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Making Czech Art Song Accessible for Novice Singers

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MAKING CZECH ART SONG ACCESSIBLE FOR NOVICE SINGERS

by

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MAKING CZECH ART SONG ACCESSIBLE FOR NOVICE SINGERS

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Czech art song is often overlooked by vocal instructors while assigning music for the novice singer. The repertoire of Czech art song is vast, yet seldom used in vocal studios in America. Though some consider the language difficult, when approached in the correct manner it is easy for a novice to sing in Czech. This document advocates for Czech art song to be assigned and selected for the novice singer. Each chapter serves as a tool to understand and navigate Czech repertoire. The last chapter provides five examples of Czech art song selected because they align with the guidelines of accessibility. The chapter includes translations and IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) for the art song examples selected. The appendix, contains different sources that will help the student or the instructor find additional Czech art songs not mentioned in this document.

This document serves as a guide for instructors and students to expand the novice singer's vocal canon by promoting Czech art song as a beautiful, appropriately accessible, and attainable addition to their music repertoire.

This document is dedicated to my mother, Beth Sweeney and husband, Eli Green.

Mom, thank you for supporting me and reading every line of this document. Your wisdom and encouraging words gave me confidence to write.

Eli, thank you for your unconditional love and support. I would not have been able to do any of this without you.

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Introduction

Making Czech Art Song Accessible for Novice Singers

How can vocal instructors help their novice singers feel comfortable singing in a foreign language perceived to be so difficult, namely Czech? Novice singers already have much to learn: how to sing well, the nature of the foreign language, proper pronunciation, as well as performance skills. Yet when Czech music is overlooked as an option for novice singers, they miss out on the opportunity to perform beautifully composed music, beautiful language expressions, and confidence-building vocal growth that comes from learning Czech art songs.

Assigning Czech art songs expands the performer's vocal music canon. Instructors can feel comfortable assigning Czech art songs because the Czech rules of diction are surprisingly easy to follow. A natural benefit of introducing Czech music to novice singers is the *legato* quality of the language which is essential to classical vocal technique. Additionally, Czech composers, many of whom are detailed in this document, have contributed much-loved, influential, and musically significant pieces to the repertoire that have often been overlooked by native English speakers. Introducing this music at the novice level allows students to grow their knowledge about singing as well as the Czech musical heritage.

Understanding Czech music history, understanding the Czech language, and assessing accessibility will help guide the selection and introduction of

Czech art songs. This document is written for the instructor and the student. Czech composers are introduced, diction examples are described to help native English speakers accurately pronounce the Czech language, and examples of music are provided, including a piece for each voice: soprano, mezzo- soprano, tenor, and baritone. Novice singers that are native English speakers really can sing Czech art songs and experience performing the beautiful vocal music from the Czech lands.

Chapter I

Czech Music History

The Czech people have long been lovers of music. From vocal to instrumental works, folk music to high-culture opera, and sacred to secular, each genre is performed and enjoyed in Czech lands. Cultivating and enhancing Western European culture, the Czech people enriched the nations with their music and arts. From the mid-1300's when it was named the capital city of the Holy Roman Empire, Prague was the center of innovation and culture, welcoming musicians, composers, artists, poets, and craftsmen. It continued to be a center for musical innovation through the centuries. Those who came to see the latest creations carried them back to their own countries and brought the Czech influence with them across the European continent. All of Europe has been touched by Czech creativity; and today, its creative excellence has circled the globe.

The Czech lands have also often been the center of political and religious upheaval and persecution, which significantly influenced their music and song. From the Hussite Movement during the 13th century to the Velvet Revolution in 1989, the Czech people have fought for their rights and freedoms. Through these centuries of struggle, each generation continued to prepare the next to make music, to love music, and to share music. This was so evident in the 1700s that an English music critic visiting the area called it the "Conservatorium of Europe."[1] The number and quality of young students in both villages and cities practicing musical instruments was overwhelming, explaining

[1] "Czech Music," The Friends of Czech Heritage, February 2, 2024, https://www.czechfriends.net/czech-heritage/czech-music.

why so many Czech land musicians were employed in the courts and musical centers of the time.

Historians record that in the fourth century BC, the Celtic Boii tribe populated what is now the present-day Czech Republic. The Boii tribe was replaced by the Germanic tribe in the first century. They called the land "Böhmen", while people groups around them called it by the Latin name, "Boiohaemum." Both names mean "Home of the Boii," but the Latin name translates to our modern-day designation of "Bohemia."[2] In the sixth century Slavic peoples came to dominance and reigned until the Germans overshadowed them in the ninth century.

The Slavic people then settled east of Bohemia in an area called Moravia. Their culture matured and became The Great Moravian Empire.[3] Sometime during the ninth century, the beginning of a Slav alphabet emerged. According to Timothy Cheek, "missionaries Cyril and Methodius arrived in the Moravian Empire with a written form of Old Slavonic, planting the seed for the development of Slavic languages."[4] These missionaries "used it to transcribe the most important liturgical texts into the Slav tongue."[5] The language continued to develop throughout the centuries.

After the decline of the Great Moravian Empire, the Přemysl dynasty came into power, lasting from 895 to 1306. In 950, the Czech lands (Bohemia) became part of the

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[2] Adam Augustyn, "Bohemia," in *Britannica*, January 19, 2024, https://www.britannica.com/place/Bohemia.
[3] Vladimír Štěpánek and Bohumil Karásek, *Outline of Czech Music and Slovak Music: Part 1: Czech Music* (Prague: Orbis, 1964), 10.
[4] Timothy Cheek. *A Guide to Czech Lyric Diction and Vocal Repertoire: Singing in Czech*, revised edition (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 4.
[5] Štěpánek and Karásek, *Czech Music*, 10.

Holy Roman Empire. During this time, there arose a struggle between supporters of the Slavonic liturgy and supporters of Latin liturgy. Under the strong influence of the Roman Catholic church, the Latin liturgy was promoted even though the Slavonic liturgy was most widely understood by the population. Beloved sacred music in the Czech's own language survived in sacred folksongs.

> The oldest known, *Lord, Have Mercy Upon Us,* dates from the end of the 10th or the beginning of the 11th century. This hymn was a great favourite with the people; Czech armies sang it in battle, and at the time of the coronation of Charles IV (1346), it became a part of the coronation ceremony of Czech kings – what we would call today a national anthem.[6]

The Luxembourg dynasty began rule in Bohemia in 1310. At this time, the Kingdom of Bohemia included Moravia, Silesia, Upper and Lower Lusatia in addition to the province of Bohemia. Charles of Luxembourg, King of Bohemia, was named Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in 1355. With this position and influence, he founded the University of Prague and transformed Prague into the principal center of knowledge and art in central Europe.

The Austro-Hungarian influence began in Bohemia in 1526 when the Habsburg Ferdinand I of Austria claimed the throne. Habsburg rule supported Roman Catholicism while a significant movement toward Protestantism grew in Bohemia. Conflict led to revolt and though Habsburg authority was reasserted in 1620, the country lost its status as a kingdom. It then became a territory of the Austrian Habsburg empire through World War I.

When Germany annexed the Sudetenland of northern and western Bohemia in 1938, the Czech lands became embroiled in the conflicts of World War II. At the end of

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[6] Štěpánek and Karásek, *Czech Music,* 10-11.

the war, Czechoslovakia was formed from its former territories. The country operated under Communist Soviet rule until the Velvet Revolution in 1989 when it moved from one-party communist rule to a parliamentary republic.[7] Tensions arose in the 1970s when many Slovaks, citing disparity between Czech and Slovak incomes and political power, advocated for Slovak separation. In 1993, governmental policymakers joined the people in peacefully separating the Czech Republic from Slovakia, creating two independent nation-states.

Throughout Czech history, folksongs, hymnals, and styles shaped Czech music. Prominent composers, musicians and artists from the Czech lands influenced the area's history and garnered public appreciation and understanding of its struggles.

> The Czech people are musical – it has been natural for them to express their thoughts and feelings in music, to respond with melody to events they have witnessed or in which they have taken part. There have been periods in Czech history when the people, deprived of personal and religious freedom and of their mother tongue, have expressed in music their love and veneration for all that was denied them, defiance and rebellion against all who tyrannized over them.[8]

Folksongs, sacred, and secular songs filled the Czech lands in each stage of its history. Czech music evolved and grew in style and complexity, often influenced by individuals and trends outside Czech lands.

Undisputed Czech musical excellence was recognized across Europe when Prague was named the capital city of the Holy Roman Empire in the mid-1300s. Instrumental and dance music flourished. Secular lyrical poetry, love songs, polyphonic compositions, and plays with lyrical monologues and dialogues became common. International validation of the excellence in Czech music grew with the rise of Záviš of Zapy, master

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[7] Adam Augustyn, "Bohemia," https://www.britannica.com/place/Bohemia.
[8] Štěpánek and Karásek, *Czech Music*, 8.

of the school of composition at Prague University. At the same time, Jan of Jenštejn, a Prague archbishop, composed excellent church music. Despite their musical achievements, their work was lost during the Hussite period.[9]

Czech Music during the Sixteenth Century: Broadside Ballads, Sacred, and Secular

The number of surviving musical works and papers increased at the beginning of the sixteenth century thanks to the invention of the printing press, which brought about the inexpensive mass production of all literature, including written music. The speed with which new documents could be printed spread knowledge wider and faster than before.

Introduced in the late fifteenth century, the broadside ballad (kramářská píseň [krama:řska pi:sɛɲ] directly translated as "shopkeeper's song") is a narrative song which quickly became popular in sixteenth century.[10] According to Fumerton, Kosek, and Hanzeková, the "Czech broadside ballads ... [are] singularly *Czech*... they have been shaped by the country's unique history of religious clashes, civil wars, occupational conflicts, invasions, and the consequent re-drawings, sometimes overnight, of the country's borders."[11] Some of the oldest broadside ballads can be found during the Humanist period (1419-1434), a time when the worldview was centered around the human realm rather than the natural realm. At this time, "Prague was a major European

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[9] Štěpánek and Karásek, *Czech Music,* 12.
[10] Patricia Fumerton and Pavel Kosek and Marie Hanzeková, "Important Terms," in *Czech Broadside Ballads as Text, Art, Song in Popular Culture, c. 1600-1900,* ed. Patricia Fumerton and Pavel Kosek and Marie Hanzeková, trans. Christopher James Hopkinson and Particia Fumerton, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022) 15.
[11] Patricia Fumerton and Pavel Kosek and Marie Hanzeková, "The History and Reception of Czech Broadside Ballads within Local, Regional, and Global Contexts," in *Czech Broadside Ballads as Text, Art, Song in Popular Culture, c. 1600-1900,* ed. Patricia Fumerton and Pavel Kosek and Marie Hanzeková, trans. Christopher James Hopkinson and Particia Fumerton, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022) 21.

hub for information, particularly after Rudolf II's imperial court had relocated to the city."[12]

Figure 1. An example of a Czech Broadside Ballad. *Czech Broadside Ballads as Text, Art, and Song in Popular Culture, ca. 1600-1900,* cover picture, Amsterdam University Press, https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/59158/1/9789048553341.pdf.

The Czech broadside ballad is characterized by an absence of musical notation, its sextodecimo size, the Schwabacher typeface (a popular typeface used in Germany at this time), religious themes, and book-collections called špalíčky [ˈʃpaliːt͡ʃki] or "blocks."[13] Printers could only print on one side of paper, thus giving them the title of a broadside ballad. The papers were folded to travel well, with many sections of the ballad on a single sheet of paper. Because of the high demand, printers would make as many as possible using cheap materials with the

[12] Jan Malura, "The Origins of Czech Broadside Ballads in Sixteenth-Century News Leaflets," in *Czech Broadside Ballads as Text, Art, Song in Popular Culture, c. 1600-1900,* ed. Patricia Fumerton and Pavel Kosek and Marie Hanzeková, trans. Christopher James Hopkinson and Particia Fumerton, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022) 94.

[13] Fumerton and Kosek and Hanzeková, "History of Czech Broadside Ballads," 22.

lowest effort. Printers were in competition against each other, having "around 20 printing houses functioning at any one time in Bohemia and Moravia."[14]

Printing houses produced broadside ballads of two genres, religious and secular. "Religious broadside ballads were submitted to the Catholic Church"[15] for review and authorization, aiming to prevent the influence of Protestant reformer Jan Hus from infiltrating printed material. Though Hus was deemed a heretic and burned for his teachings in 1415, followers of his ideas continued the movement and its teachings for many years. These teachings advocated for lay people's full participation in the Eucharist, clergy abstaining from civil power, language freedoms for clergy in preaching, and public correction of moral sins.[16]

Sacred broadside ballads were often presented in the style of a pilgrimage song. There was not a specific musical connection to all pilgrimage broadside ballads. The only defining factor was that these songs were used while people were making a pilgrimage. These unifying journeys led to especially sacred places or were made to show honor and respect to a person or event. Common pilgrimage sites included churches, monasteries, cathedrals or a holy mountain. One of the most popular pilgrimages was to Vranov Church where a man claimed to have received a message from the Virgin Mary.

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[14] Jiří Dufka, "Broadside Ballads as Artefacts," in *Czech Broadside Ballads as Text, Art, Song in Popular Culture, c. 1600-1900,* ed. by Patricia Fumerton and Pavel Kosek and Marie Hanzeková, trans. by Christopher James Hopkinson and Patricia Fumerton (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022), 61.
[15] Dufka, "Broadside Ballads as Artefacts," 61.
[16] Stephen E. Lahey, *The Hussites* (Croydon: Arc Humanities Press, Leeds, 2019), 9-13.

Regarding the broadside ballad itself, Hanzelková clarifies that "the definition does not refer to textual or melodic patterns, but rather the purpose and function of the songs."[17]

Figure 2. An example of a Czech Broadside Ballard artwork. *Transformations of Czech 'kramářské písně' (Broadside Ballads) - media, traditions, contexts,* artwork, Brno, September 11-13, 2019, Masaryk University, https://www.phil.muni.cz/kramarskepisne/en/conference/call-for-papers.

Despite the adversity and continual change that the Czech people faced, their unique style of the broadside ballad gave their music a charming and beautiful character. Secular broadside ballads were rooted in folksongs and dance tunes, which were passed down by oral tradition. Readers often found printed on the broadside ballad an indication of a well-known tune.[18]

According to Věra Frolcová, an expert concerning the Czech Broadside Ballad, these folksongs were in two basic styles: Eastern song style and Western song style. However, "the main criteria for melody type are tectonic: the strophic scheme and the

[17] Marie Hanzelková, "Broadside Ballads and Religious Pilgrimage Songs: The Virgin Mary of Vranov," in *Czech Broadside Ballads as Text, Art, and Song in Popular Culture, ca. 1600-1900*, ed. by Patricia Fumerton and Pavel Kosek and Marie Hanzelková, trans. by Christopher Hopkingson, James and Patricia Fumerton, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022), 179.

[18] Tomáš Slavický,"Melodies of Czech Broadside Ballads in the Historical Contexts of Song Culture," in *Czech Broadside Ballads as Text, Art, and Song in Popular Culture, ca. 1600-1900*, ed. Patricia Fumerton and Pavel Kosek and Marie Hanzelková, trans. Christopher James Hopkingson and Patricia Fumerton (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022) 272.

metro-rhythmic model."[19] The differences between these styles were modal elements. The Eastern song style focused on "harmonic and non-harmonic scales" while the Western song style focused on the "harmonic major/minor system."[20] Another element of the secular Czech broadside ballad is the descending melody. The descending melody would be simple and cover an interval of a fifth.[21] Dance tunes were inspired by "Polonaise-type melodies with triple metre, either in major or minor keys."[22]

Frolcová transcribed music for "Song of a Deaf-Mute Shepherd", is an example of how one broadside ballad sounded.[23]

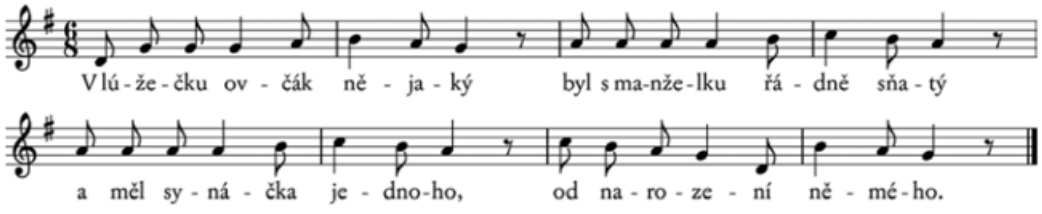

Figure 3. A transcribed broadside ballad tune. *Bohemica litteraria.* "V lúžečku/lúžičku ovčák nějaký," http://doi.org/10.5817/BL2023-1-7.

[19] Věra Frolcová, "The Melodies of Broadside Ballads and Pilgrimage Songs and the Many Media of the Song Tradition," in *Czech Broadside Ballads as Text, Art, Song in Popular Culture, c. 1600-1900.* ed. by Patricia Fumerton and Pavel Kosek and Marie Hanzelková, trans. by Christopher James Hopkinson and Particia Fumerton, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022), 292.
[20] Frolcová, *Czech Broadside Ballad,* 293.
[21] Ibid, 296.
[22] Ibid, 297.
[23] Věra Frolcová, Pavel Kosek, Hana Bočková, Markéta Holubová, and Tomaš Slavický, "Song of a deaf-mute shepherd: a Czech broadside ballad between the oral and printed tradition: an interdisciplinary case study," *Bohemica litteraria* vol. 26, no. 1 (2023): 115.

Secular broadside ballads focused on current events of the day and would often be found in news leaflets, or leták [lɛtaːk].[24]

> Broadside ballads emerged gradually during the course of the century, but only crystallized into a stable type of publication and genre during the Late Humanist era, in close conjunction with contemporary news leaflets. Compared with other parts of the Habsburg Monarchy, the Bohemian lands saw a relatively early emergence of a strong and coherent tradition of broadside ballads.[25]

The news leaflets frequently addressed "shocking events," including local miraculous births or army movements, successes, and orders.[26] By the end of the sixteenth century, the news leaflets were sought-after novelties and unique handheld documents of the latest news. This, in turn, fueled the popularity and spread of the broadside ballads. The ease with which people could access news leaflets made it clear that the music and text were intended for the common people.

Surviving leaflets and broadside ballads are extremely important to modern scholars because it is through these artifacts, we can understand the sentiments of the time. The example in Figure 4 is a leaflet announcing "events in the Kingdom of Hungary," which "gives and account on the Turkish wars."[27] Malura labels this "a news

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[24] Patricia Fumerton and Pavel Kosek and Marie Hanzelková, *Czech Broadside Ballads,* 16.
[25] Malura, *Czech Broadside Ballads,* 109.
[26] Ibid, 96.
[27] Ibid, 100-101.

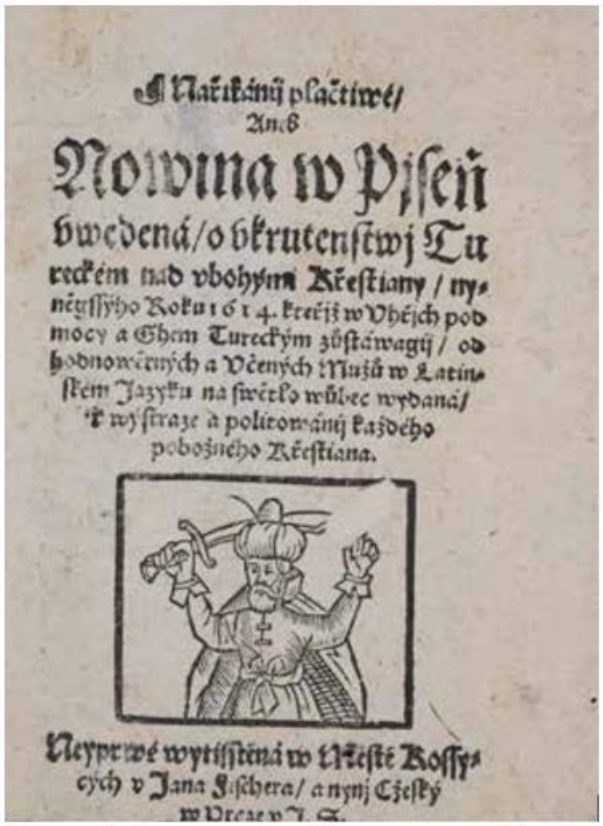

Figure 4. An example of a news song. *Czech Broadside Ballas as Text, Art, and Song in Popular Culture, ca. 1600-1900,* "Naříkání plačtivé aneb Novina v píseň uvedená," Amsterdam University Press, https://documentcloud.adobe.com//spodintegration/index.html?locale=en-us.

song about a Turkish atrocity.... Naříkání plačtivé aneb Novina v píseň uvedená (A tearful lament, a novel set to song)."[28]

An additional style of sacred music thrived during this time: the hymn. Four separate Christian sects compiled hymns into popular hymn books. "Bohemia was literally flooded with hymnals."[29] The Roman Catholics, the Utraquists or Hussites, the Lutherans, and the Unity of Czech Brethren were continually publishing hymnals. At this time, in all sects of Christianity, the tradition of vocal music was strong and purposeful. It is estimated that "during the sixteenth century between ninety-five and one hundred thousand copies of hymnbooks were published in Bohemia for about three million inhabitants."[30] Popular hymnals from this era include *Franus Hymnal*, *Hradec Králové Hymnal, The Brethren's Hymn-book,* and *Šamotuly Hymnal*.[31] This sacred music was well

[28] Malura, *Czech Broadside Ballad,* 100-101.
[29] Štěpánek and Karásek, *Czech Music,* 18.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid, 16-17.

loved, shared in community, and traveled through Europe as each sect of Christianity expanded.

