LEOŠ JANÁČEK'S VIOLIN SONATA AND HOW IT COMPARES TO THE VIOLIN SONATAS OF BRAHMS AND DEBUSSY

by

DANIJELA ŽEŽELJ-GUALDI

(Under the Direction of Michael Heald)

ABSTRACT

The turbulent period in Europe before and during World War I was one of the main causes of development in the Arts. The old Romantic world was collapsing in a most violent manner. Composers responded to the changes and aggression differently. Leoš Janáček composed the Violin Sonata as a reaction to the war, and with intensified nationalistic feelings. The characteristic compositional style found in his Violin Sonata was a result of the influences he was exposed to during his growth as a composer, and his original ideas conceived while researching folk music of his native Moravia and speech inflections in the Czech language. This study compares Janáček's Violin Sonata to those of Brahms and Debussy on historical, social, and stylistic levels.

INDEX WORDS: Janáček, Leoš, Violin Sonata, Debussy, Brahms

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DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2006

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# DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my husband Paolo André Gualdi, to whom I am grateful for his support, patience and enormous love.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to my advisory committee, without whom this study would not have been possible: Leonard Ball, David Haas, Mark Neumann, David Starkweather, and my major professor, Michael Heald. Their time and expertise are truly appreciated. I am indebted to Michael Heald, whose guidance and insight have been an invaluable resource.

Finally, I would like to give my deepest thanks and love to my parents and my sister, who have supported me and loved me unconditionally throughout this and many other processes.

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# INTRODUCTION

During the first two decades of the 20th century there were composers who further developed the style of the Romantic era, and there were those who reacted sharply against it. It was a time of a deepening psychological awareness, as well as a rapid growth of Nationalism. Musical Impressionism in France and a refreshed interest in folk idioms in Eastern Europe gave the arts a new direction. Furthermore, World War I brought death and destruction to the doorsteps of many people living in Europe. Possibly in reaction to such influences, Leoš Janáček and his contemporaries composed their violin sonatas. Some of these pieces significantly changed the compositional approach to chamber sonatas for violin and piano. They also carried with them the first examples of an expanded 20th-century violin technique.

The purpose of this study is to explore the significant changes in the violin sonata genre that are represented in Janáček's Violin Sonata. It consists of four main chapters. The first presents a biographical sketch of Janáček focusing on his education, stylistic and social influences, together with historical circumstances surrounding the Violin Sonata. The second chapter is a discussion of Janáček's compositional style as found in the Violin Sonata. There are analyses of melody, harmony, and form, as well as observations of the innovations in violin technique. In the third and fourth chapters, the work is compared to important representatives of the genre found in the violin sonatas of Brahms and Debussy. Their similarities and differences are pointed out on an historical, stylistic, and violinistic level, focusing on the manner in which

Janáček broke away from the late-Romantic compositional style and at the same time developed his own musical voice.

# CHAPTER I

# LEOŠ JANÁČEK; A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Leoš Janáček (1854-1928) was the last and the least known of the distinguished Czech composers of the late 19th century who included Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884) and Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904). His own country regarded him as a national hero, a genius composer who combined ancient and well-loved folk music with modern compositional techniques.

## Childhood and Early Music Education

Moravia and Bohemia comprised the former Crown Lands of Bohemia from the 14th century onwards. Today it exists as the Czech Republic. As a center of many different traditions of the past, including Byzantine, Catholic, Hungarian, and Hapsburg influences, Moravia developed distinct cultural characteristics. Despite being overshadowed by Bohemia, a political center throughout the centuries, works created in Moravia characterized the entire Czech nation. Moravia was the birthplace of many of Europe's finest scientists, philosophers, artists, and musicians, including Sigmund Freud, J. G. Mendel, Alfons Mucha, Leoš Janáček, and others. Unlike the more pedestrian and conformist character of Bohemia, Moravia was filled with variety, especially regarding costumes, dialects, and accents, and this tradition continues today. Before the Czech National Revival in the 19th century, written Czech had been almost completely lost, and the spoken language survived only among the peasants. Due to this

situation, folk song became an important means of keeping both the Moravian dialect and music alive.

Janáček was born in the small Moravian town of Hukvaldy, in the region of Lašsko, on the river Ostravice. His grandfather Jiří was a *kantor* (village schoolmaster-musician) and a dedicated organist. He taught his sons piano, organ, and singing. Janáček's father, also called Jiří, became a teacher as well. The best musical education in Moravia was available only at choir schools, and through his father's connections, the young Janáček was sent to study with Křížkovský, a renowned composer and a priest at the Augustinian monastery ("Queen's") in Brno, Czech's second largest city. Aside from following the usual school curriculum, he sang in the monastery's famous boys choir, which was nicknamed "Bluebirds" because of the boys' light blue, white-bordered uniforms. At the age of fourteen he suffered the usual fate of choirboys; his voice broke, and he had to leave the school. He continued his private instruction with Křížkovský, becoming a competent pianist, organist, and violinist, and also gaining valuable insight into the style and technique of vocal writing, as well as familiarity with a wide repertoire of choral music.[1]

Bohemia and Moravia had been vassals of the Hapsburg Empire since the 16th century. However, in 1848, a short-lived but significant uprising against the Austrians took place, a repercussion of the French Revolution which had occurred decades earlier. During that year Austrians installed a new Emperor in Vienna: Franz Joseph I, the last of the Hapsburg rulers. In 1851 he reversed a previous decision to grant freedom to his domains, and imposed an absolutist government with censorship, martial law, the return of Catholic privilege, and the reimposition

[1] Pradhak Pradipasen, "A Study of Leoš Janáček's Compositional Style and Analysis of Selected Orchestral Music" (Ed. D. Thesis, Columbia University Teachers College, 1982), 10.

of the German language.[2] At that time Brno was very much influenced by neighboring Austro-Germanic culture. As Austrian rule imposed German as the official language, it became the "native tongue" of both the aristocracy and middle-classes. Since Brno had no Czech school at the time, Janáček was forced to attend a German secondary school. Furthermore, Czech had become the language of the Brno underclass, and the Czech minority there was developing strong nationalistic feelings along with hopes that Russia would support their battle for independence.

## Youth and Formal Music Education

Confused about his own desires for the future, Janáček followed his father's wish and enrolled at the Brno Imperial and Royal Teachers' Training Institute. He became a certified teacher at the age of twenty. This education helped him gain practical knowledge, but it did not lessen his love of music.

In 1872 Janáček directed a choir as an unpaid assistant to Křížkovský at the Queen's Choir School. In 1873 he obtained a post as choirmaster of the Brno men's society "Svatopluk," a patriotic organization that, under Janáček's leadership, considerably widened its repertoire and improved its standards. He also found an opportunity to conduct his first original compositions on April 27, 1873: *Orání* (Ploughing)*, Ženiceh Vnucený* (The Imposed Bridegroom)*,* and *Válečná* (War Song), all of which were scored for male-voice chorus.

After this experience, Janáček decided to continue his studies at the Organ School in Prague. During his first year he studied subjects such as theory and orchestration as well as the organ; in his second year he focused on composition and aesthetics, studying contemporary harmony and

[2] Ian Horsburgh, *Leoš Janáček* (London: David & Charles, New York: Charles Scribner's sons, 1981), 21.

church modes with Skuherský. This training greatly influenced his later work due to its connection with modal Moravian music.[3]

At that time Prague boasted a highly active musical scene. Janáček often visited the St. Vojtěch Church, where he met Dvořák for the first time. This acquaintance developed into a long-lasting friendship, characterized by a deep mutual respect and admiration. He also met Smetana at a benefit concert, but this contact did not lead to the same degree of friendship as with Dvořák. Smetana's compositions, however, still strongly influenced the young Janáček.

After completing his studies at the Prague Organ School, he returned to Brno and became choirmaster of the *Beseda*, the leading Czech choral and concert-giving society. Janáček improved the society's performing standards and expanded their repertoire. He played chamber music and piano concertos by Rubinstein, Mendelssohn, and Saint-Saëns with Amalie Wickenhauser-Neruda, an accomplished pianist. Under her supervision, he also enhanced his piano skills and considered a solo career.

His early compositions, which were mostly choral works, exhibited various influences from Bruckner, Wagner, Smetana, Suk, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, and Dvořák.

By 1878 Janáček had become completely sure that music was his true vocation; as a result, he decided to continue his study of composition at the Leipzig Conservatory. Founded in 1843 by Mendelssohn, the conservatory attracted students from all over the world. The city of Leipzig had a long and impressive musical history; J.S. Bach, Schumann, Mendelssohn and Wagner all worked and lived there at some point in their careers, and this tradition must have been impressive to the young composer.

Janáček threw himself into his studies with great vigor, attempting to cram three years of work into as short a time frame as possible. However, he very soon felt exhausted from

[3] Mirka Zemanova, *Janáček* (Northeastern University Press, Boston, 2002), 27.

overwork and decided to drop some of his courses. This decision was also prompted by the Leipzig Conservatory's extremely primitive facilities, and teachers whose old-fashioned teaching methods could not keep his attention. He even rebelled in his main subjects (piano and composition), refusing to obey the strict rules of his professors.[4]

In 1879 he fell in love for the first time with Zdenka Schultz, daughter of the principal at the Teachers' Training Institute in Brno. Janáček, a passionate young man, proposed to the 14-year-old girl without much practical thought. Since her parents did not initially approve of the match, they corresponded by letter for about a year. Meanwhile, Zdenka's father paid for his private lessons in composition with Leo Grill in Leipzig. Janáček had difficulty being so far away from Zdenka and decided to transfer his studies to Vienna, which was only a few hours from Brno. He studied composition with Franz Krenn and piano with Josef Dachs, both of whom had been taught by Mahler. However, in Vienna, Janáček's approach to piano technique was considered too genteel, and he therefore abandoned piano studies and concentrated solely on composition. In May 1880, one of his early violin sonatas was rejected at the conservatory competition due to its being considered too conservative and academic.[5] After this experience, Janáček lost his confidence and returned permanently to Brno without a diploma. Later that year he married Zdenka, with whom he later had two children, Olga and Vladimir.

[4] Ibid., 32.
[5] Jaroslav Vogel, *Leoš Janáček,* revised by Karel Janovický (New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 1981), 73.

## Musical Career

In 1881 Janáček was appointed director of the new Organ School and, again, the conductor of the *Beseda*. Many composers influenced Janáček's growth during this period, most notably Chopin, whose harmonic language he absorbed.[6]

Janáček founded the new periodical *Hudbeny Listy* (Musical Letters) in 1884, in which he reviewed the operas performed at the local theatre. He not only criticized intonation, ensemble, and orchestral playing, but also commented on the structure and psychology of the works themselves. Through this effort, he hoped to increase the number of performances of Czech music.[7]

In his review of the opera *Dalibor* by Smetana, he commented that the heroine Milada sang "tunes specifically according to the flow and rhythm of speech."[8] Janáček believed that the melodic rise and fall and the rhythmic fluctuations of everyday speech reveal our emotions and states of mind. These years marked the beginning of Janáček's speech-melody relationship studies.[9]

In 1887 he encountered *Šárka*, a "music drama" based on Czech history, written by Julius Zeyer. He immediately started to compose an opera by the same name. By then, as an already rigorous anti-Wagnerian, he hoped to de-romanticize the plot whenever possible. However, his work clearly revealed a mixture of styles and influences from Wagner, Smetana and Gluck, all of which Janáček had absorbed during his classically-oriented musical grounding. His personal style clearly developed in this opera, revealed by the tragic tone of the work, the lyrical passages, and the presence of eroticism.

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[6] Ibid., 48, 276.
[7] Ibid., 51.
[8] Ibid., 52.
[9] Ibid., 53.

Smetana's influence was noticeable in the festive scenes, but by far the biggest inspiration in *Šárka* was Dvořák, in both the instrumentation and the use of harmony. He often used ninth-chords to evoke a particular mood that, according to some theorists (e.g., Vladimir Helfert), was reminiscent of late Dvořák and Debussy.[10] Janáček's preference for three-bar phrases, typical of his late works and deriving from folk music, was also apparent. Unfortunately, Zeyer did not permit Janáček to use his drama as the framework for his already completed opera. He was not persuaded by the efforts of this young, unknown composer. As a result Janáček did not see this work staged until he was 72.

## Song Collecting

In 1885 Janáček revisited the countryside of his native Hukvaldy, a trip that had a powerful impact on him. His first song collections probably date from this period. Together with František Bartoš, the principal of the Czech Gymnasium in Brno, Janáček established a significant ethnographic collaboration. They visited villages in the Lašsko and Valašsko districts and noted not only tunes but also their instrumental accompaniments and the choreography of local dances. Together they co-edited three volumes of folksongs; *Kytice* (A Bouquet) from 1890, which contained Moravian, Slovak, and Bohemian folksongs, *Kytice z národních písni moravských* (A Garland of Moravian Folksongs) from 1892; and finally a two-volume collection *Národí písne moravské v nové nasbiraně* (Folk songs of Moravia Newly Collected) from 1899 and 1901.[11] Janáček also began to arrange folk songs for various instrumentations: voice and piano, piano, chorus, and orchestra.

[10] Zemanova, *Janáček,* 57.
[11] John K. Novak, "What is Folk about Janáček?: The Transformation of Folk Music Concepts in Janáček's Mature Orchestral Works," in *International Journal of Musicology,* 8 (1999), 243.

Compared to those of other musical traditions, Moravian songs are much less rigid and more irregular in their metrical structure, and also more varied in their choice of melodic intervals; additionally, they make freer use of minor and modal scales, and modulate to relatively remote keys. Janáček referred to the particular harmonic flow of the songs as "Moravian modulation,"[12] and was intrigued by their melodic shape, dictated by the lyrics. This period also resulted in Janáček's first ballet *Rákos Rákóczy* and orchestral dances titled *Dances from Valašsko.*

*Lidové noviny* was a new liberal daily, established in Brno in 1893. This intellectual newspaper supported the *mladočech* (Young Czech) political faction and quickly became very popular. Janáček wrote essays on folk music as a contributor to this publication.

## Russian Influence and Speech Melody

In 1891 Janáček's son, Vladimir, fell ill with meningitis and died. Janáček, grieving deeply, composed a brief *Adagio in D minor* for orchestra based on material from *Šárka.* This was also the year that he composed a new short folk-opera, *The Beginning of a Romance,* based on a novel of Gabriela Preissová, a Czech author greatly influenced by the time she had spent in Moravia. Janáček struggled with this opera during its creation, attempting to adapt existing folk songs into the weak libretto. He later denounced the opera, and, in 1894, began to synthesize a new style which reflected aspects of folk music without imitation.[13]

The 1890's were politically stormy years for Czechs as exemplified by the revolutionary movement of the '*Omladina*' (The Young Czech movement's new name) and the opening of the Ethnographic Exhibition, which served as a channel for the Czechs to express patriotic sentiments. At this time, Janáček began preliminary work on his new opera, *Jenůfa*, which was

[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid., 245.

his first major work incorporating his particular manner of using folk music. *Jenůfa* has been compared to Smetana's *Bartered Bride* as a purely nationalistic work. The opera follows traditions in late 19th-century Czech literature of social-realism and the operatic realist tradition. Its grim story of infanticide and redemption is coupled with Janáček's increasing use of violent textures and speech melody.

Since he considered Russia as "the mother of all Slavs," Janáček was always a true devotee of Russian music and culture, [14] He spent two weeks in Russia in 1896, determined not only to visit the All-Russia Industrial and Art Exhibition in Nizhny Novgorod and explore Moscow, but also to visit his brother František in St. Petersburg. Russia's history, her language (related to Czech), her folklore, and her literature became very powerful influences on Janáček. He had the opportunity to hear a Russian choir at a *panikhida* (mass for the dead) and admired the characteristic features of Russian orthodox music. Consequently, on return to Brno, he founded the "Russian Circle."

Janáček was fascinated by the study of the melodic curves of a person's speech, called *Napevky Mluvy* or "Speech Melody." His theory must not be confused with musical declamation; instead, it is his explanation of how everyday speech is affected by changes of mood and situation. He notated approximately one thousand speech melodies from his observations of a wide variety of people in different situations. These melodies were not intended to be sung. Instead, he wanted to turn his research into a scholarly discipline. The speech melodies he explored and studied signified an entirely new approach to the vocal line and vocal stylization.

Janáček incorporated his speech melody theory and other folk influences into his opera *Jenůfa*. At that time, Western European music offered no analogous approach. In this opera he

[14] Zemanova, *Janáček*, 72.

also demonstrated a new concept of tonality, using enharmonically respelled intervals within major and minor keys. After his daughter Olga's death in 1903, he finished *Jenůfa* and dedicated the work to her.

At the same time he started work on a new opera *Osud* (Fate). Partially autobiographical, it was first performed after his death in 1928. Aside from the problematic libretto, its music ranks among the most lyrical and passionate Janáček wrote. Much of the melodic structure is created by repetition and the piling up of short units, which create an illusion of longer, freely flowing cantilenas. He also incorporated speech melodies, which by then had become fully integrated into his compositional style.[15]

## War Years and Recognition

The devastation of World War I caused Janáček to struggle with his composition, but in 1917 he finally responded with his Violin Sonata, a piano sonata subtitled *A Street Scene*, and a satirical opera, *Výlety Páně Broučkovy* (Excursions of Mr. Brouček).

*Jenůfa* had been performed in Prague in 1916, for the first time on Czech ground, enjoying an extremely successful premiere. That same year Janáček met Max Brod, a man of Jewish heritage with German as his mother tongue. Brod was very impressed with the opera and translated *Jenůfa* into German, thereby making Janáček's work known well beyond the Czech borders. One of the leading singers, Croatian-born Gabriela Horvátová, became Janáček's lover. He could not lie about the relationship between him and the talented singer, so he admitted his adultery to his wife. This led to Zdenka's suicide attempt, followed by a private agreement between her and Janáček to divorce. The separation never became legal, but Janáček and Zdenka would never again be close.

[15] Ibid.

In 1917 he met Kamila Stösslová in a spa in Luhačovice. Much younger, gypsy-like and passionate, she became his muse and obsession. From evidence left through their written correspondence, one can conclude that they never consummated the relationship. Kamila was married and she did not share the same degree of affection that the much older composer felt for her. Nevertheless, she became a strong source of inspiration for Janáček during his later years.[16] Janáček scholar John Tyrrell classifies the works of this period as "erotic."[17]

The last twelwe years of his life proved to be the most productive in Janáček's career. During this period he composed his most famous works for stage, chamber music, and choral music. His most famous operas include *Kát'a Kabanová* (Katya Kabanova) (1921), featuring a Russian subject, *Príhody lisky Bystrousky* (The Cunning Little Vixen) (1923), a modern fairy-tale, *Věc Makropulos* (The Makropulos Affair) (1924), and *Z mrtvého domu* (From the House of the Dead) (1928), Janáček's last opera and his most powerful realistic drama. Other masterpieces from this period include *Glagolská maš* (Glagoltic Mass) (1926), for soli, chorus, orchestra, and organ based on a Church Slavonic text; *Zápisnk zmizelého* (Diary of One who Vanished) (1918), verses for tenor, contralto, three women's voices, and piano; and two string quartets carrying programmatic titles: *Kreutzer Sonata* (1923), inspired by Tolstoy's novel, and *Intimate Letters* (1928), a clearly autobiographical piece.

After attaining recognition from the music world, Janáček traveled extensively in Europe to attend performances of his compositions. Three years before his death the University of Brno (for whose foundation he fought) honored him with the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Janáček died of pneumonia on August 12, 1928 in a hospital in Ostrava.

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[16] Lisa M.Burell, "Music, Narrative, and Sexual Morality in the Kreutzer Sonatas of Beethoven, Tolstoy, and Janáček" (DMA thesis, University of Houston, 2002), 128.
[17] Ibid.

## Historical background of the Violin Sonata

On June 28, 1914, a Bosnian revolutionary, Gavrilo Princip, fatally shot Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital and an important center of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This event provoked the beginning of World War I. A month later, the Empire declared war on Serbia, and subsequently all of Europe became involved. The persecution of Russophiles throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire began after Russia sided with Serbia.

In mid-July, 1914, Janáček was forced to cancel his plans to travel with Zdenka to Crikvenica and Montenegro. Instead, he had to stay in Brno, destroy his pro-Russian documents, and conceal all of his pro-Russian activities. Janáček was listed only as "politically doubtful." Some Czech intellectuals and patriots, including Janáček, viewed Russia's involvement in this war as an opportunity to achieve Czech independence.

Janáček's spontaneous response to the war led him to begin his Violin Sonata, which reflected the mood of uncertainty. This connection with the war was confirmed by the pianist Karel Solc, who rehearsed the piece with the concertmaster of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Stanislav Novak, in preparation for its performance at the Second Festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music in Salzburg during the first week of August 1923. According to Solc, Janáček insisted on the most agitated rendering of the high piano tremolo over the final appearance of the chorale-like theme of the last movement, explaining that it signified "the Russian armies entering Hungary."[18]

[18] Vogel, *Leoš Janáček*, 400.

The Violin Sonata was not his first work of this genre. He had attempted other pieces, including one violin sonata dating from his time in Leipzig which was left unfinished, and another from his Vienna period which has since been lost.

Janáček composed the definitive version of the Sonata over a seven-year period. After the first attempt was rejected by the Czech virtuoso Jaroslav Kocian, he reworked it, finally completing it in 1921.[19] Janáček juggled the position of movements and replaced several of them with newly composed movements. The final ordering was as follows: *Con Moto*; *Ballada*; *Allegretto*; and *Adagio*.[20] The first composed movement of the Sonata was the *Ballada*, written around 1913, when it existed as an independent piece.

