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From Rubinstein to Rebikov: influences of Russian composers on Janáček

Od Rubensteina do Rebikova: vplivi ruskih skladateljev na Janáčka

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IZVLEČEK

Članek raziskuje, koliko je Leoš Janáček poznal delo štirih ruskih skladateljev (Rubinstein, Čajkovski, Musorgski, Rebikov) in ocenjuje osnove ter razsežnost mogočih vplivov na njegovo glasbo.

ABSTRACT

The article examines Leoš Janáček's knowledge of the music of four Russian composers (Rubinstein, Tchaikovsky, Musorgsky and Rebikov) and assesses the basis and extent of any discernible influence.

Always thought to be a strangely original composer, Janáček was nevertheless open to outside influences for much of his working life. Particularly after the refusal in Prague to stage *Jenůfa* (when he was approaching fifty), he made a point of going to Prague to investigate fashionable foreign operas. Composers such as Puccini, Richard Strauss and Charpentier all made their impact upon him at this period – roughly the decade from 1903 until the First World War. But Russian music was a powerful influence on Janáček almost from the start. A dyed-in-the-wool Russophile, Janáček demonstrated his love of Russia in the names of his two children (Olga and Vladimír) and the first name he adopted for himself, “Lev” (the Moravian “Leoš” was a later development) as well as in his politics. It was also a powerful creative aid: the range of Russian literature

that inspired his own works begins with the lost melodrama *Smrt* [Death], JW X/3¹ (a setting of a Lermontov text, composed when he was twenty-two), and goes right up to his final opera *Z mrtvého domu* [From the House of the Dead], based on Dostoyevsky. But while French and Italian composers such as Charpentier, Mascagni and Puccini had an impact mostly at specific times on Janáček's compositional style, the influence of Russian composers and Russian music can be charted throughout his life.

References in Janáček's writings and lectures provide a quick overview of the composers in which he was interested and in the past decade virtually all of his public writings have been made available in the Complete Critical Edition.² These include writings published both during his lifetime and after, interviews, drafts and lecture notes. The writings relevant to Russian composers crop up in both his Literary Works (*LD*)³ and Theoretical Works (*TD*).⁴ The following chart show the number of references that can be found to individual Russian composers in Janáček's writings.

Composer	LD	TD	total
Alyab'yev	1	0	1
Balakirev	1	1	2
Musorgsky	5	5	10
Rebikov	7*	6	13
Rubinstein	5	6	11
Stravinsky	1	0	1
Tchaikovsky	6	4	10

* = includes one longer passage where discussion of Rebikov is spread over a 16-page section.

Two names here can be immediately discounted: Alyab'yev's song *Solovej* [The Nightingale] is mentioned in one of Janáček's earliest reviews, XV/11 (1875) with a comment only on how it was sung. Stravinsky's Piano Sonata is briefly mentioned (and briefly dismissed) in Janáček's account of some of the music he heard at the ISCM Festival in Venice in 1925 (XV/281). The remaining five names make a strange group. The frequency of references to western-orientated composers such as Rubinstein and Tchaikovsky is striking. One of Janáček's first musical loves was Rubinstein and for a while he saw himself as Rubinstein's successor. Tchaikovsky made a huge impact on Janáček during the writing of *Jenůfa*, as he moved into his middle period. Although Janáček is often seen as a soul-mate of Musorgsky, it is surprising there are not more references to him in Janáček's writings, as indeed to other members of the Mighty Handful (only two references to Balakirev). The absence of Rimsky-Korsakov

1 JW numbers are from Nigel Simeone, John Tyrrell and Alena Němcová, *Janáček's Works: A Catalogue of the Music and Writings of Leoš Janáček* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997). The catalogue siglum 'JW' will be omitted hereafter.

2 *Souborné kritické vydání děl Leoše Janáčka* [Complete Critical Edition of the Works of Leoš Janáček], published by Supraphon from 1978, but later spread between Bärenreiter (Prague) and Editio Janáček (Brno).

3 Leoš Janáček, *Literární dílo* (Brno: Editio Janáček, 2003), 2 vols.

4 Leoš Janáček, *Teoretické dílo* (Brno: Editio Janáček, 2007, 2007-8), 2 vols.

is particularly intriguing in view of later commentaries on his potential influence on Janáček's harmonic style.⁵ Equally curious is the frequency with which the name of the almost forgotten Rebikov comes up.

Janáček's partiality for Russian music is not a new topic. After Czechoslovakia fell into the Soviet Union's orbit of influence with the Communist coup of February 1948, it became expedient for established scholars to safeguard both their and Janáček's futures by the publication of articles drawing attention to Janáček's love of Russia and Russian music.⁶ Rubinstein was generally ignored for being not really Russian, but Janáček's interest in Tchaikovsky was a welcome topic, pursued with vigour, and was less frustrating than Musorgsky on which very little information apart from stylistic affinity could be found. As for Rebikov, his connections with Janáček began to be investigated only in the late 1990s when Miloš Štědroň drew attention to him in his book *Leoš Janáček a hudba 20. století*⁷ but the degree to which he dominated Janáček's lectures on opera could not be fully appreciated until Janáček's lecture notes became available. This article will attempt to chart Janáček's acquaintance with these four composers through his writings, his knowledge of their music and its possible impact on him.

Anton Grigor'yevich Rubinstein (1829–1894)

Janáček's first attested encounter with Anton Rubinstein is briefly mentioned in his review (XV/13) of a concert given by the Brno Musikverein on 23 April 1876, where a duet identified merely by the Czech title "V domovině" [In the homeland] was sung. Much more important was the series of Rubinstein's works that Janáček took part in under the direction of his piano teacher, Amalie Wickenhauser (1834–1890). He conducted the first movement of Rubinstein's Piano Concerto no. 3 at a concert of the Brno Beseda, the main Czech concert-giving organization in Brno, on 13 May 1876; on 28 October 1877 at another Beseda concert Janáček and Wickenhauser performed Rubinstein's Fantasia in F minor for two pianos, op. 37. Rubinstein also figured in the chamber music series that Wickenhauser organized: it is not clear whether Janáček performed in Rubinstein's Piano Trio in F op. 15 no. 1 (given on 6 January 1878), but he was the pianist in Rubinstein's Piano Quintet in G minor op. 99 on 5 January 1879.

Janáček was then in his early twenties beginning to establish himself as a music teacher at the Czech Teachers' Training College in Brno and as a conductor the Brno Beseda. Wickenhauser's influence was strong, guiding him towards a comparatively conservative repertoire, of which Rubinstein was emblematic. For Janáček Rubenstein was one of the most famous composers alive. When his original idea to study with him

5 e.g. Paul Wingfield, "Unlocking a Janáček Enigma: The Harmonic Structure of Kudrjáš's "Waiting Song," *Music and Letters* 75 (1994): 561–75.

6 e.g. Jan Racek, "Slovanské prvky v díle Leoše Janáčka: příspěvek k Janáčkovou hudebnímu realismu" [Slavonic elements in the works of Leoš Janáček: a contribution to Janáček's musical realism], *Časopis Matice Moravské* 53 (1951): 361–47 and Bohumír Štědroň, "Janáček a Čajkovský" [Janáček and Tchaikovsky], *Sborník prací filosofické fakulty brněnské univerzity* 2, no. 2–4 (1953): 201–27.