The Czech Lands during the Baroque Period: Uncovering Connections Between Europe and Czech Composers

While Western Europe entered the Baroque period in the early 1600s, most of central Europe was consumed by conflict. Due to the Thirty Years' War from 1618-1648, the Czech lands did not develop the aesthetic ideals of the Baroque period as early as Wester European countries. Lack of employment resulted in musicians and composers of the Czech lands emigrating to other countries in search of work. Upon their return to the Czech lands, they brought with them the musical styles and popular compositional trends they heard in their travels. The Baroque aesthetic finally became popular in the Czech lands around 1690, half a century after the surrounding nations. A primary characteristic of the Czech Baroque period was "combination[s] of polyphony and homophony."[32] Additional characteristics of the Czech Baroque musical style include: "short and repeated melodic cells; the prevalence of triadic motifs; instrumental character in vocal music; and the use or evocation of *alternation praxi;* melodic writing in parallel thirds, sixths, tenths, unisons and octaves; paucity of counterpoint; extreme contrasts of style (usually from mixture of high and low styles within a single work); and parallel minor-major keys."[33] The formal designation of 'Czech baroque' identifies the 50 year delay in onset of the style, but does not suggest different characteristics from Western Baroque

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[32] Štěpánek and Karásek, *Czech Music*, 21.
[33] Robert G. Rawson, "Bohemian Baroque: Czech Musical Culture and Style, 1600-1750," *Music and Letters* Volume 97, no. 1 (February 2016): 161.

music. The most influential composers of the Czech Baroque period include Jan Dismas Zelenka (1679-1745), Bohuslav Matěj Černohorský (1684-1742), Jan Zach (1699-1773), František Tůma (1704-1774) and Josef Norbert Seger (1716-1782). Though well known for their instrumental works, these composers also created beautiful vocal works in varying degrees of difficulty. Even if pieces from these composers reach beyond the novice vocalist's abilities, as some do, continued growth will open new opportunities for performance of these foundational Czech composers.

Jan Dismas Zelenka (born, Jan Lukáš Zelenka) grew up in a small Bohemian village outside Prague. His father, Jiřík Zelenka, was a kantor, a respected village position of schoolteacher, helping cultivate skilled musicians.[34] Jan Zelenka composed some of his first pieces in his mid-twenties. His musical style can be characterized as being "rich in expressive harmony, with bass lines strong in their movement, unusually balanced phrases, and melodic motifs bursting with developmental possibilities."[35]

In 1704, Zelenka composed *Via laureata* for the Jesuit college of St. Nicholas, a drama with musical accompaniment and was in the Viennese style. It included musical structures like "sinfonie, ritornellos, dances, choruses, vocal ensembles, arias, and both simple and accompanied recitatives."[36] The piece was well received but the music was lost. All that is known about the musical drama is found in the synopsis.

Before moving to Dresden, the capital of Saxony, Zelenka changed his name to Jan Dismas Zelenka. Like many Czech composers after him, Zelenka found it

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[34] Janice B. Stockigt, *Jan Dismas Zelenka: A Bohemian Musician at the Court of Dresden* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1.
[35] Stockigt, *Jan Dismas Zelenka*, 229.
[36] Ibid, 4.

professionally beneficial to be perceived as more German than Czech. The exact date he arrived in Dresden is not clear, but some speculate he served for the August Royal household for 25 years. This means he arrived in Dresden around 1711.[37] While in Dresden, Zelenka was employed as a violinist, composer, conductor, and church musician. Zelenka also had great opportunities to study and travel throughout Italy and France from 1716-1719. He studied with Johann Joseph Fux and Antonio Lotti.[38] After his studies in the contrapuntal style and travels throughout Italy and Austria, Zelenka continued composing for the church. His musical compositions were so well received that in November 1723, he directed his melodrama, *Sub olea pacis et palma virtutis conspicua Orbi regia Bohemia corona* (Under the oils of peace and the visible palms of virtue, the Royal Crown of Bohemia), for the newly appointed Emperor and Empress.

Bohuslav Matěj Černohorský was a famous music teacher who was "sought out by pupils all over Europe."[39] He was also a great composer, trombonist, poet, and theologian. Černohorský's best known works were composed for voice or organ. Unfortunately, most of his music was lost due to a fire at St. James's Church in Prague.[40] He attended the University of Prague, earning a degree in philosophy. While attending university he studied organ with Týn Church and music theory with Tomas Baltazar

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[37] Stockigt, *Jan Dismas Zelenka*, 32.
[38] Janice B Stockigt, Andrew Frampton, and Frederic Kiernan, "Zelenka, Jan (Lukáš Ignatius) Dismas," *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane Root, July 9, 2018, https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.libproxy.unl.edu/grovemusic/display/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000030907?rskey=0VqVac&result=1.
[39] Štěpánek and Karásek, *Czech Music*, 22.
[40] Ibid.

Janovka.[41] After graduating in 1702, became a priest in 1708 at Franciscan Church of St. Jakub. His travel to Italy to continue his education resulted in his appointment as chief organist of the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi in 1710.[42] Kateřina Šulcová says that Černohorský, the 'Czech Bach' had "perfect mastery of high Baroque polyphony and its most distinctive form, the fugue."[43] In 1720, he returned to the Czech lands and served at St. James's Church in Prague as the director of the choir.

Many of Černohorský's counterpoint students went on to become successful composers, including František Tůma, Jan Zach, and Josef Norbert Seger. František Tůma (1704-1774) studied with Černohorský while at the Minorite church of St. James. He later travelled to Vienna where he remained for most of his life. In 1731 he became Compositor und Capellen-Meister to Count Franz Ferdinand Kinsky, which gave him the opportunity to study with Fux. [44] Tůma's music containing intricate chromatic ornamentation is characteristic of the late Baroque period.

Jan Zach (1699-1773) was a composer, organist and violinist who helped bridge the gap between the Czech Baroque and Classical periods. Zach's music was reminiscent of his teacher's style with elements of Czech dances and folksongs while utilizing new

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[41] Kateřina Šulcová, "Černohorksý [Czernohorsky], Bohuslav Matěj," *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane Root, January 20, 2001, https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.libproxy.unl.edu/grovemusic/display/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000005298.

[42] "Bohuslav Matej Cernohorsky," czechmusic.net, Accessed February 9, 2024. https://www.czechmusic.net/klasika/cernohorsky_e.htm.

[43] Šulcová, "Černohorský."

[44] Milan Poštolka, "Tůma [Thuma, Tuma], František Ignác Antonín," *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane Root, January 20, 2001, https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.libproxy.unl.edu/grovemusic/display/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000028573?rskey=fziaBK&result=1.

and innovative forms including the three-movement Italian overture. His first professional appointment, in 1737, was as an organist at St. Martín in Prague. He then served as Kapellmeister in churches in Augsburg, Frankfurt, and places throughout Italy. Zach traveled around Europe selling his music and performing until his death in 1773.[45]

Another Czech composer that bridged the gap between the Czech Baroque and Classical periods was Josef Norbert Seger. Seger (1716-1782) became the most prolific Czech composer in the early eighteenth century. His body of work is mostly consistent of organ repertoire (preludes, toccatas and fugues). These compositions require a skilled musician because of the expressive nature within a contrapuntal texture. Though Seger's compositional work began before 1750, which is considered the end of the Baroque period, he continued to compose for another 30 years. His organ instructional work titled *Bezifferte Bässe in zwei Notensystemen* is categorized as Baroque for its particularly complex harmonic structure. However, other compositions written by Seger are classical in nature, such as his organ piece titled *Offertory in A-flat major,* which is considerably less complex and carries a clear, elegant, melodic line. Following in Černohorský's footsteps, Seger studied philosophy at university and later was appointed organist at Týn Church in 1741.[46] His influence stretched far past the Czech lands thanks to noted music

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[45] Milan Poštolka, "Zach, Jan," *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane Root, January 20, 2001, https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.libproxy.unl.edu/grovemusic/display/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000030768?rskey=Myk5Jn&result=1.

[46] Milan Poštolka, "Seger [Czegert, Secrt, Seeger, Seegr, Segert, Sekert, Zekert], Josef (Ferdinand Norbert)," *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane Root, January 20, 2001, https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.libproxy.unl.edu/grovemusic/display/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000025323?rskey=wphjnT&result=1.

historian Charles Burney who met Seger while in Prague. Even Emperor Joseph II was touched by Seger's music and playing of the organ and offered him an appointment in Vienna. Unfortunately, Seger passed away before he could accept.[47]

The Great Classical Composers from the Czech Lands... Writing in German?

In the Classical period, roughly 1750 to 1820, the Czech lands were ruled by nobility of foreign descent with the Hapsburgs claiming Bohemia as a province under their control. The people felt oppressed nationally, religiously, and socially. Not only did the people seek refuge in the freeing expression of music, many sought refuge in cities and countries outside the Czech lands completely.[48]

In the 1750s a group of composers, many of Czech origin, became the first generation of composers at the Mannheim School in Mannheim, Germany. Johann Stamitz, born in Bohemia, was the founder and conductor of the orchestra. The Mannheim composers are credited with refining the sonata form from its origin in Vienna and Italy. "They achieved the dramatic conflict of differentiating the first and second subjects and giving them a contrasting character ... stabilizing of the cyclic form for instrumental works, the use of the crescendo and new melodic ornamentation, and also admitted the clarinet into the orchestra."[49] So distinguished was their composition, training, and performance, particularly in instrumental music, that they are now identified as major contributors to the mature Classical style. W.A. Mozart particularly admired the

[47] Poštolka, "Seger."
[48] Štěpánek and Karásek, *Czech Music*, 24-26.
[49] Ibid, 26.

Mannheim orchestra. Joseph Haydn and Mozart's works have come to exemplify this style of music.

Franz Xaver Richter, born in Moravia, was also a significant figure in the Mannheim School. After 22 years as a violinist and singer for the Mannheim orchestra, he became the conductor at Strasbourg Cathedral and went on to compose "some 70 symphonies, piano, violin and violon-cello trios, string quartets and other compositions."[50] His prolific works were colored by folk melodies of the Czech lands and were often reminiscent of Mozart's work in themes and patterns. While Mozart's works are internationally known Richter's compositions are less so. Outside of music academia, Richter is not well-known. However, Mozart is easily identified among people who are not rooted in the world of music academia. Like Mozart, Richter's music was "strengthened by the core of counterpoint"[51] within his compositions. Acknowledging similarities between Richter and Mozart validates Richter's high quality of composition and strong foundation of counterpoint not standard to the Mannheim style of composition.

Jan Ladislav Dussek (1760-1812) (also known as Jan Ladislav Dušek, Jan Ladislav Dusík) was born in Bohemia, but by the age of 20 emigrated west from the Czech lands and was performing throughout Europe as a virtuoso pianist. At the same time, he began composing piano works, chamber music and accompanied sonatas. His pioneering spirit made him one of the first to introduce a programmatic element.[52]

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[50] Štěpánek and Karásek, *Czech Music*, 27.
[51] Hyatt A. King, "Mozart's Counterpoint: Its Growth and Significance," *Music & Letters* Volume 26, no. 1 (January 1945): 12.
[52] Štěpánek and Karásek, *Czech Music*, 28.

Program music refers to, or is about, something outside the music itself, attempting to mirror a story or scene through sound. Following Dussek's lead, programmatic elements in composing became increasingly popular in the Romantic period.

As a result of unfavorable circumstances in their own lands, musicians found opportunity in Germany to produce music that was applauded, both by the German public and by the professional musical community throughout Europe. Therefore, for Johann Stamitz and Franz Xaver Richter, the language of composition was German. Many Czech composers also changed their name to sound more German, including Jan Křtitel Jiří Neruda (later Johann Baptist Beorg Neruda), František Benda (later Franz Benda), Jiří Antonín Benda (later George Benda), Jan Ignatius Vaňhal (later Johann Baptist Wanhal), and František Kramář (later Franz Krommer).

Other popular German composers of Czech origin found success in Italy. Bohemian born František Benda (1709-1786) was an outstanding violinist who found an audience in Germany for the *cantabile* quality and sophisticated embellishment of his playing. His brother Jiří Antonin Benda (1722-1795) (George Anton in German) was also a gifted composer, chamber musician and conductor in Hamburg and Vienna. He toured Italy for six months composing Italian operas, *intermezzi* and melodramas. Both composers influenced later composers, most notably W.A. Mozart. Johann Antonin Kozeluch (Jan Antonín Koželuh) (1738-1814) and Josef Misliweczek (Josef Mysliveček) (1737-1781), both students of Josef Seger, mastered the Italian *opera seria* form. Koželuh's work as an opera composer soon gave him the title of a "master

contrapuntist."[53] Mysliveček was a friend of Leopold and Wolfgang Mozart and became a master of *opera seria*. He "adopted Italianate modes of expression in almost all his compositions."[54] Though they composed these works in Italian they were known as German composers.

Nationalism and Its Effect on Czech Music: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

As a result of French revolutionary uprisings followed by Napoleon Bonaparte's crushing defeat of many Roman Confederate state armies in 1805, the Holy Roman Empire officially dissolved in 1806. Former Holy Roman Empire political entities reorganized, with the Austrian Habsburgs controlling Czech lands. In the absence of Roman Empirical lordship, the Czech people enjoyed a time of national revival. The feudal system gave way to industrialization, while a growing working-middle class gave new attention to history and culture as only the upper class were accustomed to doing previously.

While the general population enjoyed renewed interest in the arts, musicians faced new challenges. As the feudal system crumbled, aristocratic patrons also backed away from the support of artists of any kind, including musicians. Recognizing this change could affect the excellence and growth of music arts, a progressive group coalesced to sustain and support the Czech musical culture. "In 1808 the Society for the Improvement of Music Arts in Bohemia was established, and this society in turn founded the Prague

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[53] Milan Poštolka, "Kozeluch [Koscheluch, Koželuh], Johann Antonin [Jan Evangelista Antonín Tomáš]," in *Grove Music Online*, edited by Deane Root, January 20, 2001, https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.libproxy.unl.edu/grovemusic/display/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000015445?rskey=fy0pXj&result=1.

[54] Štěpánek and Karásek, *Czech Music*, 30.

Conservatoire in 1811, second only in time to the famous Conservatoire in Paris."[55] The beginnings of publicly supported musical arts arose with musicians intentionally seeking to be financially supported by the general public. Czech composers wrote art songs, sometimes promoting patriotic themes. These songs were meant to replace German *Lieder* which became prevalent during Austrian and German dominance. Without wealthy patrons, Czech composers became more responsive to the wider public taste. Symphonies, overtures, and operas were loved by the people, so composers wrote in these genres, sometimes borrowing themes, forms, or styles from music in other countries and making them uniquely Czech.

In the 1820s, a passionate Nationalist law student turned composer, František Škroup, produced the first modern Czech opera, *Dráteník* (The Tinker). Škroup deeply desired the Czech language to be spoken and sung on stage. The production was a great success, and he continued to compose and influence those who followed in his passions. Czech music lover Pavla Horáková (award winning writer, journalist, and Czech translator) stated, "Until then the Czech language had not been considered refined enough for such a highbrow art form but this ... start(ed) a Czech operatic tradition which would peak in the works of Dvořák, Smetana, and Janáček."[56] However, even more than this contribution to Czech opera, Škroup's legacy is a song from the popular 1834 play, *Fidlovačka.* In the play, a blind violinist sings the song, "Kde domov muj?" [gdɛ dɔməf

[55] Štěpánek and Karásek, *Czech Music*, 35.
[56] Pavla Horáková, "First Czech opera premiered 180 years ago," Radio Prague International, January 2, 2006, https://english.radio.cz/first-czech-opera-premiered-180-years-ago-8623236.

muːˈl] (Where is my homeland?). The Czech people embraced the song as their own and in 1918, it became the National Anthem of the Czechoslovak Republic.[57]

Equal in popularity with his contemporaries during the first half of his career, but far surpassing them in the second half, Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904) is the composer most commonly associated with Czech music. Though musically talented and well-educated, he was not popular until the 1873 premier of his cantata *Hymnus* in a concert given by the newly founded, 300-voice Hlahol Choir.[58] *Hymnus* features a devotional prayer dedicated to the patriotic heart of the Czech people. Dvořák used Vítězslav Hálek's poem *Dědicové bilé hory* (['djɛdikɔvɛ: 'bilɛ: 'ɦɔrɪ] *Heirs of the White Mountain*), which recounts a major Czech battle loss to the Habsburgs, while calling Czech people to national faithfulness. Among Czech listeners, it evoked a strong nationalistic sentiment. Dvořák's music depicted sorrow and mourning in E-flat minor followed by grand, *fortissimo* E-flat major harmonic modulations and polyphonic flourishes depicting resilience and optimism. From that point, the public response to his music grew.

Already well known to the Czech people, Dvořák was internationally recognized in the 1880s. He composed works for voice, strings, piano, organ, woodwinds, brass, and percussion, including a range of styles from solo or duet works to symphonies and operas. Many believed Dvořák surpassed his accomplished contemporaries "in the universality of his work."[59]

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[57] Štěpánek and Karásek, *Czech Music*, 37.
[58] Kurt Honolka, *Dvořák,* trans. by Anne Wyburd (London: Haus Publishing, 2004), 29-30.
[59] Honolka, *Dvořák,* 113.

By the end of the 1800s, Czech nationalism was suppressed as the Habsburgs of the Austro-Hungarian Empire ruled Czech lands and the Czech language was replaced. By 1918, however, the Slovaks and the Czechs joined together to form the Republic of Czechoslovakia.[60] Nationalism peaked again, giving rise to Bohemia's leading nineteenth-century composer, Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884) who was a "fully fledged neo-Romantic."[61] His music was influenced by Joseph Proksch, Hector Berlioz, Franz Liszt, and Richard Wagner. "Smetana reacted intensely to all the social upheavals of the period"[62] and embodied the heart of a true nationalist so much that he was regarded in his homeland as the father of Czech music.

Smetana's nationalist influence extended fifty years beyond his death. Decades of German language instruction left large parts of the Republic of Czechoslovakia looking and feeling like a German territory. Western parts of the country were annexed by Germany in 1939, followed by years of engagement in World War II. Nationalistic fervor remained strong among the native Czech people as evidenced by a performance of Smetana's *Má vlast* on February 6, 1945, just three months before the end of World War II. Following the performance, Zdeněk Němec wrote an article expressing the idea of the piece, written 70 years earlier, suggesting political resistance. As a result, he was arrested, interrogated, tortured, and killed by the Gestapo.

> Smetana's *My Homeland* is among those compositions that endure despite the torrents of time and the onslaughts of circumstances; its explicitness does not allow any other interpretation than that comprised in the idea of *Blaník* [a mountain in the Czech Republic]; it carries timeless values – because they are the noblest ones from moral and musical perspectives. The piece itself addresses

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[60] "Brief History of the Czech Republic," Czech Universities, August 31, 2019, https://www.cze chuniversities.com/article/a-brief-history-of-the-czech-republic.
[61] John Tyrrell, *Janáček: Years of a Life, Volume 1 (1854-1914) The lonely blackbird* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 2006), 13-14.
[62] Štěpánek and Karásek, *Czech Music*, 38.

> us and captivates us with the first chords of *Vyšehrad* [the name of a castle in the Czech Republic] to the victory march of the Blaník Knights who come at the moment of the nation's greatest crisis to bring salvation and emancipation from bondage and darkness. Smetana's work thus fulfilled its destiny during the First World War, and thus we still understand it today. Sunday's performance by the Czech Philharmonic under the baton of K. B. Jirák at the sold-out Smetana Hall does not have to be reviewed in detail. The orchestra and the conductor completely fulfilled their duty.[63]

The year 1945 marked the end of the war and restoration of Czechoslovakia, bringing another wave of nationalistic fervor. Unfortunately, only three years into their reborn sovereignty, Czechoslovakia fell under communist rule. From 1948 until 1989, the Czech people faced great persecution for holding opposing political views from Communist Soviet dominion and authority.

Czech Music Today: Shaping the Next Generation

Czech composers have been no less prolific in the modern era than in any of the other previous periods. Perhaps one of the most well-known Czech composers is Leoš Janáček (1854-1928). He started composing in the late nineteenth century and is considered both a Romantic and Modern era composer, with many of his vocal písně (songs) categorized as the latter. Not wanting to be considered a Moravian composer, Janáček broadened his identity as a 'Czech' composer. He was passionate about Czech culture, music, literature, and language.

Despite the popularity of the German language, Janáček strove to keep the Czech language alive. Many people, including his brothers, had lost their native language, but Janáček refused to become Germanized. His dedication to the rich Czech culture is evident in his folk compositions, with special emphasis on his addition of multiple collections of folk songs to the vocal literature from 1889 to 1918.[64] Musicologist Dr.

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[63] Jan Vičar, *Imprints: Essays on Czech Music and Aesthetics*, (Togga: Palacký University in Olomouc, 2005), 10.
[64] Tyrrell, *Janáček*, 391.

Michael B. Beckerman says that during the time of Janáček's folk song composition, "real international success begins after 1916, the period that coincidentally sees the birth of modern Czechoslovakia."[65] Janáček's compositions display strong harmonies and repetitive melodies with great attention to the speech inflections of his native language.

