist, who is very popular in his country, became completely deaf in the prime of his life."[39] Smetana's deafness is also mentioned in the October 13th, 1878 issue, on the occasion of the premiere of his opera *The Secret*. The article also reports on his ongoing composition of a symphonic poem.[40] It was also in the late 1870s that the first articles devoted to Antonín Dvořák, spelled "Antoine Dvorzak," appeared in the *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, on the occasion of the premieres of his operas *Vanda*[41] (1876) and *Šelma sedlák* (1878): "*Prague*. – A new opera by Antoine Dvorzak [*sic*], *Der pfiffige Bauer* (*The Cunning Peasant*), was recently performed at the Czech National Theater and warmly applauded."[42]

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[35] "Chronique étrangère," *RGM*, June 10, 1866, 183: "*Prague*. – Un opéra-comique en langue tchèque, *Prodana nevesta* (la Fiancée vendue), a été donné le 30 mai avec un succès complet ; l'auteur, musicien bohème, se nomme Smetana."

[36] "Étranger," *RGM*, May 31, 1868, 175: "*Prague*. – Un nouvel opéra en trois actes, du chef d'orchestre Smetana, *Dalibor*, a été donné avec succès au Neustædter Theater."

[37] Charles Bannelier, "Revue rétrospective de l'étranger. Septembre 1870 – octobre 1871," *RGM*, October 8, 1871, 279.

[38] "Étranger," *RGM*, October 12, 1873, 327.

[39] "Étranger," *RGM*, December 24, 1876, 416: "*Prague*. – […] Un opéra nouveau, en deux actes, *Ein Kuss* (Un Baiser), a été chaleureusement accueilli à sa première représentation. Il est du compositeur tchèque Smetana. Cet artiste, très-sympathique dans son pays, est devenu, à la fleur de l'âge, complètement sourd."

[40] "Étranger," *RGM*, October 13, 1878, 332.

[41] "Étranger," *RGM*, August 12, 1877, 255.

[42] "Étranger," *RGM*, February 17, 1878, 55: "*Prague*. – Un opéra nouveau d'Antoine Dvorzak, *Der pfiffige Bauer* (le Paysan madré), a été donné récemment au Théâtre national tchèque et chaleureusement applaudi."

Another Parisian weekly music magazine, *Le Ménestrel* (1833–1940), also published its first reports mentioning Smetana in the 1860s, with an even greater lack of knowledge of the Czech repertoire. Published in the October 2nd, 1864 issue, the first article on this subject simply confuses Czech and Hungarian composers: "According to a Prague newspaper, no fewer than twelve Hungarian operas have been promised to the National Theater; their composers are said to be Messrs. J. Laub, Meyer, B. Smetana, V. Vinar, J.-L. Zvonar, K. Sebor, Kavan, Kott, and Pivoda."[43] In the same vein, the second article, published in the May 31st, 1867 issue, presents Smetana's last Czech opera as a German opera: "There is serious praise for two new German works: one is a three-act opera, *Dalibor*, performed in Prague and written by Mr. Smetana, the conductor of the Bohemian theatre; the other is a symphony by Mr. Antoine Bruckner, who holds, with rare distinction, the position of organist at Linz Cathedral."[44] Subsequently, references to Smetana in *Le Ménestrel* became gradually more frequent and often more precise. The composer is mentioned in 1868 (2 articles), 1871, 1873 (2), 1876, 1877, 1878, 1880, 1881, 1882 (3), 1883, 1884 (4), 1887, 1891 (4), 1892 (3), 1893 (6), 1894 (10), 1895 (8), 1896 (7), 1897 (10), 1898, 1899 (7), etc. An obituary of Smetana, presented as the most famous and popular artist in Bohemia, was published in this music periodical on May 18th, 1884.[45]