7 Miloš Štědroň, *Leoš Janáček and hudba 20. století: paralely, sondy, dokumenty* [Janáček and 20th-century Music: Parallels, Soundings, Documents] (Brno, 1998) (Brno: Nadace Universitas Masarykiana; Georgetown: Nauma; Masarykova Univerzita, 1998).

in St Petersburg came to nothing, it was at Wickenhauser's suggestion that in October 1879 Janáček continued his studies at Leipzig Conservatoire, an institution haunted by the names of Mendelssohn and Schumann – but also Rubinstein. At his entrance audition for the Conservatoire Janáček played a Rubinstein étude in addition to a Bach prelude. And when Rubinstein turned up at a Gewandhaus rehearsal on 15 October 1879 (to which Janáček, as a registered student at the Conservatoire, had free access) Janáček's excitement is palpable in the account that he wrote that evening to Zdenka Schulzová, his future fiancée:

But the most interesting thing for me was the presence of Rubinstein. From the beginning he sat in one of the last rows and listened very attentively; I observed him the whole time – during the piano concerto he was restless; I didn't like the concerto either, too little strength and energy. After that he walked through the hall to the orchestra and then the applause rose up like a storm. He's a big man, with long dark hair, no beard, powerful features – if I knew more already – how I would have run up to him!⁸

A month later Janáček attended Rubinstein's piano recital and again wrote to Zdenka of his impressions:

Should I tell you about Rub[instein]? I've not heard a greater artist! Not enormous technique, anyone can learn that, but his conception and rendition of compositions – that's the real artist in him. He played at least twenty-five pieces, among them great works, naturally by heart. But in my opinion he played his own works [a fugue to open the concert, a galop to end it] the least beautifully – his soul rushes ahead of his body. His pp is wonderfully beautiful, his fpp long-lasting. He played solo from 7 to 9.45 – and the fact that it didn't tire one is the mark of good playing. I'll hear him once again on Sunday at the chamber concert.⁹

Janáček's "at least twenty-five pieces" was an exaggeration, though the fourteen he did play seems ample enough in a programme ranging from Mozart's C minor Fantasia K475 to Schumann's Fantasy with a large group of Chopin in between. The chamber concert that Janáček announced for "Sunday" took place on Friday 22 November and this time was devoted entirely to Rubinstein's own works: two quintets (for piano and wind in F major op. 55 and for piano and strings in G minor op. 99), in which Rubinstein himself played the piano, and a string quartet (C minor op. 17 no. 2):

Yes, to be a great artist is beautiful! How I felt today at the concert! When I hear Rubinstein's compositions I feel extraordinary: my spirit truly melts, it takes wing, becomes free and, at the moment when I listen to it, paints free pictures for itself. I like his compositions so much that it seems to me that some day I should become his heir. This verve, this speaking "to the soul" I find nowhere else but in his compositions. It

8 Leoš Janáček to Zdenka Schulzová, 14–15 October 1879, published in Leoš Janáček, *"Intime Briefe" 1879/80 aus Leipzig und Wien*, ed. Jakob Knaus (Zürich: Leoš Janáček-Gesellschaft, 1985), 44–46. [hereafter IB]

9 Leoš Janáček to Zdenka Schulzová, 19–20 November 1879; IB, 95–96.

*is so natural, uncontrived, he reveals himself just as he is, how he feels, he doesn't go after any musical doctrines, he seizes my innermost depths. And how far I am from his standpoint: I feel the sorry state of my present work – I know that I'm cladding myself with an iron cloak [of technique] – how long will I have to fight to rid myself again of these constraints! [...] At the end of the concert I felt how I would have to weep – but why did this, the very happiest moment, pass so quickly?*¹⁰

In later years, when he wrote about composers he admired, such as Dvořák or Tchaikovsky, Janáček's comments more were measured. Here, however, in this letter to Zdenka written straight after the concert, we catch him off guard. In the light of Janáček's later development it seems extraordinary that such conventional if well-wrought music spoke to him in this way. Most of it was in fact a quarter of a century old by then – only the Piano Quintet op. 99, which Janáček knew from performing it in Brno, was more recent.

When Janáček next wrote about Rubinstein he was already beginning to take a more critical stance. This was seven years later when, during his visit to his brother František in St Petersburg, he took a train out of St Petersburg to attend one of the regular orchestral concerts at the Pavlovsk railway station. The programme consisted entirely of works by Rubinstein: his Symphony no. 4, Cello Concerto no. 2, Piano Concerto no. 2, symphonic poem *Ivan the Terrible* and some songs. Janáček's impressions, recorded in one of the three articles that he wrote for the Brno newspaper *Lidové noviny* about his trip (XV/150), reveal that he found *Ivan the Terrible* "garrulous" but enjoyed the Russian "folk style" in the third movement of the Cello Concerto, a reflection perhaps of Janáček's recent engagement with Moravian folk music.¹¹

Whatever his reservations, Janáček made clear in his lectures that together with Brahms and Gounod he considered Rubinstein, the "most significant living composers" (that is until the death of Gounod in 1893 and Rubinstein a year later),¹² and he would occasionally refer to Rubinstein in his theoretical writings. In his harmony manual *O skladbě souzvukův a jejich zpořádův* [On the composition of chords and their connections], XV/151 (1896), Janáček quoted three bars from Rubinstein's Piano Concerto no. 3 in D minor (1877) to exemplify the use of non-harmony notes¹³ and used the same example a decade later in his unpublished treatise entitled *Základy hudebního sčítání* [The bases of musical rhythm], XV/317 (1905-6).¹⁴ A discussion in 1907 of Wagner's "drastically fictive" [i.e. deceptive] cadences in *Tristan* came with the comment that similar things can be found in Smetana and Rubinstein.¹⁵ In his final harmony manual (*Úplná nauka o harmonii* [Complete harmony manual], XV/202, 2nd edition, 1920) he remembered approvingly Rubinstein's suggestion of determining speed of performance by adding the main tempo note (e.g. a quarter note or a half note) to

10 Leoš Janáček to Zdenka Schulzová, 22–23 November 1879; *IB*, 99, 99–100.

11 *LD*, i, 232–33.

12 Jindřiška Bártová, "Leoš Janáček, c.k. učitel hudby" [Leoš Janáček, Imperial and Royal Music Teacher], *Opus musicum* 30 (1998): 131–39; reference on p.133.

13 *LD*, i, 330.

14 *LD*, ii, 80.

15 "Moderní harmonická hudba" [Modern harmonic music], XV/190; *LD*, i, 352.

modify a tempo word such as Presto.¹⁶ Together with Berlioz and Beethoven, Rubinstein, was one of Janáček's examples of perfection of structure in his 1921 lectures at the Prague Conservatory.¹⁷

As for any influence that Rubinstein may have had on Janáček's own works, this could only have been in his earliest pieces. It seems possible that the chamber works Janáček wrote in Vienna (where he went in the spring of 1880, after Leipzig) were composed under his spell. Certainly, judging from what he reported to Zdenka about his lessons a few months later at the Vienna Conservatory, Janáček was in the opposite camp from his Wagnerite fellow-students.¹⁸ The pieces written in Vienna came in the standard forms of the time: a Violin Sonata (X/16), a song cycle *Frühlingslieder* (X/17) and three movements of a String Quartet (X/18). But none of these early works survive and if they did would probably give very little hint of the future composer. Janáček was still intent on learning "technique", and very soon his own style would be overwhelmed by the impact of Moravian folk music.

Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

The appointment of his favourite brother František to an engineering post in St Petersburg at the end of 1895 made it possible for Janáček to experience Russia at first hand. František Janáček invited Leoš to visit Russia during the summer of 1896, and he came back full of enthusiasm for every aspect of Russian life, an enthusiasm conveyed both in informal comments in his diary and in the three articles that he published about his trip in *Lidové noviny* (XV/150).¹⁹ Soon after his return Janáček helped found the Brno Russian Circle, serving on the committee and initiating several of the club's musical ventures such as concerts to commemorate Pushkin (1899), Gogol and Zhukovsky (1902). A few months before he went to Russia he experienced an equally influential encounter with Russian culture when he saw a performance of Tchaikovsky's opera *Pikovaya dama* [The Queen of Spades], writing up his impressions in *Lidové noviny* (21 January 1896). By then he had stopped reviewing on a regular basis so that the long review he published (XV/149) was exceptional. At the time he was engaged in writing his third opera *Jenůfa*, initially inspired by Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* (which he reviewed enthusiastically on 9 March 1892, XV/137). But while its sheer veristic impact may have set Janáček going on his new opera, *The Queen of Spades* seems to have stopped him in his tracks after completing only the first act. He needed time to absorb and reflect on what he had learnt in order to apply it to the less folkloristic and more psychologically demanding Act 2. Janáček did no further work on *Jenůfa* until late 1902 and instead, in the moments that he could spare for composition, he composed in other genres. Soon after his return from Russia he embarked on a large-scale work, his cantata *Amarus*, III/6. This makes no attempt to sound Russian (as one

16 *TD*, i, 640.

17 *TD*, ii, 338, 346.

18 John Tyrrell, *Janáček: Years of a Life*, i: *The Lonely Blackbird* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006), 174–75.

19 For more details see Tyrrell, *Janáček: Years of a Life*, i, 426–33.

might argue for his earlier *Hospodine!*, III/5), but it is the first finished piece in which the future composer had emerged. Almost every piece he wrote thereafter, took him to a new level as a composer in whom a distinct voice was becoming more and more audible. One can argue that Janáček's interest in Russia and Russian music began to release something new in him.

Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades* was not the first work by Tchaikovsky that Janáček had heard. His earliest recorded contact with his music was in 1882, when at a Brno Beseda concert on 30 May he conducted Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings, op. 48, a work published and premiered only a few months earlier. More extensive exposure came on 19 February 1888, when he attended a big Tchaikovsky concert in Prague, given by the Umělecká beseda with the composer himself conducting the augmented orchestra of the Prague National Theatre. This was an event that generated considerable interest among Czech musicians (at last a Slavonic composer of orchestral works that could measure up to German domination of the field) and is presumably the reason why Janáček made a special effort to get to the concert. All the main works at the concert (Piano Concerto no. 1, the Violin Concerto and two overtures, *Romeo and Juliet* and *1812*) were receiving their Czech premièrès apart from the *Romeo and Juliet* overture. In the light of Janáček's later enthusiasm, his long review of the concert (XV/87)²⁰ was surprisingly cool. The few positive comments are distinctly odd: "an outstanding contrapuntalist – of Berlioz's school, and excellently versed in existing forms". While the *Romeo and Juliet* overture and the Piano Concerto were "imposing", the *1812* overture was barely unified, "almost rhapsodic". What seems to have disconcerted Janáček was the lack of obvious Slavonic credentials: he detected "Slavonic materials" only in the third movement of the Piano Concerto and in individual motifs in *1812*.²¹ Apart from these pieces, Janáček knew little of Tchaikovsky's purely orchestral music. He thought sufficiently well of the Serenade for Strings to include it at the first concert he conducted with the Czech National Orchestra, on 20 March 1898. He seems to have been fond of the Violin Concerto, attending at least four performances in Prague from the Tchaikovsky concert in February 1888 to a concert on 1 January 1920. Janáček knew two of Tchaikovsky's ballets. *Swan Lake* (which together with *The Queen of Spades* and *Eugene Onegin* became staple repertory the Prague National Theatre) he saw twice in Prague (25 December 1907 and 23 December 1913). When Brno got round to performing *The Nutcracker* a few years later (première, 31 May 1922) Janáček was sufficiently interested to buy himself a piano score.²² There is not a single mark in it, but it would have been surprising if he hadn't gone along to one of the Brno performances. He was composing *The Cunning Little Vixen* at the time and one can see a connection between Janáček's splendid three-horn peroration added before the final scene to help with the scene change and Tchaikovsky's similar use of three horns in the "Valse des fleurs".

20 LD, i 163–65.

21 Janáček remember the overture much later, in his article "Obrátit!" [Turn back!], XV/205 (1912), when, in a discussion of instrumental motifs he declared that a speech melody without its proper context would be as meaningless as a performance of the overture without its title (and thus its programme).

22 P. Tschalkowsky, *Der Nussknacker (Casse-Noisette)*, Ballet-Féerie in Zwei Akten (Leipzig: D. Rahter; Moskau, P. Jürgenson). Janáček acquired his copy from Barvič a Novotný, the date suggested by a date stamp on the inside cover of 20 April 1922.

The great success of Tchaikovsky's visit to Prague led to the Prague première of *Eugene Onegin* in December 1888 but Janáček heard it only on 21 February 1891 when it was given in the Czech theatre in Brno. At the time Janáček usually dealt with opera reviews in a single paragraph. But for *Eugene Onegin* (XV/114)²³ he wrote a scene-by-scene account of the whole opera, drawing attention to particularly memorable passages. His attempts to summarize the style of the opera included comments on the clear diatonic harmony, standard musical forms, its "good, striking tunes" and Tchaikovsky's understanding and use of Russian folk music. Two other comments stand out. There were no leitmotifs, he declared (this misleading statement was presumably intended as a compliment since Janáček, disapproved of them at the time). He was also struck by the fact that the "rhythm of the tunes is strikingly similar to the rhythm of everyday speech". This sounds like a precursor of one of Janáček's major in preoccupations (from 1897) but from his criticisms it would appear that "everyday speech" here means something different from the "everyday speech" in Janáček's speech melodies.

These two Tchaikovsky operas that had attracted Janáček's attention were very different. *Eugene Onegin* is an early work (1877–78), written in his late twenties, and his first successful opera, whereas *The Queen of Spades* (1890) came thirteen years and five operas later, towards the end of his career. Although attractive to Janáček in many ways, *Eugene Onegin*, with its set numbers (arias, duets, dances, choruses) and even a fully-fledged concertato–stretto finale at the end of Act 1 taught him little in terms of operatic conventions that he didn't already know from the French and Italian operas staged at the Brno Provisional Theatre. While in *The Queen of Spades* Tchaikovsky did not avoid concerted voices, he restricted them to genre scenes such as the opening chorus, the next scene with the songs for Paulina, Liza and the women's choruses, or the eighteenth-century pastiches in Act 2. In the light of the increasing prevalence of naturalistic operatic conventions of the time Tchaikovsky avoided conventional concertato in *The Queen of Spades* and instead attempted a more realistic simultaneous musing of the characters such as the ensemble bringing together Liza, her fiancé, the Countess, Gherman and others with all the characters lost in their own thoughts and singing as if to themselves. What is conspicuously absent from the opera is simultaneous duet. The tenor and soprano, Gherman and Liza, have four encounters. In three of them they do not sing together, apart from single bars of high-note endings. In their final scene they sing together for thirty bars, less than a quarter of the entire number.