The first performance of the Violin Sonata's first edition took place in Salzburg on December 16, 1922. It was given by Stanislav Novák (violin) and Václav Štépán (piano). Janáček continued to revise it, and finally it was published in Prague by *Hudbeni Matice Umelecke Besedy* in 1922. It was first performed in its final version in Brno by František Kudláček (violin) and Jaroslav Kvapil (piano). A fifth edition was later revised by violinist Josef Suk (1929- ) and published by Supraphon in 1974.[21]

In 1926 Janáček traveled to London where his Violin Sonata was played at a concert of his chamber works. After his return home he wrote notes reflecting upon his experience, describing the performance and stating that he had been especially impressed with the Hungarian violinist, Adila Fachiri, Joachim's granddaughter.

[19] Mirka Zemanova, *Janáček* (Northeastern University Press, Boston, 2002), 118.
[20] Ian Horsburgh, *Leoš Janáček; The Field that Prospered* (London: David & Charles, New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1981), 101.
[21] Vogel, *Leoš Janáček,* 400.

# CHAPTER II

## THE MUSICAL LANGUAGE OF THE VIOLIN SONATA

Janáček's musical language reflects the constant inspiration he had from Czech folk music. He based his compositions on tonal harmony but in a less standardized way than that used by many of his contemporaries. He did not cite folk songs explicitly in the Violin Sonata, but his use of short and repetitive themes, modal harmonies, ostinato patterns, improvisational passage work, three-note motives, and modified traditional structural forms can be traced back to folk music.

The first movement *Con Moto* reflects Janáček's tendencies for sectionalized forms. Three-note motives are used for building short, repetitive, and modally-induced phrases. The formal structure of the movement resembles monothematic sonata form, but without a development section.

The second movement *Ballada* was actually composed first and published separately in 1915. It has lengthier themes that exchange in a rondo-like manner. The themes are connected by transitional material.

The third movement *Allegretto* has the clearest formal structure of all the movements. It is in ternary form and therefore reminiscent of a traditional third movement. Looking deeper into the background structure of this movement, Janáček's individual style emerges from combinations of simple folk-sounding melodies and unexpected, disturbing intrusions played on the violin.

The fourth movement *Adagio* is similar to the third movement in its character with the same interruptive, muted figures in the violin. However, its form is closer to that of the second movement.

## Melody

Janáček's intriguing compositional language is revealed at the very opening of the first movement of this sonata in the melodic and harmonic structure of its three-bar introduction. Many analysts have suggested that the soaring entrance of the solo violin is of particular significance. Ladislav Prick connected these introductory measures with *halekacka* (call song), a stylized version of an unaccompanied folk song from Valachia (one of the Czech regions). He also described it as a declamatory solo voice intended to project a warning prior to the outbreak of World War I.[22] Jaroslav Vogel analyzed it as an improvisation over the dominant seventh of A♭ minor, which foreshadows the main theme in bar 4, using the motif C♭-B♭-G.[23] Skoumal referred to these introductory three bars as the "violin's opening fanfare" and linked it to a fifth-series collection[24] (D♭-A♭-E♭-B♭, without A♭ in the introduction); this tactic is used to build the intensity of the main theme, which appears for the first time beginning in measure 4.

An interesting feature of Czech folk music is its type of modality that differs from that of church modes traditionally used in Western music. In Czech folk songs for example, a modal change can affect just a single beat, or several measures. In a traditional view, some of the

[22] Ladislav Prick, "Stylistic Evolution of Leoš Janáček's Lesser Known Compositions for Violin" (DMA thesis, Arizona University, 1996), 70.
[23] Jaroslav Vogel, *Leoš Janáček,* revised by Karel Janovický (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), 214.
[24] The fifth-series is a cycle of pitches a fifth apart. The cycle goes through all twelve pitch classes before returning to the starting point. Any seven-note segment of C5 represents one of the diatonic collections.

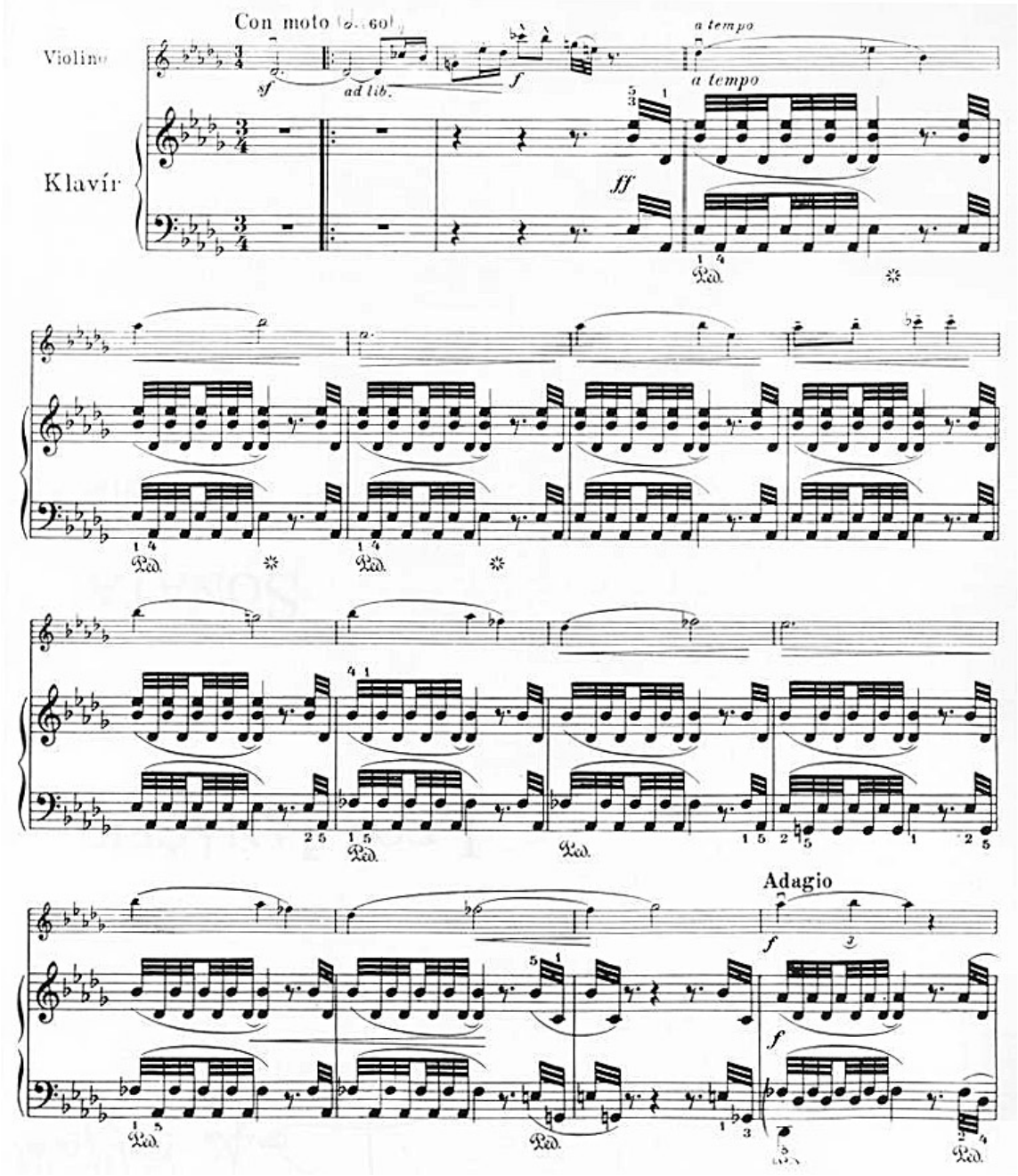
longer alterations can be understood as tonicizations or modulations.[25] The main modal features in Czech folk music are as follows:

1. Alteration of the major and minor mode (expressing a mood change)
2. Lowered 7th degree of the scale ("Moravian modulation")
3. Raised 4th degree, which, in combination with the minor 3rd degree, becomes "Lydian minor" (Janáček's favorite mode).[26]

Most of these modal features influence certain melodic aspects of the Violin Sonata and create instances of harmonic ambiguity. The first instance of ambiguity occurs immediately in the opening theme of the exposition in the first movement. With a key signature of D♭ major, Janáček provides an opening gesture that incorporates elements of A♭ minor using the pitches C♭, G♮, and F♭ (here spelled as an enharmonic E♮). The pitch A♭ is omitted in the first three measures of intermission, and does not sound until the pick-up to measure four. The placement of the A♭ as a lowest sounding pitch of a quintal formation re-enforces the feeling of A♭ minor.

[25] Zdenek D. Skoumal, "Structure in the Late Instrumental Music of Leoš Janáček" (Ph. D. thesis, University of New York, 1992), 23.
[26] Ibid., 27.

Example 2.1: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 1, mm. 1-16

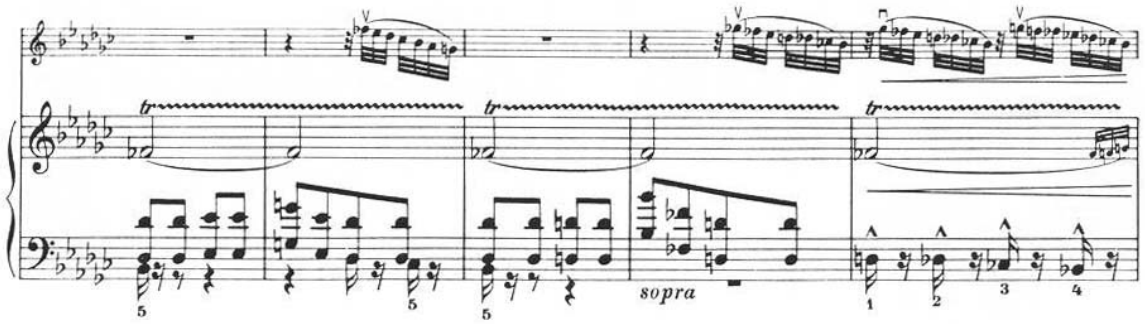



The first theme in the second movement develops a modal inflection in m. 11, where the G♮ brings a minor quality to the overall major statement which is in E major. The second subject in this movement is in D♭ major and consists of a combination of two phrases, the first of which

modulates to A♭ major, while the second modulates back to C♯ minor (or D♭ minor). One can see the major-minor modality in the specific choice of a minor instead of a major key at the end of the second theme in mm. 51-56.

In the third movement Janáček's favored mode "Lydian minor" is most apparent. The minor third of A♭, pitch C♭, which is used in rapid descending passages in the violin part, together with the pitch D♮ produces the sound of the "Lydian minor."

Example 2.2: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 3, mm. 10-14; Pitches C♭ and D♮ create a modal inflection.




Janáček's melodies are also notable for their terseness and sectional nature. He rarely writes a melody in a cantilena style.[27] Compared to the late Romantics, his melodies are characterized by brevity and constant repetition. Janáček explained this brevity in his melodies as an attempt "to satisfy the limited potential of a human mind."[28] He was referring to a general characteristic of the human mind to remember shorter, simpler melodies more easily. As a result of the repetition, his music is filled with ostinatos, repetitive figurations, and repeat signs. This

[27] "Cantilena style" is characterized by a predominant vocal top line supported by less complex instrumental accompaniment.
[28] Skoumal, "Structure in the Late Instrumental Music of Leoš Janáček," 31.

approach can create choppy, disjointed melodic lines; however, Janáček avoided the problem with the use of motivic unity and folk-dance rhythmic patterns, thereby preserving the sense of continuity in the melody.[29]

Janáček's predisposition for brief melodies is clearly observed in the main themes of the Sonata. Most of their subsections are two or three bars long. They become four bars (and no longer than five bars) in length due only to extensions and prolongations. The first theme in the first movement has four subsections, excluding the introduction. The first three subsections are three measures long, and the fourth subsection is prolonged one extra measure (m.16, *Adagio* bar).

Janáček made extensive use of what Skoumal calls "real" and "speech–influenced" melodic motives and their development in the Violin Sonata. From his perspective, almost any existing sound could become a potential motive, and the ones that occurred naturally had a great influence upon his thinking.[30] He collected these motives from everyday life and called them "real" motives. According to analysts Skoumal and Vogel, Janáček did not copy these "real" motives directly into his compositions; rather, he allowed them to become deeply embedded in his soul and later expressed them through his own compositional language. An extremely passionate man, he felt that "real" motives were the best way to express feelings, actions, and thoughts in his compositions.[31]

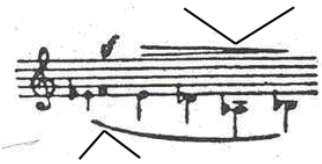
Janáček's interests also extended to researching the intonational patterns of human speech which he managed to notate in his instrumental compositions. In 1885 he began notating and collecting patterns of human speech and this research led to his development of a theory labeled "Speech Melody," or *Napevky Mluvy*. This theory was also very closely connected with

[29] Ibid., 35.
[30] Ibid., 66.
[31] Ibid., 69.

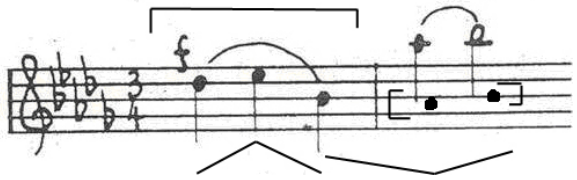
Janáček's pursuit of realism: i.e., he was especially interested in the specific circumstances that produced a given inflection, the emotions associated with it, and the character and dialect of the person involved. According to theorists Skoumal and Kaderavek, Janáček incorporated this theory into his instrumental works.[32] Skoumal's research points out the connection between one of Janáček's notated sounds and the main motive from the Violin Sonata. Example 2.3 shows similar motives from one of Janáček's "Speech Melodies" and the main motive from the first movement of the Violin Sonata.[33] The bracket indicates the main motive, and the arrows show melodic direction. The connections are drawn from the quarter-note flow, similar pitches, and a rising step at the end of the motive.

Example 2.3:

a) "The rustle of angry waters"



b) Janáček Violin Sonata (main motive)



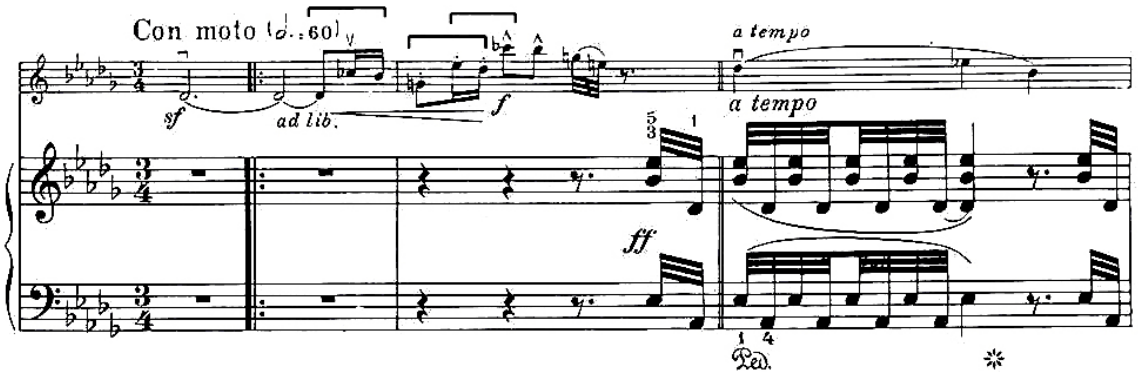
Janáček based the length and shape of his own original melodic motives on his folk-music research. The first theme's main motive, the basis of all the thematic material in the first movement, can be observed in three-note segments with a shape that occurs frequently in Janáček's music. Skoumal named it the "hook-motive." (See example 2.3 b)

> The three-note "hook-motive" combines two intervals, one relatively small, one relatively large. The smaller interval is a minor or major second, while the larger interval typically does not exceed a sixth.[34]

[32] Milan Robert Kaderavek, "Stylistic Aspects of the Late Chamber Music of Leoš Janáček: An Analytical Study" (DMA thesis, University of Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1970).
[33] Skoumal, "Structure in the Late Instrumental Music of Leoš Janáček," 82.
[34] Ibid., 128.

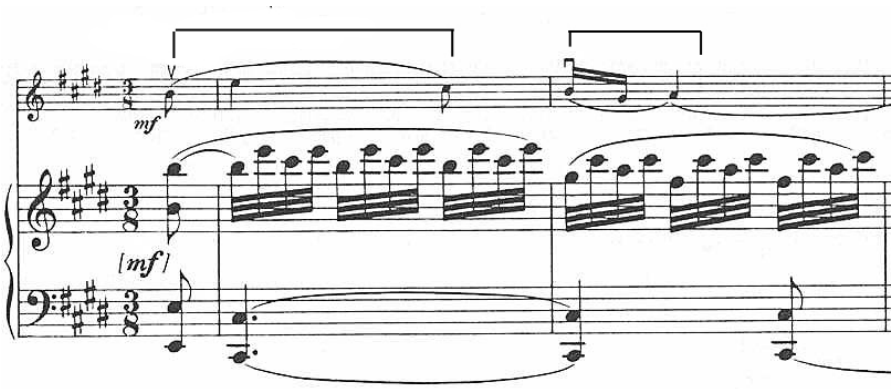
The first appearance of the “hook-motive” occurs in the violin in m. 4. The next bar quickly repeats the motive in an harmonically consequential manner. This manner of building phrases fits what one might expect of Janáček’s themes, i.e., a constant repetition nuanced by slight variations. We can observe the same motivic cells and their overlapping in bars 2 and 3 of the introduction.

Example 2.4: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 1, mm. 1-4: First three bars of an introduction



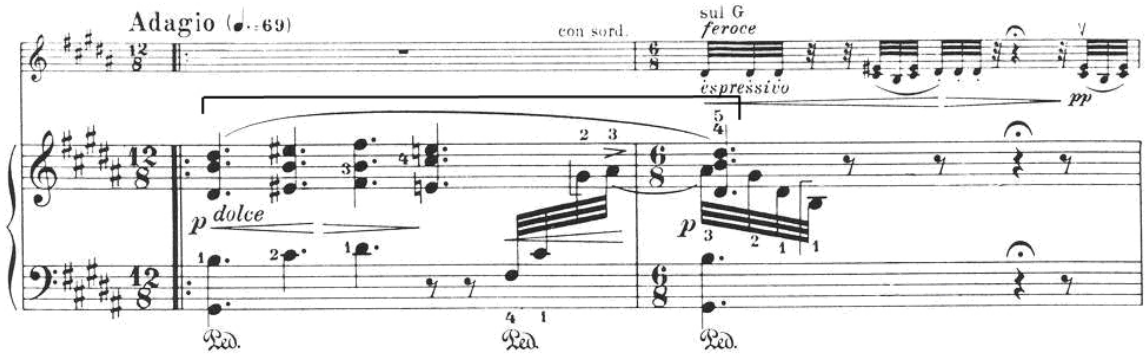

In the second movement, the “hook-motive" is changed from the initial prototype since a minor third is the smaller interval. The answer to the motive is its own inversion in m. 2 in the violin. This transforms a minor third into a minor second, as one would expect in the “hook-motive.”

Example 2.5: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 2, mm. 1-2




Another of Janáček's "named" motives appears in the fourth movement, in the top part of the piano's right hand. This motive is referred to by Vogel as the "Dumka"[35] and consists of an arched four-note figure with a chromatic descent.[36] It is dramatized further in the recapitulation by an accompanying ostinato pattern and tremolo in the piano part.

Example 2.6: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 4, mm. 1-2; Bracket shows "Dumka motive."




[35] *Dumka* is an instrumental piece with a reflective, often melancholy character, usually composed for chamber group or solo instrument. It is characterized with frequent alterations between major and minor keys and faster and slower tempos. Composed by Northern and Western Slavic composers, it was very popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and as such became a musical symbol of pan-Slavonicism. Even though Burghauser speculates that Dvořák's conception of a *dumka* may have been formed through discussion with Janáček, it is widely accepted that Dvořák established the form in Bohemia and Moravia with his many *dumka*-like pieces. See John Tyrell, "Dumka," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 2006-03-08), <http://www.grovemusic.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu:2048>

[36] Vogel, *Leoš Janáček*, 216.

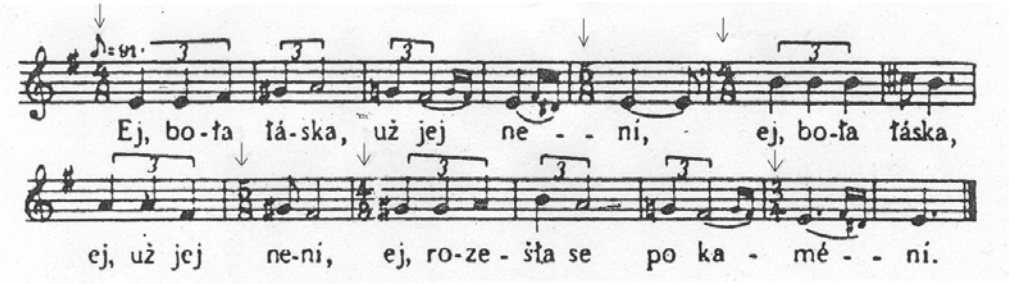
Another source of inspiration for Janáček's Violin Sonata was the ever present Gypsy tradition that had been a part of the Eastern European culture for many centuries. Janáček was particularly fascinated by Gypsy bands, songs, and instruments, and the manner in which there had been gradual blending with the local folk traditions. Some particular features of Gypsy music are found in his Violin Sonata. The improvisatory character of the entrance of the solo violin in the introduction of the first movement is a good example. Another instance can be found in the second movement in mm. 112-120. The additional marking *ad libitum* gives this passage a sense of a free cadenza.