The situation changed at the beginning of the 20th century with the publication of long articles that replaced the short news items on Smetana that had appeared in the 1870s. An example is Henri Hantich's six-page article "Frédéric Smetana," published on December 1st, 1904, in *La Revue musicale*.[46] This article contains musical excerpts from five operas and a symphonic poem by the composer, who is presented as a fervent follower of the neo-romantic school and whose favorite masters were said to be Bach, Beethoven, Berlioz, Liszt, Chopin, and Wagner. The four pages of sheet music for a "Danse Tchèque" for piano by Smetana are included as a supplement to the issue of the magazine, with the agreement of the publisher Urbanek in Prague. Another notable example is

[43] "Étranger," *Le Ménestrel*, October 2, 1864, 350: "D'après un journal de Prague, le nombre d'opéras hongrois promis au Théâtre-National ne s'élève pas à moins de douze ; leurs auteurs seraient MM. J. Laub, Meyer, B. Smetana, V. Vinar, J.-L. Zvonar, K. Sebor, Kavan, Kott et Pivoda." See Gustave Chouquet, "La musique à Prague," *L'Art musical*, April 1, 1869, 140–41.

[44] "Étranger," *Le Ménestrel*, May 31, 1868, 214: "On parle avec de sérieux éloges de deux œuvres nouvelles allemandes : l'une est un opéra en 3 actes : *Dalibor*, donné à Prague, ayant pour auteur M. Smetana, le chef d'orchestre du théâtre bohémien ; l'autre, une symphonie de M. Antoine Bruckner, qui tient, avec une rare distinction, l'orgue de la cathédrale de Linz."

[45] "Nécrologie," *Le Ménestrel*, May 18, 1884, 200.

[46] Henri Hantich, "Frédéric Smetana," *La Revue musicale*, December 1, 1904, 562–67. See Henri Hantich, *La musique tchèque* (Paris: Librairie Nilsson, ca. 1908).

William Ritter's "Chronique tchèque," published on February 15th, 1907, in *Le Mercure musical*.[47] This five-page article discusses the publication of previously unpublished compositions by Smetana, the "founder of modern Czech music," including various piano pieces and polkas, and compares the composer with Schumann and Chopin: "Smetana's polkas are to the Bohemia of his time what Chopin's mazurkas are to the Poland of his time. And Smetana's genius must be dear to him even in its infancy."[48] Another eight-page article by Ritter, entitled "Notes sur Smetana" and published on July 15th, 1907, in the same newspaper, offers analyses of *The Bartered Bride* and *Dalibor*.[49] Ritter studied the libretto of the first opera, focusing on Smetana's handling of crowds and the use of rural comedy. He recounted Saint-Saëns' admiration for this opera and the success it achieved in Budapest. This study is followed by an important chapter devoted to *Dalibor*. Two characters in particular are highlighted: Dalibor, knight symbol of the Czech people and his friend Zdenek, personification of popular song and poetry. These texts are excerpts from Ritter's biography of Smetana, published in the same year.[50] In April 1913, the illustrated monthly periodical *Musica* (Paris, Pierre Laffitte & C^{ie}) published a special issue of about twenty pages devoted to Czech music with a portrait of "Smetana, the illustrious Czech composer" on the cover.[51] The supplement to this issue, *Album Musica*, reproduced a facsimile of *Libuše*'s autograph score on the cover and contained six printed scores for solo piano or voice and piano by Smetana (*Souvenir de Bohême*), Dvořák, Fibich, Foerster, Suk and Novák.[52]

The French press's curiosity and interest in Smetana and Czech music continued throughout the interwar period. On June 1st, 1923, pianist and composer Blanche Selva (1884–1942) published a thirteen-page article in *La Revue musicale* entitled "La jeune école Tchèque," presenting an extensive list of composers including Smetana, Dvořák, Zdeněk Fibich, Leoš Janáček, Joseph Bohuslav Foerster, Vítězslav Novák, Josef Suk, Rudolf Karel, Otakar Ostrčil, Jaroslav Křička, Ladislav Vycpálek, Jan Kunc, Václav Juda Novotný, Boleslav Vomáčka,

[47] William Ritter, "Chronique tchèque," *Le Mercure musical*, February 15, 1907, 197–201.