Another modern composer, Josef Bohuslav Foerster (1859-1951) was influenced by the words of Smetana and Dvořák as well as by his close friend Gustav Mahler. Foerster's lyricism, based on his own personal understanding and ideas, at times embraced rigid Christian moral principles, and at other times focused on loose, inexpressible mysteries as were popular in the Symbolist Mysticism of the time.[66] "He was able to capture sensitively the poetic nuances of poems and at the same time achieve proper rhythmic declamation of their texts".[67] Choruses, part-songs, and songs of vocal composition make up his numerous, and, some argue, his most important works. He portrayed intimate moods and introspection through the introduction of new tonal effects in choral writing. In his songs and song cycles "he shows himself as a poet of lyrical charm, opening up to Czech singers the subtle and exciting pleasures of the part-song, the shape of which grows out of the finely balanced proportions between music and text and the intricate part-writing."[68] Additionally, his symphonies and operas find their

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[65] Michael B. Beckerman, "Leoš Janáček and 'The Late Style' in Music," *The Gerontologist* Volume 30, no. 5 (October 1990): 634.
[66] Marta Ottlová, "The 'Other World' of Music at the Turn of the Century," in *Czech Music Around 1900,* ed. Lenka Křupková and Jiří Kopecký (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2017), 29.
[67] Jiří Kopecký, "Josef Bohuslav Foerster's Lyrical Opera *Eva* and the Tradition of the French *Drama lyrique,"* in *Czech Music Around 1900,* ed. Lenka Křupková and Jiří Kopecký (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2017) 185.
[68] Štěpánek and Karásek, *Czech Music*, 72.

foundation in his skilled poetic and tonal balance as well as his preference to connect individual experience and ideas to his work.[69] Many of his works are dedicated to, commemorate or remember beloved people in his life.

Vítězslav Novák (1870-1949) was another important and influential Czech composer. After studying under Dvořák, Novák became a distinguished teacher and was appointed Director of the Master School at the Prague Conservatory. "A whole generation of Czech and Slovak composers passed through his hands."[70] His own works, as well as those of his students, represent multiple stages of maturing Czech music. Like several Czech composers before him, he was particularly fascinated with folk songs and collected, analyzed, and evaluated them for regional characteristics.[71] With this investigative spirit, he arranged and composed many songs in the folk style. Though an emotional and passionate person, Novák composed his operas, ballets, and orchestral works with thoughtful and focused transitions, including innovative, delicate contrast that supported the structure of the composition.

Unlike Novák, Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959) studied quite unsuccessfully at the Prague Conservatoire. He was expelled on June 4th, 1910 due to "incorrigible negligence".[72] Fortunately, he was very talented musically and highly individualistic. He regularly ignored the required practice and study that was given to him by his teacher.

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[69] Oldřich Pukl and John Tyrrell, revised by Vlasta Reittererová, "Foerster [Förster], Josef Bohuslav [Josef Caspar Franz Förster]," in *Grove Music Online,* ed. Deane Root, acc. March 21, 2024.
[70] Štěpánek and Karásek, *Czech Music,* 73.
[71] Ottlová, "The 'Other World'," 33.
[72] Jaroslav Mihule, *A Pocket Guide to the Life of Bohuslav Martinů* (Municipal Museum and Gallery Polička, 2008), 6.

Instead, he would explore music in his own way through books, concerts, and real-life experiences. The failures in his own formal education did not keep him from developing an impactful composing and teaching career. In his 20s he moved to France and remained there until after WWII when he emigrated to the United States. His compositions include a long list of operas, ballads, and concertante works. His unique style brought freshness to Czech music with his "pithy and vitally joyous music that found world-wide acceptance."[73]

Václav Kaprál (1889-1947), graduate of the Janáček School for Organists in Brno, continued his education in piano and composition and became a teacher in great demand. His compositional work grew from the influence of Leoš Janáček, Vítězslav Novák, and, for a short time, Claude Debussy and Richard Strauss. Kaprál's music grew into a unique style marked by ardent lyricism, touching melancholy, and deep sadness.[74] He composed popular orchestral works, church music, chamber music, instrumental works, and vocal works. Many of his songs, such as *Lullabies,* put music to words of Slovak folk poetry. His small orchestra and choral compositions were performed to the great enjoyment of audiences in Europe.[75]

Kaprál's daughter, Vítězslava Kaprálová (1915-1940), manifested compositional talent and conducting ability that was born out of her father's musical excellence, her mother's vocal experiences, and her education at the Brno Conservatory. After graduating from Brno, she studied in Prague under Vítězslav Novák, finally moving to

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[73] Štěpánek and Karásek, *Czech Music*, 97.
[74] Bohumír Štědroň, "Kaprál Václav," in *Contemporary Czechoslovak Composers,* ed. Čeněk Gardavský, (Prague: Panton, 1965), 217-219.
[75] Štědroň, *"*Kaprál, Václav," 219.

Paris in 1937.[76] While in Paris, she developed a mentor/friendship with Bohuslav Martinů, a contemporary of her father. Martinů collaborated with Kaprálová from the beginning of their friendship until her death in 1940.[77] She held a lifelong passion for song, and in vocal music Kaprálová combined her love for the singing voice with her love of poetry. She not only selected the highest quality poems but also wrote many beautiful poems herself. Kaprálová's contribution to the art songs is significant and particularly Czech in nature. Though only 25 years old at her death, she was a prolific composer of piano, string and symphonic orchestra, instrumental, and vocal works.[78]

Petr Eben (1929-2007), a Czech composer, organist, and choirmaster, was born in Bohemia and raised as a Catholic, though his father was a Jew. In 1943, Nazi soldiers captured and imprisoned him in Buchenwald, where he remained until the end of World War II.[79] When freed, he received formal musical training in piano and composition at the Prague Academy for Music. He taught for many years at Charles University in Prague but forfeited many career advancements during the Czech Communist Party's rule because he refused to join the party and he openly attended church. Early in Eben's musical career, he was recognized as a master of orchestral work, chamber music, instrumental works, and vocal works. Among his vocal works, *Těšin Songs* (1960)

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[76] Jindřiška Bártová, "Kaprálová in the Context of Czech Music," *Kaprálová Companion,* ed. by Karla Hartl and Erik Entwistle (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011), 17-20.
[77] Karla Hartl, "Vítězslava Kaprálová: An Annotated Life Chronology," in *Kaprálová Companion,* ed. by Karla Hartl and Erik Entwistle, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011), 130-135.
[78] Čeněk Gardavský, "Kaprálová, Vítězslava," in *Contemporary Czechoslovak Composers,* ed. Čeněk Gardavský (Prague: Panton, 1965), 219-220.
[79] Edvard Herzog, "Eben, Petr," in *Contemporary Czechoslovak Composers,* ed. Čeněk Gardavský (Prague: Panton, 1965), 108-109.

exhibits “rich, flowing piano accompaniments, expertly dispatched by the composer at the keyboard sensitively dovetail the soaring vocal lines.”[80]

These gifted Czech composers, along with many others not named here, remain relatively unknown outside the Czech lands. “In other countries less rich with musical talent many of these composers would be celebrated as great masters of their art. Each of them enriched European and world musical culture, often under difficult personal and social conditions, and helped form the universe of Czech music.”[81] All art, musical or otherwise, arises out of cultural context. This chapter’s detail of Czech history has been given to provide knowledge of the culture to authentic performance of any art.

The richness of Czech music is not only defined in musical composition but also in the language and text. Not only honoring nationalistic period composers, but also respecting Czech composers in all historical periods requires attention to dialect and diction. Therefore, I believe a performer of Czech vocal music should have a basic understanding of proper Czech diction.

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[80] Jed Distler, “Petr Eben Songs,” Classics Today, 2022, https://www.classicstoday.com/review/review-4157/.
[81] Vičar, *Imprints,* 27-28.

Chapter 2

Czech Diction

The richness of Czech music is not only defined in musical composition but also in the language and text. I believe it is the responsibility the vocalist and instructor to understand the cultural and historical context of a song. This not only honors the nationalist period composers, but also respects Czech composers in all historical periods. Therefore, I believe a performer of Czech vocal music should have a basic understanding of proper Czech diction.

Many people express that they are intimidated by Slavic languages. The combination of consonant clusters and čárky ([t͡ʃaːrki] accents) can be overwhelming for a vocalist new to the Czech language. Pronouncing Czech words can look very difficult for English speakers. The language features strings of consonants that make individual words look like tongue twisters.[1] When polling language learning websites, the actual language difficulty factor ranges greatly. According to WorldAltlas.com, Czech is not listed among the top 25 hardest languages to learn. Rosetta Stone ranks Czech nineteenth, while Sololinguist.com identifies it as the sixth most difficult language to learn for the English speaker.

I believe the Czech language and diction are more approachable than people imagine. I have created the charts in this chapter to help instructors and students understand how to pronounce the Czech language correctly by providing instructions on how physically form the sounds as well as illustrative examples of Czech words.

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[1] Alexa Erickson, "25 Hardest Languages to Learn, Ranked," *Far & Wide*, March 19, 2024, https://www.farandwide.com/s/hardest-languages-learn-c25c2cdffbd247e0.

Fortunately, the rules of pronunciation can be simple to follow because Timothy Cheek says, "singers need only sing what is written, as the words have been notated to reflect the dialect."[2] Roman Jakobson, a Russian linguistic, provides a phonological system that provide valuable information on pronunciation for non-native speakers.

> By the *phonological system* of a language, I refer to the inventory, proper to that language, of the "meaningful distinctions" that exist among the concepts of acoustic-motor units – that is, the inventory of oppositions that can be linked to differences in meaning (inventory of *phonological* oppositions). All phonological oppositions that cannot be broken down into small oppositions are referred to as *phonemes.*[3]

Jakobson expands these Slavic phonemes (the smallest element of a sound) by rising sonority and syllabic synharmony.[4] Sonority refers to the amount of resonance associated with a sound. Within the Slavic languages, Jakobson puts these items in order of least to most sonorous: liquids, nasals, glides, and vowels.[5] Synharmony refers to the uniformity of the root and affixes of a word in relation to their function and sound. When a prefix or suffix is added to the root of a word, the act of synharmony will change the sound/stress/duration of the syllables.

Vowels

Czech vowels, apart from vocalic l and r, are closely related to the Italian vowels because of their brightness.[6] Cheek, author of the only Czech diction guidebook, says that Czech is the "brightest of the Slavic languages."[7] There are three open vowel pairs; a/á,

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[2] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 125.
[3] Roman Jakobson, *Remarks on the Phonological Evolution of Russian in Comparison with the Other Slavic Languages,* trans. by Ronald F. Feldstein (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), xxi.
[4] Jakobson, *Remarks on the Phonological Evolution,* xxi.
[5] Ibid, xx.
[6] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 7.
[7] Ibid.

e/é, and o/ó and three closed vowel pairs; i/í, y/ý, and u/ú/ů. All vowels in the Czech language are bright, meaning that the tongue placement is slightly forward compared to English vowels.

When pronouncing different vowels in the Czech language, a vocalist must be aware of the phonological system. In this system, vowels in Slavic languages are treated differently than vowels in English. "The Czech opposition of 'length ~ shortness' is fully realized, because, first, the quantity of the vowel has a relative duration that oscillates outside the framework of a determined 'tempo,' and second, in the final syllable of the word, quantitative relations are distorted and tend to fade."[8] Vowels that are correlated to each other are: a/á, e/é, i/í, y/ý, o/ó, and u/ú/ů because the vowel pairs are pronounced the same, aside from one binary difference: length.

Vowel	Length/duration	As in	Vowel	Length/duration	As in
a	short	drama	á	long	drama
e	short	debt	é	long	debt
ě	short	debt	(ě only used when preceded by n, t, and d)		
i	short	did	í	long	deed
y	short	did	ý	long	deed
o	short	dot	ó	long	dot
u	short	doom	ú	long	doom
			ů	long	doom

The length of vowels is determined by the presence of a čárka (accent) or kroužek (a little circle above the letter). If there is a čárka or kroužek present, then the vowel will be lengthened. If there are no marks present, then the vowel is shortened. The lengthening or shortening of vowels is not related to stress. Other languages tend to use

[8] Jakobson, *Remarks on the Phonological Evolution*, 4.

lengthening to indicate the stressed syllable. In Czech, lengthening and shortening of vowels do not indicate a stressed syllable. The lengthening and shortening of vowels do indicate the meaning of a word. As an example; *léto* [lɛː-tɔ] means "summer," while *letos* [lɛ-tɔs] means "this year."

The [a] and [a:] vowels are bright vowels with the tongue position low and the tip of the tongue touching the bottom front teeth. The vowel can be characterized as a low and central vowel. There is a slight arch in the tongue toward the middle front. A close comparison to this vowel is the *a* in the Italian word *mai*. The vowel sound [a] as in the English word *father* is too dark for the Czech language. While pronouncing the long [a:], lower the tongue slightly so that there is an omission of the final [ʌ] sound, so there is no additional shadow vowel at the end of an [a:].[9] Listed below are some examples of these vowels. (In the International Phonetic Alphabet, or IPA, a colon will signify the long duration of a vowel.)

Czech	IPA	English Translation
stará	[ˈsta-ɾa:]	old
nad	[nat]	above
bílá	[ˈbi:-la:]	white
mlha	[ˈml̩-ɦa]	mist

The [ɛ] and [ɛ:] are brighter than the English [ɛ]. This "central-low front vowel"[10] should never close to the [e]. The front of the tongue is placed low in the mouth with the tip touching the front bottom teeth. The middle-back of the tongue will have a slight arch. This vowel is always open and bright. Singers tend to close this vowel at the end of a

[9] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 11.
[10] Ibid, 10.

word, creating a falling diphthong. When an *e* is final, the vowel should remain open. Listed below are examples of these vowels.

Czech	IPA	English Translation
větve	[ˈvjɛ-tvɛ]	branches
letí	[ˈlɛ-tˈiː]	flies
mé	[mɛ]	my
vábné	[ˈvaː-nbɛː]	tempting

The [i] and [ɪ] are both forward and bright. They can be classified as high vowels with the tongue arched high in the mouth. To distinguish between the [i] and [ɪ], the front of the tongue will lower slightly when pronouncing the [ɪ]. It would not be appropriate to produce an on-glide or off-glide with these vowels. When the vowels í or ý are present, use the long duration [iː]. When the vowels i or y are present, use the short duration [ɪ].

Czech	IPA	English Translation
vy	[vɪ]	(plural) you
nymfy	[ˈnɪm-fɪ]	nymphs
krývá	[ˈkriː-vaː]	it covers
zašlých	[ˈza-ʃliːx]	bygone
lípa	[ˈliː-pa]	linden
tí	[tˈiː]	those
milá	[ˈmɪ-laː]	dear
skalinách	[ˈska-lɪ-naːx]	rocks

The [ɔ] and [ɔː] are sounds that singers would be accustomed to because these vowels are very prevalent in French as well as British English. However, for American English speakers, this sound is not common. Americans tend to keep the *o* closed or in combination with another vowel, creating a diphthong. When properly used, the [ɔ] and [ɔː] is characterized as a "mid-back vowel" with the tongue in a lowered position. The middle part of the tongue is slightly raised while the tip of the tongue is touching the bottom teeth at a point. Madeleine Marshall explains in her book *The Singer's Manual of*

English Diction, that the lips should be rounded and soft, while shaping the [o] vowel.[11] If the lips are not rounded or relaxed, the vowel can sound more like an [ɑ] instead of an [ɔ]. The Czech language only pronounced an *o* with the open [ɔ] and does not use the closed [o].

Czech	IPA	English Translation
ožívá	[ˈʔɔ-ʒiː-vaː]	comes alive
to	[tɔ]	the
dróžičky	[ˈdrɔː-ʒɪ-t͡ʃkɪ]	girls
sólový	[ˈsɔː-lɔ-viː]	one person

The [u] and [u:] are determined by the rounding of the lips and the placement of the tongue. This "high back vowel" is purer than the American English *u.*[12] For English speakers often incorrectly pronounce the [ʊ] sound in place of the [u] sound. The [ʊ] sound is too relaxed with no roundedness in the lips. The Czech [u] should be closely related to the Italian [u] with soft lip rounding and a higher tongue position in the back of the mouth. The front of the tongue remains low while touching the lower incisors.[13] Know that long *u* occurs both with the *ú* and *ů*. An *ú* will mostly likely occur at the beginning of a word while the *ů* will occur in the middle of a word.[14]

[11] Madeleine Marshall, *The Singer's Manual of English Diction* (Wadsworth: Schirmer, Thomson Learnings, 1953), 144.
[12] Cheek, *Singing in Czech*, 12-13.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.

Czech	IPA	English Translation
cenu	[ˈt͡ʃɛ-nu]	value
svému	[ˈzvɛː-mu]	one's own
útěchu	[ˈʔuː-tʼɛ-xu]	comfort
celú	[ˈt͡ʃɛ-luː]	entire
můj	[muːˈ]	my
Tvůj	[tvuːˈ]	Your

All vowels that are initial in a word must be preceded by a glottal which is indicated by the [ʔ] symbol. This should feel familiar to English speakers because it is true for the English language as well. To produce a glottal stop, the vocal folds are held closed, then are abruptly separated by built up air pressure. This can disrupt the legato line that is so prevalent in the Czech language. Most often this glottal stop emphasizes the word and gives it a clearer meaning.

Liquid *r* and *l* can also be considered vowels in the Czech language. Cheek calls these vowels "vocalic." The term "vocalic" refers to the position of the letter within a word. If the *r* or *l* is between two consonants, then the letter is vocalic. Only in these circumstances does the *r* or *l* act as a vowel.[15] Jakobson discusses the *r* and *l* as a liquid, meaning in the process of vocalizing these palatal consonants, the natural sound produced in the transition creates a vowel. A palatal consonant refers to the tongue's movement toward the hard palate behind the alveolar ridge.[16] By focusing on the palatal nature of the *r* and *l*, the vocalist creates a vocalic sound.

To create the vocalic *r*, [ɾ̩] the vocalist should use the combination of a "neutral vowel, a *schwa* [ə], leaning a little toward an [a], and then add the rolled *r* when it seems

[15] Cheek, *Singing in Czech*, 26.
[16] Jakobson, *Remarks on the Phonological Evolution*, 99.

appropriate."[17] By using a neutral vowel, the schwa, the vocalist will steer away from the American retroflex *r*. The rolled *r* is similar to the Italian rolled *r* which must be pitched. When a vocalic *r* is at the end of the word, use the same structure as before. The schwa, however, will be sung quickly and then disappear into the rolled *r*.

The voiced *l*, [l], is very similar to the *l* in American English. The tip of the tongue should rise and lightly keep a dental position. However, the tip of the tongue should be placed on the alveolar ridge with no added pressure. While pronouncing the *l* in English, Marshall says to articulate a final *l* by having the tip of the tongue touch the upper gum while creating a vocal sound and keeping the soft palate high. The last step for creating a final *l* in English is to not flip the tongue at the end of the word. This ensures that there will be no shadow vowel.[18] While articulating a vocalic *l*, use all the steps a vocalist would use to create a final *l* in English.

Czech	IPA	English Translation
mlha	[ˈml̩-ɦa]	mist
slza	[ˈsl̩-t͡sa]	tear (drops)
první	[ˈpr̩-vniː]	first
krk	[krk]	neck

Diphthongs

Diphthongs are formed when two vowels are expressed in one syllable. There are three diphthongs used in Czech, two of which are only used in foreign-derived words. The only diphthong that is native to the language is the *ou*, [ɔu]. The foreign-derived diphthongs in Czech are *au*, [au] and *eu*, [ɛu]. All of these diphthongs are categorized as

[17] Cheek, *Singing in Czech*, 27.
[18] Marshall, *English Diction*, 71.

"falling diphthongs."[19] A falling diphthong is when the first vowel is given more importance (duration) than the second vowel. The falling action is given to the transition from the more important vowel (first) to the lesser vowel (second). There is no standard way to write the emphasis of duration on the first vowel. Diphthongs simply indicated [ɔu], [au], or [ɛu] already assume the singer knows to elongate the first vowel. It is also acceptable to indicate duration with a colon after the first vowel; [ɔːu], [aːu], or [ɛːu].

Czech	IPA	English Translation
řekou	[ˈřɛ-kɔu]	river
dalekou	[ˈda-lɛ-kɔu]	distance
auto	[ˈau-tɔ]	car
euro	*[ˈɛu-rɔ]*	euro

The *j* In the Czech Language

The *j* in the Czech language has many different forms. There are times when the *j* acts as a glide, semivowel, or is omitted from pronunciation entirely. When the *j* is initial followed by a vowel, the *j* will act as a glide. The *j* glide is very similar to the English *j* glide but will be brighter and clearer. This means that the [i] at the beginning of the sounding of a *j* glide is "more prominent" than the English way of pronouncing a *j* glide.[20] Jakobson speaks of how the initial *j* in Slavic language evolved in many different forms. Unlike other languages, the Czech initial *j* has stayed the same.[21] To properly pronounce this Czech glide, Cheek has created a step-by-step process that guides the sound toward a brighter *j* glide.

1. Pronounce the English *yes* [jɛs] as in normal speech.
2. Slow the same word down, reducing the glide to two syllables, [ʔiɛs].

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[19] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 14.
[20] Ibid, 17.
[21] Jakobson, *Remarks on the Phonological Evolution,* 65.

3. Pronounce the Czech word *jest* [jɛst], letting the *j* glide to the vowel, but with a higher, more prominent initial [i], somewhere between (1) and (2).[22]

When there is an initial *j* in a word or syllable followed by a consonant, the *j* becomes a semivowel. The *j* will also be a semivowel when the *j* is final in a word. The semivowel is different from the glide because there is no transition to, or falling, into the next vowel. Instead, the *j* is its own vowel, [^{i}]. It must be very short in duration and the vowel should be extremely closed. This shortness in duration and separateness of pronunciation keeps the [^{i}] from being categorized as part of a diphthong.

When a *j* proceeds a long [i:] the *j* is omitted. This does not occur very often but can sometimes appear when a suffix is added to a word. The suffix *při/pří* (first/before/sur) will occur the most frequently.

Czech	IPA	English Translation
jen	[jɛn]	only
je	[jɛ]	is
jdeš	[^{i}dɛš]	you walk
maj	[ma^{i}]	have
příjmení	[při:-mɛ-ɲi:]	surname

Consonants

There are only a few Czech consonant sounds that are foreign to a native English speaker when performing Czech vocal music. However, the combination of the consonants that are common to native English speakers can be difficult. Though the consonant clusters seem unusual, the combinations follow simple rules.

