



Palacký University in Olomouc
Faculty of Arts
Report on Doctoral Dissertation

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Topic	19th Century German Lied in the Czech Lands
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Assessment Criteria

1. Research hypothesis and research aim, inclusion into the current state of research and originality (*pursuant to Article 44, Paragraph 9a) of the UP Study and Examination Code “assessment of the dissertation significance for the specific field”; at least 150 words*)

The study has several important aims. First, it introduces into scholarly discussion a broad repertoire of unknown material of great value for contextualizing the history of 19th century music. Second, and perhaps even more importantly, it provides a nuanced view of the importance of German language and literature (with particular attention to Goethe) in the Czech imagination, and successfully delineates many different strands, as a kind of drama where German is simultaneously a respected and even essential part of the culture, and stigmatized for nationalist reasons. The author also devotes a great deal of material to a discussion of Tomasek's contribution to the art song, and places him alongside other significant and lesser figures of the time. As such, this dissertation constitutes an original contribution to Czech musicology specifically, and more broadly to 19th century studies of the art song and related materials. The work is at a high level, with meticulous attention paid to sources, both musical and bibliographic.

2. Scope, significance and selection of studied resources/corpora (How representative is the studied material?) (*at least 100 words*)

The writer of this dissertation has selected a large number of compositions, many of them virtually unknown, for this study. While there are many works cited and presented that are not in and of themselves significant in their influence on future compositions, they are essential (as above) for contextualizing the efforts of song composers such as Tomasek. The scope of the study is commendably broad, while at the same time extremely focused and detailed. The writer has obviously done a thorough search of available literature, and ensured that the material presented is representative. The sections about later (early 20th century) music are engaging and useful.

3. Method (How adequate is/are the selected method(s)? Are the used methods/concepts/approaches appropriate?) and scholar quality

(pursuant to Article 44, Paragraph 9b) of the UP Study and Examination Code: "statement on problem solution process, methods used"; at least 150 words)

The method chosen by the writer is appropriate for the nature of this study. The study provides a wide lens on the material, extending from broad assessments of the historical context to minutely detailed examinations of selected parts of the song repertoire in order to bolster arguments and provide a through-line for the reader. While as can be expected I will raise some questions about the musical-theoretical approach taken, this in no way undercuts the successful way an enormous amount of valuable material is presented to the reader. And, as above, it is significant that the study not only presents specific material in a highly professional way, but makes an important argument about how nation and nationality might be understood in a manner that takes nationalism into consideration, but is also removed from it. Finally, the quality of the scholarship, documentation, choice of materials, use of sources and bibliography, are high.

4. Structure (How clear is the dissertation structure?) and form

(pursuant to Article 44, Paragraph 9d) of the UP Study and Examination Code "any other comments, mainly on the organisation, clarity, formality and language level of the dissertation"; at least 100 words)

The structure of the dissertation is clear, both in its larger outlines and in smaller sections. Each chapter presents relevant material, but each chapter is also carefully divided into several (sometimes many) sub-sections so that the reader never has any doubts about what they are reading and especially why they are reading it (which sometimes happens in long documents). In this case, I would say that the structure of the study is meticulous, and this is an important part of what makes it successful. In summary, the shape and organization of the study is one of the most successful components of the entire project.

5. Style/relevance of arguments (is the research hypothesis and aim consistently pursued?)

(at least 100 words)

There are, as suggested above, at least three strains to this study. The first is the importance of Goethe as a personality and creative artist to writers, musicians, and intellectuals in the Czech Lands, as part of an argument about the importance of German more broadly. The second is the detailed presentation of the histories and the musical scores of selected composers, with Tomasek and Fibich being the most significant and important. The third is the tacit argument that one should avoid being too influenced by the forces of Czech nationalism and understand the context for the setting of 19th century art songs in terms of a complex of interconnected worlds. These arguments are carefully and consistently pursued.

6. Conclusion (How cogently is the research hypothesis validated/disproved? Are the results exact and cogent? Do they bring innovative benefits to the research community? Do they provide opportunities for follow-up research?)

(pursuant to Article 44, Paragraph 9c) of the UP Study and Examination Code “statement on the dissertation results and on the dissertation author’s original and specific benefit”; at least 100 words)

As implied by my earlier assessments, this is a valuable study which brings innovative benefits to the research community. The study opens up many doors, and will stimulate parallel studies of other composers and poets. As noted, there is no significant monograph that deals with Czech art song in a contemporary manner, and this work should be part of a larger project to study the valuable material of Czech art song. Part of the study lies outside the world of „scholarly proof,“ and the author wisely stays away from trying to „prove“ the quality of the material. No one has yet, for many good reasons, developed a foolproof way for measuring artistic quality. This is a valuable and important study that should have a great deal of resonance in the Czech and international scholarly community.

7. Clear statement whether the dissertation is or is not recommended for defence (pursuant to Article 44, Paragraph 9e) of the UP Study and Examination Code)

This dissertation is definitely ready for a defense, and without doubt should proceed to the defense.

Signed by the assessor (only if printed):