[48] Ritter, "Chronique tchèque," 201: "Les polkas de Smetana sont pour la Bohème renaissante de son temps ce que les mazurkas de Chopin [sont] pour la Pologne agonisante. Et le génie de Smetana doit lui être cher jusqu'en ses balbutiements."

[49] William Ritter, "Notes sur Smetana," *Le Mercure musical*, July 15, 1907, 738–45.

[50] William Ritter, *Smetana* (Paris: Alcan, 1907).

[51] *Musica* 12, no. 127 (1913): 61–80.

[52] *Album musica*, no. 127 (1913): 341–59.

Václav Štěpán, Vilém Petrželka, and Karel Boleslav Jirák.[53] The article begins with a comparison between Czech and French schools: "The Czech school, almost contemporary with the modern French school, since its founder, Bedrich Smetana (1824–1884), was roughly a contemporary of César Franck, has since that time offered increasing vitality and breadth."[54] Étienne Fournol (1871–1940), a former politician who became a journalist and historian after 1914, devoted an enthusiastic twelve-page article to Smetana on October 1st, 1824, in *La Revue musicale*.[55] He campaigned for the staging of *The Bartered Bride* at the Opéra-Comique, and encouraged performances of the symphonic poem *Vltava* and the first string quartet *From My Life* in Parisian concerts. The press reception of the first performance of *The Bartered Bride* in Paris in 1928 has been extensively studied by Antoine Marès in the article cited above. For this reason, this subject is deliberately omitted from the present article. However, it is worth mentioning an article of Bohuslav Martinů on this first Parisian performance, published on October 20th, 1928, in the newspaper *Paris-Soir*,[56] as well as an article of Karel Boleslav Jirák entitled "Les Grands Compositeurs Tchèques," devoted to Smetana, Dvořák, and Fibich, and published on January 1st, 1929, in the monthly magazine *L'Europe illustrée*.[57]

IV. Smetana's reception in the histories of music published in French

From 1895 onwards, historical works in French about Smetana or mentioning him began to appear. Under the pseudonym Jean Breton, the young philosopher Célestin Bouglé (1870–1940), future director of the École normale supérieure in Paris, published his *Notes d'un étudiant français en Allemagne* in 1895, recounting his experiences in four German university towns. He explained that concerts were held almost every day of the week in Berlin and that on days when so-called popular concerts were held, "in addition to German classics, they play Saint-Saëns and Smetana, whom we will soon hear about in France, as he is

[53] Blanche Selva, "La jeune école Tchèque," *La Revue musicale*, June 1, 1923, 134–46. See Ladislav Sulc, "La musique tchécoslovaque," *La Revue musicale*, February 1, 1922, 177–79.

[54] Selva, "La jeune école Tchèque," 134: "L'École Tchèque, presque contemporaine de l'École Française moderne, puisque son fondateur: Bedrich Smetana (1824–1884) fut à peu près le contemporain de notre César Franck, l'école tchèque offre, depuis ce temps, une vitalité et une ampleur croissantes."

[55] Étienne Fournol, "Bedrich Smetana (1824–1884)," *La Revue musicale*, October 1, 1924, 193–204.

[56] Bohuslav Martinů, "La *Fiancée vendue* de Frédéric Smetana," *Paris-Soir*, October 20, 1928, 2.

[57] Karel Boleslav Jirák, "Les Grands Compositeurs Tchèques," *L'Europe illustrée*, January 1, 1929, 7–8. See Karel Boleslav Jirák, "La musique en Tchécoslovaquie," *La Revue musicale*, March 1, 1928, 165–68.

very much in vogue here."[58] In a special issue of a magazine entitled *La Nation Tchèque. Sa Mission et son Rôle en Europe*, published in Prague in 1895 by Charles Hipman with the collaboration of leading Czech artists and writers, the six pages of the final article are devoted to "Frédéric Smetana."[59] This is a translation of an article that appeared the previous year in the journal *Nová Doba*. Like five of the six articles in the same issue, this translation was done in Prague by M. A. S. Oudin. It is therefore the Czech point of view that is presented here into French, emphasizing Smetana's national character and criticizing forced comparisons with German composers such as Mozart, Beethoven, and Wagner.