This is the convention that informs later Janáček operas. Act 1 of *Jenůfa* was written before he had heard *The Queen of Spades* and contains a large-scale concertato ensemble (for four soloists and chorus), and a trio for Jenůfa, Števa and Grandmother Buryjovka but the later acts are much more restrained in their combination of solo voices. By the time of *Káťa Kabanová*, almost twenty years later, the combination of solo voices is rare, incidental and fleeting, and generally has a "realistic" justification (characters butting in on one another, speaking over one another, etc.).

To see the immediate impact of *The Queen of Spades* on *Jenůfa* one needs only to look at the basically "melodic" nature of many of the sung passages in Act 1 and

23 LD, i, 1911, 93.

compare them with what happens in Act 2, written after Janáček's encounter with *The Queen of Spades*. In Act 1 the music divides sharply into what could loosely be called "recitative" (Janáček does not hesitate to employ this term occasionally in this opera) and "aria". In a passage such as Jenůfa's opening solo one can omit the orchestral accompaniment and still retain the musical thread. This is equally true of the "aria" passages later in the act, for instance Laca's following outburst, or, after the *concertato* ensemble, Jenůfa's separate confrontations with Števa and Laca. In Act 1 the musical dramaturgy is slow (much of the time the characters sing melodic paragraphs rather than sentences) and those unaware that Janáček was writing to a prose libretto might be surprised to learn this fact, given the structured nature of the vocal "arias". Although there are still some set-piece arias in Act 2 such as Jenůfa's Prayer to the Virgin, the general character of the voice parts is noticeably less melodic and more declamatory, with the orchestra playing a more important structural role.

The impact of the two Tchaikovsky operas that Janáček knew can also be observed in the choice of characters and voice types. In both operas there is a pair of women soloists, the chief one serious and a soprano (Tatyana, Liza), the subsidiary one cheerful and a mezzo (Olga, Paulina), a scheme directly imitated in *Káťa Kabanová* (serious Káťa, a soprano; cheerful Varvara, a mezzo). Tchaikovsky's strongly drawn character of the old and imperious Countess in *The Queen of Spades* was similarly influential: in *Osud* [Fate] (Míla's mother) and in *Káťa Kabanová* (Kabanicha). When he came to *Věc Makropulos* [The Makropulos Affair] and was looking for a model of an old woman with a mysterious and glamorous past, Janáček might well have thought back to the Countess, her supernatural knowledge of three cards paralleled by Marty's knowledge of her alchemist father's elixir for eternal youth.

As far as male characters, Gherman in *The Queen of Spades* left his mark on Janáček's later vocal writing as a type of craggy, quasi-Heldentenor, reflected in Laca in *Jenůfa*, (contrasted with the light lyric tenor of Števa) and the self-obsessed tenor protagonists of later Janáček operas such as Živný in *Fate*, Gregor in *The Makropulos Affair* and Luka in *From the House of the Dead*.

The Queen of Spades opens on a public park with different groups of people enjoying themselves and provides a contrasting backdrop of normality against which the main characters stand out. Although he did not mention *The Queen of Spades* in his instructions to his librettist Fedora Bartošová, this is the sort of opening that Janáček encouraged her to write for him at the beginning of *Fate*.²⁴ In both operas the curtain goes up with a paean of praise to the sun by the chorus in differentiated groups and provide a cheerful contrast to the human drama that unfolds against them: Gherman's brooding, or the unexpected meeting of former lovers, Živný and Míla in *Fate*.

But of all aspects it was Tchaikovsky's handling of the orchestra that most fired Janáček's imagination. The central scene of *The Queen of Spades* when the Countess returns from the ball and is confronted by Gherman, who has been laying in wait for her, is conceived symphonically. It opens, with a gnawing little ostinato on the violas

²⁴ John Tyrrell, *Janáček's Operas: A Documentary Account* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), OS11.

that Tchaikovsky uses both for orchestral foreground and as background to the voices. In his description of the opera, surely with this scene in mind, Janáček wrote:

*Jerky, fragmentary, it lacks tightly linked big tunes. The orchestra simply throws up random piercing notes in all directions. And yet the composer's highly developed musical thought weaves all these tiny particles into such a magnificent whole, with such an overwhelming effect, seldom achieved in all of musical literature.*²⁵

The description fits much of Janáček's later operatic music, none better than the end of Act 1 in *Káťa Kabanová*, where the "tiny particles" that have been building up during the previous scene are thrillingly brought together in one of Janáček's most compelling act endings.

The structural importance of the orchestra in *The Queen of Spades* is seen especially in the strong act endings dominated by the orchestra: in particular the superb ending of Act 2 with its transformation of the Gherman theme set against a striding bass, or the brassy conclusion of the canal scene with Liza's suicide. Janáček learnt from this. The orchestral endings of Acts 2 and 3 in *Jenůfa* are wonderfully effective and in his later operas there are splendid orchestral perorations where the full burden of winding up the act to a strong conclusion is left entirely to the orchestra: the Act 1 endings of *Káťa Kabanová*, *The Makropulos Affair* and *From the House of the Dead* all belong to this category.

Tchaikovsky was occasionally invoked in Janáček's lectures, for instance in a discussion of programmatic references in music where "the rhythm of 'a troika trip' (Tchaikovsky)" is given as one of several such examples.²⁶ The lectures, thought to date between 1919 and 1921, i.e. at the time of the composition of *Káťa Kabanová*, rather suggests that he was thinking of his own depiction of the troika, both in the overture and towards the end of Act 1, a reference to Tichon's crucial journey that sets the tragic action in motion. A more substantial topic is the survey of harmony manuals in his lectures where he devotes a couple of paragraphs to Tchaikovsky's *Rukovodstvo k prakticheskomu izučeníyu garmoniy* [Guide to the practical study of harmony] (Moscow: 1872), which Janáček knew in its fourth edition (1891). He confines his comments to nomenclature, handling of dissonance, modulation ("well-handled"), etc. and appears disappointed that Tchaikovsky "does not go into psychological depths".²⁷

Modest Petrovich Musorgsky (1839–1881)

The strangest aspect of Janáček's fascination with Tchaikovsky is that he, together with his earlier enthusiasm, Rubinstein, offers what for us is an odd perspective on Russian nineteenth-century music: western-orientated and without any members of the "Mighty Handful" that dominates today's view of the most characteristically Russian

²⁵ LD, i, 226.

²⁶ TD, ii, 172.

