



Janáček's *maestoso*

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Unlike his contemporary Gustav Mahler, Janáček was unadventurous in his use of expression marks. He used very few, almost always preferring Italian to his native Czech. The most common words he used were *espressivo*, *dolce* and *dolcissimo*, which occur when he wanted to characterize particularly tender music. The only other expression mark he commonly used is the term *maestoso* [majestic]. As will be shown below, the occasions on which he employed the term can be easily classified – until his final opera *Z mrtvého domu* [From the House of the Dead], where he appears to use it in rather different contexts and, if one bears in mind the meaning of the word, in a strange way. The object of this paper is to explore this phenomenon and suggest some interpretations.

The term *maestoso* has been current since the Baroque as an indication of mood or as a tempo designation. An early definition was given by J. G. Walther in his *Musicalisches Lexicon oder Musicalisches Bibliothec* (Leipzig, 1732), who described the term as “ansehnlich und langsam, jedoch mit einer lebhaften Expression” [stately and slow, but with a lively expression]. In his *Musikalisches Lexikon* (Frankfurt am Main, 1802) H. C. Koch stated that, like *con gravità*, *maestoso* could imply the use of overdotting. This can be found, for instance, in Haydn’s slow introductions, especially the middle symphonies (e.g. no. 50 (1773): *Adagio e maestoso*; no. 53, “Imperiale” (1773): *Largo maestoso*; and no. 54 (1774): *Adagio maestoso*) though as David Wyn Jones has pointed out, while all Classical composers used *maestoso*, this

was not always prompted by the expected dotted-note figuration any more than *maestoso* guaranteed dotted notes.

The changeover between the typical Baroque–Classical, often double-dotted *maestoso* and the nineteenth-century *maestoso* mood, came with Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony (1822–4). The first movement begins *Allegro, ma non troppo, un poco maestoso* and sets the model for later nineteenth-century orchestral movements where *maestoso* is not confined to a slow introduction; instead a solemn, majestic mood permeates the whole movement.

While Mendelssohn’s Symphony no. 2 (“Lobgesang”, 1840) adheres to the Classical-Baroque model of *maestoso* introductions to its first two movements, later orchestral works follow the model of Beethoven’s Ninth with a *maestoso* indication that covers entire movements. Here are some examples:

Brahms: Piano Concerto no. 1 (1859), I: *Maestoso*

Max Bruch: Symphony no. 1 (1867), I: *Allegro maestoso*

Max Bruch: Symphony no. 2 (1870), I: *Allegro passionato ma un poco maestoso*

Brahms: *Academic Festival Overture* (1880): *Allegro*, later *L’istesso tempo, un poco maestoso*

Bruckner: Symphony no. 6 (1881), I: *Majestoso* [sic]

Towards the end of the nineteenth century *maestoso* began to be used for particularly grandiose effects. A well known example is the final movement of Tchaikovsky’s Fifth Symphony (1888), marked *Andante maestoso*. This constitutes the slow introduction to the movement, giving way after almost sixty bars to an *Allegro vivace*. But near the end of the movement (bar 472) the opening theme returns now with relentless triplet accompaniment, the grandness emphasized by the “molto” in the direction *Moderato assai e molto maestoso*. Here the weight and grandeur of the *maestoso* has an almost theatrical dimension, a trait shared with another famous example, the climax of Saint-Saëns’s Third Symphony (1886). To a large symphony orchestra Saint-Saëns added two pianos and an organ. And it is the organ with a full, held *forte* chord that initiates the twenty-four-bar section marked *maestoso* (16 bars after fig. R). The dramatic impact of this is enhanced by its context: it follows a soft, subdued section in constant *diminuendo* and then an orchestral pause.

Outside the European mainstream, *maestoso* was often harnessed to a nationalist, patriotic, even triumphalist agenda. This can be seen for instance in the final movement (marked *Moderato e maestoso*) of Elgar's Second Symphony (1911), dedicated to the memory of King Edward VII, and in his *Coronation March* (for the new king George V, also 1911) with a *Molto maestoso* opening. However it was in Czech nationalist music that the patriotic *maestoso* came into its own. The more patriotically inflated sections of Smetana's six-part cycle *Má vlast* [My Fatherland] are studded with *maestoso* indications, as are parts of his heroic-patriotic operas *Dalibor* and *Libuše*.

In his third opera, *Dalibor* (1865–7) Smetana accompanied the entry of the Czech hero Dalibor with *maestoso* music, a march for full orchestra. But even before then the opera began with a scene-setting *Largo maestoso* (there is no prelude) to invoke the solemn scene as people await the trial of Dalibor who, in avenging the death of his friend Zdeněk, has killed his attacker. In this and other works Smetana associated the term *maestoso* with notions of Czech kingship, so that King Vladislav, although in some ways the villain of the piece, is generally accompanied with *maestoso* music: his arrival in Act 1 is announced by *Subito maestoso* trumpets. His first utterance in the opera, sung over held chords, is marked *maestoso*, the opening of Act 3, with the entrance of King Vladislav and his court, is marked *Moderato maestoso* and his exit at the end of the scene is again *maestoso*.

What can be seen here are essentially two sorts of uses of patriotic *maestoso*: an association with the Bohemian medieval kingdom and another with the heroic character of Dalibor himself. Such notions recur in Smetana's next opera *Libuše* (1869–72), an opera about the beginnings of the Czech kingdom, when the reigning princess Libuše chooses Přemysl as her consort and together they found the first Czech dynasty. Apart from a few bars of *lento*, the opening prelude is entirely *maestoso*. At the end of Act 1, there is a long ensemble culminating in Libuše, "con somma esaltazione", proclaiming her love for the Czech nation. These five bars are marked *maestoso*; and a short orchestral act-end that follows is *Maestoso assai*. Another important association comes towards the end of the opera when Libuše (a prophetess as well as a queen) foresees the future of the Czechs. In Libuše's prophecy, essentially a musical *tableau vivant*, one section is devoted to the Hussite wars. The Hussites were a proto-Protestant sect that arose from the teachings of the church reformer Jan Hus, mar-

tyred by the Catholics in 1415. When a Crusade was mounted against his followers they successfully defended Prague and for the next couple of centuries were able to maintain their distinctive Protestant-type religion. In order to invoke the Hussites, Smetana quoted their most famous chorale, “Ktož jsú boží bojovníci” [Those who are warriors of God] and marked it *Andante maestoso*.