In his *Histoire de la musique. Bohême* published in 1898, the music and theater critic and historian Albert Soubies (1846–1918) devoted eight pages of the fourth and final chapter to Smetana, providing some information on the composer's operas and symphonic poems, his work as a conductor, and the musical influences of Liszt and Schumann.[60] Soubies noted that Smetana was the first composer in his country to work exclusively with Czech-language librettos, and felt that there was much color and fragrance, elegance and charm in his dramatic music, in which Smetana was almost always original, vigorous without brutality, and graceful without sentimentality. In the preceding pages of the same chapter, Soubies had highlighted the role played by "Škraup" (František Jan Škroup) and Smetana in the development of Czech music:

> Bohemia had two musicians, Škraup and Smetana, who underwent a very characteristic evolution and who, largely of their own volition and through careful calculation, resolutely strove to emancipate the musical art of their homeland, to give it an independent character, strongly imbued with the flavors of the race and the color of the country. In this sense, Škraup was the initiator. His work, already interesting from this point of view, was immediately and seamlessly followed by that of Smetana, which was more significant, more complete, and in which the ethnic character was even more strongly defined.[61]

[58] Jean Breton, *Notes d'un étudiant français en Allemagne: Heidelberg, Berlin, Leipzig, Munich* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1895, 3rd ed.), 124: "on y joue, outre les classiques allemands, du Saint-Saëns ou du Smetana, dont nous entendrons sous peu parler en France, car il est en pleine vogue ici."

[59] "Frédéric Smetana," in Charles Hipman, ed., *La nation tchèque. Sa mission et son rôle en Europe* (Prague: Jos. R. Vilímek, 1895), 66–71.

[60] Albert Soubies, *Histoire de la musique. Bohême* (Paris: Librairie des bibliophiles, 1898), 70–77.

[61] Soubies, *Histoire de la musique. Bohême*, 66–67: "La Bohême a eu successivement deux musiciens, Škraup et Smetana, par qui s'est accomplie une très caractéristique évolution, et qui, en grande partie de leur plein gré, par un calcul réfléchi, se sont résolument efforcés d'émanciper l'art musical de leur patrie, de lui prêter une physionomie indépendante, fortement empreinte des arômes de la race, de la couleur du pays. En ce sens, Škraup a été l'initiateur. À son œuvre, déjà intéressante à ce point de vue, a immédiatement, sans interstice, succédé celle de Smetana, plus significative, plus complète, et où le caractère ethnique se dessine plus énergiquement encore."

At the turn of the 20th[th] century, Élise Vigoureux was a professor of music history at the Marseille Conservatory. In her *Manuel d'histoire générale de la musique à l'usage des classes de solfège*, published in 1904 after ten years of teaching in the Phocean city, the Czech school occupies only 8 lines, compared to 22 for the Russian school, 19 for the Scandinavian school, 19 for the Belgian school, and 16 for the English school, in a 136-page book. Here is the short text she wrote about the Czech school: "Alongside the German school, the *Czech* or *Bohemian* school produced talented musicians such as: *Smetana* (1824–1884), whose opera *The Bartered Bride* was a European success; and *Dvorach* (*Dvorchack*) 1841, who wrote symphonies, chamber music, piano music, and operas that are not widely known."[62] In this educational book for solfeggio classes, several dozen questions are asked to young students at the end of each chapter. Of the 37 questions asked at the end of the tenth chapter devoted to seven national schools of modern music, only one question concerns the Czech school, creating confusion with the German school: "Name two German musicians who represent the Czech school."[63] In the "Errata" placed at the beginning of the book, "Dvorach" is replaced by "Dvorak."