In summary, the melodic language of Janáček's Violin Sonata clearly shows important changes from the past. Janáček was inspired by specific Czech folk elements and Gypsy traditions, writing short, punctuated phrases, and repetitive motives. Through it all, however, he managed to communicate a nationalistic feeling as well as expressing his own compositional voice.

## Rhythm

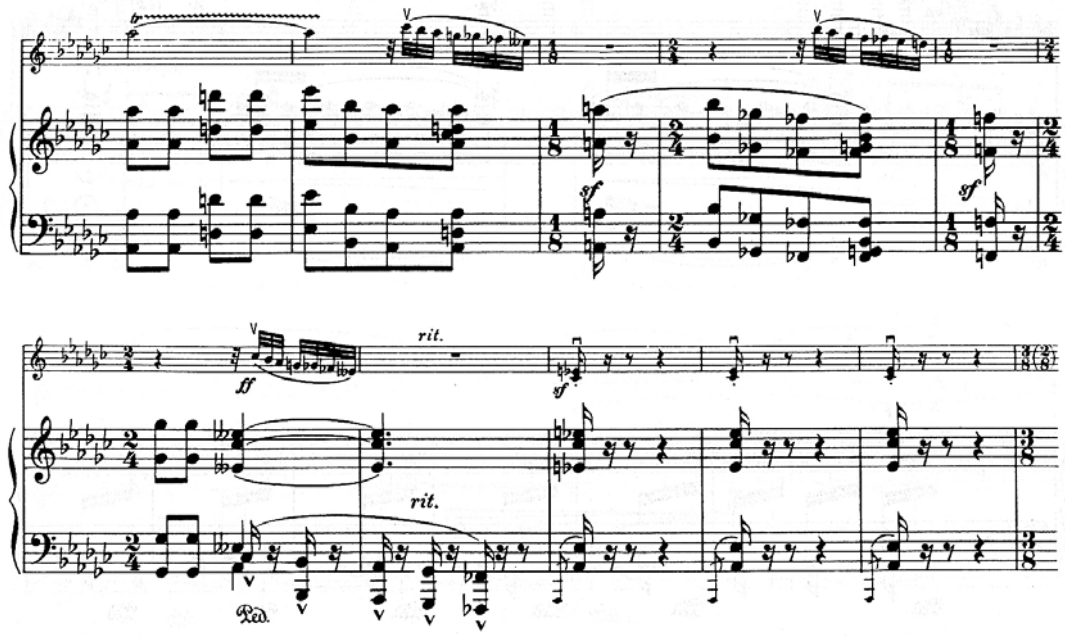
Many rhythmic aspects of Moravian folk songs and dances are reflected in the musical language of this sonata. Czech folk song's rhythmic patterns are usually structured around the text, preserving the accentual pattern of words which were often extremely irregular in nature. Janáček was very conscious about the problem of adequately notating these rhythmically complex folk songs. Example 2.7 shows the Czech folk song *Ej, bola láska* (Oh, love was here) and its frequent change of meter.

Example 2.7: *Ej, bola láska*[37]




In the third movement of the Violin Sonata Janáček changes the meter of the melodic rhythm by inserting extra measures, containing fewer beats. The specific rhythmic shifts in the melody of the **A** section in the third movement are evident in mm. 17-20. (See example 2.8). By inserting two 1/8 bars in the score, Janáček achieves a more interesting, yet shortened repetition of the first theme.

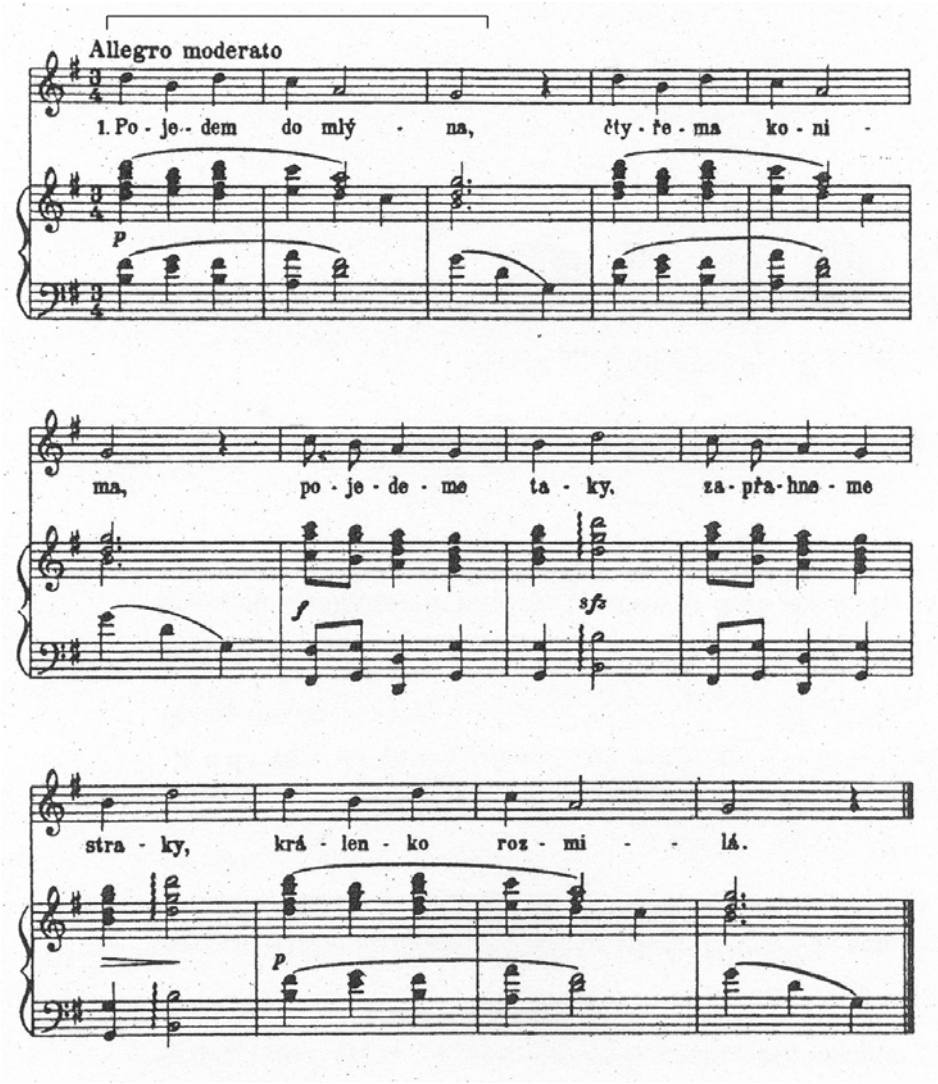
Example 2.8: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 3, mm. 15-24




[37] Skoumal, "Structure in the Late Instrumental Music of Leoš Janáček," 23.

Janáček also uses rhythm drawn from folk dances that, in contrast to folk songs, displayed rhythmic regularity and certain characteristic rhythmic cells. Example 2.9 shows a Czech dance, *Pojedem do mlýna* (We will ride to the mill), which, with the three-measure phrases and the characteristic rhythmic pattern, largely resembles the first theme from the first movement of the Violin Sonata.

Example 2.9: Folk dances, *Pojedem do mlýna*[38]




[38] Skoumal, "Structure in the Late Instrumental Music of Leoš Janáček," 55.

Janáček believed that rhythm gave music life, and therefore should be derived from life.[39] On occasion he uses a rhythmic pattern influenced by the Lachian[40] dialect, with a stress placed on the penultimate syllable of the spoken words.

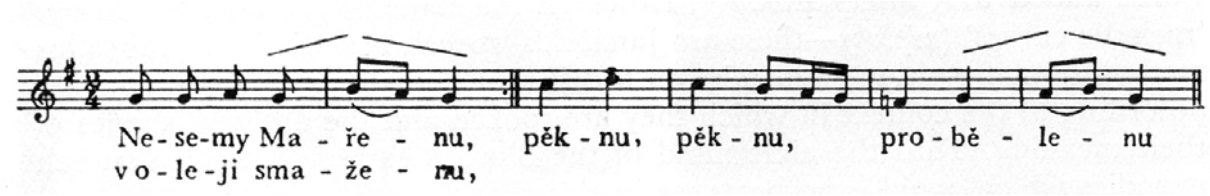
Example 2.10: Difference between the Lachian dialect (a) and the standard Czech language (b)[41]

a) b)

Ja-ná-ček Ja-ná-ček

The next example is from a folk song from a region adjacent to Příbor. It is notated to fit the Lachian dialect (notice the word *Ma-ře-nu, sma-že-nu,* and *pro-bé-le-nu*, and how the lines indicate the accent on the penultimate syllable).

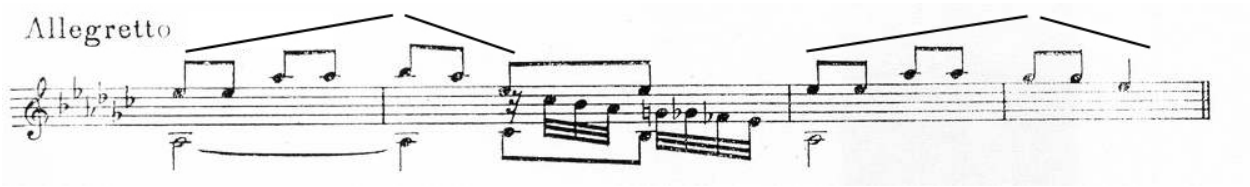
Example 2.11: Lachian dialect in folk song[42]




The third movement of the Violin Sonata is similar in rhythmic pattern and melodic contour to this folk song, which suggests that it was the source of Janáček's inspiration.

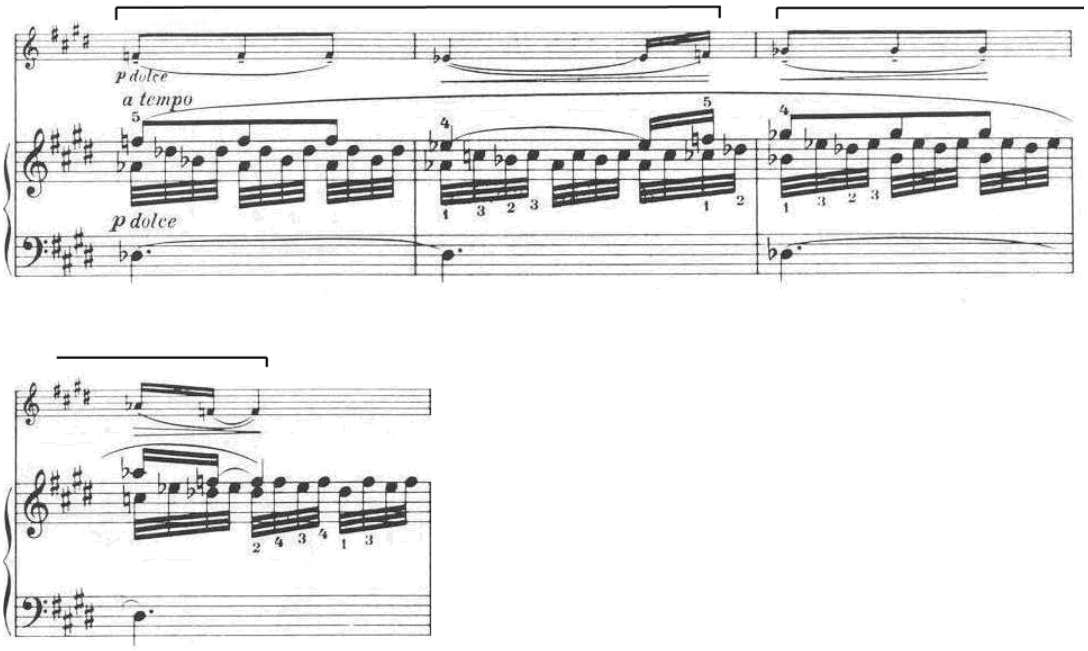
[39] Kaderavek, "Stylistic Aspects of the Late Chamber Music of Leoš Janáček: An Analytical Study," 51.
[40] Lachian dialect is mixture between Czech and Polish languages.
[41] Skoumal, "Structure in the Late Instrumental Music of Leoš Janáček," 74.
[42] Vogel, *Leoš Janáček,* 116.

Example 2.12: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 3; Lines indicate optional melodic and rhythmic emphasis. [43]




Janáček's rhythmic language also demonstrates his particular tendency towards symmetrical phrases. The phrases are often structured with short note values followed by a longer note value and then repeated in "mirror" fashion. Janáček uses these "mirror" rhythmic patterns more freely than other composers such as Messiaen. In the second movement, "mirror" measures are presented in measures 38 and 40 in a more hidden manner as a part of a larger phrase structure.

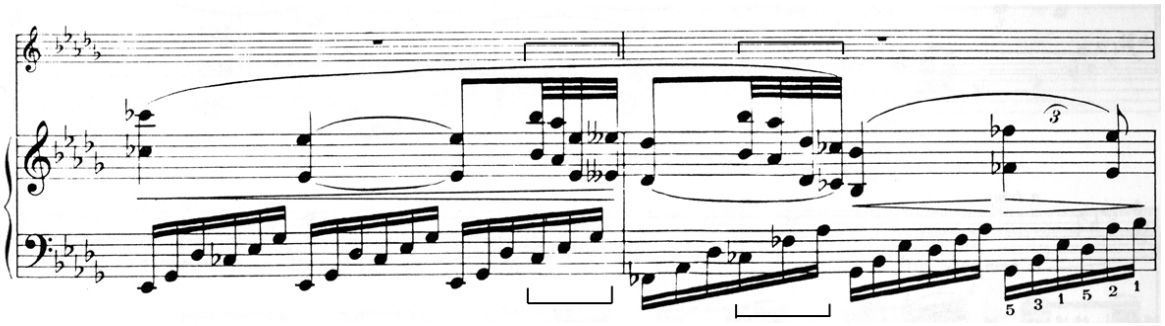
Example 2.13: Janáček Violin Sonata; mvt. 2, mm. 37-40




[43] This reduced excerpt of Violin Sonata is found in Vogel, *Janáček*, 214.

Additional rhythmic characteristics in Janáček's works include: frequent changes of pulse, free alternation between simple and irregular division of the beat, and a combination of the two in polyrhythm.[44] Janáček's frequent use of ostinatos emphasizes the polyrhythmic effects. Polyrhythm emerges in the first movement in measures 29-30 and 90-91. In most instances, the triplet is opposed to the beat divided in four.

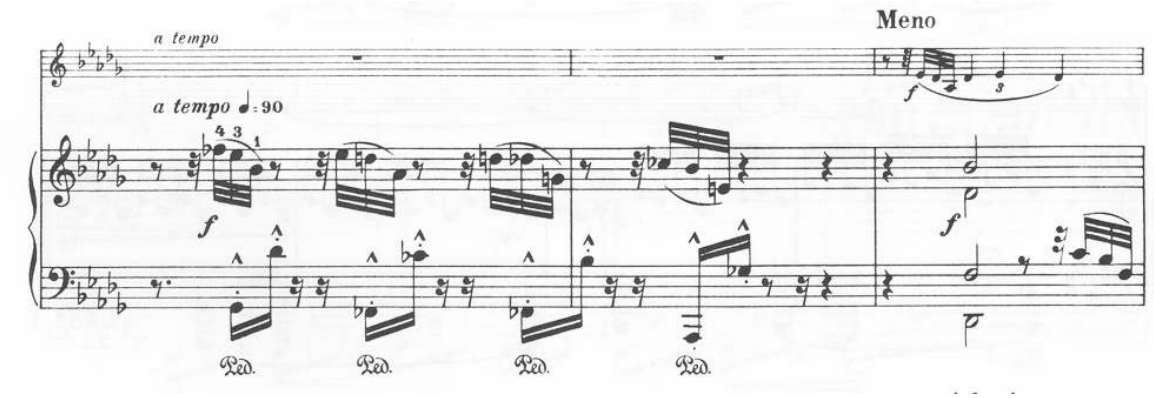
Examples 2.14: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 1, mm. 29-30



It is also interesting to observe the shift of accents, which create the feeling of a changed beat. Especially noticeable is the shift of a down beat, achieved by placing an accented note on the fourth sixteenth note in the piano left hand. This happens two measures before the coda in the first movement, mm. 104-105, hiding any clear sense of the beat.

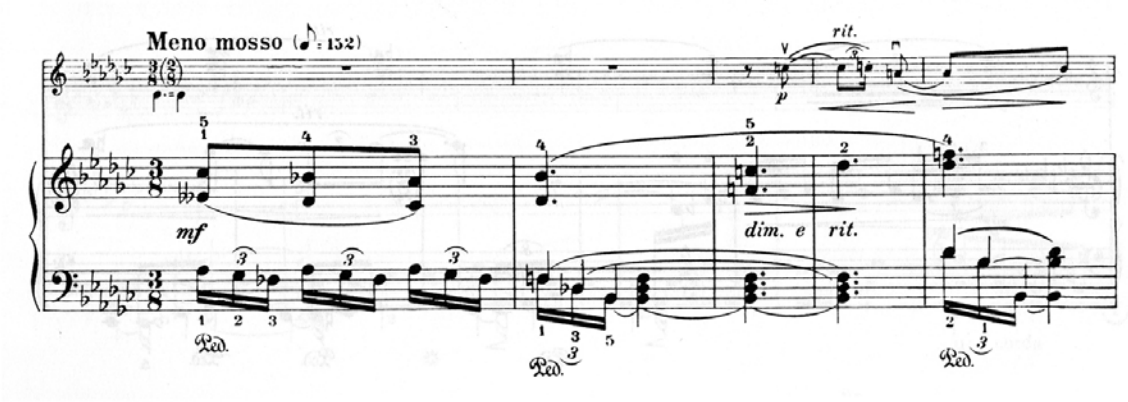
[44] Kaderavek, "Stylistic Aspects of the Late Chamber Music of Leoš Janáček: An Analytical Study," 18.

Example 2.15: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 1, mm. 104-106



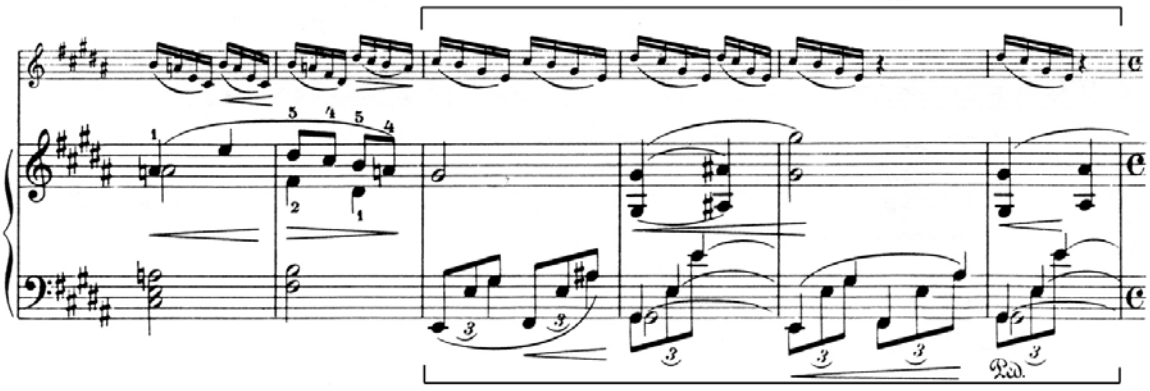

The third movement features considerable metrical instability. The second theme uses contrasting meters in mm. 25-29. Janáček combines the simple duple meter found in the violin part (2/8) with a simple triple meter (3/8) in the piano part.

Example 2.16: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 3, mm. 25-29

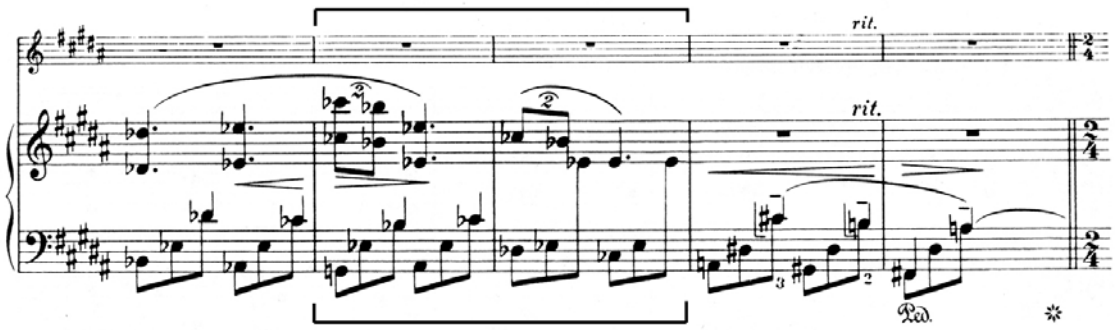



A similar contrasting meter, which in the following example creates a polyrhythmic effect, occurs in the fourth movement in mm. 35-38, where Janáček opposes four sixteenth notes with triplets.

Example 2.17: a) Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 4, mm. 33-38



b) Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 4, mm. 22-26; In mm. 23-24 the left and right hands play triplets and duplets simultaneously.




Janáček's use of various rhythmic ideas clearly helped to develop the musical language in this Sonata in new and interesting ways. No one before Janáček had used speech inflection as an indication of rhythm in a violin sonata. Moreover, his willingness to incorporate elements of Czech folk music such as "mirror" rhythm, polyrhythm, frequent meter change, and metric shifts, created an idiosyncratic result never before heard in this genre.