In Smetana’s symphonic cycle *Má vlast* the fifth movement, *Tábor* (the name of the Hussite town) is devoted to the Hussites. Much of the time in *Tábor* Smetana elaborates fragments of the chorale used in *Libuše* but towards the end there is an exciting straight-through version of the chorale, the culmination of the piece. At the climax of the movement, the *Più mosso* is suddenly slowed down to a *Lento maestoso* before accelerating to the close. This device goes back to the last movement of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony where in the middle of the final *Prestissimo* the tempo is held back by a four-bar *maestoso* at the words “Tochter aus Elysium” – a sort of grand *ritenuto* before the *Prestissimo* returns to bring the work to a swift conclusion. Here the *maestoso* has a structural function. I shall call it an “Eleventh-hour *maestoso*”.

As well as celebrating the heroic Hussites in the *Tábor* movement, *Má vlast* repeats Smetana’s association with the Bohemian kingdom in the first symphonic poem *Vyšehrad*, named after the Prague castle associated with Czech kings. After the balladic harps that open the piece, the main theme is given out *Largo maestoso*. The final symphonic poem in *Má vlast* is called *Blaník*, named after the mountain where Czech warriors wait in readiness to save the nation. At the end Smetana combined a grand version of the *Vyšehrad* theme with the Hussite chorale from *Tábor* in a passage marked *Largamente maestoso*, moving through a *Grandioso, meno allegro* to a *Vivace* that concludes the piece, i.e. another “Eleventh-hour *maestoso*”.

By taking the majestic nature of the term *maestoso* and the type of music associated with it and placing it against heroic moments in Czech history and moments celebrating the ancient Bohemian kingdom, Smetana provided a musical reinforcement of such patriotic thoughts that would then become an important trope for Czech music. I shall call this “heroic-patriotic *maestoso*”.

Heroic-patriotic *maestoso* in Janáček

Janáček's first use of the term is shown in ex. 1

Moderato (*maestoso*) (♩=60)

4 CTIRAD

f

Slá - - va ti, vel-ký — Pře-mys-le!
 Gruß dir, du großer — Pře-my-sl!
 Hail, oh great — Pře-my-sl!

Moderato (*maestoso*) (♩=60)

4

ff *f*

Slá - - va i bo-ha-tý-rům, jichž vel-ké či-ny sla-ví
 Gruß euch, ihr andern Hel-den, de-ren Ver-diens-te un-ser
 Hail, oh va-liant he-roes, your deeds of dar-ing are on

f *p* *f* *p* *f*

Example 1: Janáček: *Šárka*, Act 1. © With kind permission by Universal Edition A.G., Wien, www.universaledition.com

This short passage comes soon after the beginning of Janáček's first opera, *Šárka*. Janáček wrote out a version of the opera in piano-vocal score in 1887, but the next year, having shown it to Dvořák for his opinion and reacted to his criticisms, composed a second version. The opera is based on Czech mythic history and concerns events which took place after the death of the Queen Libuše. Her death meant there was not only a grieving widower (King Přemysl) but also an aggrieved female population, which had lost its female ruler. The women decide to take up arms against the men – the so-called “women’s war” in which their most prominent fighter was Šárka. Soon after the opening of the opera, a young hero, Ctirad, arrives at the

court of King Přemysl. The *Moderato* (*maestoso*) passage is Ctirad's greeting to the king and his warriors.

The version shown is one that Janáček revised thirty years later. The voice part (as in most of Janáček's 1919 revision of the opera) was much changed, but the orchestral accompaniment and its *Moderato* (*maestoso*) marking was there already in 1888. Note the association of this marking with two characters: a hero (Ctirad) and a king (Přemysl). By doing so Janáček plugged into the Smetana tradition of associating *maestoso* music with heroes and Czech kingship.

Janáček had began as a Czech nationalist (his opera is a sequel to Smetana's *Libuše*), but this path was blocked: *Šárka* did not reach the stage until 1925 because the author of the text – whom Janáček had not consulted – refused his permission for it to be used. And so Janáček turned his back on this type of music altogether and instead began his involvement with Moravian folk music, which, after a few years, would transform his style and begin to move it nearer to the music now associated with him.

Janáček employed no more heroic-patriotic *maestoso* markings for almost thirty years since none of the music he composed during this time called for it. However, towards the end of the First World War the Habsburg Empire began to show signs of collapse and there was thus hope of realizing the nationalist dream of an independent Czech nation, Janáček, by then famous and successful, made his contribution with a group of patriotic pieces between 1917 and 1920 which employed heroic-patriotic *maestoso*. These comprise:

Výlety pana Broučka: Výlet pana Broučka do XV. století [The Excursions of Mr Brouček: The Excursion of Mr Brouček to the Fifteenth Century], opera (1917);

Taras Bulba, symphonic rhapsody (1918);

Ballada blanická [The Ballad of Blaník], symphonic poem (1919–20).

The Excursion of Mr Brouček to the Fifteenth Century takes the Prague nineteenth-century landlord Mr Brouček back to the heroic time of the Hussites and their defence of Prague in 1420. Musically this is characterized by Hussite chorales (Janáček used the original words but wrote new musical settings for them). One of the chorales, "Slyšte, rytieři boží" [Hear ye, warriors of God], is threaded through Act 1, each time marked *maestoso*, heard at first 'from afar' sung by the 'Armed People' (Ozbrojený lid),

more loudly as they approach and finally *fortissimo* and *maestoso* as the act's conclusion.

Maestoso. ♩ = 69
Ozbrojený lid
 Ten. 1. 2. z dálky

Slyš te ry tie ři bo - ží,
 při prav te se již k ho - ji

Bas 1. 2.

Maestoso. ♩ = 69

Con moto. ♩ = 108

Example 2: Janáček: *Vljety páně Broučkovy: Vljet pana Broučka do XV. století*, Act 1. © With kind permission by Universal Edition A.G., Wien. www.universaledition.com

This is not the only *maestoso* marking in the *Fifteenth-Century Excursion*. Soon after the beginning, a drunken Mr Brouček loses his way in the cellars of Vikárka pub and imagines that he has been transported back to the fifteenth century and into the jewel-chamber of King Václav [Wenceslas] IV. There is a *maestoso* marking (against grandiose music) when Mr Brouček manages to light a lamp and gets a glimmering of where he has ended up. Soon after, the author of the *Brouček* novels, Svatopluk Čech, is brought on stage to sing an invocation to the decisive day of battle (“Slunce velkého dne” [Sun of the great day]), once again marked *maestoso*.