Born in Neuchâtel, the Swiss critic William Ritter (1867–1955) lived in Prague in 1888 and again in 1903–1904, made numerous trips to Central and Eastern Europe at the turn of the 20th century, and published, among others, various writings on Anton Bruckner, Johann Strauss, Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss, Arnold Schoenberg, and Franz Schreker. Ritter's *Smetana* (1907) was the first biography in French devoted to the Czech composer. After the introduction, the book is divided into eight chapters, arranged mainly in chronological order and entitled "Czech music before Smetana," "Until the first marriage (1824–1849)," "The early years (Prague, 1849–1856)," "Gothenburg (1856–1861)," "The Eight Operas," "*My Fatherland* (1874–1879)," "*From my life* in Two Quartets. Miscellaneous Works (1876–1882)," and "*Viola*. The Catastrophe (1882–1884)." Following the catalog of Smetana's works, the bibliography contains "nothing but general works" in French, compared to six specialized works in German, including four on Smetana, and sixteen works and countless articles on Smetana in Czech.[64] Ritter remarked on this subject:

[62] Élise Vigoureux, *Manuel d'histoire générale de la musique à l'usage des classes de solfège* (Marseille: Messerer, 1904), 108: "À côté de l'école allemande, l'École *tchèque* ou *bohémienne* a fourni des musiciens de valeur tels que: *Smetana* (1824–1884) dont l'opéra de la *Fiancée Vendue* a eu un succès européen ; et *Dvorach* (*Dvorchack*) 1841, qui a écrit des symphonies, de la musique de chambre, de piano et des opéras peu répandus."

[63] Vigoureux, *Manuel d'histoire générale de la musique*, 117: "Citer deux musiciens allemands représentants de l'École tchèque ?"

[64] William Ritter, *Smetana* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1907), 239–41.

> On Smetana himself, I fear there is nothing [in French] except our translation of the programs of the National Theatre for the Cycle of performances of the summer of 1904; our article in the *Semaine Littéraire* (Geneva) of June 11th, 1898, our Czech letters in the *Mercure de France*, May 1904 and 1907, our chronicles in the *Mercure musical*, finally the article by Mr. Marcel Montandon in the *Bulletin de l'Art ancien et moderne* of July 9th, 1904; plus the reviews in musical journals and newspapers on the various performances in Paris of the quartet *From My Life* and the overture to *The Bartered Bride*.[65]

In 1909, the writer and critic Camille Laurent Célestin Faust (1872–1945) published under the pseudonym of Camille Mauclair the first volume of his *Essais sur l'émotion musicale*, one of whose texts is entitled "La *Libuse* de Smetana" and offers seven pages of analysis on the libretto and music of this opera.[66] Three years later, in 1912, the music critic Jean Marnold, pseudonym of Georges Jean Jules Morland (1859–1935), devoted a six-page chapter of his book *Musique d'autrefois et d'aujourd'hui* to Czech music in general and to Smetana and Dvořák in particular.[67] This chapter, actually dated January 1907, ends with a judgment not devoid of condescension:

> One should not ask Czech music for more than its adolescence implies, to seek the directing geniuses and masterpieces of its elders in the past of sound art. It is worth knowing though. Under the postiche of outdated forms or borrowings, it appears straight from nature; devoid of glitz in its verve; in its melancholy, of all pathos as much as of German pedantry; in view of Russian ingenuity, ingenue; harmonious expression of the popular soul and national sensitivity.[68]

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[65] Ritter, *Smetana*, 239: "Sur Smetana lui-même, je crains qu'il n'existe rien que notre traduction des programmes du Théâtre National pour le Cycle de représentations de l'été 1904 ; notre article de la *Semaine Littéraire* (Genève) du 11 juin 1898, nos lettres tchèques du *Mercure de France*, mai 1904 et 1907, nos chroniques du *Mercure musical*, enfin l'article de M. Marcel Montandon au *Bulletin de l'Art ancien et moderne* du 9 juillet 1904 ; plus les critiques des revues musicales et des journaux sur les diverses exécutions à Paris du quatuor *De ma vie* et de l'ouverture de la *Fiancée vendue*."