## Harmony

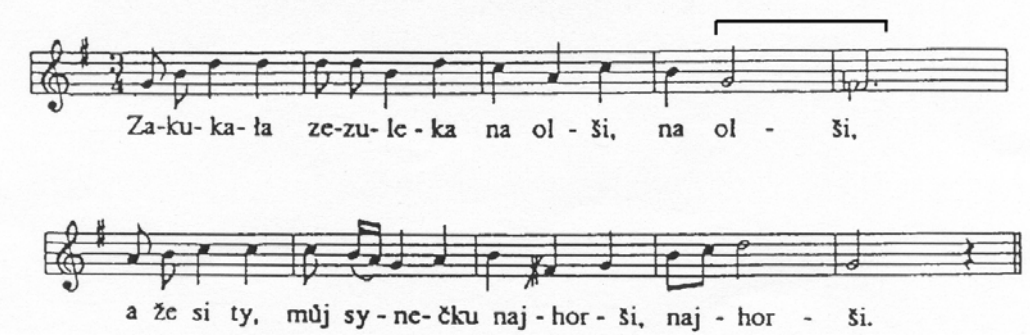
Complex traditions and certain keys found in Moravian folk music add to the particular harmonic language of Janáček's Violin Sonata. The most interesting aspects of his harmonic language are as follows:

1. Modulations to related keys and modulation types
2. Key floatation (suspended tonality) and tonally open works
3. Fifth-series motives and semitone shifts
4. Modality
5. Repeated figurations
6. Enharmonic pitch spelling

Novak's article concerning the influence of Moravian folk music on Janáček's compositions reveals that the majority of folk songs that Janáček collected and researched began and ended in the same key and contained a contrasting middle key. In minor-key songs, the contrasting key is usually the relative major (III). Janáček called this "Lachian melodic modulation."[45] The next most common key of modulation is the subtonic (♭VII), which Janáček himself labeled the "Moravian modulation."[46] This latter occurs very frequently in the folk music of Moravian Slovakia. Janáček often adopted this type of sudden shift, taking the key down by a whole step. The next example shows a folk song with the Janáček's "Moravian modulation." In mm. 4-5 the melody momentarily shifts tonal focus to the pitch F♮.

[45] Novak, "What is Folk about Janáček," 253.
[46] Ibid., 254.

Example 2.18: "Moravian modulation" in a folk song [47]




The type of modulation in Czech folk music least represented in Janáček's work is, according to Novak, the tonicization of the major dominant.[48] As opposed to Bohemian folk music and other Western art music, Moravian folk songs used V-I progressions at their cadences, but not as part of a large-scale tonal scheme.[49]

It is important to understand that in Czech folk music a distinction between tonicization and modulation is not always clear. The modal-fixion tones[50] and non-tonal relationship between the tonic and dominant scale degrees help to further reduce the sense of a tonal center. Janáček achieves the impression of floating key centers by adopting these features, moving freely from one to another without confirming any of them through standard chord progressions or cadences.[51] Arnold Schönberg's idea of floating tonality as an harmonic ambiguity between two key areas is also important. This results when common chords found in two keys are used, but without emphasis on any of the key centers. Novak compared Brahms' techniques to Janáček's, noting that Brahms typically floated between third-related keys, where one key would usually

[47] Ibid., 268.
[48] Ibid., 254.
[49] Ibid., 255.
[50] The modal-fixion tones are the notes shifted up or down a semitone, altering the position of semitones in the mode and sometimes the perception of the tonic.
[51] Novak, "What is Folk about Janáček," 256.

"win" at the end of the composition.[52] Janáček, in contrast, experimented with keys a fifth apart; however, there was no certainty that either of these keys would dominate at the end. Sometimes a third key would finish the piece. Janáček drew his tendency towards tonally open works from Moravian folk song, which typically ends in a fifth-related key.

Theorists Skoumal and Novak researched Janáček's practice of using harmonic motion in perfect fifths. This was an uncomplicated method of achieving suspended tonality.[53] In Janáček's style the fifth-series[54] does not require the inclusion of exclusively perfect fifths; diminished fifths and augmented fifths are also possible.[55] Although the practice of shifting the pitch up or down a semitone, called the "semitone shift," creates a large number of scales and fifth-series, Janáček generally limits his choices to harmonic and melodic minors, Lydian minor, and the whole-tone referential collection.[56] When a fifth-series collection of pitches[57] continues beyond the seventh member and in so doing, beyond the diatonic scale, it automatically modulates from one key area to another a fifth away.[58] Janáček tends to use smaller numbers of key sub-collections and to introduce them as a motive. At a later point in the composition he often adds the other pitches from the fifth-series, thus forming a diatonic scale. Skoumal's research reveals the first fifth-series used in Janáček's Violin Sonata. Note the presence of both augmented and diminished fifths in the series.

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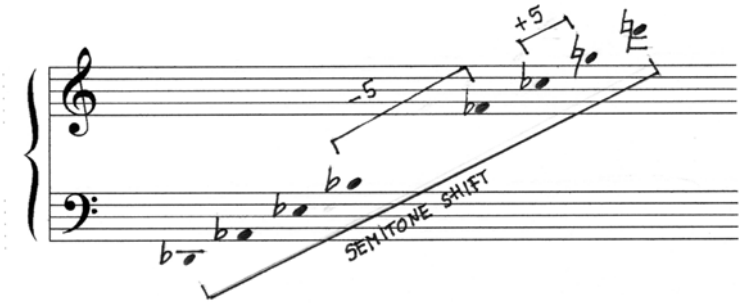
[52] Ibid.
[53] Each new chord in the cycle of fifths can be tonicized by the previous chord.
[54] The fifth-series present in Janáček's work include both the circle of fifths and the circle of fourths. Both generate the same pitches. According to Skoumal, Janáček used the circle of fourths even more frequently. Fifth-series and diatonic collections are associated. A seven note segment of the fifth-series contains the pitches of a diatonic collection.
[55] Skoumal, "Structure in the Late Instrumental Music of Leoš Janáček," 113.
[56] Ibid.
[57] The collections of pitches or pitch-regions refer to all the pitches in one passage. Analyzing Janáček's Sonata, one can notice that the collections of pitches are mostly diatonic collections which behave as keys in traditional tonality.
[58] When two pitches are shifted by a semitone in the fifth-series, the resulting collection of pitches can be regarded as a shifted fifth-series.

Example 2.19: Fifth-series from the first theme (first movement)




The first theme (first phrase) consists of a fifth-series pitch collection D♭-A♭-E♭-B♭. The pitches, F♭, C♭, and G♮ are added later (second and third phrase) to create A♭ harmonic minor. As stated earlier, the majority of the pitches of this fifth-series, minus only A♭, are also presented in the introduction.

Looking closer at measure 16 in the first movement, which is generally understood as a transition or the beginning the second section of the first movement, one finds that it adheres to the same pitch collection; however, the bass notes now reinforce D♭ and by doing so create a sense of a D♭ diatonic referential collection. The whole first section of the movement emerges from a flux between A♭ and D♭ diatonic collections. Analysts have always argued whether or not the movement is in either A♭ or D♭.

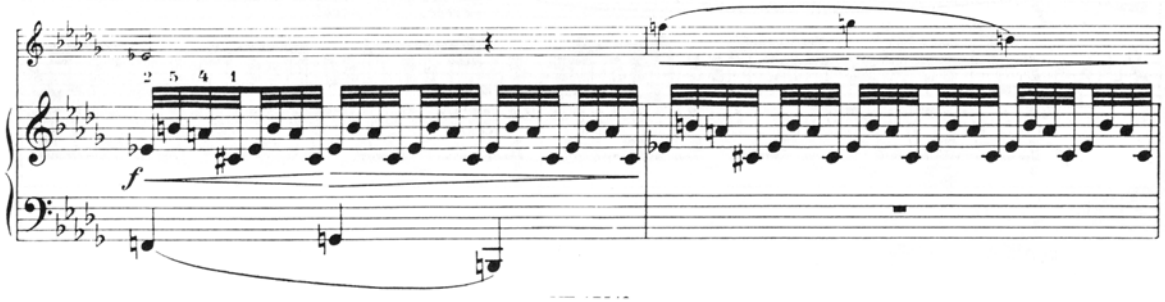
Throughout the first movement the key centers change, emphasizing different pitches from the fifth-series collection. These changes define the structural sections of the movement.[59] For

[59] Since the fifth-series collection in this Sonata acts as the key area, certain pitches behave as a tonic or an axis.

example, section 3 of the movement (mm. 28-33), features an axis around E♭, which then "modulates" back to A♭ on the first beat in bar 31.

The first radical change in the fifth-series collection appears in measure 33, where the ostinato pattern, together with motivic development, introduces a semitonal shift from A♭ to A♮, creating a whole-tone referential collection incorporating the pitches A♮, B♮, C♯, E♭(D♯), F♮, and G♮.

Example 2.20: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 1, mm. 33-34; Whole-tone referential collection



The pitches must be observed as relative because of constant enharmonic respelling, which is characteristic of Janáček's compositional approach. As previously discussed, modal scales and inflections occur frequently in Janáček's music, and these can be explained in terms of semitonal shift. In addition to modal scales, he frequently uses whole-tone scales. Skoumal explains Janáček's "creation" of the whole-tone scale as the product of a semitone shift from melodic minor.[60] A more structural implication of this type of shift can be found in larger harmonic blocks that move entire passages up or down by a semitone. Interestingly, one can detect the

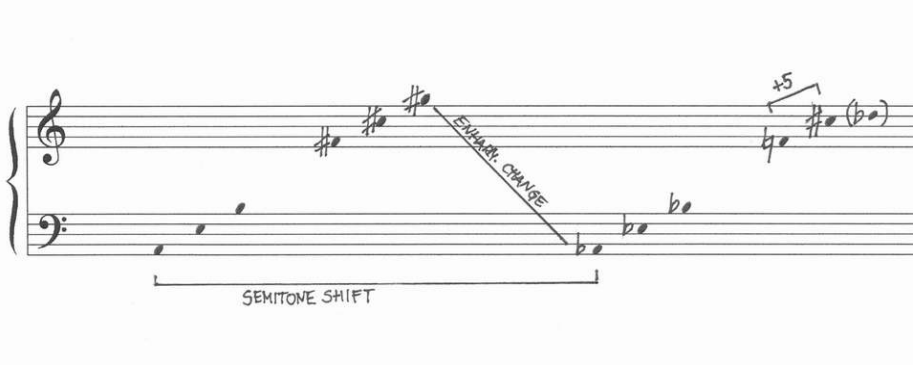
[60] Skoumal, "Structure in the Late Instrumental Music of Leoš Janáček," 106.

presence of this fifth-series in the recapitulation of the first movement, without the modal inflections of the minor mode (C♭) and lowered VI (F♭).

The coda (m. 106) reintroduces the D♭ key center, the same fifth-series pitch collection as at the beginning of the movement, this time using only pitch subsets from the D♭ major chord. The first movement of the Violin Sonata begins with an ambiguous key center, where A♭ and D♭ diatonic collections exchange in dominance. Therefore, both keys can be understood having both a tonic and subdominant function. This uncertainty between key centers gives more opportunity for an unusual ending. Knowing Janáček's tendency to typically end pieces in the subdominant, D♭ can be considered as a subdominant of the beginning A♭ key.

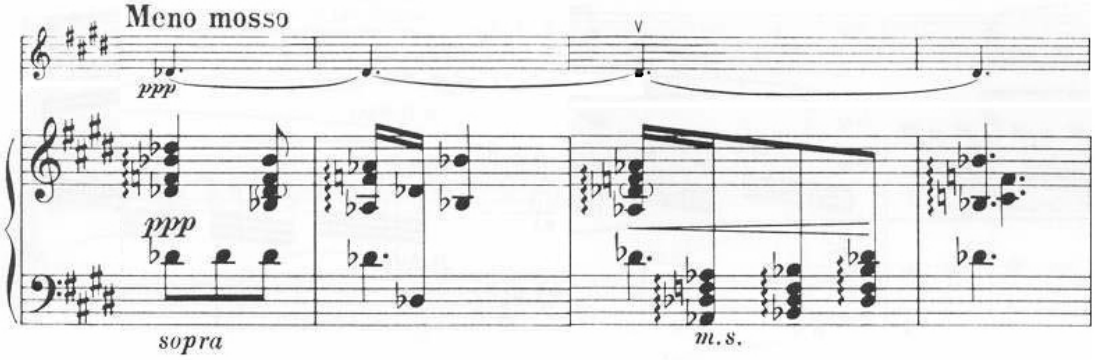
In the second movement, striking tonal ambiguities result from the fifth-series semitonal-shift modulations and an overall tonal dualism. The first subject's fifth-series is characterized by a pitch axis on E, giving the impression of E major. E major is confirmed by the V-I progression in mm. 8-9, and becomes modal in feeling with a lowered third scale degree in m. 11 (G♮). The series changes and a modulation to D♭ major is accomplished by means of a semitone shift from B♮ to B♭ in m. 13, and E♮ in m. 11 to E♭ in m. 14.

Example 2.21: The fifth-series of the second movement.



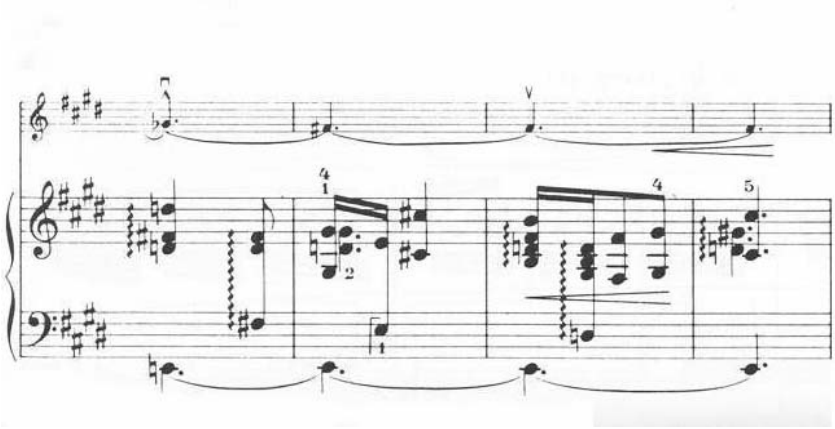

Another interesting aspect of the harmonic language in this sonata is the way in which Janáček writes chords over pedals. In the second movement D♭ serves as a pedal tone between measures 17 and 20, while the chords stacked above it are B♭ minor and D♭ major.

Example 2.22: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 2, mm. 17-20



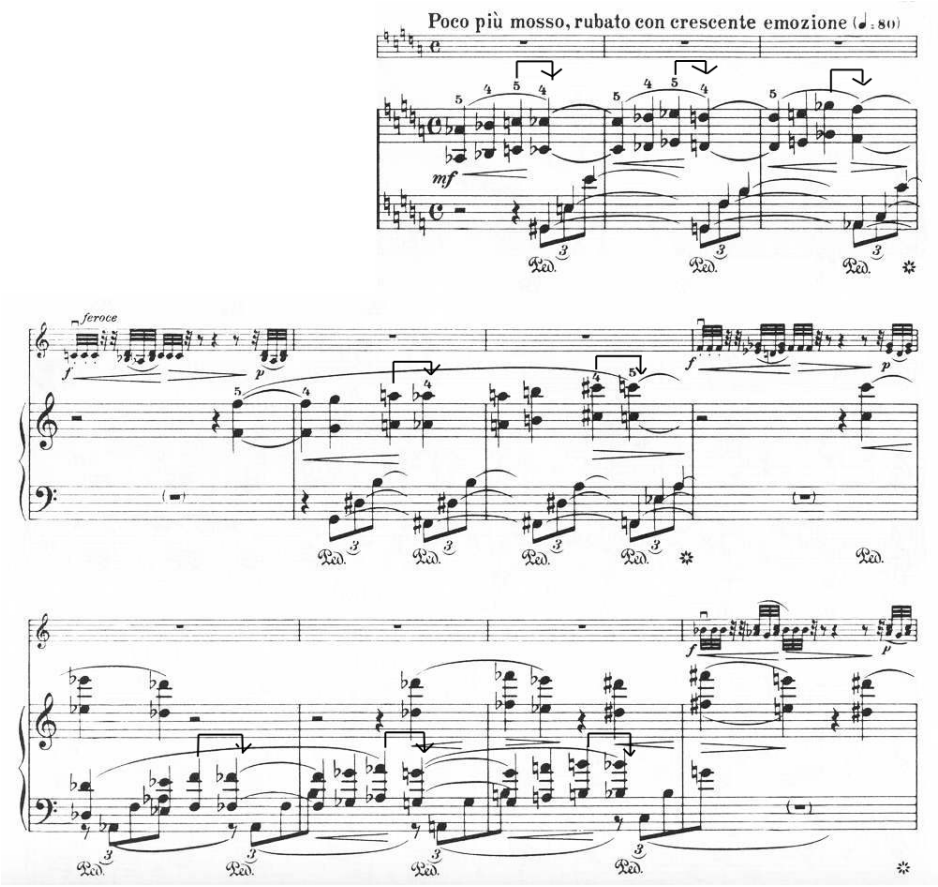

In measure 25 Janáček changes the pedal to two pedal pitches; E (semitone shift from E♭ pedal in measure 21) and F♯ (violin). Stacked chords over the pedal tones are composed of the E7 chord (+C♯). These chords form a motive that sequences through the next 4 measures.

Example 2.23: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 2, mm. 25-28



Janáček's harmonic language in the transition section of the fourth movement (mm. 40-59) is highly modulative as seen from the example 2.24. Janáček achieved a sense of motion and suspended tonality by using a constant semitone shift to transition from one temporary tonal center to another. This can be seen in the octaves of the piano right hand.

Example 2.24: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 4, mm. 40-50; The brackets indicate semitonal shifts




Janáček's rich harmonic language used in this sonata was the consequence of many different influences as well as personal choice. The most prominent influences as seen from my research are the elements drawn from Czech folk music and Gypsy traditions such as: Czech folk song melodic and harmonic modal characteristics, "Moravian" and "Lachian" types of modulations, and floatation of keys. Janáček's most original input included the fifth-series pitch collections used as keys and semitone shifts used as modulation devices. This composition helped to develop the harmonic language of the violin sonata genre, and made it a source of inspiration and point of reference for compositions that followed.

## Form

Janáček generally avoided the traditional forms used by many of his contemporaries and immediate predecessors, and this had a strong bearing on the musical language of the Sonata. Some writers have attempted to explain Janáček's sectionalized forms as a response to particular influences. They explain it as a part of Janáček's view of music as a flow of dramatic events, that caused him to allow the programmatic material to dominate the design. And, as always, there was the strong Moravian folk music influence. Most Moravian folk songs are generally four phrases long, built upon repetition and variation (especially repetition of the motives and phrases), and are formally divided into two, three, or four parts. Janáček was mainly interested in songs that had the return of material incorporated in the form, and he called them *kolečky* or "small wheels." In traditional terms, they are actually varied types of ternary and small rondo forms.[61] Janáček's pieces are usually based on repetition, variation, and contrast. It is rare in his music to find movements based on strict classical forms, such as sonata or rondo form. Instead Milan Kaderavek relates the resulting formal schemes in Janáček's music to something he calls "dramatic form."[62]

One of Janáček's characteristics is to compose a small motive (usually consisting of a melodic fragment) that is repeated, embellished, altered, and subsequently used as a base for a larger structure until a pattern emerges. He presents new material when a particular motive is exhausted. Within this constant repetition, Janáček often introduces sudden tempo shifts and changes in mood and dynamics. This approach increases the dramatic quality of his

[61] Novak, "What is Folk about Janáček," 253.
[62] Kaderavek, "Stylistic Aspects of the Late Chamber Music of Leoš Janáček: An Analytical Study," 19-21.

compositional style and thus establishes a connection between his operatic works and instrumental music.[63]

Clearly, the first movement of the sonata does not adhere to the strict classical scheme of sonata form. However, we can consider it to be a clever combination of a number of sections that resemble, in some respects, a monothematic sonata form scheme. For example, all of the sections contain similar thematic material. Instead of two contrasting themes, Janáček presents a single motive. Thus the motivic cell from m. 4 (pitches: D♭, E♭, B♭) becomes the main structural unit underlying the entire movement. Theme 1 (mm. 4-16) can be sectionalized into four sub-phrases (see the schematic outline of the first movement on page 47). In the first sub-phrase mm. 5 and 6 again arise from the main motive, which is now transposed and modified. This type of accumulation, variation, and modification of micro-texture can also be found in the compositional techniques of Mussorgsky, whom Janáček greatly admired.[64]

The second sub-section (mm. 7-9) repeats the motive, expanding it in bar 8 (adding a C♭), and creating a modified leap to G♮ in bar nine to conclude the section. The third and fourth sub-sections begin with an inverted main motive, and the entire section concludes with a whole-tone scale ascending by step. This scheme not only presents another modification of the motive, but also imparts to it a modal feeling. Close study of each section reveals that all of the sections are actually built upon one central idea, the original motivic cell in m. 4 of the first movement.

The second section (mm.16-27) is derived from the same motive; the derivation is found in a deviated tail.