[22] Cheek, *Singing in Czech*, 17.

Consonants	IPA Symbol
b	[b] or [p]
c	[t͡s] or [dz], sometimes [k]
č	[t͡ʃ]
d	[d] or [t]
d'	[dʲ]
f	[f]
g	[g]
h	[x] or [ɣ] or [ɦ]
ch	[x] or [ɣ]
k	[k] or [g]
l	[l]
m	[m] or [m̩]
n	[n] or [ɲ] or [ŋ]
ň	[ɲ]
p	[p] or [b]
r	[ɾ] or [r]
ř	[ř] or [Ř]
s	[s] or [z]
š	[ʃ] or [ʒ]
t	[t] or [d]
t'	[tʲ]
v	[f] or [v]
z	[s] or [z]
ž	[ʃ] or [ʒ]
w	[v]

There are twelve different types of consonants used in the Czech language; alveolar, alveolar affricates, alveolar fricatives, labiodental fricatives, laryngeal fricative, soft palatal, bilabial, velar, and vibrant.[23]

Before approaching the consonant sounds, a vocalist should understand the use of assimilation in the Czech language. The proper use of assimilation is connected to the phonological system of voiced and voiceless consonants.[24] Below are the voiced and unvoiced pairs, or "Czech Mates" according to Cheek.[25]

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[23] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 32-71.
[24] Jakobson, *Remarks on the Phonological Evolution,* 11.
[25] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 95.

Consonant Pairs	
Voiced	**Unvoiced**
[b]	[p]
[d]	[t]
[d']	[t']
[d͡z]	[t͡s]
[d͡ʒ]	[t͡ʃ]
[g]	[k]
[ɦ] [ɣ]	[x]
[ř]	[ř̊]
[v]	[f]
[z]	[s]
[ʒ]	[ʃ]

If the final consonant is voiced and there is a pause in the phrase, a vocalist should always sound the unvoiced consonant. These voiced consonants will also be sounded as unvoiced sounds when the next word starts with a *j, l, m, n,* or *r*.[26] The reason for this rule is because the *j, l, m, n,* and *r* do not have a paired consonant in the Czech language.

When paired consonants are combined into consonant clusters there is one simple rule to follow. Cheek calls this "yielding to the right of way."[27] First the vocalist must identify if the consonant furthest to the right is a voiced or unvoiced consonant. Once it is determined if the consonant is voiced or unvoiced, all consonants preceding within the consonant cluster will match it. So, if there is a consonant cluster ending with a [s] the consonant within the cluster will all be unvoiced. These consonant clusters can be initial, medial, final or connecting two words. The only exception to the rule of assimilation is the voiced *v* in some circumstances. When the *v* is furthest to the right in a cluster the preceding consonant may stay unvoiced.

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[26] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 98.
[27] Ibid.

Assimilation		
Czech	**IPA**	**English Translation**
soud	[sɔut]	court
nasbírala	[ˈna-zbi-ɾa-la]	gathered
zpívá	[ˈspiː-vaː]	singing
světa	[ˈsvjɛ-ta]	world
když dnes	[gdɪʒ dnɛs]	when today

The alveolar consonants: [t], [d], and [n], are created when the tongue is touching or in proximity to the alveolar ridge. The placement of articulation, the interruption of air flow, for these consonants will be at the alveolar ridge. The manner of articulation is plosive in nature for [t] and [d] but not for [n]. A plosive consonant occurs when there is a sudden explosion of air coming through the mouth or nose. English speakers tend to produce these sounds with an explosion of air. While producing a Czech alveolar consonant, gently produce the sound so that it is unaspirated, and do not completely stop the air while completing this sound. The place of articulation is between the English, where the tip of the tongue makes contact with the alveolar ridge, and Italian dental, where the tip of the tongue is touching the back of the incisors.

The [t] is an unvoiced consonant that is produced like the English pronunciation of [t] with slight alterations. Madeleine Marshall instructs placing the tip of the tongue on the upper gums ridge (alveolar ridge) and allowing a "slight puff of air" to escape while moving the tongue quickly.[28] The English [t] is aspirated. To pronounce the Czech [t], the tongue should be placed on the alveolar ridge but be unaspirated.

There are three situations where the [t] should be used. The first instance is when there is a *t* present and assimilation is not needed. The second situation is when there is a

[28] Marshall, *English Diction,* 32.

final *d* before a pause. And the third situation is when a *d* is before an unvoiced consonant, causing assimilation.[29] While practicing the [t], a vocalist needs to be sure to keep the sound dental. When a stop-plosive [t] is present, the Czech legato line will be disrupted.

Alveolar Consonant [t]		
Czech	**IPA**	**English Translation**
ty	[tɪ]	you
nad	[nat]	above
odkládáme	[ˈʔɔt-kla:-da:-mɛ]	postpone

The [d] is produced in the same manner as the [t] but is voiced. This means that the [d] and [t] are paired consonants; one being voiced and the other unvoiced. So, to produce this sound, follow all the steps to produce a [t] while voicing the consonant. There are only two situations when the [d] is produced. First, the [d] is sounded when a *d* is written in a word and assimilation is not needed. Then, the [d] is used when a *t* is written before a voiced consonant, in assimilation.

Czech	IPA	English Translation
dítě	[ˈd'i:-t'ɛ]	child
dnes	[dnɛs]	day
svatbě	[ˈsva-dbjɛ]	wedding

The [n] is an alveolar nasal consonant. The tongue should stay in the same position as the [t] and [d]. While pronouncing an [n] in English, Marshall says to quickly flip the tongue downward after humming the sound.[30] The tongue should not flip for a Czech [n] because it distorts the sound and the vowel that proceeds it. Instead, use the articulation described by Wall on English diction, “make a gentle humming sound and

[29] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 35.
[30] Marshall, *English Diction,* 57.

feel the vibration at the tip of the tongue."[31] Cheek then adds to make the [n] sound more native to the Czech language, the tip of the tongue should be "closer to the front teeth than in English."[32] If the *n* is present in a word, the sound will always be [n], unless it is found in these combinations; *ni, ní, ng,* or *nk.* These combinations will be explained in the soft palatal and velar consonant sections.

Alveolar Consonant [n]		
Czech	**IPA**	**English Translation**
vábné	[ˈvaː-bnɛː]	alluring
nechcete	[ˈnɛ-x͡tsɛ-tɛ]	does not want
cenu	[ˈ͡tsɛ-nu]	value

The alveolar affricate consonants, [t͡s], [d͡z], [t͡ʃ], and [d͡ʒ], are created by two steps. The first step is to allow the tongue to be placed in an alveolar consonant position. Then the manner of articulation is first plosive, which is immediately followed by a fricative.[33] According to Wall, "a *fricative* consonant has the air flow partially interrupted, thus producing a noisy sound."[34] Fricatives can be sustained, while plosives cannot. When these two actions are produced consecutively, an affricate consonant is produced. The sounds are also paired consonants; [t͡s] [d͡z] and [t͡ʃ] [d͡ʒ]. The sounds [t͡s] and [t͡ʃ] are unvoiced and the sounds [d͡z] and [d͡ʒ] are voiced. These sounds can be found in Czech when there is a *c, č,* or *dž* present in a word.

The *c* will always be pronounced as [t͡s]. An exception to this rule is when the *c* is pronounced [k] in foreign derived words. The [t͡s] sound will occur in times of

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[31] Joan Wall and Robert Caldwall, *Diction for Singers; A concise reference for English, Italian, Latin, German, French, and Spanish pronunciation* (Redmond, 2009), 32.
[32] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 38.
[33] Joseph Hudson, *The Sound of English: A Practical Course in British English Pronunciation* (Pronunciation Studio Ltd, 2023), 5.
[34] Wall, *Diction for Singers,* 5.

assimilation or when one word ends with a [t] sound and the next begins with an [s] sound. The *c* seldom is pronounced [d͡z] except for the use of assimilation. Cheek says that "[t͡s] has a voiced counterpart in Czech, so that *c* will be pronounced voiced before paired voiced consonants, as in *leckdo* [lɛd͡zgdɔ] (many a person)."[35]

The *č* will be pronounced in two ways; the unvoiced [t͡ʃ], or the voiced [d͡ʒ]. When this letter is initial or final, it will always be pronounced [t͡ʃ]. It will only be pronounced [d͡ʒ] when assimilating to a voiced consonant. The [d͡ʒ] will be pronounced also when *dž* is present. However, when the *dž* is final, the unvoiced counterpart [t͡ʃ] will be used. Cheek uses the example of "*poněvadž* [pɔɲɛvat͡ʃ] (since)" to show the use of a final *dž*.[36]

Aveolar Affricates [t͡s] [t͡ʃ] [d͡z] [d͡ʒ]		
Czech	**IPA**	**English Translation**
ztráceti	[ˈstraː-t͡sɛ-tɪ]	to lose
proč	[prɔt͡ʃ]	why
leckdo	[ˈlɛ-d͡zgdɔ]	many a person
džus	[d͡ʒus]	juice
poněvadž	[ˈpɔ-ɲɛ-vat͡ʃ]	since

True alveolar fricatives: [s] and [z], are produced with the tip of the tongue behind the lower front teeth and an arch of the tongue close, but not touching, the alveolar ridge. The tongue should stay wide with the sides touching the first molars. Then allow the air to flow through the gap at the top of the vocalist's mouth. This creates a fricative sound. These fricative sounds can be voiced and unvoiced.

Cheek defines the [ʃ] or [ʒ] as post alveolar fricatives. To create the [ʃ] or [ʒ], a vocalist only needs to round the lips forward and the middle of the tongue arches higher

[35] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 62.
[36] Ibid, 64.

in the mouth. The lips should not be firm, but relaxed and soft. These sounds ([s], [z], [ʃ], and [ʒ]) also appear in English diction. Marshall says to "point the tongue tip toward the center of the upper front teeth."[37] In Czech the tip of the tongue should be slightly more forward which is closer to the Italian [s] and [ʃ].[38]

The sound [s] is used in three different situations. When there is an *s* present in a word, use the sound [s]. This can be initial, medial, or final within a word. Another instance when a vocalist would use the sound [s] would be when a *z* is final in a word. The last instance when a [s] is sounded is when the *z* is before an unvoiced consonant, the act of assimilation. The [z] is also present in two different situations. When there is a *z* present in a word use the sound [z]. Like the letter *s*, the *z* can be initial, medial, or final. When an *s* is in a consonant cluster and a voiced consonant is to the far right, then the *s* will sound as a [z]. (However, this rule of assimilation does not apply when a *v* is before a *s*.)

When the *s* appears with a háček, then the [ʃ] should be used. The [ʃ] is also present when there is a final *ž.* The last instance when the [ʃ] is pronounced is when a *ž* is used in assimilation, an unvoiced consonant proceeds the *ž*. The rules for the *ž* are similar to the *š*, only in reverse. The [ʒ] is pronounced when a *ž* is present. If the *š* is before a voiced consonant the [ʒ] is used.

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[37] Marshall, *English Diction,* 115.
[38] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 56-60.

Alveolar Fricatives [s] [z] [ʃ] [ʒ]		
Czech	**IPA**	**English Translation**
síly	[ˈsi:lɪ]	power
rozkošné	[ˈrɔ-skɔ-ʃnɛ:]	adorable
bez	[bɛs]	without
za	[za]	for
sbor	[zbɔr]	chorus
duše	[ˈdu-ʃɛ]	soul
Bože	[ˈbɔ-ʒɛ]	God

The labiodental fricatives, [f] and [v], are the same as in English.[39] Labiodental indicates that the upper teeth are touching the lower lip.[40] However, the teeth should not be over the lip. "Do not place the lower lip inside of the upper teeth. Raise the lower lip sufficiently for the upper teeth to make contact well down inside of it."[41] While the teeth are slightly touching the lower lip keep the lip relaxed and soft, then gently blow air through the mouth to create the [f] sound. The [v] sound is created similarly, but allow the sound to be voiced.

The [f] is used in a few situations. When an *f* is present in a word, the sound will be the unvoiced [f]. When a *v* is final in a word before a pause, the sound will be the unvoiced [f]. The last instance of the [f] sound will be when a *v* precedes an unvoiced consonant, in assimilation. The [v] will be used when there is a written *v* in a word. The [v] will also be used when there is a written *w*, which is a letter only used in foreign derived words. Also, a *v* does not follow the rule of assimilation when it is the consonant furthest to the right in a consonant cluster.

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[39] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 48.
[40] Hudson, *The Sound of English,* 70.
[41] Marshall, *English Diction,* 48.

Labiodental Fricatives [f] [v]		
Czech	**IPA**	**English Translation**
faktor	[ˈfa-ktɔr]	factor
dav	[daf]	crowd
vtom	[ftɔm]	suddenly
volání	[ˈvɔ-laː-ɲiː]	cry
své	[svɛː]	our

The laryngeal fricative, [ɦ], is paired with the [x] sound, a velar consonant. Cheek emphasizes that "*in Czech, [ɦ] is the voiced counterpart to [x]* (even though they are formed in different places!), so that all the rules of assimilation will apply to this pair."[42] This sound is like the English *h* but is voiced. This can be hard for native English speakers to produce because there are no instances when a *h* is pitched. Marshall says that the *h* in English is simply "a stream of air strong enough to be clearly audible."[43] A vocalist only needs to add to Marshall's rule a voiced quality to the *h.* To practice this new sound, a vocalist can take any English word starting with an *h* – the word "happy," for example – and sing the word with a pitch before starting the *h* sound. However, the vocalist must keep the voiced nature of the sound throughout the utterance of the *h*, to create [ɦ]. Vocalist should not allow this sound to morph into the [x]. The [x] is a velar consonant that will be produced further in the back of throat at the uvula.

When an *h* is written in a word, pronounce it [ɦ]. The *h* is commonly found between two vowels or at the beginning of a word. When the *h* is within a consonant cluster, refer to the velar consonant section discussed below.

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[42] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 55.
[43] Marshall, *English Diction,* 101.

Laryngeal Fricatives [ɦ]		
Czech	**IPA**	**English Translation**
jeho	[ˈjɛ-ɦɔ]	his
hory	[ˈɦɔ-ɾɪ]	mountains

The soft palatal consonants, [ɲ], [d’], and [t’], are very common in the Czech language. Similar sounds exist in other Slavic languages but are not truly present in the English language. These consonants are categorized as soft because they are formed toward the front of the mouth instead of at the alveolar ridge. Jakobson would distinguish these types of consonants as “high-tonality” consonants because the sound has a “single [high] palatal point of articulation.”[44] If there is more than one palatal point in the act of articulation, then the vocalist has created a palatalized consonant. This is explained by Jakobson as a consonant “with a primary point of articulation and a simultaneous secondary palatalization.”[45] This type of consonant, palatalized, is not present in the Czech language. There is only one point of articulation which involves the tongue placement. The tongue's movement toward the roof of the mouth will create a palatal sound. Hudson says that this sound is used in the *j* glide in English.[46] However, this sound has the tongue’s arch close to the middle of the roof of the mouth. These sounds in Czech should not have the *j* glide present. “*Pronouncing [ɲ], [t’], and [d’] and [nj], [tj], and [dj] is a major criticism Czechs have of English-speaking singers.*”[47] Instead, the arch of the tongue should be more forward in the mouth. The tip of the tongue should stay low, touching the back of the front bottom teeth.

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[44] Jakobson, *Remarks on the Phonological Evolution*, xxi.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Hudson, *The Sound of English*, 98.
[47] Cheek, *Singing in Czech*, 39.

The [ɲ] is the same as the Italian *enya*. Wall says that "although the enya sounds something like [n], it is made with the blade of your tongue, not the tip, touching your alveolar ridge."[48] While focusing on the blade of the tongue to produce this unique sound, stay away from creating two sounds, [n] plus [j]. The [ɲ] sound can be found in many different circumstances: *ň, ně, ni, ní,* and *mě.* When the *ň* is present in a word the nasal [ɲ] is sounded. When an *n* or *m* is followed by the *ě,* the nasal [ɲ] is sounded. Also, the nasal [ɲ] is used when there is the letter combination *ni* or *ní* (except in foreign-derived words).

The [d'] is a voiced soft palatal consonant which is found in other Slavic languages. To pronounce the [d'], use the arch of the tongue to lightly touch the alveolar ridge instead of the tip of the tongue, which is used to produce the [d] sound. While doing this action, should continue to make the sound voiced or pitched. Every other aspect of this sound should remain in line with the other soft palatal consonant, [ɲ]. The [d'] is pronounced in five different circumstances: *ď, ď, dě, di,* and *dí.* When there is a *d* followed by either an apostrophe or háček, then the [d'] is sounded. The [d'] should also be sounded when in combination with these vowels; *ě, i,* and *í.*

The [t'] is an unvoiced soft palatal consonant, the paired consonant of [d']. The sound is treated and produced in the same manner as the [d'] but does not use the voice or pitch. The rules also follow the same structure as [d'], with one additional situation. The [t'] is sounded when these letters are present: *ť, ť, tě, ti*, and *tí.* When a *t* is followed by an apostrophe or háček, then the [t'] is sounded. When a *t* is followed by the vowels *ě, i,*

[48] Wall, *Diction for Singers*, 66.

and *í,* then the [t’] is pronounced. And finally, the [t’] will be used when *d’* and *dˇ* are used at the end of a word or in assimilation with an unvoiced consonant.

The [d’] or [t’] is not used when found in combination with *dy, dý, ty,* or *tý.* Cheek uses the “I Did, Didn’t I?” rule, “try asking the question ‘I did (i.e. “I did soften the *ds, ns,* and *ts* after the letter *ii*”), didn’t I?’ The letters in this question will tell you the rule you need to remember.”[49] A *y* in any form will not change the *n, d,* or *t* to a soft palatal consonant.

Soft Palatal [ɲ] [d'] [t']		
Czech	**IPA**	**English Translation**
píseň	[ˈpi:sɛɲ]	song
rovně	[ˈro-vɲɛ]	straight
zelenina	[ˈzɛ-lɛ-ɲɪ-na]	vegetable
strážní	[ˈstra:ʒɲi:]	nice
měsíc	[ˈmɲɛ-si:t͡s]	moon
Mad'arsko	[ˈma-d'ar-skɔ]	Hungary
neděle	[ˈnɛ-d'ɛ-lɛ]	Sunday
hodina	[ˈɦɔ-d'ɪ-na]	hour
dítě	[ˈd'i:-t'ɛ]	child
štěstí	[ˈʃt'ɛ-st'i:]	happiness
ještě	[ˈjɛ-ʃt'ɛ]	still
tisíc	[ˈt'ɪ-si:t͡s]	thousand
tat'ka	[ˈta-t'ka]	dad
podˇ	[pɔt']	come

The bilabial consonants: [p], [b], [m], and [m̩], are all created with the lips.[50] How the lips are used in combination with the flow of air and pitch determines the different types of bilabial consonants. To properly produce the [p] or [b],

1. Protrude the lips in the form of a pout, touching them together lightly. Do not make a thin line of the lips.
2. Keeping the lips very relaxed, blow out a narrow stream of air, directing it against the center of the upper lip, causing the lips to open.

[49] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 46-47.
[50] Hudson, *The Sound of English,* 8.

3. Use only the inner surface of the lips.[51]

Add a voiced tone while pronouncing the plosive *p* to create the [b] sound. The [m] is created with the lips in a relaxed state and "barely touching."[52] A hum is present; then the mouth opens for the next sound, which will most likely be a vowel. This requires the hum to be short and precise. The [m̩] is the same as the English [m] but is prolonged slightly. This occurs rarely in the Czech language.

The [p] sound occurs in three situations. When *p* is present in a word, the [p] is used. When *b* is final in a word the [p] is also used. And finally, the [p] is used when *b* is before a voiced consonant, in assimilation.

The [b] sound occurs in the same instances except for the end of a word. When *b* is present in a word the [b] is used. The [b] is used when the *p* is before an unvoiced consonant, in assimilation. The [m] sound always occurs when the *m* is present in a word. The only exception to this rule is when *m* proceeds another consonant at the end of a word. When this situation occurs, the *m* is sounded as a [m̩], a short, pitched hum. This [m̩] can become syllabic with a note of its own.

Bilabial [p] [b] [m] [m̩]		
Czech	**IPA**	**English Translation**
pomoc	[ˈpɔ-mɔ͡ts]	help
ptaček	[ˈpta-t͡ʃɛk]	bird
Biblické	[ˈbɪ-blɪ-t͡skɛ:]	Biblical
sbírka	[ˈzbɪ-ɾa]	collection
mysli	[ˈmɪ-slɪ]	mind
osm	[ɔsm̩]	eight

[51] Marshall, *English Diction,* 44.
[52] Ibid, 56.

The velar consonants: [k], [g], [ŋ], [x], and [ɣ], are produced with the arch of the tongue touching the velum, also referred to as the soft palate. In English the [k] and [g] are articulated with the tongue closer to the middle of the roof of the mouth instead of closer to the velum. Besides the placement of the tongue arch, the [k], [g], and [ŋ] will be produced the same as English.

> Raise the back of the tongue to meet the soft palate at the highest point possible, and as tongue and palate separate, add voice. Do not substitute an explosion of air for the voicing of *g.* The result would be [k].[53]

To produce the [k], simply remove the voiced aspect to the [g] sound. The [ŋ] will be similar to the [k] and [g] but Marshall says to keep the tongue more relaxed so that it is never pressing hard against the soft palate.[54] A vocalist can add more pressure with the tongue to the [k] and [g] because there is a plosive effect when the air flows through the mouth. The [ŋ] does not have this effect because it is a partial nasal consonant. In Czech this sound will never be independent.[55] This sound will always be paired with a *g* or *k,* as in Italian.