²⁷ TD, ii, 418.

music of the nineteenth century. Surely, one might think, Janáček would be trying to get away from the Russian westernizers and instead seeking out the “real” musical Russia in composers such as Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin, Balakirev and Musorgsky? Musorgsky, in particular, has always seemed an obvious parallel to Janáček in his interest in something that can almost be interpreted as “speech melody” and in the individualistic, forging-one’s-own-path approach to composition that dominates Musorgsky’s approach. Commentators from Max Brod onwards have tried their best to establish links of influence between Janáček and Musorgsky and have failed. The most thorough-going attempt in this line was by Russian musicologist Abram Gozenpud, though even his painstaking examination of this subject only goes to show how little concrete evidence there is to go on.²⁸

The actual contacts that can be traced between Janáček and Musorgsky are remarkably few. Janáček’s lecture notes of 1909 have survived in a shorthand transcription by his pupil Mirko Hanák and contain this sentence: “From mensural music onwards the text was always put into verse. In opera there used to be only knights. Ordinary life was too small for opera. There was no real life in opera. This began only in Charpentier’s *Louise*. Musorgsky’s *Boris Godunov* is another example of this.”²⁹

This tiny, unspecific comment thrown in to what is principally a discussion of *Louise* would appear to be based only on what Janáček may have read. The next year he included Musorgsky’s *Detskaya* [The Nursery] in one of his “Sonata Hours” concerts at the Organ School (4 December 1910); a week later he made an ambiguous comment about the composer in a letter to his Prague friend, Artuš Rektorys: “Through the rippling of the rhythm, harmonic conception changes its colour so many times – and these gentlemen see only the earliest stage of how a composer forces it into his own style, into his own picture – a picture not found in Musorgsky – and confuse it with Smetana, equally unclear and misty.”³⁰ It is sad that this, his longest recorded comment on Musorgsky, is similarly “unclear and misty”.

At the time the Prague press was full of discussion of Musorgsky’s opera *Boris Godunov*, about to receive its première at the Prague National Theatre, and Rektorys urged Janáček to see it. Although this was a period when Janáček frequently got to Prague to see operatic novelties, he did not attend. Thereafter, however, *Boris Godunov* crops up in Janáček’s surviving lecture notes. A lecture entitled *Objektivní hodnota hudební díla* [The objective value of a musical work], XV/362 (after 1915), contains what became a familiar trope in later lectures, the names of *Boris Godunov*, *Louise* and Janáček’s *Jenůfa* linked together, essentially because of their use of prose rather than verse in their librettos.³¹ However it should be pointed out that apart from the general comment relating to all three works, and providing a (completely wrong) composition date for *Boris*³² Janáček says nothing more, and certainly nothing that would demonstrate any personal acquaintance

28 A. Gozenpud, “Janáček a Musorgskij” [Janáček and Musorgsky], *Opus musicum* 12, no. 4 (1980): 101–109; 12, no. 5, supplement (1980): I–V, VII–VII.

29 *TD*, ii, 408.

30 *Korespondence Leoše Janáčka s Artušem Rektorysem*, Janáčkův archiv, iv (Prague: Hudební matice, 1949), 145.

31 *LD*, ii, 71.

32 Janáček states that it was composed in 1876; the original seven-scene version was written in 1868–69, the expanded version in 1871–72.

with the opera. In contrast, for instance, he quotes a three-bar extract from *Madama Butterfly*, together with a brief commentary. There are similar references to *Boris* (or just Musorgsky) in later lecture notes (dating from 1917, 1919, 1920, 1921).³³ None are any more specific and all stick to the same point (the use of prose or informal speech), and are usually linked with *Louise* and *Jenůfa*. Just one comment is different: in his lectures on opera (dated approximately 1915–1919), in addition to mentioning the three works yet again he suddenly remembers Musorgsky's *The Nursery* (performed at the Organ School in 1910) and comments that it is “nice to compose even on children's babble”.³⁴

According to Jan Racek, Janáček is said to have possessed a piano-vocal score of *Boris Godunov* and made markings in the score, including a ‘negative’ appraisal of the Kromy forest scene,³⁵ but this score has disappeared. The only music by Musorgsky that has survived in Janáček's personal library is an edition of his *Kartinky s výstavki* [Pictures from an Exhibition]. He took the opportunity of seeing *Boris* when František Neumann introduced it in Brno on 22 August 1923, but made no specific mention in his correspondence of this production at the time. In his 1924 interview with Olin Downes for the *New York Times* (XV/254)³⁶ Janáček mentioned he had seen the Brno production a year earlier “for the first time” and he was reported to have “admired the opera very much”, but did not elaborate.

In his article on the subject Gozenpud spent much time contemplating Janáček's initial lack of interest in Musorgsky and explained it in two ways: that Musorgsky was by no means universally acclaimed in his native Russia; and that the regular, hostile comments by M. Ivanov in *Novoye vremya*, a newspaper Janáček subscribed to, could have coloured his attitude before hearing a note of the music. Another possible problem for Janáček was that *Boris* was a historical opera, set several centuries earlier and focussed on an historical character. By contrast, Charpentier's *Louise* was completely up to date – something Janáček mimicked in his *Fate*. Although the conventions that Musorgsky espoused were not notably different from those in Janáček operas (i.e. an emphasis on monologue, dialogue, some diegetic “songs”, and choruses) the fact is that Janáček seems not to have known *Boris* before his operatic conventions had been set in place and formulated – on the basis of his acquaintance with *The Queen of Spades* and *Louise*.

What one also needs to remember is that for all his oddity Janáček was, unlike Musorgsky, a well-trained musician, versed in a range of musical theory. His deep interest in the subject is demonstrated by his large output of harmony manuals and theoretical articles and by the fact for most of his adult life he headed an academic teaching institution, the Brno Organ School, which he himself founded in 1882. Finally Musorgsky, as indeed all of the “Mighty Handful”, was a latecomer on the Czech musical scene. Earlier Russian composers such as Glinka were cultivated at the Czech Provisional Theatre, boosted by the visit of Balakirev in 1867 to conduct *Ruslan and Ludmila*. Tchaikovsky's visit in 1888 was similarly important in increasing awareness of another Russian composer, but members of the “Mighty Handful” had to wait their turn in Prague and Brno

33 LD, ii, 91, 107, 135, 534; TD, ii, 232, 234, 237, 305.

34 LD, ii, 354.

35 Gozenpud, “Janáček a Musorgskij”, 109. No further source is offered for this other than Racek's “testimony”.

36 LD, i, 540–42.

almost until the twentieth century.³⁷ Janáček's ideas on speech melody were developed independently (years before he perhaps even heard of Musorgsky), despite the parallels that many commentators have seen between them and Musorgsky's writings. And any stylistic similarities in the music of the two composers simply reflects two composers pursuing similar paths rather than a matter of direct influence.

Vladimir Ivanovich Rebikov (1866–1920)

On 30 December 1906 Janáček's ex-pupil and keen promoter of his music Jan Kunc wrote a letter apologizing that he had not been able to see him during a brief visit to Brno. After mentioning that he had written a review of Janáček's *Four Moravian Male-voice Choruses*, IV/28,³⁸ he went on to discuss a new discovery:

I also wanted to write a feuilleton about Rebikov. He is an extremely interesting fellow, not so much in Yolka [The Christmas Tree], which really doesn't amount to much since it is neither a drama nor a story but simply one scene, but in the psychological drama Tea [Tea: bogina (Thea: the Goddess)], whose piano score Prof. Saska³⁹ lent me. I've never found so many harmonic novelties as there. He regards elevenths and thirteenths as simple chords, he isn't scared to take a whole string of them in semitones, one after the other; etc. And it doesn't seem to me something contrived, but something grown out of the needs of his harmonic thought, which is very complicated, though at the same time logical. It is strongly individual.⁴⁰

Rebikov⁴¹ was forty when Janáček heard about him from Kunc. His early years were spent in his native Russia, teaching at music schools in Moscow, Kiev and Odessa and later in Kishinev (now Chişinău, Moldava) but from 1906 he had been moving around the capitals of Europe, promoting himself with concerts of his own works. Piano works form a substantial and on-going part of his output and through them one can see his development from an accomplished provider of piano miniatures influenced by Grieg and Tchaikovsky (*Rêveries d'automne*, op. 8, 1897; *Scènes bucoliques*, op. 28, 1904) to a composer beginning to explore the more adventurous harmonic palette, described by Kunc above. Rebikov's first appearance in Prague was on 2 May 1906 when in collaboration with Adolf Mikeš's Music Institute he gave a concert of his works including piano pieces (including duets), solo songs, women's choruses and melodramas; it went well enough to be repeated in a shortened form a week later.⁴² On 27 November 1906 the Prague National Theatre staged *The Christmas Tree* (1900; première Moscow 1903) in a Czech

37 Gozenpud, "Janáček a Musorgskij", 104–105.

38 Published in *Lidové noviny* (17 December 1906).

39 Robert Saska (1853–1924), music critic, teacher at the German Realgymnasium in Brno.

40 Štědroň, "Leoš Janáček a hudba 20. století", 75.