A more ambiguous moment comes in Act 2 when Kunka, the daughter of Brouček’s fifteenth-century host and protector Domšík, returns shattered from the battlefield. The mainly orchestral music is marked *maestoso*, which hardly seems to fit the initial despondent mood, but against this an ascending figure suggests a hopeful outcome to the battle, soon confirmed by a jaunty victory march and by another Hussite choral (“Dítky, v hromadu se senděme”) [Children, let’s get together], again marked *maestoso*, sung by Kunka’s lover Petřík and the chorus.

Janáček began composing his three-movement “rhapsody for orchestra” *Taras Bulba*, in 1915, in the early stages of the First World War in reaction to encouraging news from the front with early Russian victories

against the Habsburgs (Janáček hoped at this point that the Russians would “liberate” their Slavonic brethren from the Habsburg yoke). Gogol’s novella, the inspiration for Janáček’s work, is a chapter in the history of how the Ukraine was gained for Russia from the Poles and Lithuanians. The chief character is the Ukrainian Cossack Taras Bulba, seen at the beginning taking his two young sons off to the fighting grounds to achieve their manhood. All three are killed.

As the Russians’ war fortunes faded and the unlikelihood of getting a performance of a large-scale symphonic work seemed to have dawned on Janáček, he put the work aside until 1918. By then his own fortunes had changed with the huge success of his opera *Její pastorkyňa* [Jenůfa] in Prague as had the balance of forces in the war with the entry of the Americans.

The third movement of Janáček’s work is entitled “Proroctví a smrt Tarase Bulby” [The prophecy and death of Taras Bulba]. The “prophecy” is Gogol’s Russian chauvinist dream of the ultimate triumph of Russia and its Orthodox faith put into the mouth of Taras Bulba as he dies at the stake: “A tsar shall arise from Russian soil, and there shall not be a power in the world which shall not submit to him”. In one of Janáček’s commentaries on the work he wrote (adapting Gogol’s own conclusion) that “such fires or tortures that could destroy the strength of the Russian people cannot be found on earth”. By 1918, with the installation of a Bolshevik Government (which Janáček disapproved of), Janáček’s Russophilia had somewhat abated. He deleted the word “Slavonic” from its original title (“Slav. rhapsodie” [Slavonic Rhapsody]) and transferred the triumphalism of the final movement to a more Czech-patriotic use with his later, though unofficial, dedication of the work to the Czechoslovak Armed Forces.

Janáček’s music in the third movement includes an eight-bar *maestoso* section (bars 44–51) with a *pp* melody marked *dolcissimo* on the violins answered by cor anglais and harp. As the work nears its end the overwhelmingly grandiose atmosphere is enhanced by two more brief *maestoso* passages (bars 123–8; bars 191–6). By the last of these the large orchestra has been swelled by addition of an organ.

Janáček’s *Ballad of Blaník*, dedicated to the Czechoslovak President “the liberator T. G Masaryk”, is a messianic work commemorating the same mountain that featured in Smetana’s *Má vlast*. *Maestoso* markings appear early in the work. At bars 54–5 there is a two-bar motif played on horns and two harps (the harps reminiscent not only of those in *Taras Bulba* but also in Smetana’s balladic *maestoso* harps in *Vyšehrad*). It is interrupted by a

three-bar passage marked *Vivo*, and then resumes in the same texture with another short *maestoso* section. Although brief, the motif is important in the piece, to be brought back towards the end (bars 273–81), in a *Meno* section (though Janáček's autograph is marked *maestoso* at this point) which puts together the two previous *maestoso* sections without the *Vivo* interruption. Again the motif is played on two harps (though not horns, and with a fuller orchestral background). What is remarkable is that the motif is in fact the same as that found in *Taras Bulba* at bars 195–8, i.e. bars directly continuing from the third of the *maestoso* sections mentioned above. Although the purpose of the two symphonic works could not be more different, one a glorification of war, the other a plea of peace, both share similar *maestoso* apotheoses.

Structural *maestosos* in Janáček, I: endings

Though not particularly sympathetic towards Smetana, Janáček knew all the Smetana pieces described above and from the examples given it would appear that he took on board Smetana's distinctive uses of the term *maestoso*. He was, however, much more in tune with Smetana's younger contemporary, Antonín Dvořák. Dvořák's Seventh Symphony in D minor (1885), which Janáček conducted in Brno in 1886, has a first movement marked *Allegro maestoso*, the final movement concludes with a *Molto maestoso*. There is also a ten-bar "Eleventh-hour *maestoso*" in the final movement of Dvořák's Cello Concerto marked *Andante maestoso* before accelerating into a concluding *Allegro vivo*. Some of the pieces by Dvořák that Janáček knew particularly well were the four late symphonic poems based on poems by Karel Jaromír Erben: *Vodník* [The Water Goblin], *Polednice* [The Noonday Witch], *Zlatý kolovrat* [The Golden Spinning Wheel] and *Holoubek* [The Wild Dove]. Janáček published long analyses of them (JW XV/152, XV/153, XV/154, XV/156) and even gave the first performance of the last one, *The Wild Dove*. Based on Bohemian folk-legend, the Erben symphonic poems have a patriotic cast to them and Dvořák used *maestoso* markings in all but one. There is, for instance, a *Grandioso e maestoso* section associated with the King in the *Golden Spinning Wheel*.

The really interesting one in this connection is *The Noonday Witch*, which has no association with kings or heroes. Apart from a one-bar *stringendo*, the final twenty bars are marked *maestoso* and constitute the dramatic end to the piece: a mother looking after a fractious child threatens it with the Noonday Witch. The father returns to find the mother in a faint

with the dead child pressed to her bosom, its life taken by the Witch. The music here describes the horror of the parents as they realize what has happened – a depiction of supernatural horror.

vi - tr a mráz!

Recit.
Kostelnička,
Ja-ko by sem smrt' na-ču- ho-va -la!

Maestoso. ♩ = 60
105 Opona rychle spadne.