Unlike the plosive and nasal velar consonants, [k], [g], and [ŋ], the [x] and [ɣ] are voiced and unvoiced fricative velar consonants. These sounds can be found in other languages besides English. The [x] is the unvoiced partner of the [ɦ] sound. However, the combination *ch* can also have the paired combination; [x] and [ɣ].[56] The placement of the tongue while producing the Czech [x] is between the German *ichlaut* and *achlaut*. The tongue will be closer to the velum than the German *achlaut*, but do not go so far as to

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[53] Marshall, *English Diction,* 79.
[54] Ibid, 98.
[55] Cheek, *Singing in Czech, 52.*
[56] Ibid, 54.

place the tongue on the velum. This tongue placement will be the same for the [ɣ], but pitch is added.

The rules in which to produce the [k] are straightforward. When *k* is present in a word a vocalist should sound a [k]. When there is a final *g* written in a word, one should pronounce the [k]. This does not happen often within the Czech language. The rules in which to produce the [g] are similar to the [k] with the added rule of assimilation. When *g* is present in a word, a [g] will be pronounced. A vocalist should also pronounce the [g] when *k* precedes a voiced consonant. An exception to this rule is when *k* is before *v.* This is discussed earlier in the labiodental fricatives.

During the Common Slavic period, starting as early as 500 AD, the evolution and expansion of the Slavic languages began.[57] Many other Slavic languages kept the palatalization (two points of articulation) while some of the West languages, including Czech, did not continue to use palatalization. Robert Channon discusses the use of palatalization for Slavic languages and identifies when palatalization was used before the Common Slavic period. The *j* glide used in these historic forms was associated with "front vowels."[58] This use of palatalization was used in combination with *k, g,* and *x.* This is no longer used in modern Czech.

When an *n* comes before a *k* or *g,* the [ŋ] is pronounced. Cheek uses two examples of this sound; "*banka* [baŋka] (bank)" and "*maminka* [mamɪŋka] (mother, mom)".[59] When pronouncing this sound, the tongue should be placed toward the velum instead of

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[57] Jakobson, *Remarska on the Phonological Evolution, xix.*
[58] Robert Channon, *On the Place of the Progressive Palatalization of Velars in the Relative Chronolgoy of Slavic,* (Paris: Mouton, 1972), 9.
[59] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 52.

the alveolar ridge. If the tongue is too close to the alveolar ridge, the sound will be that of the [ɲ]. Despite both sounds being nasal, these sounds are dramatically different. Remember that the [ŋ] will always be followed by a *g* or *k.*[60]

The [x] occurs in four different circumstances when *ch* or *h* is present. When the *ch* combination exists within a word, produce the unvoiced [x]. A vocalist must also produce the [x] when a *h* is final in a word before a pause. Cheek uses the example "*Bůh* [bu:x] (God)".[61] The [x] will also be pronounced when the *h* is before an unvoiced consonant, in assimilation. The example that Cheek uses in his book is "*vlhko* [vl̩xkɔ] (moisture)".[62] The last instance when the [x] is used is in combination with *sh.* The *s* will be pronounced as [s] while the *h* will be pronounced as [x]. The [ɣ] will only occur in assimilation between two words. This means that when a *ch* ends a word and a voiced consonant begins the next word with no pauses, the [ɣ] will be pronounced. This occurs frequently in Czech vocal music.

Velar [k] [g] [ŋ] [x] [ɣ]		
Czech	**IPA**	**English Translation**
krátkého	[ˈkra:-tkɛ:-ɦɔ]	harm
biolog	[ˈbɪɔ-lɔf]	biologist
Golem	[ˈgɔ-lɛm]	Golem (proper name)
když	[gdɪʒ]	when
banka	[ˈbaŋ-ka]	bank
maminka	[ˈma-mɪŋ-ka]	mother
nechceš	[ˈnɛ-x͡tsɛʃ]	you do not want
Bůh	[bu:x]	God
vlhko	[ˈvl̩-xkɔ]	moisture
na shledanou	[ˈna ˈsxlɛ-da-nɔu]	goodbye
zašlých dní	[ˈza-ʃli:ɣ ˈdɲi:]	past day

[60] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 52.
[61] Ibid, 53.
[62] Ibid, 54.

The alveolar lateral consonant is [l]. This sound is voiced and fricative. The Czech [l] is similar to the more forward Italian and French [l]. Cheek says to stay away from the "thick English [l]", which is only pronounced when at the end of an English word.[63] But the initial [l] in English is produced in the same manner as the Czech [l].

1. Flip the tongue tip down from the upper gum, quickly and vigorously, directly on the beat. ... Do not move the tongue slowly. It must be flipped rapidly. This does not imply that the vowel that follows is necessarily quick. The vowel may be of short or long duration, according to the music.
2. Point the tip of the tongue. Do not flatten the tongue tip as in pronouncing *n.*
3. Touch the gum well above the tooth line.[64]

While voicing the [l], keep the tongue behind the front teeth and inside the mouth. Many people tend to place the point of the tongue outside of the mouth and then flip downward. This excessive movement of the tongue will hinder the vowel or consonant that will follow.

The other alveolar lateral consonant is the Moravian *ł.* This letter will be found in songs that use Moravian folk texts. The sound is characterized as a harder velar consonant but is produced along the alveolar ridge. One way to think about this sound is that it travels from the soft palate, over the arch of the tongue, and then down the tip of the tongue when flipped downward. Many people will sing the *ł* as a [w]. However, the sound is closer to a [l^w].[65] To produce this sound, pucker and round the lips before producing the voiced [l]. Then, open and relax the lips into the next vowel or consonant. This movement of the lips creates the [w] sound.[66] All of this should be very quick and short.

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[63] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 66.
[64] Marshall, *English Diction,* 68.
[65] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 66-67.
[66] Marshall, *English* Diction, *103.*

When *l* is present in a word the [l] is used. Only when the *l* is singular in a syllable without a vowel present does it act as the vocalic *l.* This situation was discussed in the vowel section of the chapter. When the *ł* is present in Moravian dialect text, the [lʷ] is used.

Alveolar Lateral		
Czech	**IPA**	**English Translation**
lípa	['li:-pa]	linden (tree)
mila	['mi:-la]	loved one (female)
złate	['zlʷa-tɛ]	gold
utłačił	['ʔu-tlʷa-t͡ʃɪlʷ]	suppressed

The alveolar vibrant consonants are [ɾ] and [r]. The term "vibrant" refers to the action of the tongue while producing the sound; specifically, the taps or rolling of an *r*. To produce the [ɾ] or [r], the vocalist must use the tip of the tongue against the alveolar ridge. Paton describes the articulation and pronunciation of the [ɾ] and [r], in the Italian language, by maintaining relaxed lips, vibrating the tip of the tongue against the alveolar ridge, keeping the sides of the tongue in contact with the upper molars to "form a narrow channel" of breath, and keeping the air flow strong so that the tongue can tap "passively against the alveolar ridge."[67] Marshall describes the flipped *r* in the same way with one difference. "The tongue actually touches the gum ridge once - and only once."[68] The Czech [ɾ] and [r] are produced in the same manner as the English and Italian *r* but will vary with the number of flips utilized.

When the *r* is present without a háček, the regular [r] is used. This [r] is not equivalent to the rolled Italian *r*. The Czech regular *r* is flipped multiple times so that the

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[67] John Glenn Paton, *Gateway to Italian Diction; A Guide for Singers* (Van Nuys: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 2004), 56.
[68] Marshall, *English Diction,* 8.

word being sung keeps an even, legato line. When the *r* is intervocalic, between two vowels, the [ɾ] sound is used. This flipped *r* is closer to the English flipped *r* but can be flipped two or three times. Both situations are regular occurrences within the Czech language.

Alveolar Vibrant		
Czech	**IPA**	**English Translation**
staɾá	[ˈsta-ɾa:]	old
rozplývají	[ˈrɔ-spli:-va-ji:]	melt away
stɾach	[strax]	fear

The alveolar voiced vibrant [ř] is unique to the Czech language. Other Slovak languages do not have this sound. This sound and its unvoiced pair, [ř̆], are some of the hardest sounds to produce for native Czech speakers. It is easy for a vocalist to overanalyze this sound. However, the sound can be produced combining two sounds, [ʒ] and [r]. Other scholars have said that an English speaker can combine the *ř* as [rzh].[69] This approximation of the alveolar voiced vibrant is not precise enough because a vocalist needs to sing this sound on one phoneme. When a vocalist sees three symbols, they should produce three consecutive sounds instead of one simultaneously sound in a syllable.

To produce this sound, a vocalist should first prepare the tongue for the [ʒ] sound. This can be done by placing the sides of the tongue on the upper molars. The arch of the tongue will not touch the hard palate. The tip of the tongue will be relaxed and placed behind the bottom front teeth.[70] The lips should be puckered and relaxed while in a

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[69] Pavel Boháč and Milan Haralík, "Toponymic Guidelines of Czech Republic," *Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names,* trans. by Marie Boháčová, (17 June 2002): 4.
[70] Marshall, *English Diction,* 115.

slightly smiling position.[71] Second, cause the tip of the tongue to flip while the arch and sides of the tongue stay in the previous position. Finally, move a strong stream of air though the mouth while adding pitch.

The [ř] will be used in two instances. Whenever an *ř* is intervocalic or before a vowel, the [ř] will be sounded. The second instance is when the *ř* is present before or after a voiced consonant. In all other situations, the *ř* will be unvoiced, [ř̊].

Alveolar Voiced Vibrant		
Czech	**IPA**	**English Translation**
řekou	[ˈřɛ-kɔu]	river
naříkím	[ˈna-řiː-kiːm̩]	I lament
řekl	[řɛkl]	said (told)
dobrořečiti	[ˈdɔ-brɔ-řɛ-t͡ʃɪ-lɪ]	blessing (charity)

The [ř̊] is the unvoiced pair of the [ř]. The sound is produced in the same manner as the [ř] but is lacking the pitched variable. Instead of using the [ʒ] simultaneously with the flipped [r], use the [ʃ] in combination with the unvoiced [r] sound. Many non-native Czech speakers find this sound easier to produce.[72] Knowing this, a vocalist could practice this sound by slowly going between the [ʃ] and unvoiced [r] sound, then combining them. Once this sound can be made, adding pitch to these sounds would be another way to create the voiced [ř].

The [ř̊] occurs in two situations. The first situation is when the letter *ř* is written at the end of a word or before a pause. The second is when the *ř* comes before or after an unvoiced consonant. In this combination, a vocalist will find three common combinations: *př, tř, and stř.*[73] These combinations are most likely found at the beginning

[71] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 69.
[72] Ibid, 70.
[73] Ibid, 71.

of a word. However, if these combinations are found in the middle of a word, the combination of consonants is treated in the same way as stated above.

Alveolar Unvoiced Vibrant		
Czech	**IPA**	**English Translation**
příteli	[ˈpři:-tɛ-lɪ]	friends
nepřátele	[ˈnɛ-přa:-tɛ-lɛ]	enemies
spatřují	[ˈspa-třu-ji:]	they consider
pastyř	[ˈpa-stɪř]	shepherd

All other letters or sounds that have not been covered previously are derived from foreign languages: *qu* [kv], *w* [v], and *x* [ks] or [gz]. The *qu* will always be pronounced as [kv] and never [kw].[74] The *w,* is pronounced as [v] unless the *w* is final, when it is pronounced [f]. The *x* can be pronounced two different ways because of the rule of assimilation.[75] If the *x* is followed by an unvoiced consonant, then the sound produced is [ks]. If the *x* is followed by a voiced consonant, then the sound produced is [gz].

Single Letter Words

The use of single-letter words is very common in Czech. These single-letter words are prepositions: *k* (near), *s* (with), *z* (from), and *v* (in). To correctly produce the sound needed for these prepositions, a vocalist should use the rule of assimilation and link the preposition with the next word in the phrase.[76] If the word starts with a voiced consonant, the vocalist should use the voiced sound for the preposition. If the word starts with an unvoiced consonant, the vocalist should use the unvoiced sound for the preposition (for example; *s kniha* (with a book) [ˈs͡knɪɲa] or *v potravinářství* (in the

[74] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 72.
[75] Ibid, 73.
[76] Ibid, 102.

grocery store) [ˈf ‿pɔtravɪnaːřstviː]). If there is not a voiced or unvoiced consonant to follow the preposition, the single letter word will be pronounced by its unvoiced pair.[77]

Proper Stress and Duration

Syllabification of the Czech language follows three primary rules. First, every syllable must end with a vowel[78] (*dí-tě* and *pří-te*-li). The second rule of syllabification is that the syllables are divided when two consonants are medial and one or more of those consonants are not on the Consonant Pair chart from page 41 (*dal-ší* and *stráž-ní*). The last rule of syllabification is applied when the consonants are used in voiced assimilation. When two or more consonants are Czech Mates (included in the Consonant Pair chart), the voiced consonant cluster must be placed on the next syllable (*na-sbi-ra-la,* and *po-zhu-ji).*

The Czech language is very legato and melodic. The words easily flow together to create one unit of a phrase. The vocalist should strive to sing on the vowels and quickly articulate the consonants. The syllabic stress is always on the first syllable of a word in Czech.[79] This is a rule with no exceptions. These stressed syllables might sound weak to English speakers; native English speakers give strong emphasis on the stressed syllable. The stressed syllables in the Czech language do not need the same vocal weight. English speakers should also take care that they do not add duration to the stressed syllable.[80] The duration of vowels does not determine the stressed syllable. Czech speakers give stress to

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[77] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 102.
[78] Ibid, 78.
[79] Tyrrell, *Janáček,* 17.
[80] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 106.

the syllable by producing a "stronger attack and a higher pitch."[81] Vocalists should distinguish the stressed syllable by placing a stronger emphasis on that syllable. It is typical of Czech music that the stressed syllable is scored on a strong beat. This allows the vocalist to naturally give emphasis to the syllable without compromising the vocal line. In the same way, the composer often places a long vowel on a note that is held.

There are some instances when a word has multiple stresses, or an initial strong and secondary weak stresses. This is found in words that have four or more syllables. The strong stress is always at the beginning of a word, with the weaker stress following on a later syllable.

> Four-syllable words will have a weak secondary stress on the third syllable ... Five-syllable words will have secondary stress on either the third or fourth syllable ... Six-syllable words will have two secondary stresses.[82]

Examples of words with secondary stresses are *kalendářní* [ˈka-lɛn-ˌdaː-řɲiː] (calendar) and *pomerančový* [ˈpɔ-mɛ-ran-ˌt͡ʃɔ-viː] (orange).

This chapter has provided pronunciation guides and clarifying charts to assist instructors and vocal students through pronouncing the Czech language. Vowels, diphthongs, the *j*, single letter words, stress and duration have been presented with careful focus to replace intimidation with confidence in learning Czech diction. With these diction tools, novice singers can find performing art songs in the Czech language achievable.

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[81] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 102.
[82] Ibid, 116.

Chapter III

Accessibility

Though the vast majority of vocal instructors are already well acquainted with the considerations I discuss in selecting music for novice singers, I record them here to relate them to introducing specifically Czech art song. While this process is one way to select music of any language, I believe these considerations are particularly helpful in selecting Czech art song. Vocal instructors regularly evaluate both the abilities of the vocalist and the difficulty of the music. Choosing repertoire that is both challenging and achievable is often their goal. But what is "achievable music"? For this document, I am consider three criteria when selecting Czech art song for novice singers: vocal considerations, language considerations, and musical considerations. Instructors have powerful influence to help students find success and experience new music.

Vocal Considerations

When selecting music for a novice vocalist, one must consider four primary vocal considerations: tessitura, *passaggio*, range, and endurance. When these four criteria match the student's abilities, the student will have more success performing the selected repertoire. These areas can also be dependent upon each other. For example, if the tessitura of a piece is sitting in the *passaggio*, the vocal demand will be higher. Conversely, if the tessitura is outside of the *passaggio*, the vocal demand will be lighter. In an ideal circumstance, the difficulty level of these four considerations would be appropriately balanced, and the student's likelihood of achieving success would be greater.

"The tessitura of a piece is not decided by the extremes of its range, but rather by which part of the range is most used."[1] The range of a piece of music refers to the lowest and highest possible notes used in a song, and the interval between them.[2] The tessitura of a piece can either help or hinder a novice vocalist. If the tessitura of the piece also aligns with the vocalist's "individual tessitura", then a novice vocalist will not experience excess fatigue while singing.[3] To understand a novice vocalist's "individual tessitura", a brief discussion about register is needed. According to Richard Miller, a soprano's vocal registers can look something like this: chest voice (G3-Eb4), lower middle voice (Bb3-C5), upper middle voice (C#5-F#5), and head voice (G5-C6).[4] The soprano will experience two breaks or register transition points: *primo passaggio* (Italian term meaning first passage) and *secondo passaggio* (second passage). The *zona di passaggio* (the passage zone) is a term used to indicate the notes between the two different passages.[5] The areas in which a soprano will experience the *zona di passaggi* are at Eb4, the *primo passaggio* point and F#5, the *secondo passaggio* point.[6]

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[1] Owen Jander, "Tessitura [testura]," in *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane Root, January 20, 2001. https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.libproxy.unl.edu/grovemusic/display/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000027741?rskey=4lwAt7&result=1.

[2] Julian Rushton, "Range," in *Grove Music Online*, edited by Deane Root, January 20, 2001, https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.libproxy.unl.edu/grovemusic/display/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000022879?rskey=7Tsh2b&result=1.

[3] Cornelius L. Reid, *The Free Voice: A Guide to Natural Singing*, 50th Anniversary edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 46.

[4] Richard Miller, *The Structure of Singing: System and Art in Vocal Technique* (New York: Schirmer Books, A Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1986), 134.

[5] Miller, *Structure of Singing*, 115.

[6] Ibid, 134.

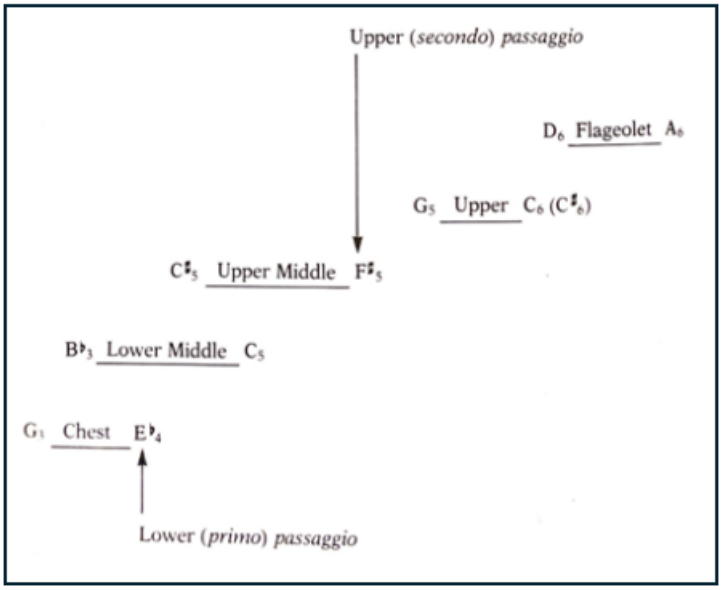


Figure 5. Richard Miller, *The Structure of Singing,* (New York: Schirmer Books; A Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1986), 134, fig. 10.1.

A mezzo-soprano has these registers: chest voice (E3-E4), lower middle voice (C4-Bb4), upper middle voice (B4-E5), and head voice (F5-Bb5).[7] The *zona di passaggi* for a mezzo-soprano are usually at E4, the *primo passaggio* point and E5, the *secondo passaggio* point.

[7] Miller, *Structure of Singing,* 135.

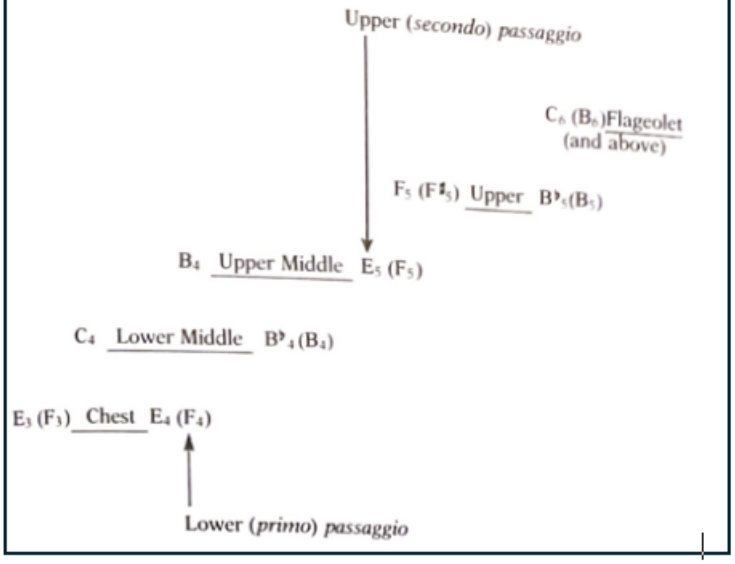
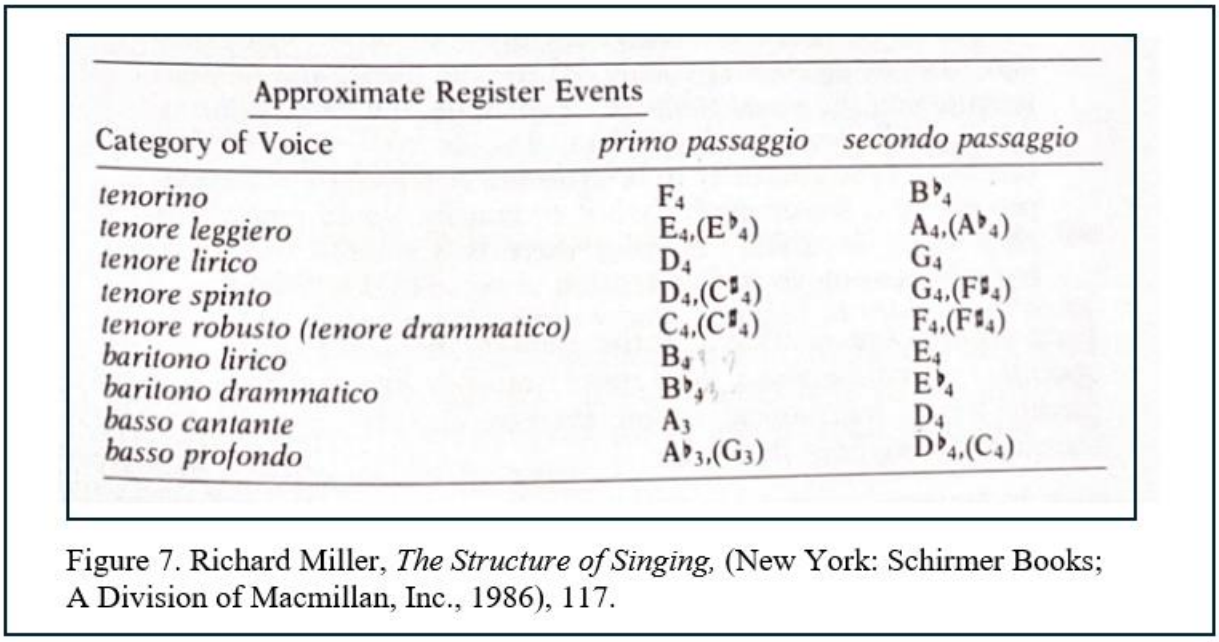


Figure 6. Richard Miller, *The Structure of Singing,* (New York: Schirmer Books; A Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1986), 135, 10.2.