[66] Camille Mauclair, *Essais sur l'émotion musicale. La Religion de la musique* (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1909), 179–85.

[67] Jean Marnold, *Musique d'autrefois et d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Dorbon-Aîné, 1912), 225–30.

[68] Marnold, *Musique d'autrefois et d'aujourd'hui*, 230: "Il ne faut pas demander à la musique tchèque plus que son adolescence implique, y chercher les génies directeurs et les chefs-d'œuvre de ses aînées dans le passé de l'art sonore. Elle vaut cependant d'être connue. Sous le postiche des formes ou des emprunts désuets, elle apparaît issue tout droit de la nature ; dénuée de clinquant dans sa verve ; en sa mélancolie, de tout pathos autant que de teuton pédantisme ; au regard de l'ingéniosité russe, ingénue ; harmonieuse expression de l'âme populaire et de la sensibilité nationale."

In 1914, Mauclair, alias Faust, published a work entitled *Histoire de la musique européenne, 1850–1914*, containing a seven-page chapter on "Frédéric Smetana."[69] The first two sentences of this chapter present the composer as the founding father of Czech music: "It was Frédéric Smetana who gave to Bohemia his capital dramatic works and who, master of Dvorak, opened before him the road of the musical future in this country. Before Smetana, Czech music, strictly speaking, did not exist: he first raised a national voice, and from him everything came."[70]

The end of the First World War and the creation of Czechoslovakia sparked a renewed interest in Czech music and in Smetana. Within a four-page chapter on Czechoslovak music, V. Dědeček thus devoted two pages to Smetana in his work entitled *La Tchécoslovaquie et les Tchécoslovaques*, published in Paris in 1919 with a preface by the historian Jules Chopin (1880–1939), who lived for a long time in Prague where he was a lecturer at the University.[71] The following paragraphs briefly examine four other Czech composers, namely Fibich, Dvořák, Novák, and Suk.[72] Similarly, the historian Louis Eisenmann (1869–1937) attributed two pages of his book *La Tchécoslovaquie*, published in Paris in 1921, to Smetana, Dvořák, and some other composers.[73]

A student of Antoine François Marmontel, François Benoist, François Bazin and Ambroise Thomas, Albert Lavignac (1846–1916) taught solfège and then harmony at the Paris Conservatory for several decades and published numerous theoretical works which were long considered authoritative in French music conservatories. In his imposing work entitled *La Musique et les musiciens* (1895), it is worth noting the absence of comments on Smetana and Dvořák, as well as the absence of the Czech or Bohemian school in the table of contents (p. x), unlike the German, Italian, French, and Russian schools (the latter on pages 566–573).[74] This gap was partly filled in the fifth volume of the first part of his very voluminous *Encyclopédie de la musique et dictionnaire du conservatoire* (more than 7000 pages in total), published jointly with the musicologist Lionel de la Laurencie (1861–1933) in 1922 and devoted to the history of music in sev-

[69] Camille Mauclair, *Histoire de la musique européenne, 1850–1914* (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1914), 209–16.

[70] Mauclair, *Histoire de la musique européenne*, 209: "Ce fut Frédéric Smetana qui donna à la Bohême ses œuvres dramatiques capitales et qui, maître de Dvorak, ouvrit avant lui la route de l'avenir musical en ce pays. Avant Smetana la musique tchèque, à proprement parler, n'existait pas : il éleva le premier une voix nationale, et de lui tout est venu."

[71] V. Dědeček, *La Tchécoslovaquie et les Tchécoslovaques* (Paris: Éditions Bossard, 1919), 150–51.

[72] Ibid., 151–52.