Example 3: Janáček: *Její pastorkyňa* (piano-vocal score published by Prátel umění v Brně, 1908), Act 2.

A few years after Dvořák composed his symphonic poem, Janáček embarked on the long journey of writing his third opera *Jenůfa*, finally completed in 1903 and staged in Brno in January 1904. Like the end of Dvořák's *Noonday Witch*, Act 2 concludes with a *maestoso* passage, invoking an almost supernatural *frisson* as the Kostelnička, who has returned from murdering her beloved stepdaughter's baby in the frozen river, begins to realize of the enormity of the crime she has committed and imagines death knocking at her door ("Jakoby sem smrt' načuhovala"). She utters these words in a dramatic, unaccompanied cry, the five syllables of her final word "na-ču-ho-va-la" echoed by the five chords in the orchestra which then launches the terror-filled orchestral *maestoso* based on this rhythm as the curtain falls (see ex. 3).

This type of concluding *maestoso* became a favourite in Janáček's operas for act endings, heightening the drama of what has just occurred on stage and bringing the act to a forceful conclusion. Examples can be found in:

- Její pastorkyňa* [*Jenůfa*], opera (1903): end of Act 2; end of Act 3;
- Osud* [Fate], opera (1907): end of Act 2; end of Act 3
- Šumařovo dítě* [The Fiddler's Child], symphonic poem (1913): end;
- Výlety pana Broučka: Výlet pana Broučka do XV. století* [The Excursions of Mr Brouček: Excursion to the Fifteenth Century], opera (1917): end of Act 1;
- Káta Kabanová*, opera (1921): end of Act 1; end of Act 2; end of Act 3;
- Příhody lišky Bystroušky* [The Cunning Little Vixen], opera (1923): end of Act 3;
- Věc Makropulos* [The Makropulos Affair], opera (1925): end of Act 2;
- Sinfonietta* (1926), end of movements I and V.

All of Janáček's operas from *Jenůfa* onwards include at least one *maestoso* act-ending (the *Brouček* example of course counts also as a heroic-patriotic *maestoso*). But Janáček did not confine the use to operas. Large-scale orchestral works such as his symphonic poem *The Fiddler's Child* conclude with a *maestoso* marking. His *Sinfonietta* has two because the Fanfare opening, where it first occurs, is recapitulated at the end of the work, now with the whole orchestra joining in the brass fanfares of the opening movement.

These concluding *maestosos* can be further divided. The Act 2 *Jenůfa* can be categorized as melodramatic and exciting, but the orchestral conclusion to Act 3 of the opera (fig. 82), after the touching scene of forgiveness between Jenůfa and Laca, marked *Maestoso con moto*, is instead a type of redemptive, transcendental *maestoso* that can be found, for instance at the end of *The Cunning Little Vixen*. The six-bar *maestoso* orchestral conclusion to *Fate* Act 2 (Scene 5, bars 133–8) after Živný's discovery of the dead bodies of his wife Míla and her mother is clearly melodramatic. *Makropulos* Act 2 has a more substantial *maestoso* ending. It begins straight after Emilia Marty has demanded from Jaroslav Prus the envelope containing the formula for her father's elixir of life. A *fortissimo* orchestral unison, with a *sforzando* cymbal roll rings out, *maestoso* (bars 975–95). In its final bar Prus asks "A kdy?" [And when?], i.e. when would be their assignation in payment for the envelope. A softer, more relaxed *Andante* accompanies the pair's brief exchange, but Prus's final "Platí" [Agreed!] initiates the *maestoso* (bars 992–1003), which brings the act to an end – another melodramatic act-ending.

All three acts of *Káťa Kabanová* end in *maestoso*. The nine-bar orchestral conclusion to Act 1 (fig. 33), with Tichon's departure despite Káťa's pleas for him stay (she rightly fears that her feelings for Boris will lead to disaster) is another, melodramatic *maestoso*, as is the seven-bar orchestral *maestoso* conclusion to Act 3. Here after Káťa's suicide and her mother-in-law's triumph over the corpse Janáček combines the prominent themes of the voices of the Volga (calling Káťa to her death) with the eight-note timpani theme (portending fateful events) heard in the early bars of the overture. By contrast, the conclusion to Act 2, as Káťa slowly departs after her meeting with Boris, belongs to the transcendental type. Radiant *fortissimo* E-major chords (an unusual key for Janáček) highlight what has surely been the happiest moment of Káťa's adult life. After the initial outburst, the chords slowly move down from their initial height and a double bass and then cello solo lead into the end of the act where the *maestoso* gives way to five bars of cadential *Adagio*.

It is not easy to characterize the *maestoso* at the end of *The Fiddler's Child*. If the composer is adhering at all to the story of Svatopluk Čech's poem that gives Janáček's symphonic poem its name, this is the point after the Mayor (the villain of the piece) has discovered the corpse of the fiddler's child: a melodramatic situation. But the long *maestoso* that follows (bars 438–84), after its initial *fortissimo* chords, soon subsides, producing a subdued ending that suggests pathos rather than transcendence. The same

however cannot be said for the exuberant, apotheotic, *maestoso* ending of the Sinfonietta, a thrilling medley of trilling woodwind and strings over the brass fanfares of the first movement. Like the *Káťa* Act 2 example, it does not end *maestoso*: seven bars of *Adagio* are devoted to a prolonged cadence.

Apart from the few words in *Makropulos* Act 2 and the Hussite chorale of *Brouček's Excursion to the Fifteenth Century*, Act 1 all of Janáček's *maestoso* act-endings in his operas are purely orchestral.

Structural *maestosos* in Janáček, II: Eleventh-hour *maestosos*

Like Smetana and Dvořák before him Janáček also made use of “eleventh-hour *maestoso*”. These present a rather more varied use and occur not only in operas, but in choral-orchestral and even chamber works:

String Quartet no. 1 (1923), IV: *maestoso* before the final *Più mosso*;
The Makropulos Affair (1925): *maestoso* interlude before Marty's farewell in Act 3 (effectively the end of the opera);

Mša glagolskaja [Glagolitic Mass] (1926): *maestoso* episodes before the end of movements III and IV

Capriccio for piano left hand and wind ensemble (1926), IV: piano cadenza marked *maestoso* towards end of the movement

Although the grand associations of *maestoso* means that the term is seldom found in chamber works, Janáček made a few exceptions. The six-bar *maestoso* in the last movement of his First String Quartet (at bar 121) resembles the classic “eleventh-hour *maestoso*” in that it gives way to a *Più mosso* that brings the work to a close, heightened towards the end with a *Più mosso* (*feroce*). However the *Maestoso Tempo I* is less an interruption of the preceding *Adagio* than itself an intensification of it.