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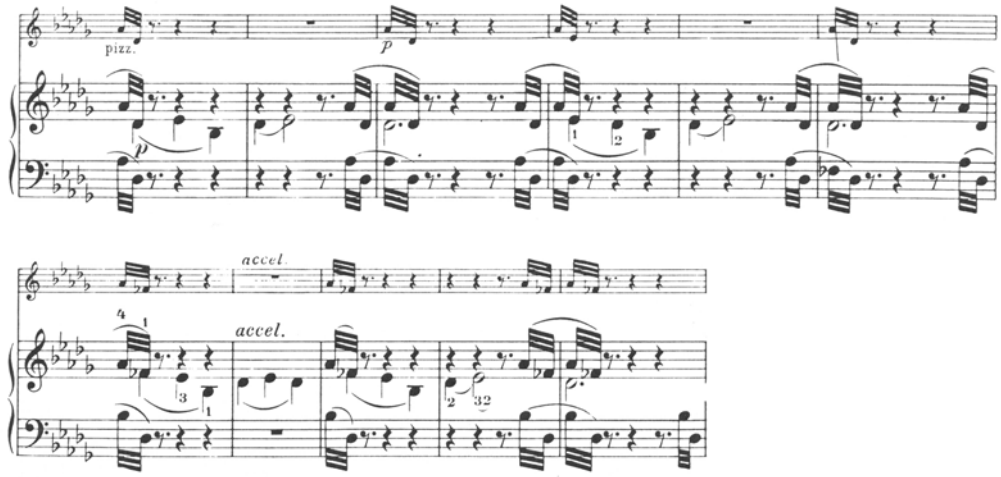
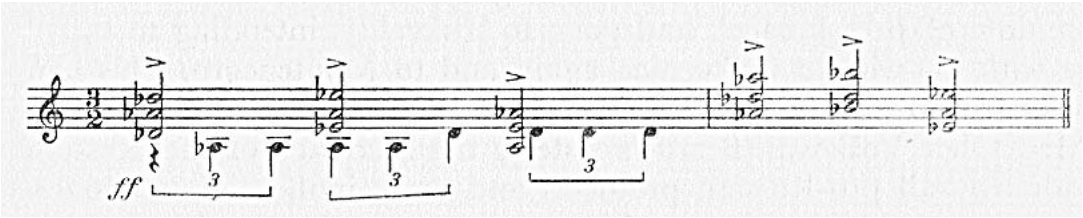
[63] Ibid.
[64] Prick, "Stylistic Evolution of Leoš Janáček's Lesser Known Compositions for Violin," 84.

Example 2.25: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt.1, mm. 17-27



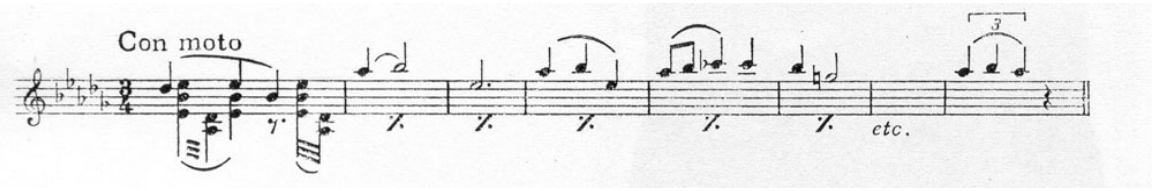

The whole first theme has been pointed out by Vogel as having a connection with Janáček's opera *Kata Kabanova* [65] and its closing theme from the penultimate scene. (See example 2.26 a).

Example 2.26: a) Motive from the penultimate scene of the opera *Kata Kabanova.*




[65] *Kata Kabanova* was composed from 1919-1921. According to Vogel, the Russian atmosphere that dominates the Violin Sonata is even more striking when compared with the motivic material that is affiliated with this opera's motivic material. Vogel, *Leoš Janáček,* 214.

Example 2.26: b) Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt.1, mm. 4-11




The third section (mm. 28-32) has been designated as a second theme by Vogel,[66] but neither the melodic material (the same motive) nor the use of repeated figurations as an accompaniment helps to support this idea.

The fourth section (mm. 33-36) acts as connecting "bridge-like" material. An ostinato-like pattern in the right hand of the piano introduces a new mode, while the violin and left hand of the piano exchange the repetition of the "hook-motive."

Theorists Burghauser and Vogel believe that the fifth section (mm. 38-42) consists of the second and third subjects respectively.[67] The material of this section appears at first to be different, but is simply another transformation of the main motive. Where the fifth section begins is debatable because of the introduction of the group of thirty-seconds in measure 37, the last measure of the fourth section. This formation later becomes the head of the "new" motive that is used to build section five. One cannot help noticing that these thirty-second notes are simply an enharmonically respelled reference to the accompanying ostinato that supports the transition section four bars earlier. These small motivic formulations were, for Janáček, very characteristic. He called them *sčasovky:* short, repetitive figures of static harmonic content.[68] The repeated combination of the upbeat *sčasovky* and the transformation of the main motive

[66] Ibid., 215.
[67] Prick, "Stylistic Evolution of Leoš Janáček's Lesser Known Compositions for Violin," 85.
[68] Kaderavek, "Stylistic Aspects of the Late Chamber Music of Leoš Janáček: An Analytical Study," 12.

define this section. Being very short compared to section one, it is highly unlikely to be understood as the second subject of this piece. J. Vogel proposes that this section should be heard as a codetta.[69]

The traditional key choices in the recapitulation section show that this movement conforms in part to sonata form. The majority of the recapitulation sub-sections have A♭ as the tonal center, reminding us of sonata form, in which the two contrasting subjects return in the same key. The coda section (mm. 106-end), which modulates to D♭ major, is particularly interesting since it is the subdominant of the key in which the movement starts.

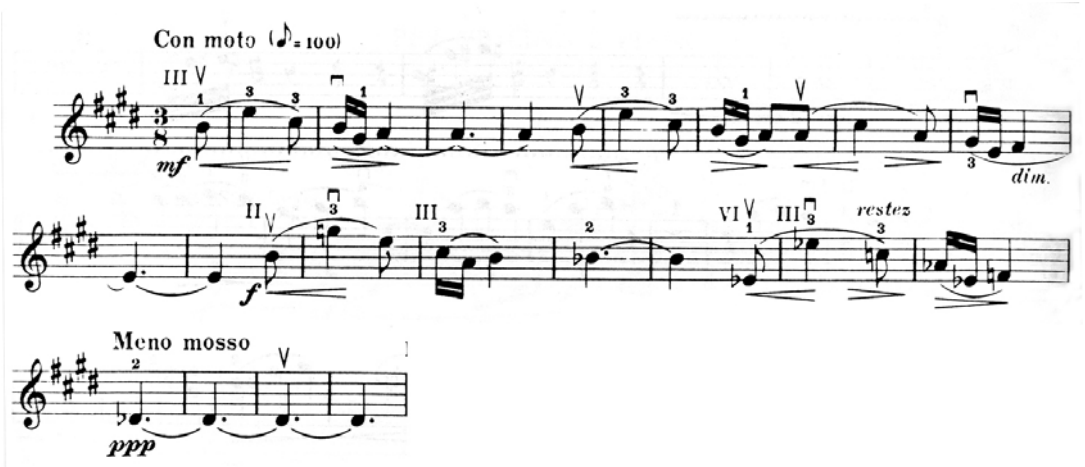
[69] Vogel, *Leoš Janáček,* 214.

| *Schematic outline; Mvt. 1* | *measure numbers* | *keys* |
|---|---|---|
| Exposition: | | |
| Introduction | 1-3 | V7/a♭ |
| Section 1 | 4-16 (3+3+3+4) | a♭ |
| Section 2 | 16-27 (1+3+3+5) | d♭ |
| Section 3 | 28-32 (4+3) | e♭/C♭ |
| Section 4 | 33-37 (2+3) | WT1 |
| Section 5, codetta | 38-42 (2+2+2) | V/E |
| Development: | | a♭ → mod→V/a♭ |
| Section 6 | 43-49 (4+2) | |
| Section 7 | 50-54 (3+2) | |
| Section 8 | 55-65 (3+2+1+2+2+1) | mod.→V/a♭ |
| Recapitulation : | | |
| Section 9 | 66-77 (3+3+3+3+1) | a♭ |
| Section 10 | 78-88 (1+3+3+4) | a♭ |
| Section 11 | 89-93 (4+3) | A♭-f-D♭ |
| Section 12 | 94-100 (2+3) | W1 |
| Section 13 “codetta” | 101-105 (2+2+2) | a♭-V/D♭ |
| Coda: | 106-110 (2+3) | D♭ |

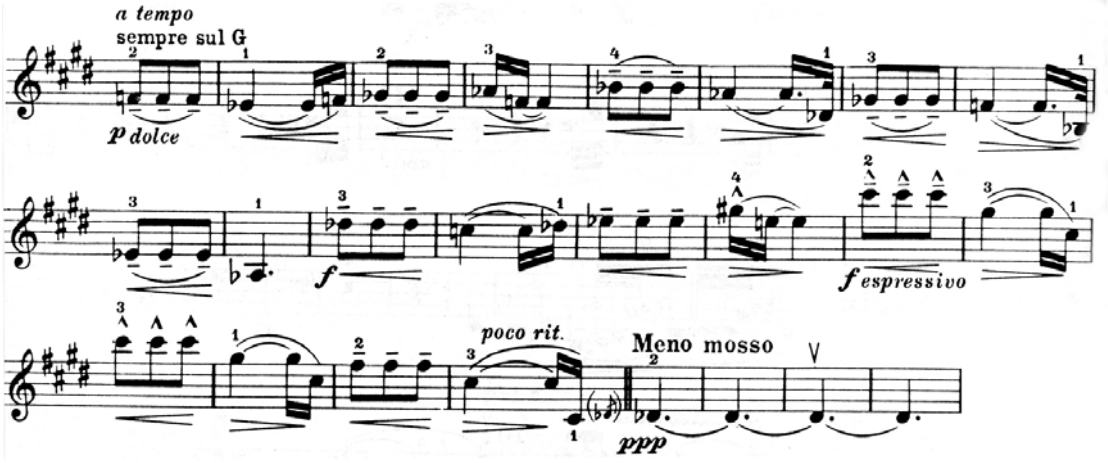
The second movement displays a rondo-like structure, in which two themes are exchanged with intervening episodes.

Example 2.27: Janáček Violin Sonata; Mvt. 2; Two alternating themes

a) Theme 1




b) Theme 2

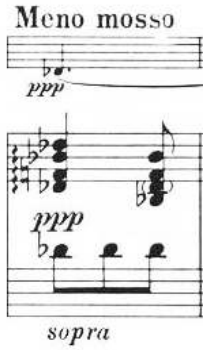



These episodes are built from material drawn from both themes. Observing measure 17 in example 2.28, we can see that the piano (left hand) presents material similar to that of the first

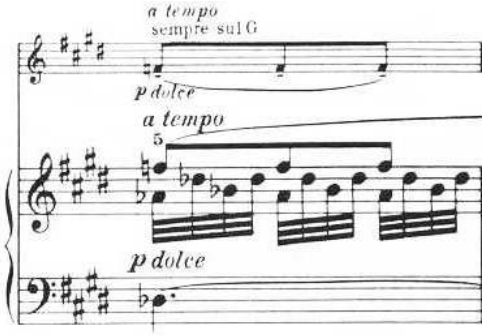
subject. For example, the notes repeated by the left hand in measure 17 foreshadow the second subject's leading motive, that appears in the violin part in measure 37.

Example 2.28: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 2; comparison of mm. a) 17 and b) 37

a)




b)




Analysts regard the themes in this movement as rare moments in which Janáček expresses himself in extended, fully developed subjects. As Vogel writes:

> The second movement, the Ballad, alternates a lifting, imitative version of the main theme...with an "extended," soothing melody of a typically Valachian atmosphere...[70]

Interestingly, the "lengthy" themes in this movement are also built from repetitive sections. Instead of simply repeating the earlier pattern, Janáček reverses the order of the themes and, in the second half of the movement, the second theme appears first, in a varied and extended manner.

[70] Ibid., 215.

| *Schematic outline; Mvt. 2* | *measure numbers* | *keys* |
|---|---|---|
| A-theme one: | 1-17 (4+6 + 4+3) | E |
| Transition: | 17-36 (4+4+4+4+4) | (b♭), D♭, (B♭), A♭, (B♭7), E7, d♭, A♭7, g♯V/D♭ |
| B-theme two: | 37-57 (4+6 + 4+6) | D♭, b♭, C♭, E, c♯(d♭) |
| Transition: | 57-76 (4+4+4+4+4) | D♭~modulation~a♭ (g♯) |
| B¹-theme two: | 77-107 (4+4+6 + 6+4+7) | A♭, f~modulation~V/C♯ |
| A¹-theme one: | 108-129 (4+1+2 +6 + 4+5) | c♯, B, E |
| Coda: | 129-end (2+3+3+3) | C♯ |

B¹ begins with the theme in the piano and remains there even when the violin enters in m. 81. A major extension begins in m. 90, where the improvisation described above takes place. The accompanying segments are in the violin part, while the piano takes over the main subject throughout this set of sequences.

A¹ also exhibits a cadential improvisatory character. The rhapsodic figure elaboration (m. 111) is expanded in mm. 114 and 116. Janáček modulates with this "cadenza" into B major, which then becomes the dominant for the return of the first subject's motive in m. 121 in E major.

The third movement displays a compound ternary, scherzo-trio-scherzo-like structure (*Allegretto-Meno mosso-Allegretto*). Both the *Allegretto* and the *Meno Mosso* are sectionalized in structure and are reminiscent of ternary (a b $a^1$) forms. The simple folk-sounding tune is basically repeated three times with slight variations that make the second one more developmental, and the third one more of a recapitulation. Of all the movements, the third presents the most clearly outlined form.

| *Schematic outline; Mvt. 3* | *measure numbers* | *keys* |
|---|---|---|
| Allegretto (A) | | |
| Section 1 | 1-5 (1+2+2) | a♭ |
| Section 2 | 6-14 (2+2+2+2) | a♭ |
| Section 3 | 15-24 (2+2+2+3+3) | a♭ |
| Meno mosso (B) | | |
| Section 1 | 25-34 (5+5) | B♭,G♭ |
| Section 2 | 35-45 (5+6) | D, c#, V/A♭, A♭ |
| Section 3 | 46-65 (5+4+10) | b♭, V/B♭, a♭ |
| Section 4 codetta | 65-79(1+6+8) | V/a♭ |
| Allegretto (A) | | |

The fourth movement exhibits a formal structure similar to that of the second movement: i.e., a rondo-like alignment of sections with an improvisatory character. In this movement the overlapping of sections and misalignment of voices that create the polyphonic illusion, especially in the transitional sections, becomes more noticeable.

| *Schematic outline; Mvt. 4* | *measure numbers* | *keys* |
|---|---|---|
| Introduction | 1-2 | g# |
| Section 1 (A) | 3-26<br>(violin and piano have overlapping sections) | g# |
| Section 2 (B) | 27-39 (4+4+2+2) | E |
| Section 3 Transition | 39-59<br>4+3+polyphonic misalignment of voices | modulatory |
| Section 4 ($A^1$ ) | 60-68 (2+2+5) | g♯ |
| Section 5 ($B^1$) | 69-80 (2+6+5) | a♭ |
| Section 6 Coda | 81-end | g♯ |

Many analysts describe Janáček's style in this sonata as "anti-developmental." It is debatable whether this description is due to a lack of the true development section in the first movement, or because of an extensive use of repeated motives, phrases, and sections. In any case, Janáček's use of these unique structural forms in each of the movements gives this Sonata an individual musical personality that had not been seen before.

## Violin techniques

There are various features of violin technique required to successfully perform this sonata. In the left hand there are specific problems connected with fingering, intonation, and vibrato. In the right hand the violinist must understand certain bowing articulations and different sound effects peculiar to Janáček.

### *Left hand techniques*

In his dissertation about the development of violin technique at the beginning of the 20th century Ernest Periera wrote:

> In the left-hand technique, the invention of the chin-rest and the (by now) nearly universal way of holding the violin permitted a free left hand that allowed all the following: extensive use of positions on all strings, including single-string playing; natural and false harmonics, including double-stop harmonics; glissandi; single-and double-trills of various kinds; continuous and selective vibrato; double-, triple-and quadruple-stops; extension- and contraction-fingering, including unisons, fingered octaves and tenths; sliding chromatic fingering and, in isolated cases, contiguous chromatic fingerings and left-hand pizzicato.[71]

All of these techniques, with some of them being expanded and intensified, appear more regularly throughout the 20th century.

Otakar Ševčik (1852-1934) was one of the most influential violin pedagogues of the time, and responsible for many innovations in violin technique. Ševčik was Janáček's contemporary and countryman, and was famous for his left hand exercises based on hand frame positions. These are still used by many violin students today. The increased chromaticism of the late 19th century induced Ševčik and others to "rediscover" the fingering for chromatic scales that Geminiani (1687-1762) had suggested: using a new finger for every semitone (contiguous

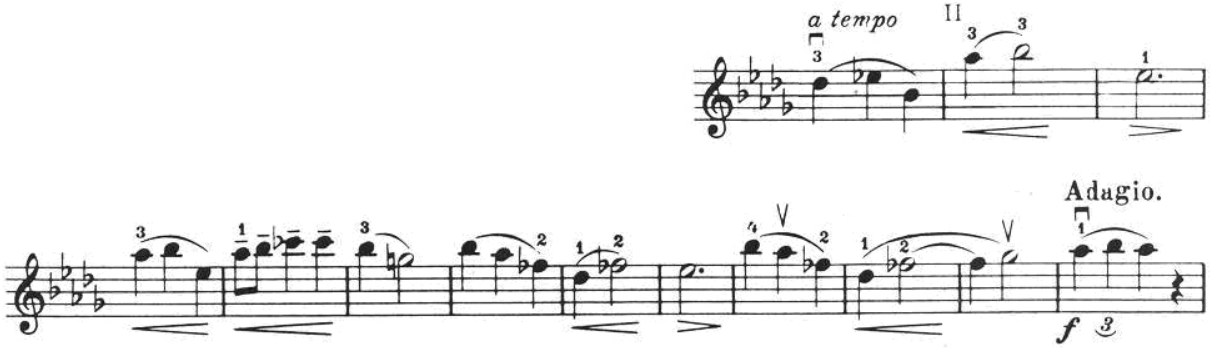
[71] Ernest Periera, "Twentieth-Century Violin Technique" (DMA thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1987), 17.

fingering) as opposed to the sliding type more commonly used. This allowed performers to respond to the demands of the music from the late 19th century onwards.[72]

Carl Flesch (1873-1944) was another prominent pedagogue of the early 20th century. In his famous publication, *The Art of Violin Playing*, which includes the supplements titled *Scale System*, *Basic Studies*, and *Violin Fingering,* he indicated extensions and contiguous fingerings as necessary to avoid slides.

Janáček's Violin Sonata qualifies as difficult material because of the intonation problems[73] and specific fingerings required. A need for a more advanced left hand technique is created by the use of modality and chromaticism, extensive use of enharmonically respelled pitches, and difficult keys often using many flats. For example, at the beginning of the first movement, in the first theme Janáček's use of D♭ as the tonal center obliges the left hand to use non-fixed positions and finger extensions in order to remain on the **A** string and in that way preserve same color and timbre.

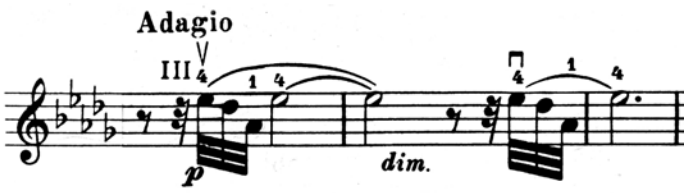
Example 2.29: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 1, mm. 4-16




[72] Ibid., 18.
[73] To achieve a "perfect" intonation or to play "in tune" is an ongoing task for every violinist. With the more chromatic and modal language that we find in Janáček's Violin Sonata, this task is even more challenging.

Another example of non-fixed left hand positions and further finger extension passage can be found in the first movement in example 2.30 when the first finger must reach from fifth to fourth position. This edition of the Violin Sonata suggests this specific technique in order to preserve the color of the **D** string (avoiding clumsy string crossing) and to efficiently execute the passage. This creates a double extension where the first finger reaches back a step to A♭, and it is immediately followed by the fourth finger reaching back up a step to E♭.

Example 2.30: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 1, mm. 101-102



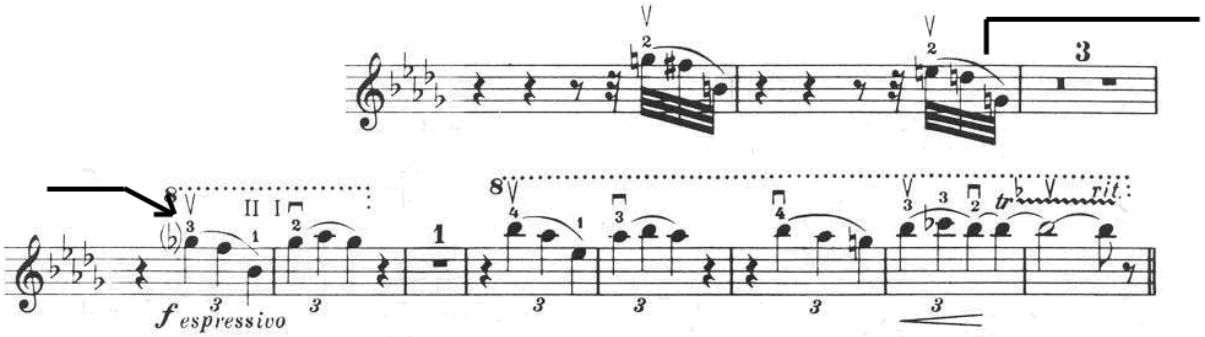

In the second movement mm. 24-57 the left hand is required to be extremely flexible with only a few moments when it is in a set position. A violinist must specifically learn the steps of the fingers in the more modal and chromatic passages. There is no actual set of standard fingerings that fit this passage, and one is forced to "cripple"[74] with fingers in order to reach the pitches fluently.

Janáček writes many wide leaps for the violin, causing particular difficulties for the violinist. A shift from G♮, second position on the D string, to G♭ in sixth position on the E string is in my opinion a difficult passage to play in tune even though the violinist has three measures to get prepared. This high-lying extended melodic passage was very unusual in previous violin

[74] The "cripple" fingering is an expression used by Ernest Periera in his dissertation about 20th century violin technique. It vividly explains the extensions a left hand has to perform in different directions.