[73] Louis Eisenmann, *La Tchécoslovaquie* (Paris: F. Rieder et C[ie], 1921), 113–14.

[74] Albert Lavignac, *La Musique et les musiciens* (Paris: Librairie Ch. Delagrave), 1895.

eral dozen countries or geographical areas, including Russia, Poland, Finland, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, etc. Within the chapter "Autriche-Hongrie," a seventeen-page sub-chapter is entitled "Bohême" and is authored by Alexandre de Bertha, pseudonym of the Hungarian composer and music critic Sándor Bertha (1843–1912) who had settled in Paris in 1865. Two long pages of this sub-chapter concern Smetana.[75] According to Bertha, it was with this composer that the "glorious period of Czech music" began. With *Prodaná nevěsta*, Smetana is said to have composed a comic opera of incomparable charm, in which the rich discoveries would be always imbued with the purest national character. The influence of Wagner on Smetana is emphasized several times. Bertha expressed interest not only in Smetana's operas, but also in his symphonic poems and chamber music. In his *Histoire de la musique* published in Paris in 1923, the musicologist and music critic Paul Landormy (1868–1943) briefly discussed Smetana and the Czech school:

> The Czech school was founded by Smetana (1824–1884), author of two *string quartets*, a *trio* for piano, violin and cello, numerous operas, the best-known of which is *The Bartered Bride*, and perhaps the most nationally significant *Libůse*, and a cycle of six symphonic poems entitled *My Fatherland*. Smetana does not use the themes of popular song, nor does he have a very personal technique: but the national feeling that inspires him is of a penetrating emotion. After him came Antonín Dvořák (pronounced Dvorchak) (1841–1904), author of a host of works in all genres, including an opera, *Rusalka*, and Zdeněk Fibich. At present, the Czech school is mainly represented by Vítězslav Novák, Josef Suk and Václav Štěpán. These are artists of generous sensibility. They have a predilection for developing great tragic themes or evoking fantastic visions. They have not yet completely freed themselves from the influence of German Romanticism, either in their language or in the quality of their emotion.[76]

[75] Albert Lavignac and Lionel de la Laurencie, ed. *Encyclopédie de la musique et dictionnaire du conservatoire. Première partie: Histoire de la musique. Russie – Pologne – Finlande […]* (Paris: Librairie Delagrave, 1922), vol. 5, 2608–09.

[76] Paul Landormy, *Histoire de la musique* (Paris: Librairie Delaplane, 1923), 447–48: "L'école tchèque fut fondée par Smetana (1824-1884), auteur de deux *quatuors* à cordes, d'un *trio* pour piano, violon et violoncelle, de nombreux opéras parmi lesquels le plus connu est *la Fiancée vendue*, et le plus significatif peut-être au point de vue national *Libuse*, et d'un cycle de six poèmes symphoniques intitulés *Ma Patrie*. Smetana n'utilise point les thèmes de la chanson populaire et il n'a pas non plus une technique très personnelle : mais le sentiment national qui l'inspire est d'une émotion pénétrante. Après lui, il faut citer Antoine Dvorak (prononcez *Dvorchak*) (1841–1904), auteur d'une foule d'ouvrages dans tous les genres et notamment d'un opéra, *Roussalka*, et Zdenko Fibich. Actuellement l'école tchèque a pour principaux représentants V. Novak, Joseph Suk et Vaclar Stepan. Ce sont des artistes d'une sensibilité généreuse. Ils ont une prédilection pour le développement de grands thèmes tragiques ou pour les évocations de visions fantastiques. Ils ne se sont

Landormy thus emphasized the influence of German Romanticism on the Czech school. However, the space devoted to the Czech school is less than a page in a book of 470 pages. Similarly, in a work dedicated to violinists and violin music from the 16th to the 18th century and published in 1924, Arthur Pougin devoted two pages to the Czech school and concluded by highlighting the superb musical renaissance which took place in the Czech country more than sixty years earlier and of which Smetana was the hero.[77] The musicologist Julien Tiersot (1857–1936) was a student of Jules Massenet and César Franck at the Paris Conservatory where he later worked as a librarian between 1883 and 1920. He published a 128-page critical biography of Smetana in 1926,[78] two years before the first Parisian performance of a Smetana opera.