Janáček's Capriccio for piano left hand, flute/piccolo, two trumpets, two tenor tubas and three trombones has what is virtually a piano cadenza before the end of the work. At bar 134, thirty bars before the cadenza, there is a section, at first confined to the brass, marked *maestoso-vivo* (a most unusual combination). The brass bars highlight a theme, previously merely subsidiary, on which the rest of this section is based. Tempos are fast or moderate until a sudden *Adagio* at bar 163, two bars before the cadenza. Together the *Adagio* and the grander, two-bar beginning of the cadenza (marked *maestoso*) constitute a brief holding back of the tempo before

plunging into *Prestissimo* for solo piano. After twenty bars the flute joins in, followed by the rest of the ensemble as the piece moves towards its close. Apart from the *Grave* for the final twelve bars this gives the impression of a rather more elaborate “eleventh-hour *maestoso*”.

Towards the end of *The Makropulos Affair*, Emilia Marty tells her mysterious story as, among her hearers, disbelief turns slowly to grudging acceptance. She collapses, a doctor is called, and she is taken into the bedroom of her hotel suite. Fast and furious orchestral music, high and full of trills, gives way after eighteen bars to a passage marked *maestoso* (at bar 810). At first there are slow and solemn brass chords; then a theme, at first on a solo violin, transfers to the viola d’amore (an instrument which Janáček used occasionally to convey especial tenderness) and then, after the viola d’amore has ascended to the top of its range, a full *forte* orchestral version takes over, again marked *maestoso* (though no other instruction has intervened). An *Adagio* follows with the reappearance of Marty, described in the stage direction as “jako stín” [as a shadow], “a pale green light overflowing the stage and auditorium” contributing to the other-worldly atmosphere. This is the beginning of the finale in which Marty comes to terms with her mortality and accepts death.

With great clarity this passage depicts a change of state. Something is going on that transforms Emilia Marty from the bossy, confident figure we have seen so far, determined to get the formula to give her another three hundred years of life, into someone quietly reconciled to death. The long orchestral *maestoso* before the final scene is a structural marker, a development of the “eleventh-hour *maestoso*”, but this wonderful section is also an example of what one might call a “redemptive *maestoso*”.

There are more uses of *maestoso* as a near-end structural marker in two movements of Janáček’s *Glagolitic Mass*. In the third movement, “Slava” [Sanctus], a long passage starting “Sědej o desnuju otca” [Sitting at the right hand of the father] (bar 139) marked *maestoso* is dominated by the tenor solo (with increasing support from the chorus) though when the chorus takes over completely the pace increases to a *Un poco mosso* moving through *Allegro* with the return of the solo tenor, then *Presto* and finally a purely orchestral *Allegro* of nine bars to close the piece.

In the next movement, the “Veruju” [Creed] a long orchestral section describes Christ’s suffering on the cross. The chorus comments briefly “raspect že zany, mučen i pogreben byst” [He was crucified also for us, he suffered and was buried] after which a five-bar *maestoso* (bar 244–8) on full orchestra including the organ, *fortissimo*, gives way a new *Andante*

section, set vocally for chorus. This is more a marker for the central point in the narrative than an “eleventh-hour *maestoso*”. However another *maestoso* occurs a little later that fulfils this function. The chorus repeats the hushed “Věřuju” opening, which is followed by a five-bar orchestral *maestoso, fortissimo* (bars 336–40, the chorus overlaps in the first bar) heralding what is in effect the finale of the movement. After a pause bar the orchestra continues with a new swirling accompaniment against the tenor’s words “Katoličesku i Apostolsku Crkov” [(I believe) in the Catholic and Apostolic Church]. A *Un poco più mosso* follows and drives to the movement to its end. The scale of this example and the *Makropulos* finale is of course very different from that in the final movement of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, which is no more than an extended *ritenuto*. But the function is the same: a distinctive holding back before a section brings the movement or the act to a climactic end.

Highlighting important words

Most of the examples encountered so far in Janáček’s operas have been purely orchestral. However, in a few cases in Janáček’s operas words crucial to the plot are highlighted either by having them sung against a *maestoso* passage, or by placing a *maestoso* passage immediately afterwards. Thus in the final pages of Act 1 of Janáček’s first opera, *Šárka* there is a three-bar section (fig. 30) marked *Poco lento (Maestoso)*. Two orchestral bars announce a variant of the theme which will, at fig. 31, constitute the *Adagio* finale of the act, the first of Janáček’s “slow cathartic waltzes”. In the third bar of this marked *Poco lento (Maestoso)* the orchestra pauses for the temporarily defeated Šárka to declare “příšerně” [viciously] “Krví tvou záští ukojím” [I’ll assuage my anger with your blood!], a sentiment that will spur on her actions in the next act, culminating in the death of her male rival, Ctirad,

At the end of the first act of *Fate Míla* elopes with her lover Živný. The reaction to this by Míla’s mother is decisive. In Act 2, Živný and Míla and their little son are living together. But with them is Míla’s mother, whose horror at their out-of-wedlock liaison has driven her mad: her actions at the end of the act lead to her and her daughter’s death. When in Act 1 Míla’s mother hears of the elopement she cries out “To ne! To snad ne! S panem Živným!” [No! Surely not! With Mr Živný!] to which the orchestra reacts with a six-bar *maestoso, fortissimo* (Scene 15, bars 22–7).

In *Káťa Kabanová*, Act 3 Scene 1 Dikoj, having heard what he regarded as a flippant answer to his question of what a storm is (“just electricity”),

gives his own portentous explanation: “Bouře je za trest na nás aby chom moc boží potífovali” [Storms are our punishment so that we feel the might of the Lord] (7 bars after fig. 5). His words are given out “přesvědčivě” [persuasively] in a *maestoso* passage of four bars against the theme (heard later in the act) of the voices that call Káťa to her death. The storm depicted in this scene unnerves Káťa to make her public declaration of adultery and, in the next scene, to seek her death.