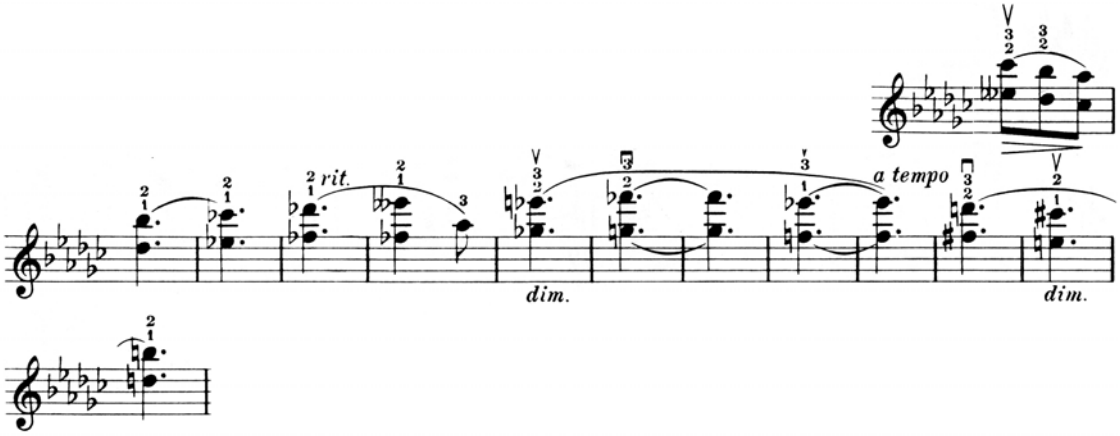
sonatas. Janáček's Violin Sonata brings this technical advancement as a new element in the development of the 20th-century violin sonata.

Example 2.31: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 2, mm. 54-65; The brackets show the jump from G♮ to G♭ two octaves higher in the violin.



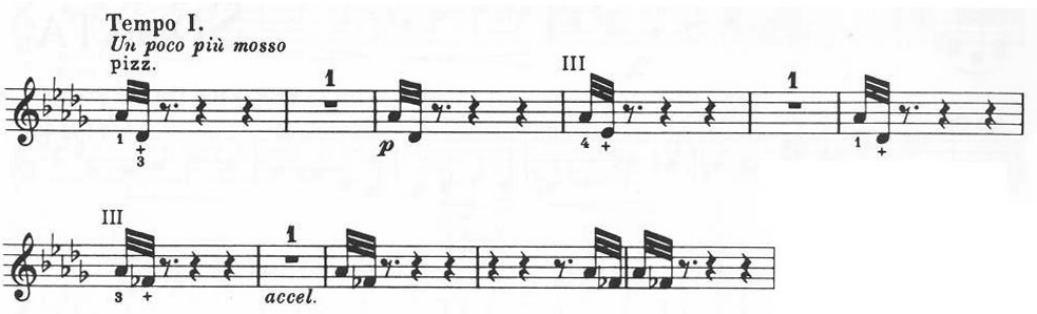

Enharmonic respelling of pitches makes the music difficult to read, but once the folk tunes themselves have been heard, a particular passage becomes easier to hear and to play. An excellent example of this is the double-stop passage in the third movement, mm. 46-59. Such an extended double-stop passage was very rare and unusual in the violin sonatas of the pre-20th-century period and therefore it represents a technical advance.

Example 2.32: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 3, mm. 46-58



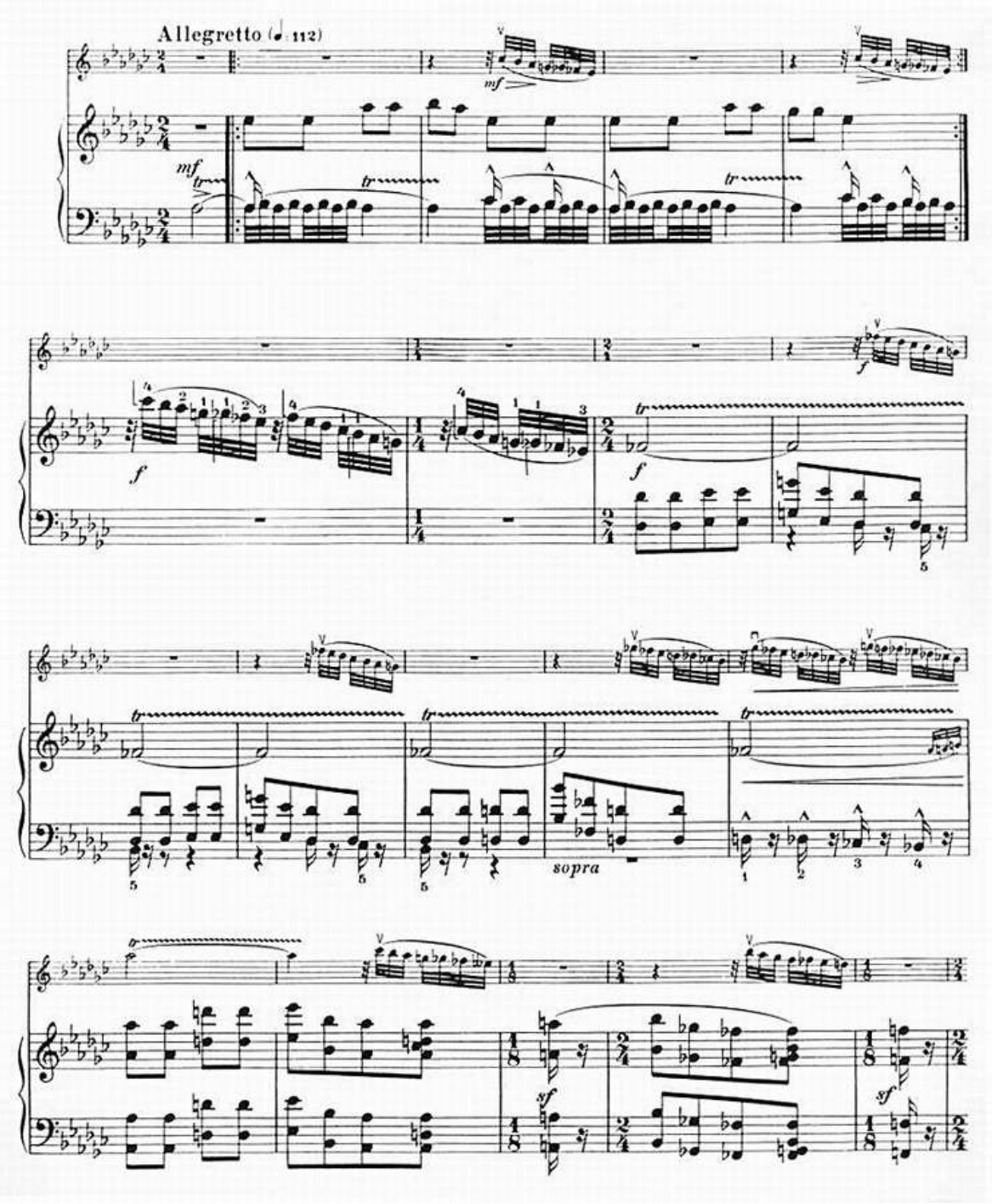

In this composition, left hand pizzicato is used not only as an effect, but as part of the overall dramatic and musical texture. The following example illustrates the combination of left and right hand pizzicato with fast rhythmic figures that make the music much more dramatic.

Example 2.33: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 1, mm. 17-27; The + sign indicates left hand pizzicato.




At the beginning of the third movement Janáček presents exceptionally rapid descending scales in the violin. This type of fast scale passages have not been featured, especially not so extensively in the pre-existing violin sonatas. Therefore they could be seen as another element of technical advance presented in this sonata.

Example 2.34: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 3, mm. 1-19




*Right hand techniques*

At the beginning of the 20th century, all the bowing articulations known today were already in standard use. These included: détaché, staccato, martelé, legato or slurred bowing, col

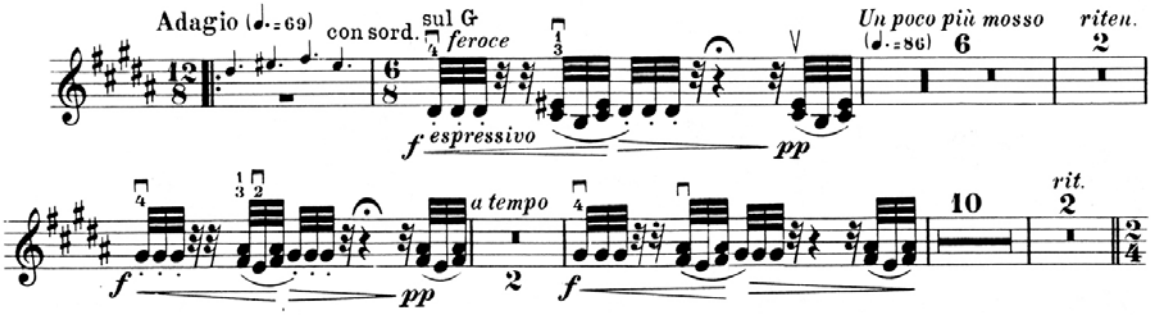
legno, ricochet or jeté, spiccato, saltando or sautillé, flying staccato, tremolo, the Viotti-bowing, the louré or portato, arpeggiando bowing, sul-ponticello and sul-tasto.[75]

In Janáček's Violin Sonata, as in other works of the time, many of these features are used to create different characters. The specific bowings Janáček uses in this piece are an indication of the type of sound he was seeking. From the previous analysis and historical background, one can conclude that these sounds are closely connected with timbres of folk music (for example the passage with extended repeated figurations in the second movement mm. 94-106, see example 2.36), human speech (we have already observed the particular impact of the Lachian dialect in the first theme of the third movement, see example 2.12), and the environment (the main theme of the first movement resembling one of Janáček's "real" motives, see example 2.3). Being aware of the folk influence in this sonata helps a violinist strive towards the textures Janáček adapted from folk bands, gypsy fiddlers, cimbalom players,[76] and the unrefined voices of folk singers.

In his Violin Sonata Janáček uses more traditional bowing techniques as well as more inventive ones. But it is the use of the latter that makes this composition different from other violin sonatas. Such an example is the rapidly serrated interjections at the beginning of the fourth movement.

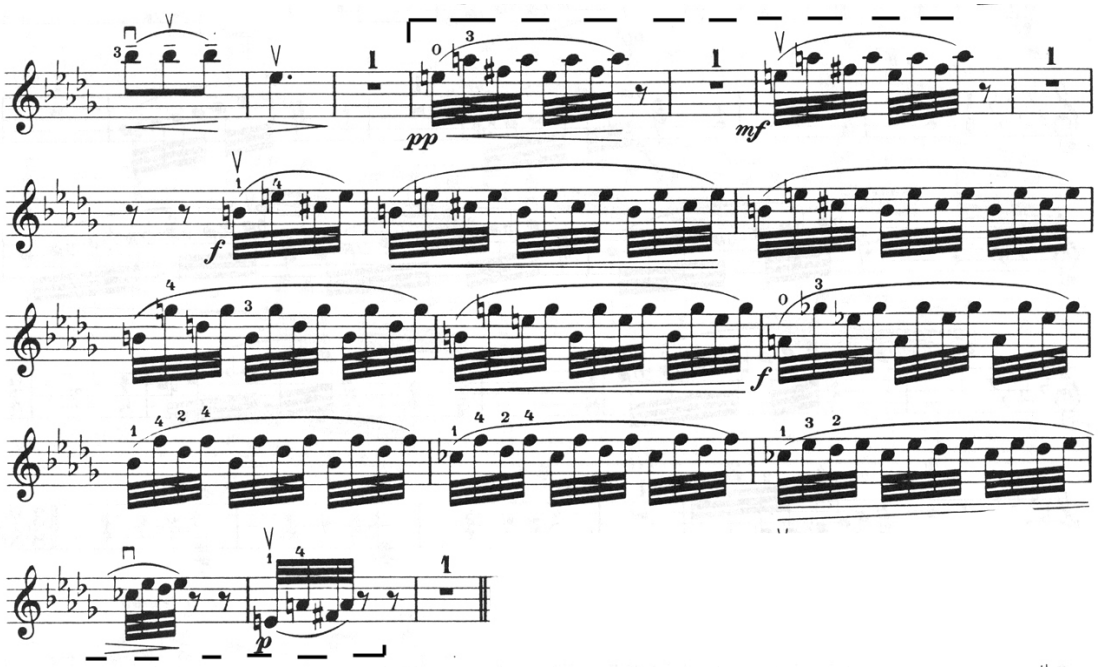
[75] Ibid., 17.
[76] The *cimbalom* is a Hungarian stringed folk instrument played with mallets.

Example 2.35: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 4, mm. 1-26



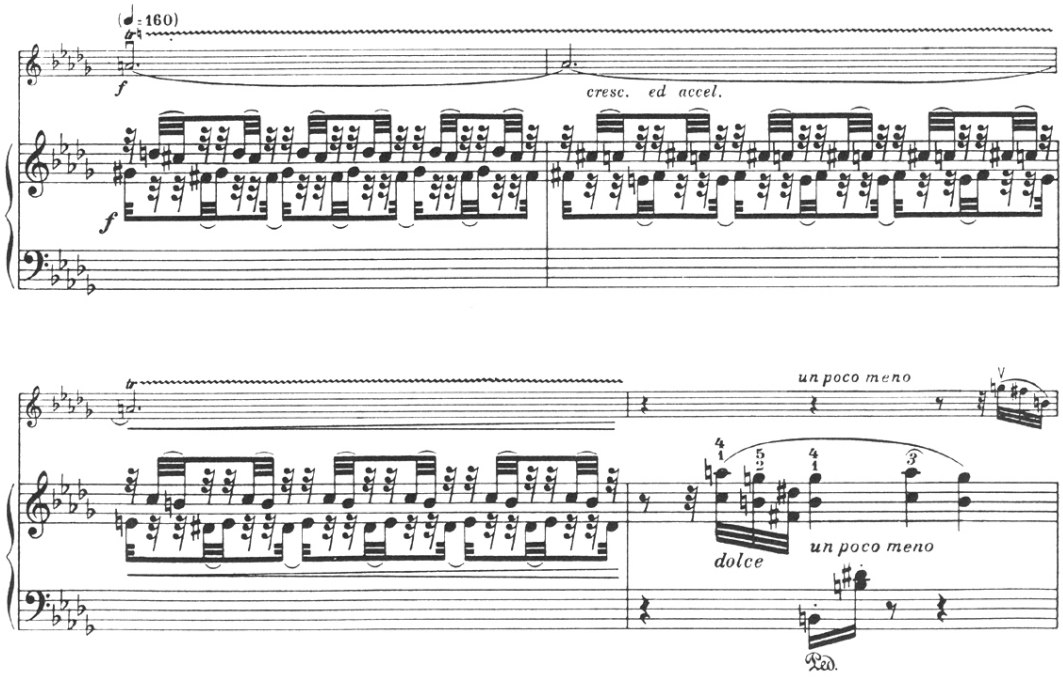

The repeated figures support the melody harmonically and invoke memories of folk instrumentation (such as the cimbalom). They increase the level of intensity throughout with the use of specific modal and harmonic choices. One example of disruptive repeated figures occurs in the second movement, mm. 92-106 (see example 2.36), where varying dynamics support the thematic development in the piano part. Some of the figures require challenging finger extensions in the left hand, and together with the prolonged loud dynamics they represent a further addition to the range of techniques used in violin sonatas at the beginning of the 20th-century.

Example 2.36: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 2, mm. 89-107; The brackets show the beginning and the end of the section with repeated figuration.




Janáček achieves a similar effect through the use of trills. These trills are intensified with forte dynamics and are unusually long, three or four measures, which makes them more difficult to play. This is a new element in the development of the violin sonata. In the first movement, these can be found in mm. 44-47 and mm. 50-52, both supported by a repeated figuration pattern in the piano part. (See example 2.37).

Example 2.37: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 1, mm. 50-53; Trill in violin is supported by a descending figuration texture in piano.




The different emotional characters and sound effects Janáček notated had repercussions in the increased technical difficulty required to perform this composition. Wide leaps, finger extensions, un-fixed left hand positions, and enharmonic spelling are just some of the elements Janáček incorporated into this piece. Like many aspects of his musical language, some of these techniques such as repeated figurations, lengthy trills, and left hand pizzicatos were also a direct influence of traditional folk-band players.

## CHAPTER III

## JANÁČEK'S DEPARTURE FROM THE TRADITIONS OF THE GERMANIC VIOLIN SONATA, AS REPRESENTED BY BRAHMS' VIOLIN SONATAS

Janáček made an effort to turn away from Germanic traditions of compositional form and structure. He renounced Wagner and most Western-derived characteristics, looking instead to Russia and his own country's music traditions for inspiration. The three violin sonatas of Brahms serve as some of the most prominent representatives of the genre in the late Romantic period, and act as reference points for comparison with Janáček's Violin Sonata.

Brahms is one of the greatest representatives of German instrumental music from the 19th century. His violin sonatas create a completely different atmosphere from that of Janáček's Violin Sonata. Brahms' sonatas offer a palette of sweetness, love, nature, and melancholy. Janáček's Sonata creates a special feeling of suspense and fateful gloominess, truly setting it apart from the violin sonatas written before. The historical circumstances of Brahms' violin sonatas are as follows. The first, most lyrical Sonata in G major, op. 78, also called "Rain-drop," was composed in 1878-79 and inspired by a Brahms song from 1873, "Regenlied," op. 53, no. 3. Brahms wrote this sonata, as well as the Second Symphony and the Violin Concerto, during summer vacations at Lake Worth in Pörtschach. He commented that the lovely natural surroundings had an extraordinary effect on these compositions: "Here the melodies are flying so thick that one must be careful not to step on one."[77]

[77] Alfred von Ehrmann, *Johannes Brahms: Weg, Werk und Welt,* (Breitkopf & Härtel, Berlin, 1933), 287.

The second sonata in A major, op.100, is considered songlike in a specific way since it alludes to many of Brahms songs, e.g., "Komm bald!" (Come soon!) (op. 97, no. 5), "Wie Melodie zieht es mir" (How the Melody draws) (op. 105, no. 1), "Aut dem Kirchhofe" (On the Church Roof) (op. 105, no. 4), "Meine Lieder" (My Songs) (op. 106, no. 4), and "Meine Liebe is grün" (My love is green) (op. 63, no. 5). All of these songs were inspired by love, and, consequently the atmosphere of the sonata is engulfed in warmth and beauty.

The third Sonata in D minor, op. 108 was dedicated to his friend and conductor, Hans von Bülow. This work, especially its first movement, is more suppressed, mysterious, and provocative in character. The dramatic impact of the two first movement themes is very operatic, and can be compared to the dramatic level of Janáček's Sonata.

The development of the violin sonata as a genre at the beginning of the 20th century can also be observed through a comparison of the historical circumstances that surrounded Brahms' violin sonatas and Janáček's Violin Sonata. Czech folk music and the programmatic sounds of upcoming war inspired Janáček's music and increased the level of realism in his sonata. While Brahms used his own songs in his first and second sonata, Janáček was influenced by Czech folk songs, although he never cited them explicitly.

Brahms was strongly influenced by both Mozart and Beethoven, and especially by their chamber works. According to Imogen Fellinger, in Brahms's inscription of a copy of the original edition of his Violin Sonata in G major, Op. 78, he referred to both Mozart and Beethoven by writing the words spoken by "Himmelskonigin" (Queen of Heaven) from Faust's "Verklärung" (Transfiguration) in Goethe's *Faust*: "Komm, hebe dich zu hohren Sphären!/ Wenn er Dich ahnet, folgt er nach" (Come, rise to higher spheres/ If he senses, he will follow).

This shows us that Brahms was fully aware of the tradition of sonata writing, and how he adapted in to that tradition.[78]

In contrast, Janáček studied and admired the 18th- and 19th-century Germanic composers, but did not choose to follow and develop all their forms directly. His compositional style cannot be completely understood, however, without realizing that it grew out of those traditions. Skoumal addresses Janáček's Romantic heritage as follows:

> Janáček reveals his nineteenth-century heritage through his interest in 'unity' and motivic relationships. Composers of the time seem to have striven to achieve unity in their works; indeed, the artistic merits of nineteenth century composition were often judged on the basis of whether or not they were deemed to display unity. For nineteenth-century composers, the quest for unity became paramount. The gradual dissolution of established structural paradigms (and ultimately dissolution of tonality itself), as well as the changing make-up of audiences, made unity a more pressing problem.[79]

Brahms cultivated long-established genres of orchestral and chamber music. He was strongly oriented towards "absolute" music, avoiding the programmatically driven style of the time. Although Janáček contributed greatly to chamber literature with his two string quartets and the Violin Sonata, his style was definitely *not* dedicated to absolute music. He was primarily an opera composer. Even in his strictly instrumental compositions, Janáček tried to incorporate elements typically reserved for more dramatic works.

Brahms' style comes across clearly in his chromatic language, constant motivic development, thematic transformation, and metric and rhythmic complexity. In his compositions he had a tendency towards "total organization," despite his frequent functional and formal ambiguity. In contrast, Janáček's style, as already discussed in the previous chapter, is "anti-developmental."

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[78] Max Kalbeck, *Johannes Brahms*, vol. 3 (Berlin: n.p., 1913), 383-4, n.1. This reference is found in Imogen Fellinger's article "Brahms' View of Mozart" in *Brahms,* ed. Robert Pascal, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 53.

[79] Zdenek Skoumal, "Janáček's Folk Settings and the 'Vixen,'" in *Janáček Studies,* ed. Paul Wingfield, (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), 128.