Approximate register breaks for male voices are noted in Figure 7. The first break occurs approximately at F3 for a tenor voice and at B3 or Bb3 for a baritone (this is the *primo passaggio).* The second break occurs approximately at Bb4 in tenors and E4 or Eb4 in baritones (this is the *secondo passaggio).*[8]

[8] Miller, *Structure of Singing,* 117.



Approximate Register Events		
Category of Voice	*primo passaggio*	*secondo passaggio*
tenorino	F_4	$B\flat_4$
tenore leggiero	E_4,($E\flat_4$)	A_4,($A\flat_4$)
tenore lirico	D_4	G_4
tenore spinto	D_4,($C\sharp_4$)	G_4,($F\sharp_4$)
tenore robusto (tenore drammatico)	C_4,($C\sharp_4$)	F_4,($F\sharp_4$)
baritono lirico	B_4	E_4
baritono drammatico	$B\flat_4$	$E\flat_4$
basso cantante	A_3	D_4
basso profondo	$A\flat_3$,(G_3)	$D\flat_4$,(C_4)

Figure 7. Richard Miller, *The Structure of Singing,* (New York: Schirmer Books; A Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1986), 117.

An individual tessitura will not encompass the vocalist's total *zona di passsaggio.* It will occur after the transition from one register to the next. These ranges are not rigid across all voices in a voice type. Each voice is unique, requiring instructors and students to explore and experiment to understand what will feel most comfortable for the vocalist.

Additional factors that merit consideration include endurance and tempo. If a song is exceedingly long, a student runs the risk of growing vocally fatigued. Tempo also contributes to vocal demand and can hinder proper articulation of phrases. Fast tempos may challenge proper consonant and vowel pronunciation. The vowels of the Czech language should create the "*legato* quality of the language".[9] If the vowels are distorted because of the fast tempo, the beautiful quality of *legato* is lost.

[9] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 3.

Language Considerations

To select Czech music for the novice vocalist, instructors may assess three language considerations: a minimal occurrence of challenging sounds, minimal glottal strokes, and language stress aligned with the musical setting. The Czech language does not have pronunciation rule exceptions unless the words are derived from foreign languages. This is helpful for vocalists learning to sing in Czech for the first time. The language itself is also consistently bright and forward, which encourages appropriate tone placement. The "more evident the sensation of resonance in the cavities of the head and mouth, the better the 'placement' of voice."[10] When properly pronounced, Czech language can help a vocalist achieve this sensation.

Despite the language being extremely phonetic, there are a few sounds that are very foreign to native English speakers, including [ř], [ř̊], [ɲ], [t'], [d'], and [ɬ]. [11] None of these sounds are found in the English language. The voiced [ř] and unvoiced [ř̊] must be practiced with care. Cheek says that the best way to practice these sounds is to listen and analyze native Czech speakers.[12] Native English speakers often produce the sounds that create voiced [ř] and unvoiced [ř̊], [ʒ] and [r], successively. These sounds should be produced simultaneously. This is the same complaint made about the [ɲ], [t'], and [d']. A native English speaker will often pronounce these sounds successively: [nj], [tj], and [dj]. This is to be avoided.[13] The last consonant that may cause difficulty for native English

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[10] Giovanni Battista Lamperti, *Vocal Wisdom,* enlarged edition, trans. William Earl Brown (Marlboro: Taplinger Publishing Co., Inc., 1957), 40.
[11] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 3.
[12] Ibid, 69.
[13] Ibid, 39.

speakers is [lʷ]. This sound is only found in the Moravian dialect. It is acceptable to produce a sound closer to [w] than [l]; however, the vocalist should not linger on the sound.[14]

The Czech language is very legato, but there are moments when a vocalist needs to add a glottal stroke.[15] Glottal strokes are produced by an abrupt air stream pushed through the glottis,[16] and are needed when a word begins with a vowel. Though this is not unique to the Czech language, glottal strokes are difficult if singing in a legato manner is the goal. One exercise that can help the novice vocalist produce this glottal stroke is by singing the word "about" on a single pitch. The onset before the vowel [ʌ] is the glottal stroke.

The last piece of language criteria to consider when selecting Czech music for novice singers is whether the language stress aligns with the musical stress. If these two stresses align with one another, it will be easier for the vocalist to sound like a native Czech speaker. Most Czech composers naturally write music that does this. However, some modern music will not align as smoothly.

Musical Considerations

The third criterion in selecting music for a novice vocalist are aspects of musical considerations: minimal vocal leaps, vocal doubling in the accompaniment, traditional Western chordal progression, and ease of memorization. These four aspects can be used together to help a novice vocalist find the most success while singing.

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[14] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 67.
[15] Ibid, 22.
[16] Miller, *Structure of Singing,* 2.

Stepwise motion within the melodic line is helpful for novice vocalists. The contour of the vocal line, when presented in stepwise motion, is visually easier to follow. Vocal doubling is another helpful tool to assist a novice vocalist. Vocal, or voice, doubling is when melodic material is shared in the vocal line and part of the accompaniment.[17]

Traditional Western chordal progression is fundamental in classical and popular contemporary music. The chord progression I-IV-V-I is so common and familiar that novice vocalists have an easier time learning music that uses this chord progression. Familiar chordal progression can give a mental "*Feeling of Remembrance,"* which will help vocalists feel more comfortable with a piece of music that is not from the traditional canon.[18] Simple chord progressions match the level of the novice vocalist's musical theory knowledge. Paul Cienniwa's book on memorizing music, *By Heart: The Art of Memorizing Music*, explains that understanding the harmonic structure of a piece can aid in a performer's memorization process. "It is important to know how your music is constructed. A little harmonic analysis helps a lot in the learning process, so don't be afraid to use one of your practice sessions to map out exactly how your piece is put together."[19] Memorization is also made easier when there are aspects of repetition

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[17] Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, revised edition (Milwaukee: Hal Leonart Corporation, 2006), 1.
[18] Ivan Jimenez, Tuire Kuusi, and Christopher Doll, "Common Chord Progressions and Feelings of Remembrance," *Music & Science,* 3 (January-December 2020), 3.
[19] Paul Cienniwa, *By Heart: The Art of Memorizing Music* (Lexington: Paul Cienniwa, 2014), 33.

throughout the piece. Repetition of text (as well as minimal unique text), melodic contour, or passages "creates a comprehension of pattern."[20]

With a focus on these three criteria listed above, I believe that a novice singer can achieve success while performing Czech art song. Vocal demands including tessitura, *passaggio*, range, and endurance, should be tailored to the novice singer. Considerations regarding language, such as few challenging sounds, few glottal strokes, and the language stress aligning with the musical stress, will help the novice singer can find success in pronouncing the Czech language. And, musical considerations, such as minimal vocal leaps, vocal doubling in the accompaniment, traditional Western chordal progressions, and ease of memorization, are compositional characteristics that will help and support the novice singer as they perform a song outside the traditional vocal canon. If these vocal demands, language, and musical considerations are appropriately balanced in the music, the singer will have the tools to perform these Czech art songs with success.

[20] Cienniwa, *By Heart*, 31.

Chapter IV

Czech Vocal Repertoire for Novice Singers

With the introduction of Czech history for valuable context in performing Czech music art, focused clarification of Czech diction, and considerations of accessibility, I suggest the following five Czech vocal pieces for novice singers. I believe each piece has multiple elements, as outlined in Chapter 3, that make it a great option for novice singer repertoire.

The songs that are listed in this chapter are intended for a novice singer. However, not all novice singers are of the same level. For the purposes of this discussion, a novice singer is characterized as a voice student who has only taken a couple years of voice lessons. A novice singer is not characterized by skill but by musical knowledge. For these reasons I have picked a variety of songs. The compositions are not listed in any particular order of difficulty. Each art song includes a brief explanation of historical context, my interpretation of the vocal, language, and musical consideration criteria, potential challenges, translations and IPA guides. Finally, my own performance analysis of each song is provided.

"Dolina, dolina" from *Písně z Těšínska*

"Dolina, dolina" is the fifth song in Petr Eben's cycle, *Písně z Těšínska* [ˈpiːsɲɛ s ‿ t'ɛʃiːnska] (Songs of Těšín Land). Eben was a resilient musician who survived many of history's brutal events, including the concentration camps at Buchenwald during World War II and the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviets in 1968.[1] Despite these

[1] Matthew Markham, "A Study of *Písně z Těšínska* of Petr Eben," DMA diss., (Florida State University, 2009), 1.

circumstances, he continued to study music at every opportunity. His third composition for solo voice, *Písně z Těšínska,* was composed in 1952. The text and melodies were from the Těšín region. It is said that these pieces were dear to Eben because of his wife, Šárka, was from this region.[2] The Těšín region also plays an important role in Eben's career. While living in Těšín he produced many compositions, including this cycle inspired by the folksongs and regional dialect of the area. The Těšín dialect was influenced by the Polish language which, unlike Czech, does not have longs vowels or the Moravian *ł.*[3]

This song could be assigned to a novice singer, baritone, who has some experience singing modern classical music. The tessitura sits low within the range of the average novice baritone vocalist. There are many interludes throughout the song so that the vocalist has time to collect themselves or rest after a vocal phrase. A large reason for why I chose this song for this document because the vocal demands are few.

The musical considerations throughout this song are helpful for the singer. The song is in ABA' form. The melodic line is consistently the same throughout the entirety of the song. When the song modulates to the parallel minor key, e minor, the melodic contour of the vocal line is the same. This means that the vocal line in the A section is virtually the same as the vocal line in the B section, only sequentially pitch down a whole step. When the song modulates back to E major, the vocal line continues to use the same melodic contour. The repetition of the melodic contour with help the student learn and perform the song well. In partnership with the repeated melodic contour, the accompaniment will also help the vocalist by use of occasional vocal doubling. These

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[2] Markham, "*Písně z Těšínska,"* 14.
[3] Ibid, 20.

two aspects will give the student support throughout the song while performing, enhancing their chances of success.

The vocal demand considerations and musical considerations help the novice singer perform this song but, there are some difficulties of note. One significant challenge is that the tempo is quick. This will make it difficult for the novice singer to easily pronounce the text. This song is also set to a Czech dialect from the Těšín region. The use of the Moravian *ł* is present in the song. The last challenge associated with this song is the thick texture of the accompaniment. At times, I found that the accompaniment can easily overpower the vocalist. To encourage a more balanced collaboration between accompaniment and voice I encourage vocalists to increase the energy of the text when the B section begins. This will help balance the combined sound while adding intensity to the story that is being sung. Understanding the pitfalls of this song and doing careful, focused practice will help the novice student find success while performing this song.

The figure below illustrates some general information about the song. Below the figure is an IPA transcription for the song, complete with word-for-word translations.

"Dolina, dolina" from *Písně z Těšínska*		
Vocal Deman Considerations	Language Considerations	Musical Considerations
Range: A3-C4 Tessitura: F#3-B3	[ř] & [Ř] : Multiple [ɲ], [t'], [d'] : Many Moravian dialect	Allegretto in E major ABA' form Modulations to parallel minor, E minor then back to E major Repeated melodic contour; sequential

Figure 10. Rachel Green's general information about "Dolina, dolina" from *Písně z Těšínska* by Petr Eben and text from Folksongs in the Těšín region.

"Dolina, dolina" from Petr Eben's song cycle *Písně z Těšínska.* Translation by Matthew Markham. IPA by Rachel Green.

[ˈdəlına ˈdəlına]
Dolina, dolina
Valley, valley

[ˈdəlına	ˈdəlına	ʔa	ˈv ‿dəlıɲɛ	ˈsɔsna]	
Dolina,	**dolina,**	**a**	**v dolině**	**sosna:**	
Valley,	valley,	and	in valley	pine (tree):	

[ˈpɔvıs mɲɛ	ˈdɛvuxɔ	dla ˈkɔgɔs	ʔˈurɔslʷa]	
Poviz mně,	**děvucho,**	**dla kogo's**	**urosła?**	
Tell myself,	maiden,	for whom	did you grow up?	

[ʔˈurɔslʷax	ʔˈurɔslʷax	ʔˈalɛ ɲɛ	dla ˈtjɛbjɛ]	
Urosłach,	**urosłach,**	**ale**	**ně**	**dla těbě,**
I grew,	I grew,	but	not	for you,

[dla	ˈtɛgɔ	ˈsınɛt͡ʃka	t͡sɔ	ˈz ‿yɔⁱnı	ˈpřıjɛd'ɛ]
dla	**tego**	**synečka,**	**co**	**z vojny**	**přijedě.**
for	that	boy,	that	from war	comes.

[ˈpřıjɛd'ɛ	ˈpřıjɛd'ɛ	na ˈbranɛm	ˈkɔnıt͡ʃka]	
Přijedě,	**přijedě**	**na brannem**	**koničku,**	
Comes,	comes	on armed	horse,	

[ˈpɔtkɔvjınkı	ˈzlʷatɛ	ˈʃablıt͡ʃka	na ˈbɔku]
podkovjynky	**złate,**	**šablička**	**na boku.**
horseshoes	golden,	sword	at waist.

[ˈd'ɛvuxɔ	ˈd'ɛvuxɔ	ˈpɔraxuⁱ	ˈsɔbjɛ]	
Děvucho,	**děvucho,**	**porachuj se**	**sobě,**	
Maiden,	maiden,	count	you,	

[ˈvjɛla ja	xɔdnıt͡ʃkuf	ʔˈutlʷat͡ʃılʷ ku	ˈtɔbjɛ]
Věla ja	**chodničkuv**	**utlačił ku**	**tobě!**
How many	I way	I have taken to	you!

[ˈdıbıɣ ʒɛx	ja	ˈmjalʷa	ˈxɔdnıt͡ʃkı	ˈraxɔvat']
Dybych žech	**ja**	**mjała**	**chodničky**	**rachovat',**
If	I	have	to way	to count

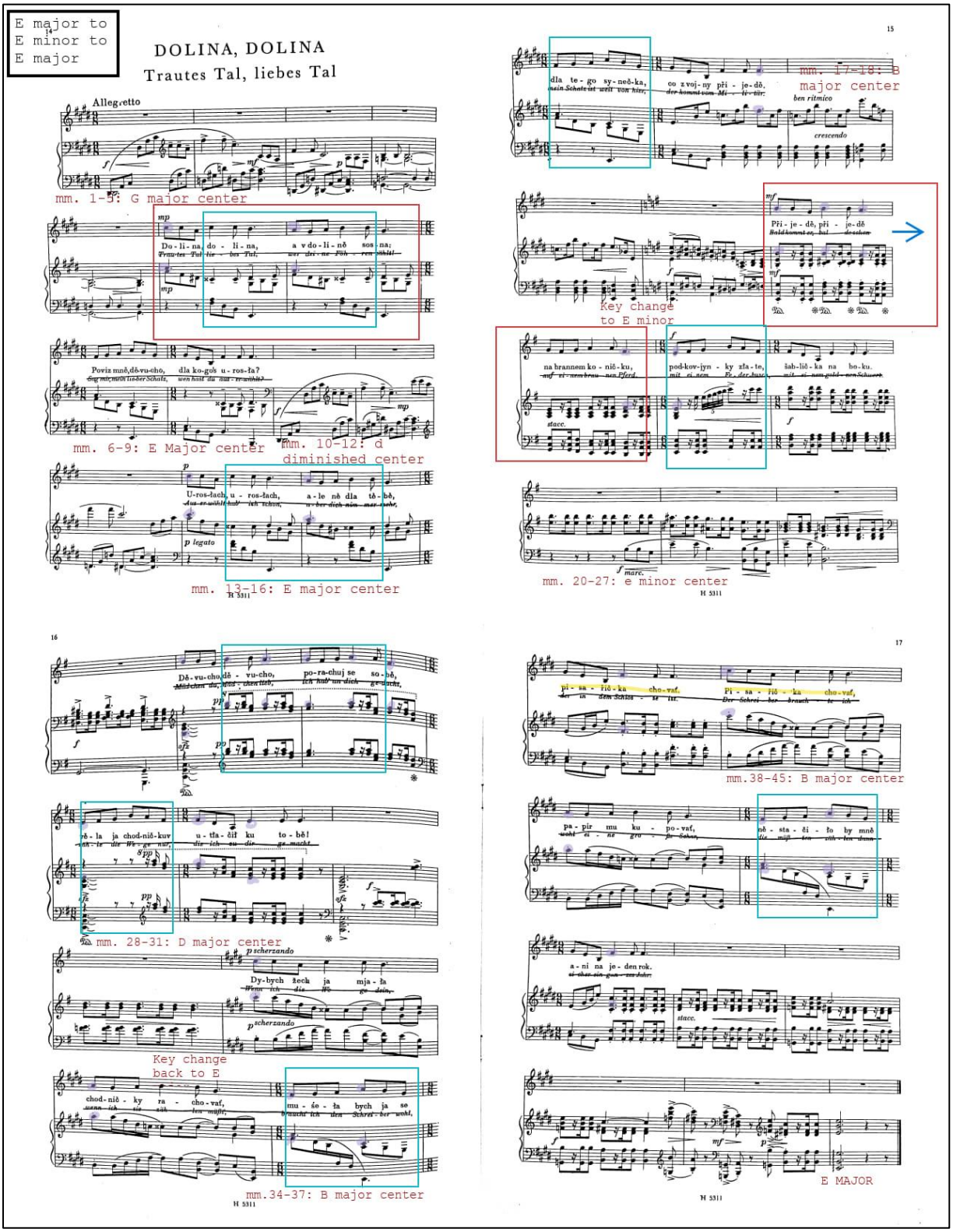
[ˈmuʃɛlʷa bɪx	ja sɛ	ˈpɪsařɪt͡ʃka	ˈxɔvat’]
mušeła bych	**ja se**	**pisařička**	**chovat’.**
Have to	I	writer	keep.

[ˈpɪsařɪt͡ʃka	ˈxɔvat	ˈpapɪr	mu ˈkupɔvat’]
Pisařička	**chovat’,**	**papir**	**mu kupovat’,**
Writer	keep,	paper for	him to buy,

[ˈɲɛstat͡ʃɪlʷɔ bɪ		mɲɛ	ʔˈanɪ	na ˈjɛdɛn	rɔk]
něstačiło by		**mně**	**ani**	**na jeden**	**rok.**
Would not have enough		I	neither	for one	year.

The following is a performance analysis of “Dolina, dolina.” These considerations will help the vocalist succeed while performing this song. Different aspects of melodic style are color coded. Light blue boxes are placed around stepwise motion in the melody. Dark blue boxes are placed around chromatic stepwise motion in a melody. Purple boxes are placed around large diatonic leaps. Red boxes are placed around sequential melodic phasing. Text that is highlighted with yellow indicates repeated lyrics, while musical lines that are highlighted purple indicate vocal doubling in the accompaniment. The harmonic structure is also indicated on the music under the piano accompaniment. The harmonic structure will highlight the overall tonal center of different phrases in the piano and the vocal line. This will help the novice singer aurally map the song. By presenting the scores, with my performance analysis, it is my hope that instructors will find this performance analysis helpful when considering this song for a novice singer.

Example 1. “Dolina, dolina” from Petr Eben’s song cycle *Písně z Těšínska*



“Kde domow můg?”

The first verse of this song is the national anthem of the Czech Republic. This song was originally composed by František Škroup as incidental music for the play *Fidlovačka,* collaborating with Josef Kajetán Tyl (librettist). Tyl did not believe in the music being of a high quality, nor that it would become popular.[4] Soon after the premier of this piece, in 1834, “Kde domow můg?” became a popular song that aligned with the patriotic views of the day. By 1918, the song was declared Czechoslovakia’s national anthem. When the Czech Republic became a democratic nation in 1992, they kept the song as their beloved national anthem.[5] Because it was composed in 1834, the language spelling differs slightly from modern Czech. For example, *domow,* meaning home, is not spelled with a *w* but a *v, domov.* The word *můg,* meaning “my”, is now spelled *můj.*

This song has many different aspects that will be helpful for the novice singer. First, the vocal line has a lower tessitura. I would argue that it sits more comfortably within a mezzo-soprano’s voice than a soprano’s voice. The range also fits comfortably within a mezzo-soprano’s voice. The contour of the vocal line is stepwise with minimal leaps. While looking at the vocal line I also thought that the phrasing would be very approachable for a novice singer. There are moments to breath every two to three measures. Giving the vocalist moments to reset and breath minimized the chances of fatigue.