In conclusion, the slow and belated reception of Smetana's operas in France is out of step with his reception in the rest of Europe. Sixty-two years after its premiere, *The Bartered Bride* was the only opera by the composer and the only Czech opera performed in France before the Second World War. Three of Smetana's other operas were performed in France more than a century after their premiere. As a result, only four of Smetana's eight operas and a single Dvořák's opera have been performed in France to the present day, while Janáček's operas are a little better known and while the operatic output of composers such as Zdeněk Fibich is still unknown in France today. The reception of Smetana's operas was very poor at the end of the 19th century and often illustrated by simple ignorance. The first years of the 20th century changed the situation somewhat with the publication of the first monograph in French devoted to the composer. It was not until the independence of Czechoslovakia at the end of the First World War, more than thirty years after the composer's death, that French music critics began to take a real interest in Smetana. While Smetana's instrumental music is now fairly well known in France, his operatic output has never really made it into the standard repertoire in this country. The language barrier is only one of several explanations for this observation, and it is possible to speculate on the greater reception that Smetana's operas would have had in France if the composer's plan to stage *The Bartered Bride* in Paris in 1869 had been successful.[79] In fact, there were relatively few places abroad where Smetana himself attempted

point encore, ni par le langage ni par la qualité de l'émotion, complètement dégagés de l'influence du romantisme allemand."

[77] Arthur Pougin, *Le violon, les violonistes et la musique de violon du XVI^e^ au XVIII^e^ siècle* (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1924), 271–72.

[78] Julien Tiersot, *Smetana, biographie critique* (Paris: H. Laurens, 1926).

[79] See Viktorová, "Promoting Smetana's *Bartered Bride* (*Prodaná nevěsta*) in Paris," 80–81.

to introduce this opera as early as the late 1860s, and France–albeit unsuccessfully–was one of them. Even the great success of *The Bartered Bride* in Vienna in 1892, which initiated the opera's subsequent spread to numerous stages around the world, did not produce a comparable effect in France. Nineteenth-century France was a highly centralized country. In the French repertoire, only operas and opéra-comiques premiered in Paris stood any chance of being performed in the provinces or abroad. Similarly, only Italian and German operas performed in the French capital were likely to gain nationwide exposure, a fact that composers such as Meyerbeer, Donizetti, Verdi, and Wagner understood perfectly well. Smetana's misfortune in Paris and France can be compared to that of the German composer Albert Lortzing (1801–1851). Although Lortzing ranked, after Verdi, Wagner, and Puccini, among the four most frequently performed opera composers in the German-speaking world during the interwar period, and although his *komische Opern* are still staged in Germany today, his name remains unknown to French audiences due to a lack of performances in Paris during the 19th century – a problem that the German composer had clearly identified and anticipated in 1850, a few months before his death.[80]

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[80] Irmlind Capelle, "*Les méprises par ressemblance* von Grétry und Lortzings *Die beiden Schützen*," in *Die Opéra comique und ihr Einfluß auf das europäische Musiktheater im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Herbert Schneider and Irmlind Capelle (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1997), 357. [Lortzing's letter to Philipp Reger, March 1850]: "Dann mein lieber Philipp, um auf die Veranlassung Deines Projectes zurückzukommen, glaube ich noch gar nicht, dass es mir gelingen würde, eine meiner Opern auf einem französischen Theater zur Aufführung zu bringen. Das Volk hat mehr Nationalstolz wie die Deutschen; […] Also wäre ich darauf angewiesen eine Oper in und für Frankreich selbst zu komponieren. Ob mir das gelänge, ist eine grosse Frage!"

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