In other words, he builds his form not by developing and transfiguring motives, but rather through constant motivic and phrase repetition, which is one of the reasons why his movements in this sonata are noticeably shorter in length than Brahms' movements. Brahms, however, has an ability to maximize the opportunities for development without endangering comprehensibility.[80] He exploits repetition only as much as necessary to give coherence to his ideas and their rapid evolution, and he tends to avoid literal repetition in favor of continuous development of the musical prose.[81]

While Brahms employs the traditional sonata and variation forms, his late-career violin sonatas fit into a new compositional style due to certain structural and tonal contexts. Many analysts categorize Brahms' form as "organic," or growing out of his musical ideas.[82] Still, many aspects of Brahms' sonata forms in these compositions are regular, following historical tradition. He preserved "the uniformity of proportions, internal dynamics, and large-scale rhythmic structure, and also took care to mark his large-scale formal restatements with signs of developing variation."[83]

Both Brahms and Janáček were interested in folk music. Brahms set over two hundred folksong texts, keeping pace with the dialect of the text by using diatonic and often static harmonies, modality, tonic pedals, and resultant second-inversion triads and syllabic settings of the text. Often the lilting melodies, simple rhythms, triple meter, tonic drone, and parallel thirds, hint at a pastoral character.

Scientific study of folk music did not develop until the beginning of the 20th century, with the arrival of ethnomusicology. Janáček was one of the first well-known composers of the time

[80] Peter H. Smith, *Expressive Forms in Brahms' Instrumental Music* (Indiana: University Press, 2005), 67.
[81] Ibid., 108.
[82] James Webster, "The General and the Particular in Brahms' Later Sonata Forms," in *Brahms Studies: Analytical and Historical Perspectives* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 49-51.
[83] Smith, 68.

caught up in the subject. He collected and studied the structure and harmonic aspects of folk songs, and then incorporated them into his original compositions. Also, when compared to Brahms' works, the stronger sense of modality in Czech songs, as opposed to that of German folk music, inspired the more modally influenced compositional style of Janáček's pieces.

## Form

The thematic designs of sonata movements by Brahms and Janáček differ significantly. All three of Brahms' sonatas feature both a first and a second theme group. In contrast, Janáček's "sonata form" is monothematic. Regarding its sectionalization,, JanáčekViolin Sonata could be described as consisting of a single theme group.

The most atypical aspect of sonata form occurs in Brahms' D-minor Sonata, where the long first group appears to compensate for the unusually short development, performed entirely over a dominant pedal. The recapitulation adds a secondary development that not only extends the developmental process but also explores a new tonal region (F♯). We have already discussed Janáček's lack of a secondary theme, or even a second group in his "sonata form" scheme within the first movement. However, in examining Brahms' prior deviation from the traditional concept, we can detect the appearance of the unusually short development in the third violin sonata's first movement. Janáček also emphasizes the short "development" section in the first movement of his Violin Sonata by the use of pedals as well as the chromatically induced choice of keys. In Brahms we find F♯ major hinted at in the development and referenced again in the second section; in Janáček, we encounter A minor (♭ii), and E minor (♭vi).

An interesting way to describe Brahms' organization of music is Schönberg's idea of "developing variation." In Schönberg's view this meant that "variation of the features of a basic unit produces all thematic formulations that create fluency, contrasts, variety, logic, and unity on the one hand, and character, mood, expression, and every needed differentiation on the other hand, thus elaborating the *idea* of the piece."[84] Many theorists have embraced this idea and they have recognized an entire era dominated by thematic procedures. This era extended from about 1720 to 1950 and included figures as diverse as Vivaldi and Janáček.[85]

In Brahms' Sonata in G major, op. 78, this principle is clearly and immediately seen at the beginning of the first movement, which presents, in Frisch's view, "the limpid art of developing variation." The violin sets forth a handful of motives from which the "variations" are spun, especially by the flexible development of their rhythmic aspects. The opening section in this movement has an A B $A^{I}$ structure, followed by the development section which, according to Frisch, starts in the middle section and is based primarily on polymetrical devices. The violin part reshapes the notated 6/4 meter into 3/2 in measure 11, and then completes the phrase over the bar line into a 3/4 measure. This process repeats in measures 12 and 13. Underneath the irregularly expanded violin theme, the piano provides a steady flow of eighth-notes, but their arpeggiated pattern suggests another subdivision of the notated meter. This polymetric relationship between the instruments is one of the most complex in all of Brahms' compositions.[86]

The second theme consists of elegantly modified motives drawn from the first theme, and provides the stable thematic group (especially in terms of the metrical aspect) of the sonata form.

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[84] Arnold Schonberg, *Style and Idea,* ed. Leonard Stein (New York: St. Martin's Press,1975), 397.
[85] Walter Frisch, *Brahms and the Principle of Developing Variation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 24.
[86] Ibid., 119.

Thus, the "variations" of the basic motive shape the entire exposition, or, more precisely, "evolve into a fully continuous process."[87] According to Frisch, this sonata adopts "the motivic legacy in which pure horizontal dimension unfolds with both sophistication and flexibility."[88] We have already mentioned how this process was both inherited and further developed by Janáček. Traces of it clearly appear in the first movement of Janáček's Violin Sonata. Relating to our earlier discussion of the motivic structure in Janáček's music, in his first movement he develops the overall texture through the highest degree of motivic use, including obsessive repetitions.

In his Sonata in A major, Brahms uses hybrid form, combining what would have been the second and third movements by way of an alteration of sections in slow and fast tempos, producing a single movement. It is similar to a rondo form. There are no hybrid forms in Janáček's Sonata, but the similarity between Brahms' movement set in rondo-like manner and Janáček's second and fourth movements is apparent.

It is clear that Brahms' formal structures of the specific movements in his violin sonatas are quite progressive. Even though some of his sonata movements show unexpected forms that differ from the Romantic period traditions, Brahms' innovations cannot be applied to his compositional style as a rule. He followed the traditional forms in many aspects, such as movement and section lengths, their key choices, and manner of development. In contrast, Janáček broke many of the rules established by Romantic composers. He was one of the first to incorporate folk elements of repetition and brevity in a violin sonata. In this way, he sent the genre in a new direction. Czech composer Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959) was one of the most important followers of Janáček legacy. In his violin sonatas he incorporated folk music influences, extremely brief musical ideas, and modality.

[87] Ibid., 120.
[88] Ibid.

## Harmony

The harmonic vocabulary in Brahms' compositions, including his sonatas, is enriched by his juxtaposition of distant keys, use of dissonance, and chromaticism. He was fond of subdominant harmony, especially in minor keys, and this emphasis on the plagal division of the octave can be heard both as a relic of older music and as antithetical to the tonic-dominant relationship so characteristic of major-minor tonality.[89] This preferred concept of subdominant relations replacing the dominant later became the rule in Janáček's work. Another common harmonic relationship in Brahms' music that Janáček developed in his work is the semitone interval, frequently occurring as ♭II-I.[90] The flat supertonic is one of the oldest, most commonly used modal inflections in music. It has it roots in the Phrygian mode. In her dissertation Biamonte discusses Rey W. Longyear's concept of the nineteenth-century version of modal harmony as an emphasis on secondary triads (ii, iii, vi in major; III, v♭, VI and ♭VII in minor).[91] Longyear explains that these harmonies became a means of widening tonal spectra among various composers, especially Brahms.

The harmonic language in Brahms' Violin Sonata in D minor exhibits traces of modality in the first movement. In the third measure Brahms uses the III chord. This is a typical choice in modally inflected works in a minor key. Only a few measures later (measures 6, 7 and 8) he temporarily modulates to ♭VII, which is yet another modal inflection in the minor. In this movement Brahms' choices of secondary keys are very much expanded from what one would expect in the typical schemes of classical composers. For example, one of his modulations in the

[89] Nicole Biamonte, "The Modes in the Music of Beethoven, Schumann, and Brahms: Historical Context and Musical Function" (Ph.D thesis, Yale University, 2000), 218.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Rey W. Longyear, *Nineteenth-Century Romanticism in Music,* quoted in Biamonte, 218.

same movement of this sonata is to C major in measure 40 (♭VII of the initial key). The second theme is in F major, understood as III of the movement's tonic. In comparison to the modal inflections in the Brahms Sonata, Janáček's composition amplifies this approach through the much-extended use of modal and exotic scales, as well as whole-tone and pentatonic scales. These types are not found in Brahms' violin sonatas, but nonetheless, we can definitely observe a rebirth of modality in comparison to his predecessors.

As we have seen, Brahms uses modally inflected harmonies in his violin sonatas. Most of his harmonic language's modal peculiarities come from well known German folk music and from the church modal scales which had been used in Western music since the 9th century. Janáček uses modal infections in a different manner and much more extensively. First, modally changed harmonies came from a completely new source, Czech folk music, unfamiliar to Western composers up to that time. Secondly, Janáček uses whole-tone and gypsy scales not only to enrich the harmonic vocabulary and to enhance the timbre of the music, but also to create mood changes and the feeling of an exotic Eastern European culture.

## Rhythm

In Brahms' violin sonatas we encounter one of his most significant rhythmic techniques, namely *hemiola*. The word *hemiola* derives from the Greek word *hemiolios*, meaning "one-and-a-half." It was originally used in music to refer to the frequency ratio 3:2, but it can also represent two measures in triple time articulated or phrased as three measures in duple time.[92] An example of the *hemiola* pattern is apparent in the first movement of the Sonata in A major, measures 33-34 and 37-38. *Hemiola* does not exist in Janáček's Violin Sonata. Both composers

[92] Young In Cho, "A Study of Brahms' Compositional Techniques in the Violin Sonata no. 2 in A Major" (MM thesis, Ball State University, 2005), 10.

manipulated their compositions by use of displacement of meter and complexity of rhythm, and for Brahms this was an especially powerful tool for developing variation.[93]

## Violin techniques

Being a pianist, Brahms turned to the violinist Joseph Joachim for help in editing string-related works. From the Joachim-Moser *Violinschule* of 1905, published in both Germany and England, and from the correspondence between Brahms and Joachim, we can draw certain conclusions about how their relationship affected his compositions. We can also ascertain interesting information about the style of violin technique in the second half of the 19th century.

Unlike Brahms, Janáček was a violinist. He studied the instrument in his youth with the famous violin pedagogue Henry Schradieck at the Leipzig Conservatory; thus he was familiar with all the violin techniques existing at the turn of the century. There is no evidence that he consulted with any other contemporary violinists, resulting in a composition that is not influenced by anyone else.

### *Left hand techniques*

The changes in left hand fingering that emerged at the start of 20th century were commented upon by Joseph Szigeti (1892-1973), a Hungarian-American violinist trained in the older style. Addressing the passages in the Janáček Violin Sonata that were practically impossible to execute with old-fashioned fingerings, he hailed the new modern chromatic fingerings as "liberation."[94] Clive Brown argues, however, that something is lost by adopting the new fingering technique.

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[93] Frisch, *Brahms and the Principle of Developing Variation,* 8.
[94] Bernard D. Sherman, "How Different was Brahms' Playing Style from our own?" in *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style,* ed. Michael Musgrave and Bernard D Sherman (Cambridge: University Press, 2003), 5-6.

He states that the old-fashioned finger-sliding from one position to another[95] was very characteristic of Joachim's style of playing. In Brown's opinion, much of the seamless legato and *portamento*[96] style of playing that is the "real sound" of Brahms and his contemporaries disappears with the application of the new fingering method.[97] In short, he questions today's obsession with clarity at the expense of a more vocal approach for Brahms' music.

Janáček's sonata is very chromatic and modal in tonal language and requires flexible hand positions and nearly "crippling" fingerings. In Brahms, it is appropriate to keep fingerings simple in order to remain closer to the originally desired phrasing and articulation. *Portamento* used in Brahms' sonatas on occasion is necessary while playing Janáček's sonata. It features a technical advance in Janáček's composition. Knowing his infatuation with folk and Gypsy music, I believe that Janáček wanted to imitate Gypsy fiddle playing on purpose, and *portamento* was an integral part of its character and expression.

Interestingly, Brahms was also very concerned about the playability of his compositions. In correspondence with his musician friends, he expressed a particular interest in fingerings. His ideal was to compose for strings so that the player did not need to add any fingerings. He said, "To me, (marked) fingerings are always just evidence that something is rotten in violin scoring."[98]

Joachim's concept of tone production came from the violinist and composer Giovanni Battista Viotti (1755-1824), whose traditional concept of a beautiful and powerful sound did not

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[95] This mannerism is connected with the old-fashioned way of shifting between positions on the fingerboard. Using the same finger to move the hand from one position to another produces a slight glissando effect.
[96] *Portamento* is an audible technique of shifting between the left-hand positions on the fingerboard. (A sort of a short *glissando*). It was used in the past as one of the major decorative techniques. It was also very characteristic in the playing of Gypsy and folk musicians. Today, using too much *portamento* in performance is considered bad taste.
[97] Sherman, "How Different was Brahms' Playing Style from our own?," 5-6.
[98] Styra Avins, "Performing Brahms's Music: Clues from his Letters," in *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style,* ed. Michael Musgrave and Bernard D. Sherman (Cambridge: University Press, 2003), 26.

depend on vibrato as one of its basic elements. Violinists Joachim, Beriot and Spohr used vibrato selectively, and p*ortamento* as a more important expressive device.[99] No 19th-century violin method recommended anything resembling a continuous vibrato. In practice, the violinists Ysaÿe and Kreisler were the first to use wider and more continuous vibrato, a few years after Joachim. Through their efforts the violin acquired a more sensuous sound. Both of these violinists were contemporaries of Janáček. One question emerges: being influenced by folk music and musicians, did Janáček hear a constant vibrato in their playing; or was vibrato more of an unconscious, instinctive, occasional reflex? Whatever the answer, it seems appropriate that performers need to aim for the same approach as the Gypsies did when playing Janáček's sonata.

It is a very well known fact that Brahms was meticulous in his score markings, and extremely detailed in expressing the desirable particularities of a certain work. To ensure a more expressive performance Brahms and his contemporaries had to add more detailed indication to the score. According to Brown, one such sign was < >, recognized as a sign for vibrato, or ~~, recognized as a sign for gypsy vibrato.[100] In my opinion, both approaches to the marking < > should be taken into account; a violinist should play a dynamic swell (contemporary understanding of the marking) as well as with a more vivid vibrato (Brown's view).

*Right hand techniques*

Joachim was considerably more advanced in the matter of bow strokes than he was in his treatment of vibrato and *portamento*. He had developed his technique under the influence of Paganini (1782-1840), and used a variety of bow strokes that were unknown to Viotti and the Mannheim School. A pupil of Viotti, Baillot wrote a publication *L'art du violon* (1834) that

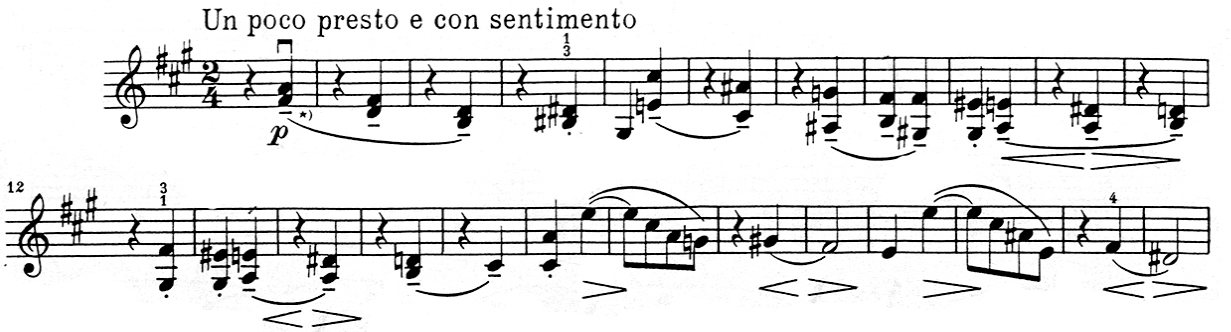
[99] Clive Brown, "Joachim's Violin Playing," in *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style,* ed. Michael Musgrave and Bernard D Sherman (Cambridge: University Press, 2003), 64-65.
[100] "Gypsy vibrato" is a term used by Brown for a wider, less focused vibrato.

contains a range of strokes unfamiliar to Rode and Kreutzer (his contemporaries), while Spohr (1784-1859) and other German violinists continued to insist that springing strokes were unidiomatic in classical repertoire.[101] Perhaps due to this heritage there are no *spiccato* bowings in Brahms.

From the Brahms-Joachim correspondence, we learn that they discussed the meaning of slurs, staccato notes, and *portato* articulations. They tried to understand what each of these particular markings meant for violinists and how they differed for pianists. They attempted to mark scores in ways to create similar sounds from the two different instruments. As a result, there are inconsistencies in markings. Their agreement to differ on the matter of *portato* is shown in the first edition of the third movement of the Sonata in D minor, op. 108. The score prints the *portato* indications in the violin and piano as dots under slurs, but the separate violin part presents them as horizontal lines under slurs.

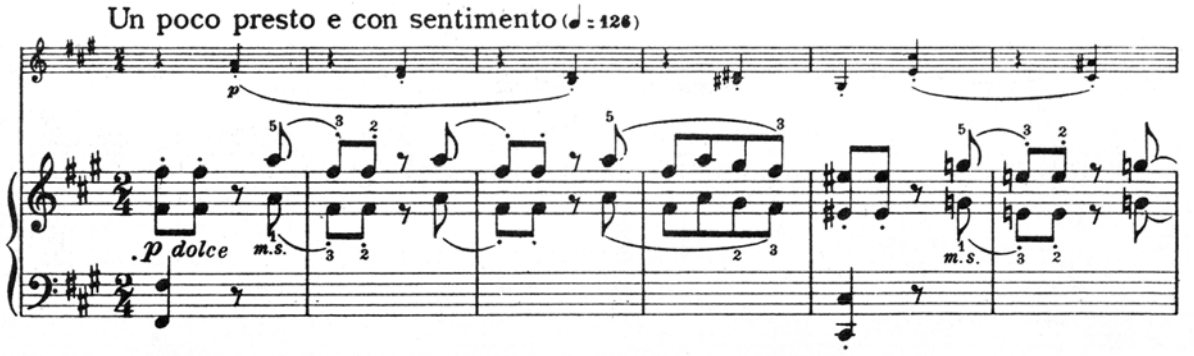
Example 3.1: Brahms Violin Sonata in D minor, mvt.3

a) Violin score, mm. 1-24




[101] Brown, "Joachim's Violin Playing," in *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style*, 79.

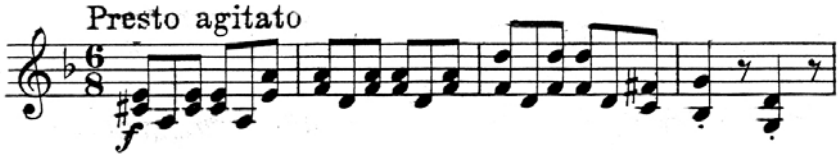
b) Piano score, mm. 1-6




In Janáček's scoring, one does not need to speculate on this matter due to his intimate knowledge of the violin. He also clearly indicates when he wants a different articulation on the same motivic material. In the fourth movement, the aggressive violin intrusions are sometimes marked with dots under the note heads and sometimes without dots. This little detail in articulation should be performed differently when marked differently. (See example 2.35).

On the other hand, even though Brahms did not use specifically the *spiccato* bowing in his sonatas, there are instances when this bowing is simulated. At the beginning of the fourth movement in Brahms' D minor Violin Sonata the rapid triplets are not marked with dots but should be performed close to the frog in order to obtain accurate results in dynamic and character.

Example 3.2: Brahms Violin Sonata in D minor, mvt. 4, mm. 1-4; Rapid triplets



In summary, the ethnomusicological basis of Janáček's work appears to be the key to his contribution to the violin sonata genre, and the main departure from the Romantic traditions of composers like Brahms. Czech folk traditions affected the form, harmony, and melody, in his Violin Sonata, and Gypsy music in particular affected aspects of the violinistic writing.

# CHAPTER IV

## DEBUSSY'S VIOLIN SONATA COMPARED TO JANÁČEK'S VIOLIN SONATA ON THE BASIS OF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS

Claude Debussy (1862-1918) greatly influenced his contemporary Janáček. An important connection between these two composers was their shared affection for Russian music. Even though Janáček did not attend any operas during his two-week trip to Russia in 1896, and neither studied directly nor met with any Russian composers, he was inevitably intrigued by the sounds of Russia as they were heard in the marketplace, the churches, and at funeral masses. Debussy traveled to Russia at the recommendation of his teacher, Antoine Marmontel, when he was only 20 years old, and managed to obtain the mentorship of Nadezhda von Meck, Tchaikovsky's patron. Although there is little concrete evidence to confirm his knowledge of contemporary Russian composers' works, it is highly likely that he responded well to Tchaikovsky's music and, even more, to that of the "Mighty Five." From the same trip, Debussy brought home another inspiration: the music of Russian gypsies, whose improvisational style influenced his work.[102] Gypsies also provided great motivation and inspiration for Janáček's work; however, he did not have to go to Russia in order to hear and observe them. They could be seen and heard in all the Slavic countries as a part of everyday life.