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[4] “The Czech National Anthem: Where My Home Is,” *CzechClass101.com,* November 4, 2022, https://www.czechclass101.com/blog/2022/11/04/national-anthem-of-czech-republic/#1.

[5] Martin Mikule, “The Czech national anthem is 170 years old,” *Radio Prague International,* December 20, 2004, https://english.radio.cz/czech-national-anthem-170-years-old-8094024.

As I looked through the language, I noticed that there were not many consonant clusters or difficult sounds. There are no vibrant alveolar [ř]'s present in the song. Also, there were only a few words that started with a vowel, meaning that few glottal strokes are needed. With the absence of these sounds, the vocalist can focus on singing in a *legato* manner.

Despite the absences of vocal doubling in the accompaniment I believe there are other musical considerations that can aid the vocalist while singing this song. The first musical consideration that will be helpful is the use of traditional Western chordal progressions. The accompaniment provides a strong foundation that supports the vocalist. Because it is strophic, the vocalist will have a better opportunity to find success while memorizing. There are moments when there is unique text (not repeated text), but the beginning and ending phrases of the verses are repetitive.

One of the major challenges in this song is the use of old Czech. Words that use the *w* or *g* as a final consonant are spelled instead with a *v* or *j* in the modern Czech language. I would instruct the student to change these spellings so that they could then approach diction correctly. Another challenge that the vocalist might face is that the accompaniment does not double the vocal line. I would assign this song to a vocalist who has shown they can sing independently. The last challenge I will mention is the vocal leap in measure 19. The vocalist will need to sing a leap of a major sixth, landing on E5. This pitch is also the tonic of the key, but this particular pitch may be challenging as it falls in the *passaggio.* Despite these challenges I believe a novice singer could find success in performing this song.

"Kde domow můg?"		
Vocal Demand Considerations	Language Considerations	Musical Considerations
Range: E4-E5 Tessitura: A4-C#5	[ř] & [Ř] : NONE [ɲ], [t'], [d'] : Minimal	♩ = 88 in E major Strophic Mostly in stepwise motion with no melismatic passages

Figure 8. Rachel Green's general information about "Kde domow můg?" by František Jan Škroup and text by Josef Kajetán Tyl.

"Kde domow můg?" by František Jan Škroup. Text by Josef Kajetán Tyl. Translation & IPA by Rachel Green.

[gdɛ dɔməf muⁱ]
"Kde domov můj?"
Where home is my?

[gdɛ dɔməf muːⁱ gdɛ dɔməf muːⁱ]
Kde domow můg? Kde domow můg?
Where home is my? Where home is my?

[vɔda ɦut͡ʃʲ pɔ lut͡ʃɪnax burɪ ʃumⁱ pɔ skalɪnax]
Woda hučj po lučinách, bory šumj po skalinách,
Streams are rushing through meadows, Pinewood murmurs over rocks,

[fsad'ɛ stkvⁱ sɛ jaɾa kvjɛt]
w sadě stkwj se gara kwět,
In orchards radiant with spring blossoms,

[zɛmski: raⁱ tɔ na pɔɦlɛt]
zemský rág to na pohled!
Earthly paradise that on sight!

[a tɔ jɛst kraːzbaː zɛmɲɛ]
A to gest krásbá země,
And that is beautiful land,

[zɛmɲɛ t͡ʃɛskaː dɔməf muːⁱ]
země česká domuw můg!
Land Czech home is my!

[zɛmɲɛ t͡ʃɛska: dɔməf mu:ⁱ]
země česká domuw můg!
Land Czech home is my!

[gdɛ dɔməf muⁱ gdɛ dɔməf muⁱ]
Kde domow můg? Kde domow můg?
Where home is my? Where home is my?

[fkrajɪ zna:ʃlɪ bɔɦu mɪlɛm duʃɛ autlɛ: ft'ɛlɛ t͡ʃɪlɛ:m]
W kragi znašli bohumilem duše autle wtěle čilém,
In (the) land they found Bohemian border souls willowy in the body of the lively,

[mɪst jasnɔu znik ʔa zdar]
Myst gasnau znik a zdar
Mind clear, vigorous and prospering,

[ʔa tu silu vzdɔɾu zmar]
A tu sjlu wzdaru zmar,
And here they are defiant (of) frustration,

[tɔ jɛ t͡ʃɛxu slavnɛ: plɛmɲɛ]
To ge Čechů slawné plémě,
That is the Czechs glorious nation,

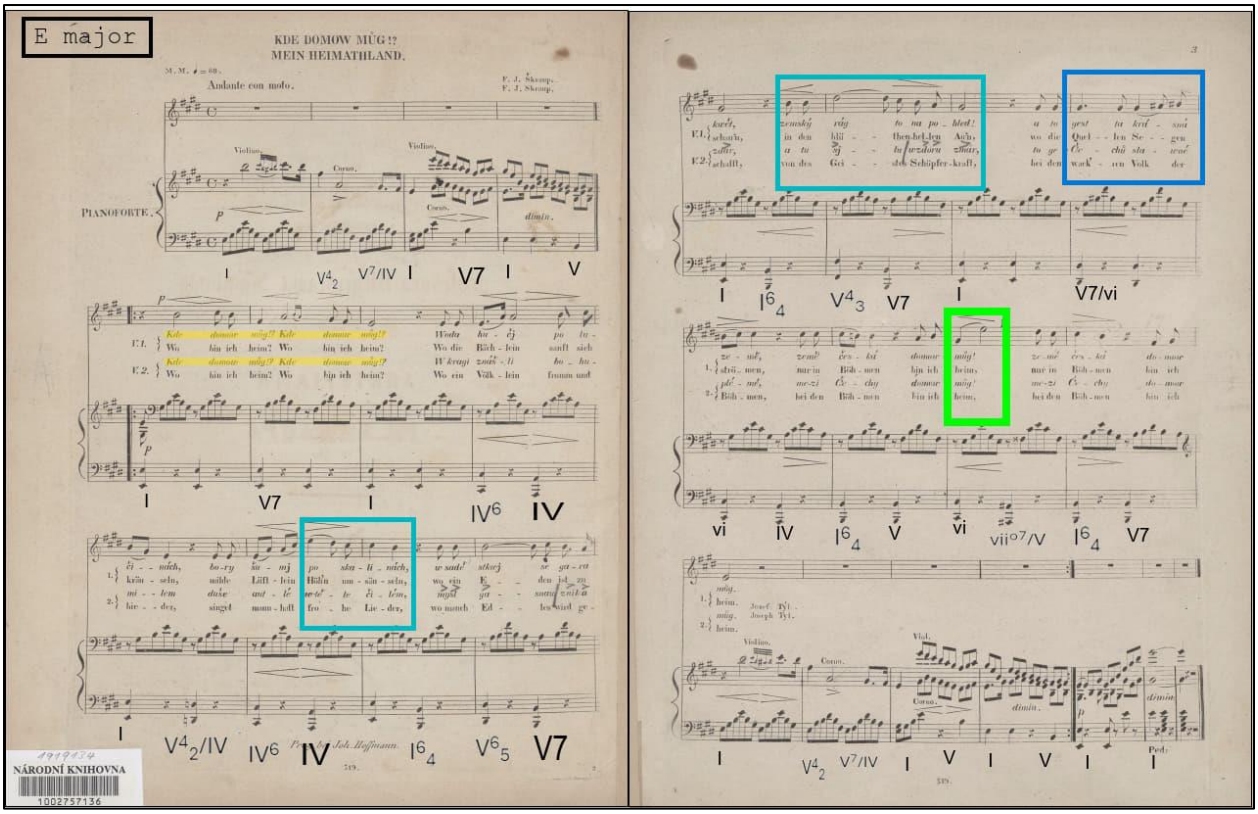
[mɛzɪ t͡ʃɛxu dɔməf muⁱ]
mezi Čechu domow můg!
Among the Czech home is my!

[mɛzɪ t͡ʃɛxu dɔməf muⁱ]
mezi Čechu domow můg!
Among the Czech home is my!

The following is a performance analysis of "Kde domow můg." The things that I have addressed in the song are all considerations that will help the vocalist succeed while performing this song. Different aspects of melodic style are color coded. Light blue boxes are placed around stepwise motion in the melody. Dark blue boxes are placed around chromatic stepwise motion in a melody. Purple boxes are placed around large diatonic

leaps. Red boxes are placed around sequential melodic phasing. Text that is highlighted with yellow indicates repeated lyrics, while musical lines that are highlighted purple indicate vocal doubling in the accompaniment. The harmonic structure is also indicated on the music under the piano accompaniment, shown in roman numerals.

Example 2. “Kde domow můg?” by František Jan Škroup



“Proč?”

“Proč?” is the first song in Dusik’s publication of *Four Songs: for voice and piano.* He was a composer of the Classical period and a prolific pianist. His music is reminiscent of other famous Classical period composers, such as Mozart or Haydn. Others have commented that his music has more chromaticism and a thicker texture

compared to Mozart.[6] Despite extensive research, the exact date of publication for these vocal songs could not be found. Because Dusik also published Chansonnettes in 1804 with compositions similar to Proc?, it may be assumed that this song was composed around that time, perhaps between the years 1800 and 1805. The music can be sung in Czech, German, or Italian.

This song is suitable for a soprano voice. The song does not have a large vocal range and sits above the *primo passaggio* in a comfortable part of the voice. The melodic contour is not taxing on the voice. There were moments of rest between musical phrases which allows for a reset of the breath. Overall, this song is not vocally demanding.

While looking at the language considerations in this song I noticed that there were many soft palatal consonants. Despite the many soft palatal consonants, the vibrant alveolar [ř] was not a regular occurrence. The moments when the vibrant alveolar [ř] was needed the surrounding consonants and vowels help prepare the lips and tongue to be in the correct position. The vibrant alveolar [ř] was then easier to pronounce while singing. There are also minimal glottal strokes and because there are minimal occurrences of the glottal strokes the vocalist will be able to sing a continuous legato line.

There are many things that will help the novice singer as they sing this song. The tempo is at a moderate speed. This means that the vocalist will be able to work through the text and pronunciation accurately. This song also has many repeated melodic phrases and text which will aid the singer in memorization. There are also different moments of sequential phrasing with occasional chromatic pitches. However, the vocalist should not

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[6] Stephen D. Lindeman, "Jan Ladislav Dussek," *Hyperion Records,* 2014. https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/c.asp?c=C4188.

be concerned with the moments of chromaticism because the accompaniment doubles the singer's melody. This will help the novice singer find success as they perform this song.

If an instructor wishes to assign "Proč?" to a novice singer, they should be aware of a few challenging aspects in this song. These challenging elements include endurance and tessitura. This song is the longer piece of all the examples presented in this document. However, there are musical interludes so that the vocalist has time to rest between sections. The other challenge is that this song has a tessitura that sits in a difficult position for certain sopranos. Due to these minimal challenges and a large number of positive considerations (vocal demands, language, and musical), I believe this song would be appropriate for a novice singer who has endurance.

"Proč?" by Jan Ladislav Dusik		
Vocal Demand Considerations	Language Considerations	Musical Considerations
Range: Eb-4Gb5 Tessitura: Bb4-D5	[ř] & [Ř] : Minimal [ɲ], [t'], [d'] : Many	Allegretto moderato assai in Eb major Strophic Mostly in stepwise motion with no melismatic passages Repeated melodic contour; sequential

Figure 11. Rachel Green's general information about "Proč?" by Jan Ladislav Dusik

"Proc?" by Jan Ladislav Dusik. Translation & IPA by Rachel Green.

[prɔt͡ʃ]
"Proč?"
Why?

[vɪ	ˈnɪmfɪ	ˈvaːbnɛː	ˈrɔskɔʃnɛː	viːlɪ]
Vy	**nymfy**	**vábné,**	**rozkošné**	**víly,**
You	nymphs	alluring,	adorable	fairy,

[prɔt͡ʃ ˈlaːskɪ ˈsiːlɪ ˈnɛxt͡sɛtɛ znaːt]
proč lásky síly nechcete znát?
why loves power (one) does not want to know?

[prɔt͡ʃ ˈnɛxt͡sɛʃ ˈdiːtʼɛ za ˈʒaːdnɔu ˈt͡sɛnu ˈpřiːtɛlɪ ˈsvɛːmu ˈʔuːtʼɛxu daːt]
Proč nechceš, dítě, za žádnou cenu příteli svému útěchu dát?
Why do you not want, child for no value friends one's own comfort give?

[prɔt͡ʃ ˈnɛxt͡sɛʃ ˈdiːtʼɛ za ˈʒaːdnɔu ˈt͡sɛnu ˈpřiːtɛlɪ ˈsvɛːmu ˈʔuːtʼɛxu daːt]

Proč nechceš, dítě, za žádnou cenu příteli svému útěchu dát?
Why do you not want, child for no value friends one's own comfort give?

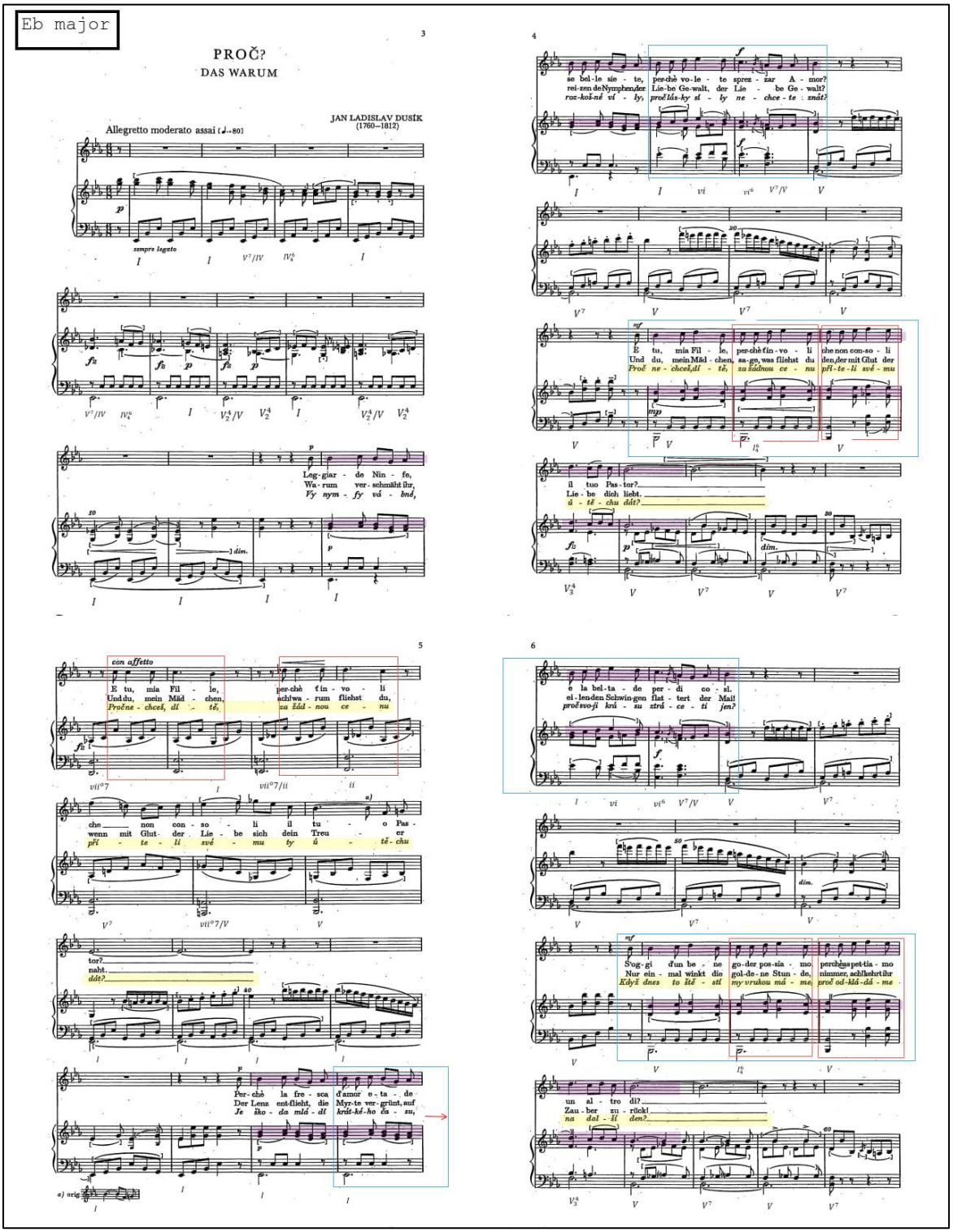
[jɛ ˈʃkɔda ˈmlaːdiː ˈkraːtkɛːɦɔ ˈt͡ʃasu prɔt͡ʃ ˈzvɔjɪ ˈkraːsu ˈstraːt͡ʃɛtɪ jɛn]
Je škoda mládí krátkého času, proč svoji krásu ztráceti jen?
Is harm youth short time, why one's own beauty to lose only?

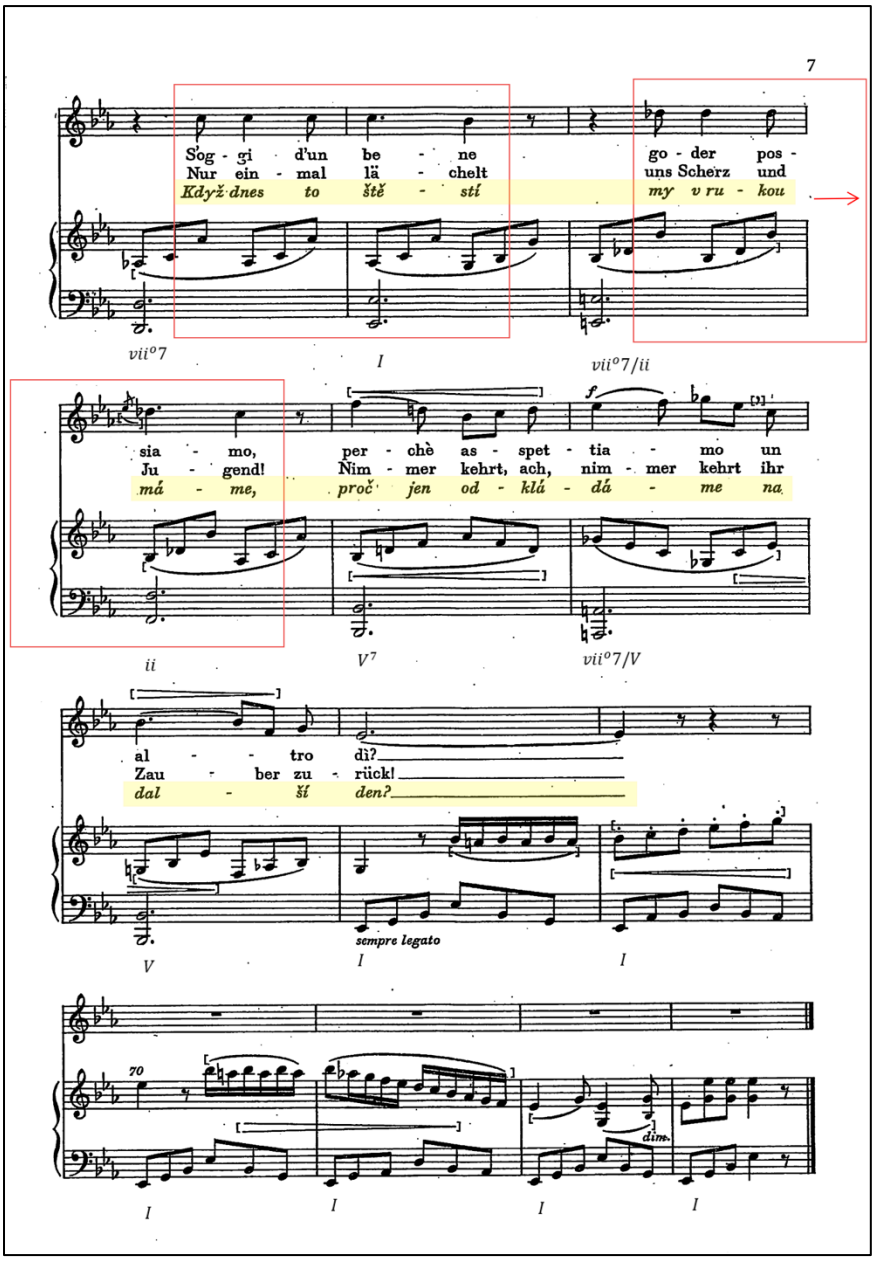
[gdɪʒ dnɛs tɔ ˈʃtʼɛstiː mɪ ˈv‿rukɔu ˈmaːmɛ prɔt͡ʃ ˈʔɔtklaːdaːmɛ na ˈdalʃiː dɛn]
Když dnes to štěstí my v rukou máme, proč odkládáme na další den?
If today that happiness we in hand we have, why we postpone on another day?

[gdɪʒ dnɛs tɔ ˈʃtʼɛstiː mɪ ˈv‿rukɔu ˈmaːmɛ prɔt͡ʃ ˈʔɔtklaːdaːmɛ na ˈdalʃiː dɛn]
Když dnes to štěstí my v rukou máme, proč odkládáme na další den?
If today that happiness we in hand we have, why we postpone on another day?

The following is a performance analysis of "Proc?". The things that I have addressed in the song are all considerations that will help the vocalist succeed while performing this song. Different aspects of melodic style are color coded. Light blue boxes are placed around stepwise motion in the melody. Dark blue boxes are placed around chromatic stepwise motion in a melody. Purple boxes are placed around large diatonic leaps. Red boxes are placed around sequential melodic phasing. Text that is highlighted with yellow indicates repeated lyrics, while musical lines that are highlighted purple indicate vocal doubling in the accompaniment. The harmonic structure is also indicated on the music under the piano accompaniment, shown in roman numerals.