41 Biographical material on Rebikov used in this article comes mostly from Manfred Füllsack, "Versagte oder fatale Selbstüberschätzung? Zu Leben und Werk des russischen Komponisten Vladimir Ivanovič Rebikov", *Acta Musicologica* 70, no. 1 (1998): 1–21.

42 Füllsack, "Versagte oder fatale Selbstüberschätzung?" 8; Dr J. Pihert, "Vladimír Ivanovič Rebikov", *Smetana*, 1 (1906), 158–59.

version (*Vánoční stromek*),⁴³ and a month later it was given in Brno (19 December 1906). Kunc's review of the Brno production in the thrice-weekly newspaper *Moravský kraj* (8 January 1907), focussed on the substandard performance but ended by undertaking to write more about the composer later. The promised feuilleton (entitled "V. Rebikov") appeared in the same paper in two instalments (17 and 22 January 1907).⁴⁴

Kunc's feuilleton is essentially a comparison between Janáček and Rebikov based initially on his impression that Rebikov's piano pieces reminded him of Janáček's *Pozarostlém chodníčku* [On the Overgrown Path], VIII/17.⁴⁵ Kunc noted that *The Christmas Tree* aroused considerable debate when it was performed in Prague, not so much because of any extraordinary success but because of the composer's opinions: "Rebikov declares that his aim is the principle of truthfulness in music, that he wants simplicity of means, strength of expression and a condensation of mood." People seemed astonished by this statement, Kunc wrote, but these were surely "the views of every self-aware and progressive composer. For years these had also been Janáček's beliefs."⁴⁶ The much vaunted whole-tone progressions in Rebikov were something that could be found in *Jenůfa* but with Rebikov, Kunc contended, it had become a hobbyhorse, a cheap way of characterizing dreams and the supernatural. Where the two composers deviated was in their differing attitudes. Kunc characterized Rebikov by his essential pessimism, "fleeing from the world, from life, gloomy and wounded, into the realm of sweet dreams [...], where there is peace, contentment and comfort". Living only through illusions, his art is "bloodless, pale and somambulistic – a cold dream of dead beauty." But Janáček, in Kunc's view, "believes in the possibility of beauty in life and seeks it out, [...] his music burns with the greedy fire of blood and passion."

Janáček presumably read Kunc's comments since this feuilleton survives among his cuttings (Janáček subscribed to a cuttings service). And if he was curious to find out more, he would have ample opportunity to read about him in the Czech music-periodical press. The Prague concert on 2 May 1906 had been trailed by a leading music critic, Emanuel Chvála, in his column in *Politik*, and his informative description, characterizing him as a "modernist in the spirit of the French impressionists, but with an expressly Russian colour", was extensively quoted in an unsigned review printed in the musical periodical *Dalibor*.⁴⁷ The *Dalibor* critic was unimpressed by the concert, finding the music mannered, colourless and monotonous, and feared for the future of modern music, if this was anything to go by.

Much more enthusiastic was a 700-word review-article⁴⁸ of the concert by Dr Jindřich Pihert, a young lawyer with a musical background whose reviews appeared in leading

43 Füllsack, "Versagte oder fatale Selbüberschätzung", 8, gives a première date two months earlier and states that it was performed eighteen times in the first month and thereafter became a standard item of the repertory. In fact it was performed a total of eight times including its final performance on 23 December 1907 (*Soupis repertoáru Národního divadla v Praze, 1881-1983*, ii (Prague: Národní divadlo, 1983), 249).

44 Kunc's review and feuilleton can be found in Janáček's collection of cuttings (*Výstřížky*) in the Janáček Archive in the Music Division of the Moravian Museum.

45 At the time only five of the ten pieces that make up the first series of *On the Overgrown Path* existed, published in the harmonium series, *Slovanské melodie* in 1901 and 1902.

46 "Hudba pravdy" [The Music of Truth] was Janáček's eloquent title for an article (XV/143) published in 1893.

47 *Dalibor* 29 (1907): 93-94.

48 Pihert, "Vladimír Ivanovič Rebikov", 158-59.

journals and newspapers. Pihert regarded Rebikov's piano works as the most successful, their harmonic harshnesses concealing a "healthy core". Composers such as Grieg, Schumann and Tchaikovsky had indeed left their traces but Pihert detected an individual voice, in the "interesting succession of chords, refined melody, saturated in Russian characteristics, and apt tone-painting" (for instance in his depiction of the wandering village musicians, a shepherd playing on his pipe, and a lame witch walking through the forest).⁴⁹ *Esclavage et liberté*, op. 22 (1902), a single movement lasting almost twenty minutes, sounded to Pihert like a piano arrangement of an orchestral piece (perhaps on account of the extended use of tremolo and Liszt-like rhetorical gestures), but its genre description ("tableau musical-psychologique") points the way to Rebikov's later stage works.

The Christmas Tree, Rebikov's most popular stage work (it was played in many theatres in Russia as well as Berlin and Ljubljana), was performed in Prague later in the year and Pihert again provided a favourable review.⁵⁰ Partly based on Hans Christian Andersen's story *The Little Match Girl*, this one-act opera was essentially a fairy-story for children, its simple action filled out as the girl, dying of hunger and cold, peers enviously through the window of a rich house where Christmas is in full flood with food, presents, dancing, and a Christmas tree decked with candles. It climaxes in a tear-jerking apotheosis as the girl's (dead) mother leads her to heaven. Despite the fully-fledged divertissement ballet, Pihert regarded it as something more than mere Christmas entertainment since its music faithfully represented the emotions and feelings of the two soloists, often singing without any accompaniment.

An unsigned review of the same event in *Dalibor*⁵¹ provides a contemporary impression of the nature of Rebikov's art, emphasizing that above all Rebikov was "a composer of moods", which, despite the composer's deliberate primitivism had an effect quite out of proportion to the simplicity of means. Rebikov underlines these moods with his consistent use of the whole-tone scale and "modern chromatics". For all the orchestral colour it was in the vocal aspects of his work that the composer went furthest in exploring "modern recitative". As with most Czech accounts of Rebikov, the review quoted extensively from Rebikov's own statements about his aims: Rebikov seems to have been considered a new voice in music in the Czech lands not so much because of his music itself, but because of his theories. Rebikov himself described these in a journal article in 1909:

I regard music as a medium for awakening the feelings and moods I desire in my listeners.

I record my feelings in the way that they take shape in my soul. I write, so to speak, as my heart dictates. I could say that I follow a path that is musical-psychological.