In the final scene of the opera, Káťa wanders alone, contemplating her fate and wanting death. She longs to see Boris and then, in what up to now has been a mainly soft soliloquy, she calls out, *forte*, “Vy větry bujně! Doneste mu žálostný můj stesk!” [Abundant winds, carry my sad longing to him!]. The four-bar passage (4 bars before fig. 27), is marked *maestoso*, and Káťa’s memorable tune is emphasized by the orchestra playing it in unison with her. Not long after, her wish is granted: Boris appears for a brief farewell scene before she throws herself into the Volga.

Finally, in *The Makropulos Affair*, in the middle of Marty’s long story about her strange life she comes to describe how the Emperor Ferdinand, who has demanded her father make up an elixir of life for him, now insists that it be tried first on the young Elina Makropulos. Emilia’s last word “zkusil” [tried] overlaps into an orchestral *maestoso* of five bars (bars 711–15), at first a purely orchestral reaction, and then while the orchestra pauses on a single chord (as in the *Šárka* example above), she sings: “Pak jsem byla týden či jak dlouho bez sebe a uzdravila” [Then I was unconscious for a week or so, and got better], after which she resumes her narrative, the tempo now marked *Moderato*. The *maestoso* here underlines the fact that it was the young Elina Makropulos (now Emilia Marty) who, rather than the Emperor, was given the magic formula which has prolonged her life by three hundred years, the underlying basis for the plot of the opera.

Marking important moments

All the *maestoso* underlining of important words described above are short passages. But Janáček also used longer sections of *maestoso* to draw attention to important moment in a work. In *Fate* there is a long, purely orchestral passage (Scene 2, bars 143–200) marked *maestoso*. It comes early in Act 1 and therefore has none of the functions of the structural *maestosos* described above. However the length is striking and this long orchestral passage helps to highlight an important moment in the opera when Míla has caught sight of her former lover Živný, from whom she has involuntarily

parted (the rest of Act 1 will see their reconciliation and finally elopement). The drama of the situation is furthermore heightened by the last eight bars (the *maestoso* marking is repeated) in which the texture thins down to tremolo violins, playing a triple *forte* version of the theme on which the *maestoso* passage before was based. Voices are heard only in the final two bars, after which normal conversation between the group (Míla and Živný and two others) resumes, the tempo now changed to *moderato*.

Janáček used the *maestoso* indication three times at the end of Act 3 of *Fate*. In response to the students' invitation to describe the opera to be given that evening Živný begins a long narration which, as he explains the plot, also reveals his personal involvement – it is in fact his story, and by the first *maestoso* (at Scene 3, bar 47) his utterances have become incoherently passionate and visionary, the transcendental mood emphasized by the wide-spaced orchestral accompaniment to his words. The students to whom this is addressed register their horror but Živný continues (Scene 4 with the *maestoso* seemingly continuing) describing the vision of his dead wife until he collapses in a faint, a total of thirty-four bars. A second *maestoso* comes a little later (Scene 4, bar 53) as the anxious students try and calm Živný, who attempts to echo the notes that he hears his dead wife singing. But when the student Verva suggests that this is from the missing last act of the opera Živný sits up and declares robustly “To jest v rukou božích a zůstane tam!” [That is in the hands of God and will stay there!]. These words are sung unaccompanied and *maestoso*. Then follows eleven bars of purely orchestral music that concludes the opera in high drama.

While the final *maestoso* in *Fate* can be regarded as a Structural I *maestoso* the other uses in this act help to underline the visionary, transcendental state that takes over Živný in his increasingly personal description of the opera.

This use of *maestoso* to create a strange, otherworldly atmosphere can be found outside Janáček's operas. In the second movement (bar 131) of his *Sinfonietta* the previously brisk tempo is halted by a strange *maestoso* with held wind chords, high violin and viola figuration pierced by Janáček's trumpets and then trombones in one of Janáček's more unusual time signatures (13/8). The uneven metre, and wide-spread orchestration combined with the *maestoso* marking contributes to a feeling of time standing still. It gives way to a *Più mosso* until arrested again by another *maestoso* with similar effects (though varied means). This strange *maestoso* section con-

stitutes a central moment of timelessness in contrast to the otherwise busy outer sections of the movement.

Janáček used the same device in the fifth movement of the same work (bar 100) when the impetuous *Più mosso*, which has been driving the movement towards a climax, is suddenly interrupted by a six-bar *maestoso*. Again he used a wide-spread texture: growly thick trombones at the bottom, high tremolo violins at the top against which a very high flute wanders down, alternating and then combining with an E flat clarinet until swept away by a return to the previous *Più mosso* as the music heads towards an exciting climax with the return of the fanfares and its *maestoso* climax.

[71–72] *Ty vlnky mé zlaté Kamily.*
5/VIII 1928

pp

Dunaj

ppp

vlnka lká:
vášnivě

Maestoso

Ta slasť!

Example 4: Janáček: *Památník pro Kamilu Stösslovou*, ed. and transcribed by Jarmila Procházková (Brno: Moravské zemské muzeum, 1994).

One of Janáček's more puzzling *maestoso* markings comes in the second movement of his Second String Quartet "Listy důvěrné" [Intimate Letters] at bar 60. Here a theme already heard *fortissimo* four bars earlier is

played again and elaborated for eight bars marked *maestoso in espressione*, a slowed-down intensification of the music before a *Vivace* continuation. Some clue as to what this meant for Janáček can perhaps be provided by a tiny fragment jotted down in the *Památník pro Kamilu Stösslovou* [Album for Kamila Stösslová], dated 5 August 1928, a week before he died and a few months after completing the Second String Quartet. Here, having written out themes to represent “Ty vlnky mé zlaté Kamily” [The waves (i.e. breasts) of my dear Kamila], and others to show the waves crying “passionately” (“vlnká lká”; “vášnivě”) he writes two chords (the second very spread out), marked *maestoso* with the comment “Ta slast!” [That bliss!] (see ex. 4).