Example 3. “Proc?” by Jan Ladislav Dusik





"Stará lípa sklání větve" from *Pět písní na lidové texty*

"Stará lípa sklání větve" is the second song in Václav Nelhýbel's song cycle *Pět písní na lidové texty* [pjɛt ˈpiːsɲiː na ˈlɪdɔvɛː ˈtɛks-tɪ] (Five Songs on Czech Folk Lyrics). Václav Nelhýbel (1919-1996) was born in Polánka, Czechoslovakia. At a very young age he started conducting and composing. By the age of 18, Nelhýbel was an assistant

conductor to Rafael Kubelik at the Czech Philharmonic.[7] In 1957 he travelled to the USA and by 1962, Nelhýbel became a citizen of the USA. He was most well-known for his conducting skills and band compositions. His compositions were favored in high school band classrooms throughout America. “Young people are attracted to the music of Nelhýbel because it is characterized by such a strong inner dynamic energy.”[8] This song depicts “inner dynamic energy” through the use of a repeated melismatic passage. The melisma is repeated three times in the song: verse 1, verse 2, and final chorus. The song is the most challenging of the five selections. There are many meter and tempo changes. However, the language does not have many pitfalls and there are moments of voice doubling in the piano.

This song might seem intimidating when a vocalist first looks through the music but, the vocal demands are small, the language pronunciation is approachable, and the musical elements are presented in an understandable manner. A mezzo-soprano or contralto would find success singing this song. The tessitura is very low compared to many other pieces I considered while researching. For the majority of the song the vocalist will be singing in chest voice. The vocalist will sing in mixed and head voice occasionally, but more frequently throughout the B section. These transitions between the registers occur at new phrases or sections which should be easier on the vocalist instead of these occurrences happening in the middle of phrases.

The melodic phrases are uniquely linked to the stress of the language. Many of the stressed syllables are aligned with the strongest beat in the measure. While analyzing

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[7] Václav Nelhýbel, “Introduction,” (Hal Leonard), 0.
[8] Nelhýbel, “Introduction”, 0.

and singing this song I found it a great help to have these stresses of the language align with the musical stress. Pronouncing the Czech language while singing this song was accessible because there were few challenging sounds, glottal stokes, and repeated phrases. This song will present these new sounds to a novice singer, but will not overwhelm the singer.

The musical considerations that will help the singer are few but significant. The first section is repeated melodically with new text. Other moments of repetition are present in the melismatic passage in the A section. This melismatic passage is repeated exactly three times in the song. Despite some vocalists not have familiarity with singing melismatic passages, this melismatic passage, that is repeated throughout the song, will be help the student feel comfortable while performing this song.

I believe this song is accessible for novice singer, but there are challenging aspects to this piece. These challenges include modern compositional structure, unique text (lack of repeated text), and vulnerable vocal lines. The lack of traditional Western chordal progression might cause a novice singer to stumble. I tool that I have used to help me understand this song is to focus on a pitch center throughout the song instead of focusing on trying to understand a progression of chords. This will be shown in the performance analysis below. Another aspect that is challenging is the amount of unique text. However, the tempo is very slow. I believe that due to the slow tempo the vocalist will have an easier time pronouncing the words while singing. The last challenging aspect of this song I will discuss is the fact that the vocal line is independent from the accompaniment. There are few moments when vocal doubling occurs. The song would be a good choice for a novice singer who is comfortable singing independently from the

accompaniment because it allows the singer to shine by bringing out their musicality. So, even though this song might be difficult for a novice vocalist, I believe they can find success while performing.

"Stará lípa sklání větve" from *Pět písní na lidové texty*		
Vocal Demand Considerations	Language Considerations	Musical Considerations
Range: A3-D5 Tessitura: D4-A4 Melsimatic passages	[ř] & [Ř] : Minimal [ɲ], [t'], [d'] : Multiple Intervocalic *l*	Molto Lento centered around C AA'B form Mostly in stepwise motion with occassional vocal leaps Chromaticism

Figure 12. Rachel Green's generla information about "Stará lípa sklání větve" from Václav Nelhýbel's *Pět písní na lidové texty* and text from Folk text.

"Stará lípa sklání větve" from Václav Nelhýbel's song cycle *Pět písní na lidové texty.* Translation & IPA by Rachel Green.

[ˈstaɾa: ˈli:pa ˈskla:ni: ˈvjɛtvɛ]
"Stará lípa sklání větve"
An old linden tree bows its branches

[ˈstaɾa:	ˈli:pa	ˈskla:ni:	ˈvjɛtvɛ	nat	ˈřɛkɔu]
Stará	**lípa**	**sklání**	**větve**	**nad**	**řekou,**
An old	linden tree	bow	its branches	above	a river,

[ˈpi:sɛɲ	ˈlɛti:	ˈpla:ni:]
píseň	**letí**	**plání**
A song	soars above	the flat,

[ˈʃɪɾɔu	ˈdalɛkɔu	$ɛ^{i}$	ˈʃɪɾɔu	ˈdalɛkɔu]
širou	**dalkou**	**Ej**	**širou**	**dalekou.**
Wide	distance	ej	wide	distance.

[ˈɦusta:	ˈml̥ɦa	ˈbi:la:	ˈlɔukɪ	ˈpřɪkri:va:]
Hustá	**mlha**	**bílá**	**louky**	**přikrývá,**
Heavy	mist	white	meadow	covers,

[ˈstraːʒniː ˈpiːsɛɲ ˈmilaː]
strážní píseň milá
Guard song (of) loved one (female)

[ˈzdaːlkɪ ˈzazniːvaː ɛ^{i} ˈzdaːlkɪ ˈzazniːvaː]
zdálky zaznívá Ej zdálky zaznívá.
From distant sound ej from distant sound.

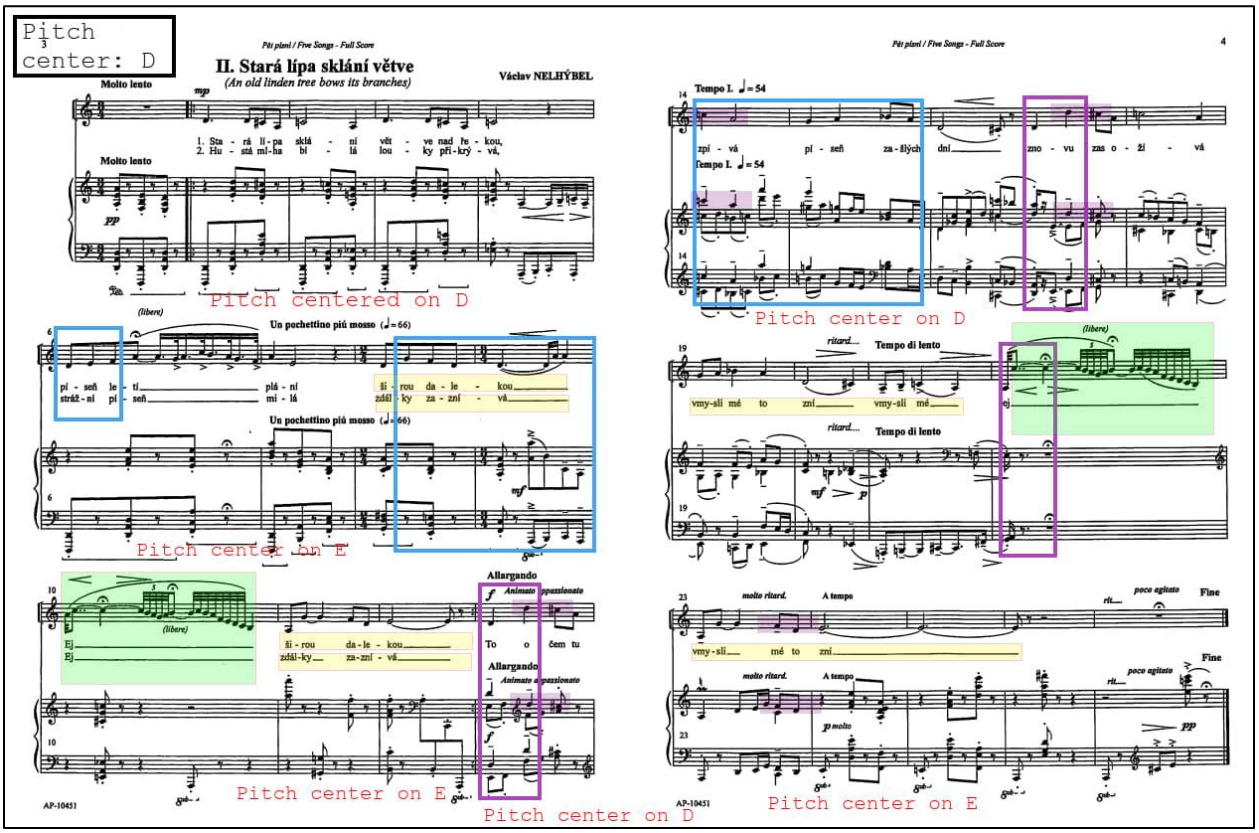
[tɔ ʔɔ t͡ʃɛm tu ˈspiːvaː ˈpiːsɛɲ ˈzaʃliːx dniː]
To o čem tu zpívá píseň zašlých dní
That in what here sings song bygone days
that in what bygone days, (I) here sing songs

[ˈznɔvu zas ˈʔɔʒiːvaː ˈvmɪslɪ mɛː tɔ zniː]
Znovu zas ožívá vmysli mé to zní
Again again comes to life in mind my that sound

[ˈvmɪslɪ mɛː ɛ^{i} ˈvmɪslɪ mɛː tɔ zniː]
vmysli mé ej vmysli mé to zní.
in mind my ej in mind my that sounds.

The following is a performance analysis of "Stará lípa sklání větve." Different aspects of melodic style are color coded. Light blue boxes are placed around stepwise motion in the melody. Dark blue boxes are placed around chromatic stepwise motion in a melody. Purple boxes are placed around large diatonic leaps. Red boxes are placed around sequential melodic phasing. Text that is highlighted with yellow indicates repeated lyrics, while musical lines that are highlighted purple indicate vocal doubling in the accompaniment. The harmonic structure is also indicated on the music under the piano accompaniment. This harmonic structure is not presented in traditional chordal progressions analysis, but instead by identification of the pitch center of each phrase. This will help the novice singer create an aural map to understand the order of events present in this song. By presenting the scores, with my performance analysis, I hope that it is evident that this song is appropriate for a novice singers.

Example 4. “Stará lípa sklání větve” from Václav Nelhýbel’s song cycle *Pět písní na lidové texty*



“V černym lese ptaček zpiva” from *Slezské písně (ze sbírky Heleny Salichové)*

“V černym lese ptaček zpiva” is the last song in Leoš Janáček’s song cycle, *Slezské písně (ze sbírky Heleny Salichové)* [ˈslɛskɛː ˈpiːsɲɛ zɛ ˈzbiːrkɪ ˈɦɛlɛnɪ ˈsalɪxɔvɛ] (Silesia songs (of collections Heleny Salichové)). The cycle was arranged in 1918, toward the end of Janáček’s life. This song cycle is unique because half of the songs are written for women and half are written for men.[9] This cycle is from the Silesia region, which was under German control in the southwestern region of Poland. However, the

[9] Cheek, *Singing in Czech*, 235.

dialect is Moravian because Silesia was within the greater part of Moravia. “The songs are lovely and sound more Slavic than German, but there were always Slavs living in Silesia.”[10] This piece does not have the Moravian *ł,* but does have an intervocalic *r*.

This song is composed for a male vocalist. However, I believe this piece could also be given to a female vocalist, mezzo-soprano or soprano. The song has a tessitura from E4 to C5 which sits between the first and second *passaggio* points. This means that the majority of the song will sit in a comfortable range for the average novice tenor. Because the tessitura is manageable for the vocalist the endurance required for this song is not demanding.

The language considerations in this song are favorable for the novice vocalist. There are no vibrant alveolar [ř]’s present in this song. However, there is a vocalic [r̥] present in the second verse. The vocalic [r̥] is sung on a descending sixteenth note. Because this syllable is sung quickly, I believe the vocalist will pronounce this sound with ease. Most syllabic stresses align nicely with the musically stress which will help the student properly enunciate the language.

There are many musical considerations throughout this song that will help the student perform with success. One of these musical considerations is the form of the song. This song is strophic and within each verse there are many moments of repeated text. The accompaniment is also very helpful for the vocalist. Throughout the whole song there are moments of vocal doubling. At any point the vocalist will hear their melody in the accompaniment. The melody of the song features stepwise motion with minimal

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[10] Carl Bauman, “Janacek: Dairy of One Who Disappeared,” *American Record Guide*, 59, no. 2 (Mar/Apr 96).

vocal leaps. The last musical consideration that will help the vocalist find success while singing this song is the traditional use of chordal progressions. Despite a measure or two that has some tonicization of a related key, the song follows the rules of Western music theory.

I believe this song would be accessible for any novice singer at any level. However, there are a few challenging to overcome. One challenge is that the song is in the Moravian dialect. There are no long duration vowels in this dialect. This means that all words with the vowels *i* or *y* should be pronounced [ɪ]. Another challenge is that there are multiple soft palatal sounds throughout the song. It is easy to make all of these sounds go through the nose. Vocalists may choose to remedy this issue by singing the song while squeezing their nose. This allows the sound to not enter the nose and helps the soft palatal sounds to stay forward while singing. Once a vocalist addresses these challenges, I believe that this song is very approachable for the novice singer.

"V černym lese ptaček zpiva" from *Slezské písně (ze sbírky Heleny Salichové)*		
Vocal Demand Considerations	Language Considerations	Musical Considerations
Range: B3-E5 Tessitura: E4-C5	[ř] & [Ř] : NONE [ɲ], [t'], [d'] : Multiple Moravian dialect	♩ = 69 in A melodic minor Strophic Mostly in stepwise motion with no melismatic passages

Figure 9. Rachel Green's general information about "V černym lese ptaček zpiva" from *Slezské písně (ze sbírky Heleny Salichové)* by Leoš Janáček and text from Folksongs in the Silesia region.

"V černym lese ptaček zpiva" from Leoš Janáček's folk song collection *Slezské písně (ze sbírky Heleny Salichové).* Translation & IPA by Timothy Cheek.[11]

[ftʃ͡ɛrnim lɛsɛ ptatʃ͡ɛk spiva]
"V černym lese ptaček zpiva"
In black forest little bird sings,

[ftʃ͡ɛrnim lɛsɛ ptatʃ͡ɛk spiva]
V černym lese ptaček zpiva,
In black forest little bird sings,

[maⁱ mila tam travu zbiɾa]
maj mila tam travu sbira,
My dear there grass gathers,

[nazbiɾala ji mɔt͡s]
nasbirala ji moc,
She gathered (to) her much,

[ɲɛmɔɦla sɪ pɔmɔt͡s]
němohla si pomoc.
She could not herself help.

[nazbirala natr̩ɦala]
Nasbirala, natrhala,
She gathered, she picked,

[na milɛɦɔ zavɔlala]
na mileho zavola:
To dear (she) called:

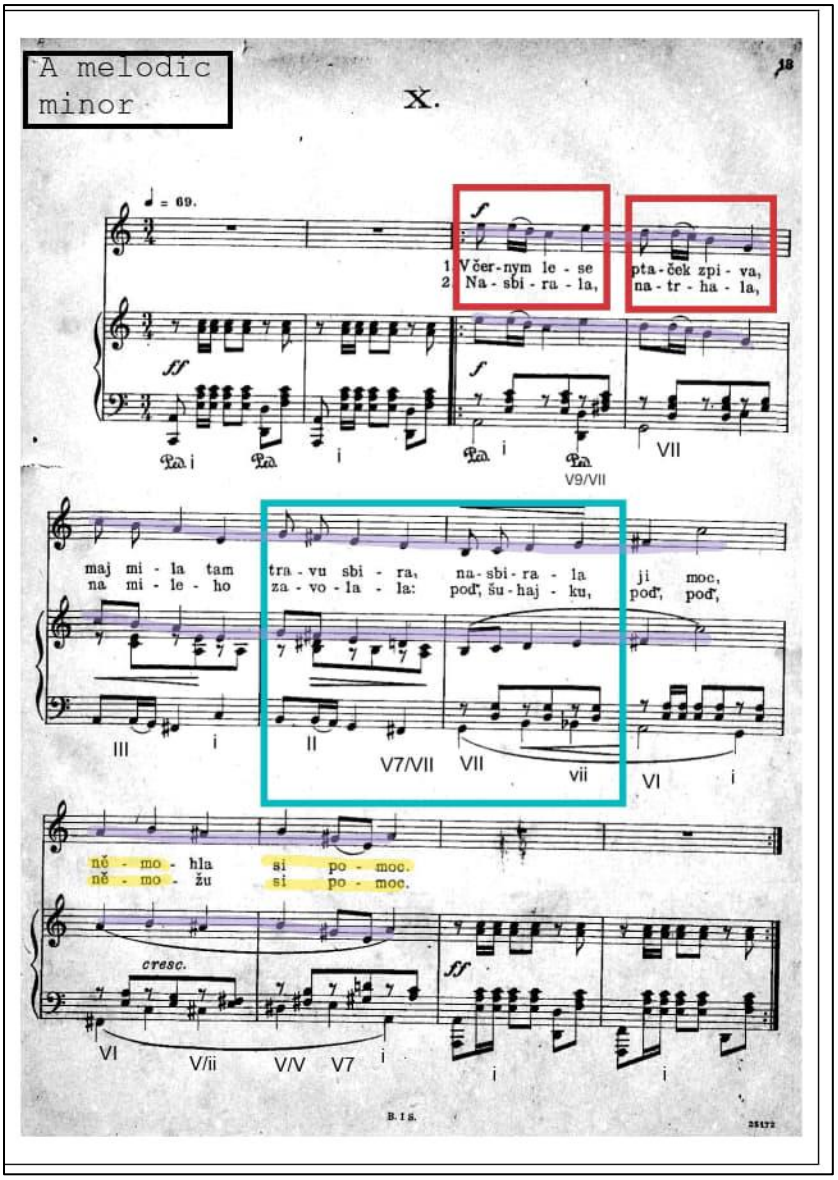
[pɔtʼ ʃuɦaⁱku pɔtʼ pɔtʼ]
Poďˈ, šuhajku, poďˈ, poďˈ,
Come, boy, come, come,

[ɲɛmɔʒu sɪ pɔmɔt͡s]
němožu si pomoc.
I cannot myself help.

[11] Cheek, *Singing in Czech,* 236-237.

The following performance analysis of “V černym lese ptaček zpiva” that will help the vocalist succeed while performing this song. Different aspects of melodic style are color coded. Light blue boxes are placed around stepwise motion in the melody. Dark blue boxes are placed around chromatic stepwise motion in a melody. Purple boxes are placed around large diatonic leaps. Red boxes are placed around sequential melodic phasing. Text that is highlighted with yellow indicates repeated lyrics, while musical lines that are highlighted purple indicate vocal doubling in the accompaniment. The harmonic structure is also indicated on the music under the piano accompaniment, shown in roman numerals.

Example 5. “V černym lese ptaček zpiva” from Leoš Janáček’s folk song collection *Slezské písně (ze sbírky Heleny Salichové)*


A melodic minor
X.
18
♩ = 69.
1 Včer-nym le - se pta-ček zpi - va,
2 Na - sbi - ra - la, na - tr - ha - la,
i i i VII
V9/VII
maj mi - la tam tra - vu sbi - ra, na - sbi - ra - la ji moc,
na mi - le - ho za - vo - la - la: poď, šu - haj - ku, poď, poď,
III i II V7/VII VII vii VI i
ně - mo - hla si po - moc.
ně - mo - žu si po - moc.
cresc.
VI V/ii V/V V7 i i i
B. I S.

Conclusion

Though the Czech language may see intimidating to native English speakers, the introduction of accessible Czech art songs is a valuable addition of to the repertoire of a novice singer. There are excellent Czech art songs meeting that meet the tessitura, *passaggio*, range, and endurance needs of a novice singer. The perceived difficulty of the language does not always prove to be as challenging as it was believed to be upon careful examination. Simple rules guide the largest part of pronunciation, and the natural *legato* quality of the language helps novice singers develop better vocal technique. Many Czech compositions feature minimal vocal leaps, vocal doubling in the accompaniment, traditional Western chordal progression, and an ease of memorization to be deemed accessible for novice singers.

I will continue to researching accessible Czech art song for novice singers. In the coming years I plan to compile and publish more songs that follow the criteria mentioned in chapter three in an anthology. My goal is to create resources for students and instructors wishing to explore, perform, teach, or experience Czech art song.

Czech vocal music can be accessible for novice vocalists. Why ignore such beautifully composed and, often, historically significant music? Why not consider the confidence-building vocal growth that comes from learning Czech art songs? Look for accessible Czech music by using the tools presented or begin by using examples in this document. Don’t overlook such a large selection of excellent music simply because it is in the Czech language. Consider expanding the singer’s vocal music repertoire with Czech art song early in the novice singer’s education, because Czech art song truly is accessible for novice singers.

Appendix

If a vocalist or instructor is interested in finding or learning more about Czech art song and Czech composers, I recommend the following sources.

- *Contemporary Czechoslovak Composers*

  Edited by Čeněk Gardavský

- *An Outline of Czech and Slovak Music; Part 1, Czech Music*

  By Vladimír Štěpánek and Bohumil Karásek

- *A Guide to Czech Lyric Diction and Vocal Repertoire; Singing in Czech*

  By Timothy Cheek

- https://www.breenichols.com/czech-diction-coaching

  By Bree Nichols

- https://repertoire-explorer.musikmph.de/en/

- https://www.fredbock.com/

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