My ideal would be a musical-psychological drama that would force the listeners to feel and live in themselves the feelings that the characters experience as the drama

49 These pieces are all from *Silhouettes*, "tableaux enfantins", op. 31, published by Jürgenson in 1906.

50 Dr. Pihert, "Národní divadlo v Praze", *Smetana* 1 (1906): 293–94.

51 "Národní divadlo", *Dalibor* 29 (1907): 92–93.

progresses. I would like to convey the feelings in sound in such a way that the listeners forget that they are in a theatre and that they are watching artists performing, so that the listeners entered deeply into the spirit of the drama.

Noting that the singing of a performer awakens in the listener a sense of pleasure, and that this feeling of pleasure, filling the listener's heart, becomes mingled with all the other sensations that must move the heart of the listener as the drama progresses, which often have nothing whatsoever in common with pleasure, I substitute singing for musical speech – something very close to ordinary conversation.

[...]

As regards the instrumental aspect of the drama, I regard the orchestra as a means for conveying a feeling and awakening it in the listeners. The orchestra conveys the interior state of that person in the drama who is at its centre at any given moment. If it is the feelings of two or three persons, it is all the same – then the orchestra will convey their common feeling. But if their feelings are different, then the orchestra must reflect the feelings of that person who is concentrated at the focus of the drama.⁵²

In the same article Rebikov proclaimed “Starting with opus 10 my motto was ‘*Music is the language of feelings*’”. This, Rebikov wrote, gave rise to basic questions about form, tonality and chords, leading to his exploration of this seventh and ninth chords and in particular the whole-tone scale, which he found “appropriate for conveying fantastical, other-worldly scenes.” This is a topic that Rebikov took further in a later article:

In order to seek this inner force of music I had to write using all possible sound combinations forbidden by authority, all parallel movements, all whole-tone chords and so on, but these original features were not my aim; all these combinations happened by themselves, I did not seek them out and did not make them up.

I notated them solely because, it seemed to me, these combinations faithfully conveyed feeling, because the feeling itself was contained within these chords.

Sounds for the sake of sounds were not my objective.

My objective was one and only: to find a combination of sounds that would communicate feeling.⁵³

As for programme music, of which he said he was a “great supporter”, he noted two ways in which sounds can be used for “vivid depictions”:

52 V.I. Rebikov, “Rebikov o sebe” [Rebikov about himself], *Russkaya muzikal'naya gazeta*, (1909), no. 43: 945–51. English translations of Rebikov articles here are by Robin Thomson.

53 V.I. Rebikov, “Muzikal'nīya zapisi chuvstva” [The musical notation of feeling], *Russkaya muzikal'naya gazeta* (1913), no. 48:1097–99.

Either sounds that imitate various noises and sounds of nature, birdsong, etc., cause similar ideas to arise in the mind of the listener:

Or sounds awaken in the listener the same feelings that the composer felt when he saw or imagined a given scene or action.

In musical-psychological scenes I wanted to convey and awaken in the listeners the feeling I desired to evoke. In order to direct the performers I would write in the moods or feelings with which each given section was to be performed.⁵⁴

That Janáček was aware of Rebikov is evident not only from Kunc's letter and feuilleton but from the occasional mention that can be found in his writings. In a short final paragraph of his theoretical article "Moderní harmonická hudba" [Modern harmonic music], XV/190, published in January 1907, i.e. soon after he heard about Rebikov from Kunc, he concluded his discussion of the different types of harmonic mannerisms he found in Reger and Richard Strauss with the comment: "About the harmonic novelties of Mr Rebikov one must say that they already existed here but he wasn't aware of them. After all the scale itself doesn't matter but what comes out of it."⁵⁵ In a lecture taken down by one of his students in 1909, Janáček included a reference to Rebikov in a section on opera that included a section on Wagner's reforms. After stressing the "inanimate nature" of Wagner's motives he added: "Rebikov does not show fully the innermost core of a person, but only what the person says."⁵⁶ The next year in an introduction to the Organ School's public concerts printed in *Dalibor*, "Váha reálných motivů" [The weight of real motifs], XV/197, he made a passing reference to the "new scales of Rebikov and his followers."⁵⁷ With their brevity and lack of detail (not even titles offered) none of these references demonstrate any personal knowledge of Rebikov's work nor indeed of Rebikov himself. Although Rebikov seems to have met Czech composers such as Novák and Suk⁵⁸ there is no evidence that he met Janáček.⁵⁹ It seems more likely that Janáček had picked up some of the buzz around this new composer and inserted occasional comments showing awareness of two aspects of Rebikov's work: that his music included "harmonic novelties", in particular the use of the whole-tone scale, and that his music attempted to depict innermost feeling.

During this period Rebikov had continued his peregrinations in western Europe: spending time in Paris, Lucerne, Prague again (1908 and 1909), Munich, Florence and Vienna, but in the autumn of 1909 he returned to Russia for good, settling in Yalta, where he died in 1920, a disappointed man, and largely forgotten, having been earlier

⁵⁴ V.I. Rebikov, "Rebikov o sebe", 950.

⁵⁵ *TD*, i, 359.

⁵⁶ *TD*, ii, 410.

⁵⁷ *TD*, i, 431.

⁵⁸ Füllsack, "Versagte oder fatale Selbüberschätzung", 8.

⁵⁹ The statement in Larry Sitsky, ed., *Music of the Twentieth Century Avant-garde: A Biocritical Sourcebook* (Westport, Conn., 2002), 23, that Rebikov was one of several avant-garde composers that Janáček met has no foundation, and appears to be a misreading of a comment in Štědroň, *Leoš Janáček a hudba 20. století*, 75. Gozenpud's assertion that Janáček "completely certainly" met Rebikov in Brno (Gozenpud, "Janáček a Musorgskij", 12 (1980), no. 5, 1) is undermined by the fact that Rebikov did not go to Brno.

proclaimed as the “father of Russian modernism”.⁶⁰ And with Rebikov out of the news, there are no more references by Janáček to Rebikov after 1910 for five years.

But in 1915 Janáček began mentioning Rebikov again and this time in more detail.⁶¹ By far the most substantial of these references comes in his notes for lectures on musical form that Janáček prepared in the period 1915–19.⁶² The final section is on opera, where Janáček provides a comparison of three operas, rather unlikely bedfellows: Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, Smetana's *Prodaná nevěsta* [The Bartered Bride] and Rebikov's *Alfa i Omega*. *Alpha and Omega* is one of Rebikov's “musico-psychological dramas”. He wrote the text in November 1905 and composed the music on his return to Russia in Yalta, in January 1911. It was published as op. 42 by Jürgenson in Moscow (no date given), in a piano-vocal score with dual Russian and German texts.

What follows from this is that by 1915 Janáček had somehow had access to a piano-vocal score of this work – the only Rebikov work that he seems to have known, unless he got to one of the four performances of *The Christmas Tree* in Brno. The score is not in his library and from the fact that the texts quoted are from a Czech singing translation with note values adjusted accordingly, suggests that he borrowed the score from a theatre that was considering mounting a production for which a Czech translation had been made and written into the piano-vocal score.