*

Janáček's *maestoso* passages in the years up to his last opera, *From the House of the Dead*, have a number of shared characteristics. They are mostly loud and slow, generally providing a contrast in speed to what comes before and (unless they end a piece) after. While some more extensive examples can be found, most are short sections. Apart from a few instances where Janáček used *maestoso* to highlight important words or moments in operas, Janáček limited his uses of *maestoso* to purely orchestral (or instrumental) music. Generally the marking is always appropriate to the solemn or majestic or occasionally otherworldly mood. Their uses can be categorized as follows:

- a. Heroic/patriotic nationalism;
- b. Structural (I): conclusion of act or movement;
- c. Structural (II): dramatic stopping-point towards the end of a piece, followed by a precipitate close (= “11th-hour Maestoso”)
- d. For highlighting important words;
- e. For marking important moments;
- f. To suggest a transcendental, visionary quality.

Maestoso in From the House of the Dead

The oddity of the way in which Janáček used *maestoso* in *From the House of the Dead* becomes clear when his usage there is compared to that in the three preceding operas.

Káta Kabanová (1921): 5 occurrences:

3 structural (ends of Act 1, Act 2 and Act 3);
 2 key words, all Act 3: Dikoj declares that storms are a punishment from God to show his might; Káťa calls out to Boris before their final meeting.

The Cunning Little Vixen comment. (1924): 1 occurrence:
 1 structural (end of Act 3).

The Makropulos Affair (1926) 4 occurrences:
 2 structural (end of Act 2, end of Act 3);
 1 suggesting a transcendental change of state for Emilia to emerge “like a shadow”, Act 3;
 1 for important words, Act 3: Marty describes how they tried out the formula years on her and thus gave her a three-hundred-year life span.

In *From the House of the Dead* Janáček used *maestoso* in the following places:

A: Overture, bars 141–2

B: Act 1, bars 154–64: Arrival of Petrovič at the prison camp (orchestra only): includes motto theme;

C: Act 1, bars 327–8: Prisoners tell Nikita to release the eagle;

D: Act 1, bars 607–12: Prisoners dismiss the crazy Skuratov as a “useless fellow”; includes motto theme;

E: Act 3, bars 35–8: Prelude: end; this music recurs at end of the opera to words about freedom and the release of the eagle;

F, G, H: Act 3, bars 602–9, 759–72, 826–37): three important moments in Šiškov’s story about Akulka; H includes the motto theme.

The two-bar *maestoso* in the overture has all the hallmarks of an “eleventh-hour *maestoso*”. It occurs towards the end after a long *Allegro* passage and is immediately swept aside by a *Presto* and then *Allegro*, which drives the music towards its climactic end.

As the summary above show, five of the uses of *maestoso* include sung words (C, D, F, G, H). To deal with these first, example C has just three words, but these are key words to the opera. Janáček made a clear link between the eagle with a broken wing kept by the prisoners and Alexandr Petrovič Gorjančikov, whose arrival soon after the beginning of the opera

and his departure at the end of opera constitutes the chief narrative thread of the piece. When Petrovič has been taken off to be beaten (we hear his cries of pain offstage), the prisoners bring out the eagle. They tell his keeper, Nikita, to release him – just two bars marked “Maestoso”. But the eagle’s wing is still broken and he is unable to fly. “Orel, car lesů” [Eagle, tsar of the forests!] the prisoners sing ironically. These are important words that are heard later in the opera.

Maestoso **Allegro** (♩ = 126)

327 VĚZEŇ S ORLEM / STRÄFLING MIT DEM ADLER / PRISONER WITH THE EAGLE

VĚZEŇ I / STRÄFLING I / PRISONER I

O - rel car le - sů!
Ad - ler, Zar der Wäl - der!
Tsar of all for - ests!

Ni - ki - to, pust ho!
Ni - ki - ta, laß ihn!
Ni - ki - ta, free him!

Fl. Cor. *sf* VI. Fl. *f*
Tbn. con sord. *sf* Va. Vc. Cl.b. Vc. Cb.

Example 5: Janáček: *From the House of the Dead*, Act I. © With kind permission by Universal Edition A.G., Wien. www.universaledition.com

The third act is dominated by the longest narrative in the opera, Šiškov’s harrowing tale of how he married and murdered Akulka. He was persuaded to marry Akulka after his friend Filka Morozov has told all the village that he has slept with her and thus disgraced her. She is now considered damaged goods and the good-for-nothing Šiškov is encouraged to take her on. But, after the marriage when the couple have been left alone, he discovers that she is in fact a virgin – “Čistá, nevinná! Čestná z čestného rodu” [Pure, innocent! An honourable woman from an honourable family] he declares in a passage marked *maestoso* (from bar 602), Akulka’s purity matched by the purity of the harmony and the *dolcissimo* marking.

Later in the same narrative Šiškov describes how Filka Morozov goes off to the army in place of a conscripted recruit. As Filka passes by Akulka’s house he sees her. He jumps down from the cart and, bowing low before her, tells her that he has loved her for three years. The moment when

he asks her forgiveness for maligning her is when the second of the three *maestoso* passages occurs. Although Šiškov is a baritone, normally notated in the bass clef Janáček notates Filka's reported words as if sung by a tenor.

27 759 **Maestoso** *ossia:* **accel.**

Šiš. Od-pust mi ty, čest-né - ho ot - ce čest-ná dce-ro! Já pod-lec,
Ver-zeih, du ei-nes ehr-ba-ren Va - ters rei-ne Toch-ter! Ich log nur,
Hon-our-a-ble daugh-ter, a sin - ner craves for-give-ness. A li - ar

Fl. b
Vi. b
Cb. b
+ Cor.

mf

762 [a tempo]

Šiš. já všim vi - nen!“ A hlu-bo-ce se jí po-klo-nil.
bin ein Un - ter!“ Und bückt sich vor ihr zum Erd-bo-den.
and a scound-rel.’ He bowed to the earth in front of her.

765 **ritornello**

Šiš. A - kul - ka se za - sta - vi - la, za - lek - nu - ta;
A - kul - ka ist steh'n - ge - blie - ben, starr vor Schre-cken,
First she did not move at all, scared to death.

pp
Ob. solo
Archi

Example 6: Janáček: *From the House of the Dead*, Act 3, © With kind permission by Universal Edition A.G., Wien. www.universaledition.com

The use of *maestoso* comes with the words “Odpust” [Forgive me], recalling a similar *maestoso* moment at the end of Janáček’s opera *Jenůfa*. The music is intensified by recalling the healing ritornello that runs through this monologue, associated with Akulka. These two examples have some-

thing of the redemptive quality heard in examples above from *Jenůfa* and *Makropulos*.