The action is simple: Scene 1 takes place in a forest at the beginning of the world: Lucifer (bass) persuades Man (baritone) to follow him, Woman (soprano) follows Man. Scene 2 is set the end of the world, in the desert, with the Sphinx in the background; it is very cold. Man dies of cold and despair, there is no sign of Woman; Lucifer triumphs; Life (soprano), Death (mezzo-soprano) and Mankind (tenor) comment. Most of the music for the orchestra comes in slow chords, often based on the whole-tone scale with much parallel movement. The voice part entirely non-melismatic and in this sense speech-like; no voices are heard together. There is no chorus.

In his lecture on opera Janáček, however, was not interested in the story of the opera, or in its conventions. He comments briefly on the use of whole-tone scale (providing a 22-bar example from the beginning of Scene 2) and goes on to deride its use on the basis that tonality becomes uncertain and that there is no possibility of modulation. His chief point, however, is in the relationship between motif and stage action as reflected in the words. His reason for including Smetana in this strange trio of composers was to give an example of an opera using “song forms” (generally ABA forms), where returning to the “A” in the final section creates a sense of ending and thereby, Janáček contends, lowers the emotional temperature. Wagner and Rebikov are examples of a more recent trend of continuous composition that moves to a conclusion only at the end of an act. Wagner achieves this on the basis of leitmotifs: four main ones in Act 1 of *Tristan*, all exemplified in the lecture (Liebesgluth; Trankgiftmotiv; Sühne; “true, pure love”). This technique, Janáček maintains, cannot reflect the stage

60 Füllsack, “Versagte oder fatale Selbstüberschätzung”, 11.

61 “Typy české mluvy” [Types of Czech speech], XV/326 (1915), *LD*, ii, 63; “Okolo Pastorkyně” [Around *Jenůfka*], XV/209 (1916), *LD*, i, 428; “Píseň a její vztah k hudbě” [Song and its relation to music], XV/328 (1916), *LD*, ii, 76; “Opera”, XV/377 (1917), *LD*, ii, 90–91; “Vědomí a skladba” [Consciousness and composition], XV/368 (1919–23), *TD*, ii, 212, 236, 242; “Fonetika II”, XV/370 (1920), *LD*, ii, 135; *Úplná nauka o harmonii*, XV/202 (1920), *TD*, i, 568; “[Naturalismus]”, XV/340 (1924), *LD*, ii, 178.

62 “Formace hudební” [Musical forms], XV/363 (1918–19), *LD*, ii, 343–55, *passim*.

action bar-by-bar but only in a more generalized way – which he appears to deplore, preferring the greater freedom of the remaining acts that respond more closely to the changing moods. Rebikov's *Alpha and Omega* takes less than thirty pages in piano-vocal score. The brevity, according to Janáček, is because the composer does not repeat motifs but instead the different music in every bar reflects the words that are being sung. To illustrate this Janáček provides examples of what the orchestra plays when Lucifer sings of the ocean's "bottomless depths" and in the next bar when he sings of the "boundless ocean".

Janáček has not dug particularly hard when considering *Alpha and Omega*. While he gives examples of his *Tristan* leitmotifs extending to p 74 of the piano-vocal score, the Rebikov examples are confined to the first two pages of Scene 1 and the first page of Scene 2. The point that he makes about Rebikov is fair, however. There is no attempt, musically, to create a unified work, but more to provide an appropriate background to the sung text. Much of the text is sung without accompaniment, with no substantial orchestral interludes (six bars at the most) apart from the beginnings and ends of the two scenes. Where this is all going is revealed towards the end of the lecture when Janáček summarizes Wagner's method ("the singing arises from the leitmotif (the harmonic basis)"), and Rebikov's ("the singing arises from the held chords"). "The word has no musical soul in either of these. [...] Only three composers did not compose on verse but on natural human speech: Musorgsky; Boris Godunov; Charpentier: Louise; Janáček: Jenůfa."

There is no indication in the lecture that Rebikov was for him anything more than an extreme example of a particular trend in opera, rather than a composer who had any impact on what he wrote. Janáček looked briefly at a score he had borrowed, made a few obvious stylistic points and left it at that. Gerald Abraham has suggested that Janáček's *Zapisník zmizelého* [The Diary of One who Disappeared], V/12 (1917–20) was "probably suggested by Rebikov's 'musico-psychological tales' which had interested him".⁶³ In a earlier essay specifically mentioning Janáček's opera lecture, Abraham wrote that "Rebikov's harmony tends to be schematic, as does Janáček's in his later works".⁶⁴ It should be noted, however, that the design of *The Diary of One who Disappeared* is a natural progression from the expansions into mini-dramas of Janáček's male voice choruses such as *Maryčka Magdónova*, IV/35 (1907) and *70,000*, IV/36 (1909), composed years before Janáček knew *Alpha and Omega*. And if Janáček noticed Rebikov's "schematic harmony" he did not say so in his lecture, confining himself to discussing the motivic construction and its relationship to text as a whole.

Apart from a brief reference in a draft essay on naturalism in 1924, any mention of Rebikov by Janáček disappears after 1921. At first sight it may be thought that there is some affinity between Janáček's concept of speech melody and Rebikov's emotion-based attitude towards setting words but there is an essential difference between the two. Janáček believed that the contours and rhythms of people's speech betrayed their underlying emotion and he tried to emulate this in the voice parts in his operas.

63 *The Concise History of Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 838.

64 Gerald Abraham, 'Realism in Janáček's Operas', in Gerald Abraham, *Slavonic and Romantic Music* (London: Faber 1968), 83–98; quotation from p. 94.

Rebikov believed that the expression of emotion was the most important thing in music and this should be achieved above all by the accompaniment, especially in harmonic vocabulary. A shared emphasis on "truth" was, as Kunc noted in his feuilleton, anticipated by Janáček many years before Rebikov burst on to the musical scene. In the end it would seem that only Tchaikovsky among Russian composers had any discernible impact on Janáček's own music.

POVZETEK

Janáček je poznal Rubinsteinovo glasbo preko svoje učiteljice klavirja, Amalie Wickenhauser, spoznal pa ga je tudi v času študija v Leipzigu (1879). O njegovem strastnem navdušenju pričajo vrstice v pismih o Rubinsteinovih leipziških koncertih. Vsakršen vpliv na njegovo glasbo bi bil bržkone razviden v delih, ki jih je napisal v obdobju po tem letu, a so vsa izgubljena. Ruski skladatelj, ki je na Janáčka najbolj vplival, je bil Čajkovski, zlasti z delom *Pikova dama* (uprizorjena v Brnu). Vpliv je bil tako silen, da je Janáček opustil pisanje svoje tedanje opere (*Jenůfa*) in se k njej vrnil šele čez pet let, ko je vsrkal številne poteze, še posebej pomembnost orkestra pri strukturiranju dela.

Čeprav so razlagalci našli stične točke med Janáčkom in Musorgskim, se zdi, da so te naključne: Janáčkovo poznavanje glasbe Musorgskega je bilo zanemarljivo in prepozno, da bi lahko štel kot vpliv. Janáček je poznal Rebikova preko svojega učenca Jana Kunca in preko češke časopisne glasbene kritike iz leta 1906 in 1907. Janáčkovo predavanje o operi (po letu 1915) je vključevalo Rebikovo »glasbeno-psihološko dramo« *Alfa in omega* z deli Wagnerja in Smétane. Rebikova je dojemal kot skladatelja, ki je poosebljal neko skrajnost v operi, ne pa kot nekoga, od kogar bi se lahko učil. Kaže, da sta od ruskih skladateljev zgolj zahodnjaško usmerjena opazno vplivala na njegovo glasbo.