What upsets Šiškov most is that Akulka (now his wife) readily forgives Filka. Her action seals her fate. In a two-bar *maestoso* passage he tells Akulka that her end is come. What is striking about this final example is that Šiškov's words are sung against the short and striking motif often known as the "motto theme" that dominates Act 1. This is the only instance where the *maestoso* in Janáček's autograph manuscript differs from that in the authorized copy. The latter has it in the position shown in the example; Janáček originally had it, less logically, two bars later.

Maestoso

825

Sis. „Vstá - vej, A - kul - ko! Tvůj je
 „Auf - steh'n, A - kul - ka! Auf, du
 'Out you get, A - kul - ka! You will

Vi. +Cl.

f motto theme

Tbn. con sord. Vc. Cb.

828

29

Sis. ko - nec!""
 stirbst jetzt!""
 die here!'

Vc. Cb. f Fig. Va.

Example 7: Janáček: *From the House of the Dead*, Act 3. © With kind permission by Universal Edition A.G., Wien. www.universaledition.com

Soon after the beginning of the opera the prisoners in a Siberian prison camp await the arrival of the new prisoner, Alexander Petrovič Gorjančikov. This first *maestoso* in the act begins with the motto theme. There follows a very high, violin solo, set against low accompaniment, which seems to sug-

gest the fear and loneliness of the man as he sees the prison for the first time.

7 **Maestoso** [♩ = 60]

Ott. Fl. 3
Cl. Vl.

f Tb. Timp. **motto theme**

Tamb.pic. Vc. Cb.

Vstupa je pod STRÁŽÍ I ALEXANDR PETROVIČ GORJANČIKOV.
ALEXANDER PETROWITSCH GORJANTSCHIKOFF tritt auf, von WACHE I begleitet.
ALEXANDR PETROVIČ GORJANČIKOV enters escorted by GUARD I.

152

Vi. solo *espr.*

Fl.

Vi. solo *p*

C.i.

155

accel.

Tbn. con sord.

Vc. Cb.

160

Example 8: Janáček: *From the House of the Dead*, Act 1. © With kind permission by Universal Edition A.G., Wien. www.universaledition.com

Later in the act, one of the prisoners Skuratov, has gone almost mad in the prison. He does a wild dance and then collapses in exhaustion. Over repeated chords from the motto theme the rest of the prisoners comment saying that he is a useless imbecile. And, puzzlingly, this passage is marked *maestoso* (see ex. 10).

There are no occurrences of *maestoso* in Act 2, which is by far the most light-hearted act of the opera. But at the end of the short prelude to Act 3 there are three bars marked *maestoso* before the curtain goes up. They present a musical theme that is heard towards the end of the opera, associated with freedom.

Maestoso (♩=♩)

607 VĚZNI / STRÄFLINGE / PRISONERS
Tenori

ff 3

Člo - věk zby - teč - ný! —
So ein Ta - ge - dieb! —
He's an im - be - cile! —

Bassi

ff 3

Ob. Cl.

ff

Fg.

SKURATOV se zhroutí.
SKURATOFF bricht zusammen.
SKURATOV collapses.

609 motto theme

Cor. Tbn.

Example 9: Janáček: *From the House of the Dead*, Act 1. © With kind permission by Universal Edition A.G., Wien. www.universaledition.com

At the end of the opera Petrovič is released from prison. He looks forward to his new life (“Nový život”) and at the same time the other prisoners celebrate his freedom by letting the eagle out of the cage, its wing now healed. “Pusť ho Nikito!” they sing – repeating the words from Act 1 – and this time the eagle can fly and does fly. “Zlatá svoboda!” [Dear freedom] Petrovič sings to a repeat of the theme heard at the end of the Prelude. One might have expected this to be marked *maestoso* – but it is not.

As is evident there are more occurrences of *maestoso* here than in all of the previous three operas combined (eight compared with ten) and five of these (C, D, F, G, H) include words, compared with three in the previous three operas. Only one of the *House of the Dead* examples is structural (the main use in the previous three operas). Three of the occurrences (B, D, H) include one of the main musical themes of the opera, the motto theme. This theme opens Act 1 and recurs generally in association with painful events, for instance at the arrival of Petrovič in the prison camp and later during his brutal beating by the prison guards. It is heard when Skuratov

has collapsed with exhaustion and is mocked by the other prisoners. And it is heard at the end of Šiškov's story when he tells Akulka that is about to kill her, both these passages (D and H) are marked *maestoso*.

Example 10: Janáček: *From the House of the Dead*, Act 3. © With kind permission by Universal Edition A.G., Wien. www.universaledition.com

Most of the *maestoso* passages in *From the House of the Dead* are heard – unusually for Janáček – in sung passages and the words that are sung here perhaps provide a clue to Janáček's thinking. We have already noted two painful uses – with Skuratov and with the killing of Akulka. But equally there are others with positive associations. For instance when the prisoners tell Nikita to release the eagle, and the two moments of great tenderness and compassion, in Šiškov's story about Akulka.

Bearing in mind the original meaning of the term *maestoso* – majestically – and the earlier Czech preoccupation with its regal and heroic aspects, Janáček's use of the term in a prison setting and with common criminals, seems out of place. But we need to put these associations within the context of one more clue about Janáček's intentions in this opera. At the beginning of the score he wrote these words "V každém tvorů jiskra boží" [In every creature a spark of God].

This thought is emphasized in the some lines found on Janáček after his death. In what seems to be notes for an article on the opera, he wrote:

Why do I go into the dark, frozen cells of criminals with the poet of Crime and Punishment? Into the minds of criminals and there

I find a spark of God. You will not wipe away the crimes from their brow, but equally you will not extinguish the spark of God.

In *From the House of the Dead* the direction *maestoso* seems not so much an indication of how to play the music as a label to bestow dignity on his characters, to see in them this “spark of God”. In this opera with a cast of criminals the indication that originally denoted and dignified Czech heroes is now used perhaps to suggest that even the dregs of society, the murderers that have been incarcerated in Siberian prisons, still retain their humanity. Janáček depicts their world and the terrible deeds they have done unflinchingly but also with huge compassion. And in what would be his final opera – almost his final work – he tries to find some sort of peace for them – forgiveness and a promise of freedom.

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