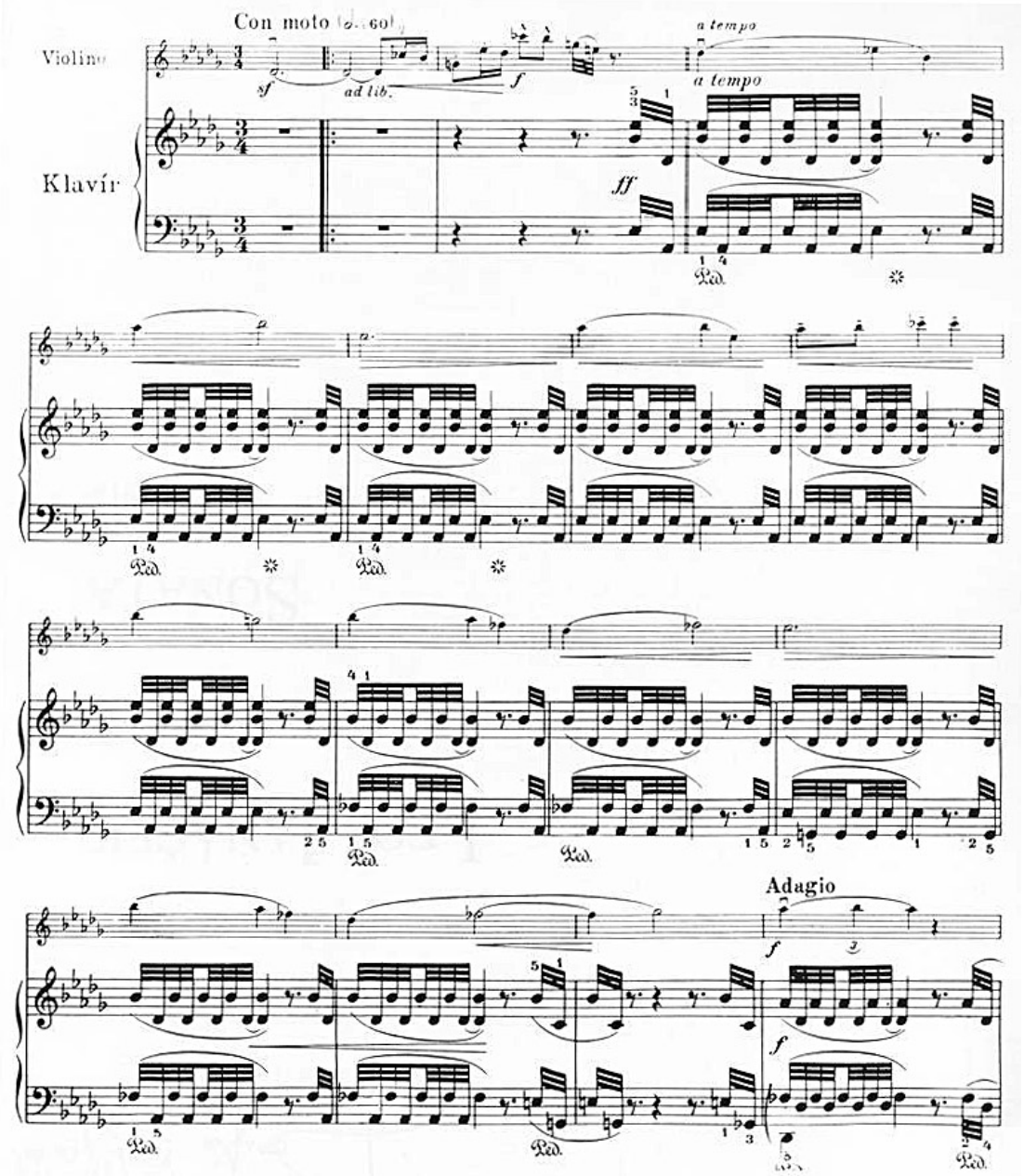
In the manner of the Impressionist painters, and later the French Symbolist poets, Debussy wanted his art not merely to represent nature, but to reflect "the mysterious correspondences

[102] Jann Pasler, "Impressionism" in *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. S. Sadie and J. Tyrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol. 12, 91.

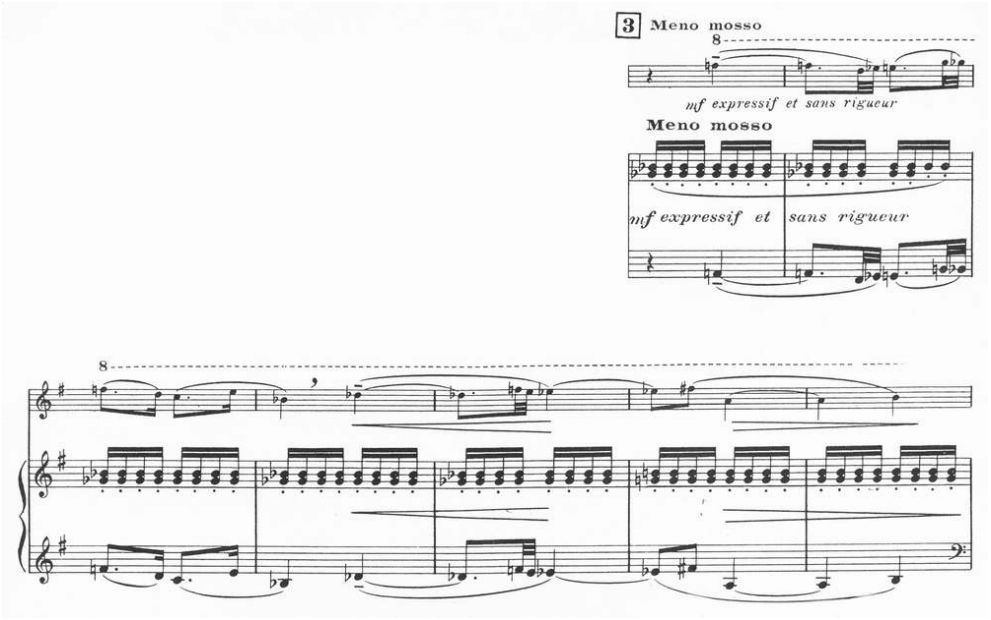
between Nature and Imagination."[103] The term "Impressionism" was linked to his music and his contemporaries. Certain characteristics of this musical direction have become significant in identifying Debussy's stylistic signature, and even though his Violin Sonata (1917) was written much later than the heyday of Impressionism, some of these characteristics can be observed in it. Debussy additionally explored the sounds of nature and seemed to express the fleeting moments of life. He used extended tremolos and other kinds of repeated figurations in order to convey the flow of time. For him, form emerged from successions of colors and rhythms, a series of sensations rather then the deductions of a musical thought.[104] Janáček also used repeated figures and tremolos to preserve floating tonalities and at the same time achieve a sense of time suspended. It is probable that Janáček studied Debussy's work in general and was influenced by Impressionism. The following examples illustrate Janáček and Debussy's similar approaches to the use of a pedal tone and an effect characterized by a combination of repeated figurations and tremolo. Janáček achieved a suspension of the A♭-minor mode using the repeated pattern in the piano right hand, which can be described as an imitation of the folk instrument the "cimbalom."

[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid., 92.

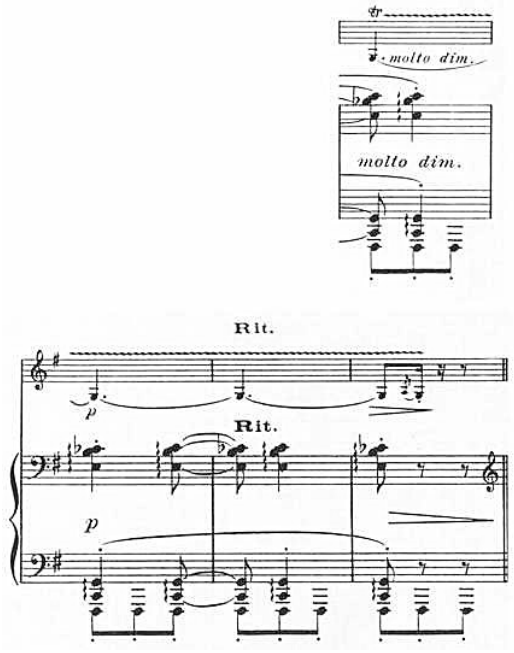
Example 4.1: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 1, mm. 1-16; The “Cimbalom” effect



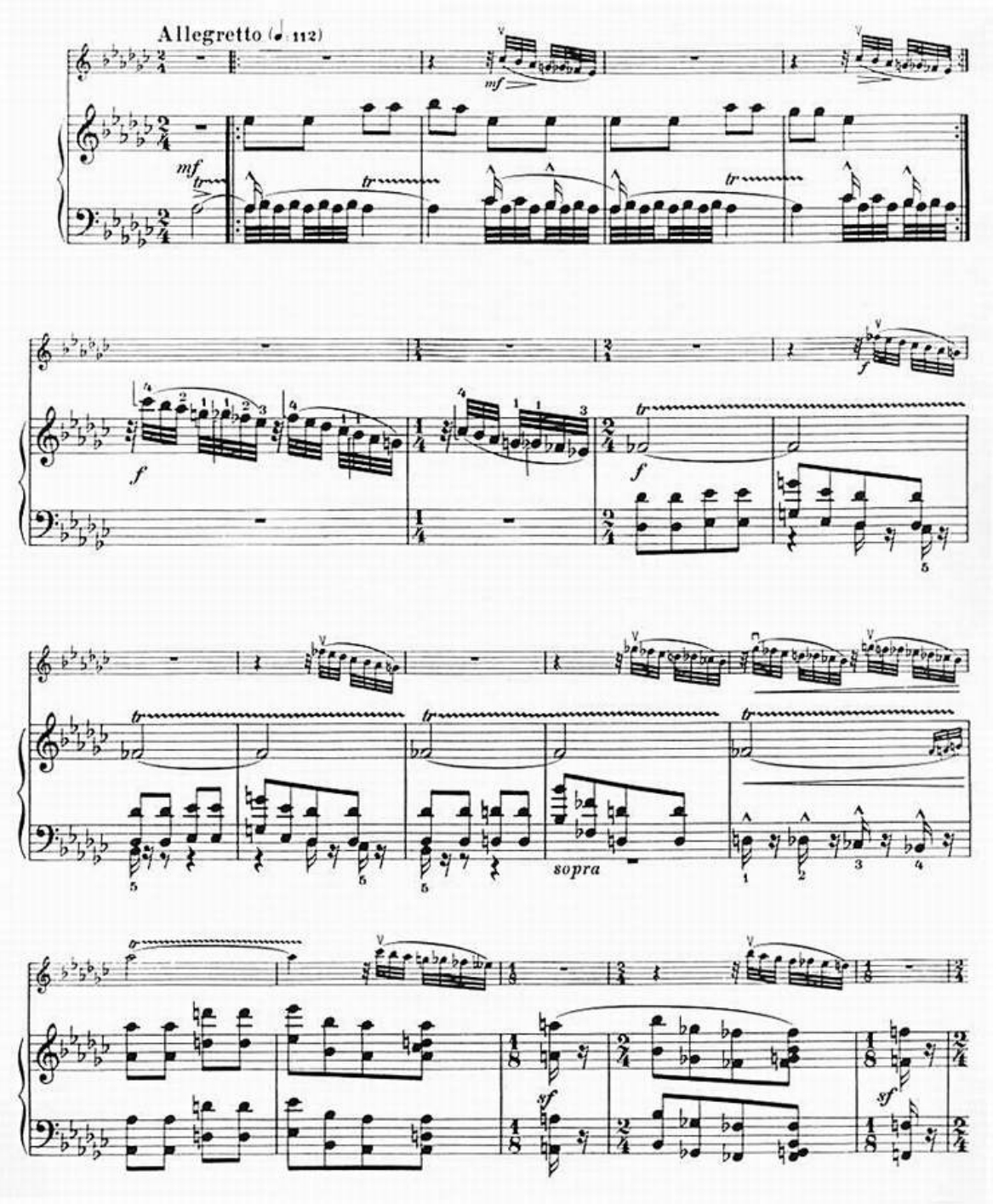
Example 4.2: Debussy Violin Sonata, mvt. 2, mm. 72-79; Separated dual pedal; Debussy prolongs the modal area, introducing the new material of the movement. (A similar passage appears in mm. 101-108).



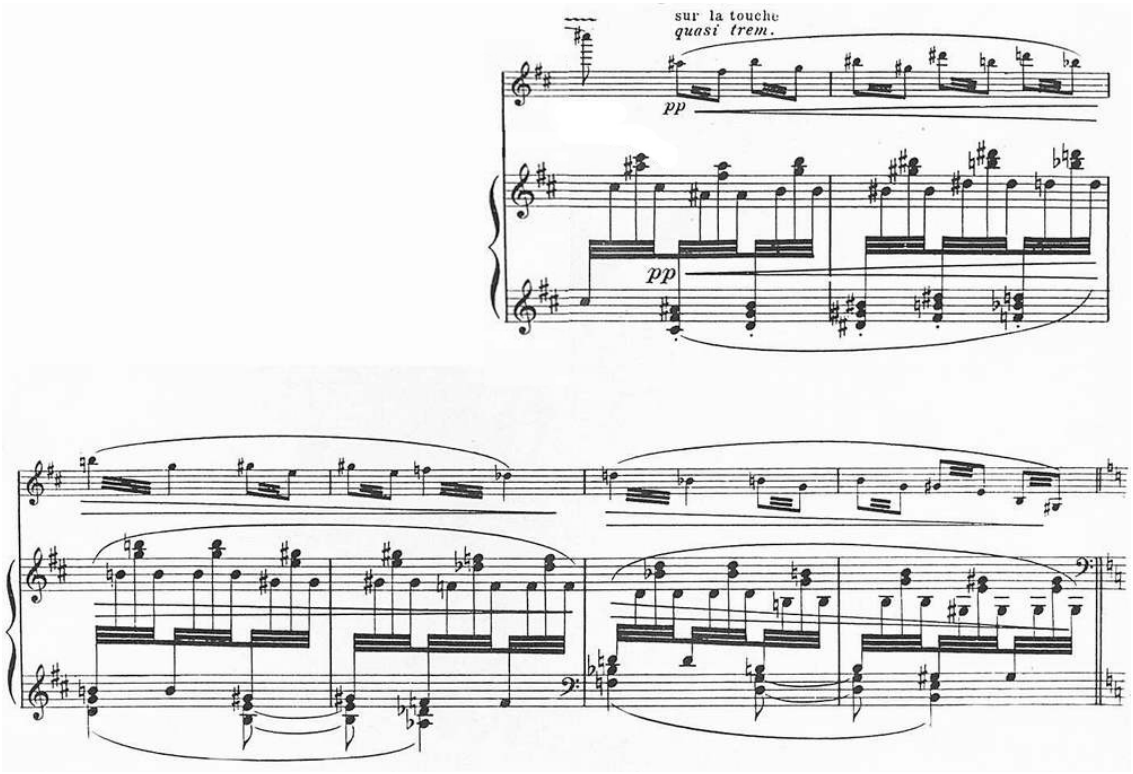

Example 4.3: Debussy Violin Sonata; *Finale,* mm. 81-84; Use of trill as a pedal. Debussy uses pedal in the cadenza, dissolving the melodic line.



Example 4.4: Janáček Violin Sonata, mvt. 3, mm. 1-19; In both the violin and piano parts, trills serve as folk-like accompaniment to a simple tune.



Example 4.5: Debussy Violin Sonata; *Finale*, mm. 110-115; "Quasi tremolo" is an effect between a trill and a tremolo, changed by the use of harmonies.




Debussy gave the musical line a decorative function in his Violin Sonata, fragmenting it into short motives and using repetitive figurations resembling those of Russian composers, especially the "Mighty Five," and Liszt, who was one of his teachers. In Debussy's compositions one can feel the sense of timelessness established by creating chords that have been liberated from their dependence on functional harmony. Debussy's melodies were often derived from old French folk songs and French traditional music, such as medieval organum from the 16th century,[105] creating a nationalistic musical style, just as the Eastern European composers used nearby folk influences. Debussy also studied and admired troubadour music and the Renaissance chanson.[106] According

[105] Ibid.
[106] Charles Lamar Barrus, "Interpretation and Analysis of Four Works for the Violin" (MM Thesis, University of Utah, 1964), 41.

to Lockspeiser, Debussy was inspired by the Pierrot image through his entire collection of sonatas. In Lockspeiser's words,

> ...The second movement (of the Violin Sonata) is again one of those Harlequinesque interludes, the last of Debussy's serenades, less mordant than the slow movement of the Cello Sonata, but with many touches of a tender, benign melancholy.[107]

Debussy started work on the Violin Sonata in 1916, just two years later than Janáček. It was during World War I and he was in an advanced stage of the cancer that would eventually kill him. This was the last of the three late sonatas; Sonata for Cello and Piano (1915), Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp (1916), and Sonata for Violin and Piano (1917). Debussy originally intended to compose six sonatas: *Six sonatas pour divers instruments*. The Violin Sonata is in three movements. The first movement *Allegro vivo* is in a modified sonata form. The double exposition of this movement features sectionalized themes and tonal ambiguity, in contrast with the development section and its tonal stability. The second movement *Intermède* and third movement *Finale* remind us of sonata-rondo form with an introduction. The introduction material is later incorporated into the exchanging themes.

Some theorists and historians linked the influence on Debussy's style in this composition to World War I, thus incorporating his emerging nationalistic feelings. They found the sonata to be rebellious against the prevailing Germanic sonata forms. Very similar motives and nationalistic feelings moved Janáček in his own Violin Sonata.

This sonata was not a composition created in one breath. Like Janáček, Debussy struggled for a long time over the final versions of its movements, especially the second and third. The definitive version of the finale was completed by April 1917.

[107]Edward Lockspeiser, "Debussy" *Master Musician Series* (London: J.M.Dent and Sons Ltd., 1951), 177-181.

## Melody

Abravanel describes Debussy's melodic and rhythmic peculiarities in general in the following observation:

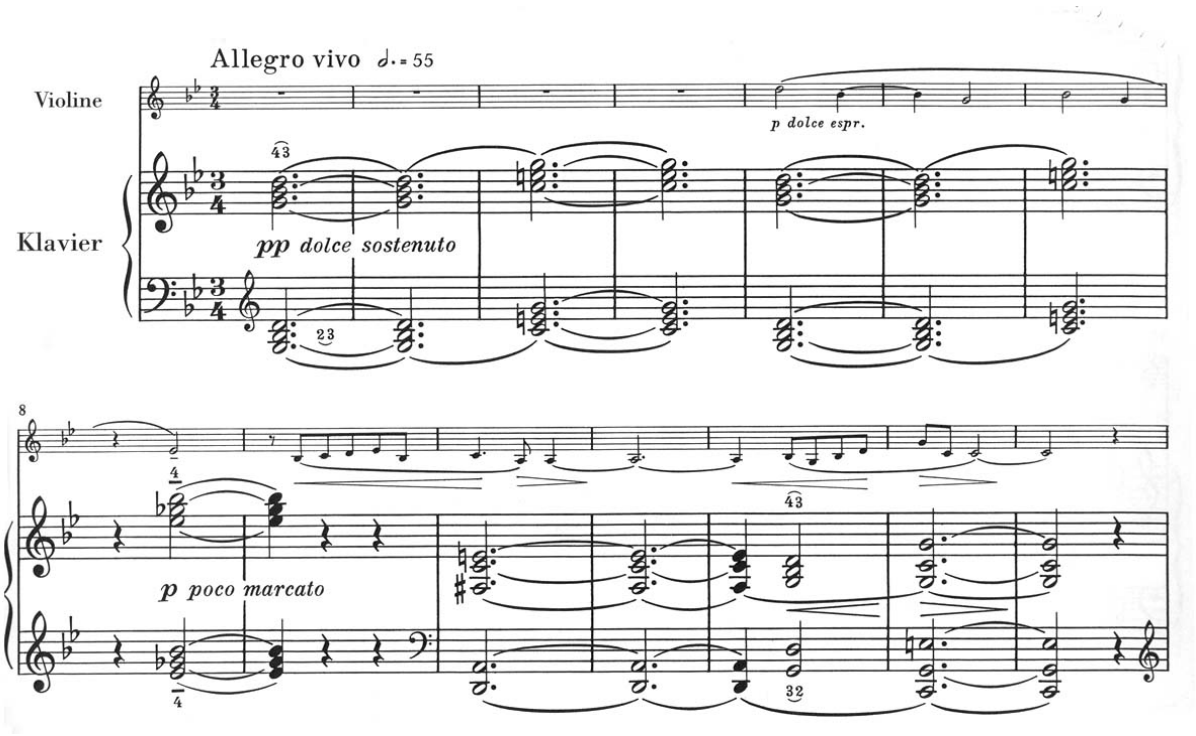
> Debussy's melody is not a product of the Italian *bel canto* tradition. Rather, it is closest to French recitative in the aesthetic of Lully and Rameau. It is formed by motives of varying length, whose rhythms are adapted directly from the spoken language. These rhythmic motives are the foundation of melody, which provides for large or small melodic intervals or for repeated notes. They are always to be sung naturally and without emphasis. Here is an astonishing plasticity, the rhythmic patterning for an extraordinary suppleness that allows this melody the power of translating exactly the slightest affective signification of words.[108]

These general observations of Debussy's melodies are easily applied to the themes of his Violin Sonata. Parks describes the beginning of the first movement:

> The character of the first fourteen measures of the *Sonata pour violin et piano* is improvisatory, tentative and contemplative....This material serves as an introduction for the main body of a work that is more conventionally expository, more straightforward in metric and phrase structure....The opening passage harbors obscurities in the domains of meter and phrase...[109]

[108] Claude Abravanel, "Symbolism and Performance," in *Debussy in Performance,* ed. James R. Briscoe (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 36.
[109] Richard S. Parks, "Structure and Performance: Metric and Phrase Ambiguities in the Three Chamber Sonatas," in *Debussy in Performance,* ed. James R. Briscoe (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 213.

Example 4.6: Debussy Violin Sonata, mvt. 1, mm. 1-14

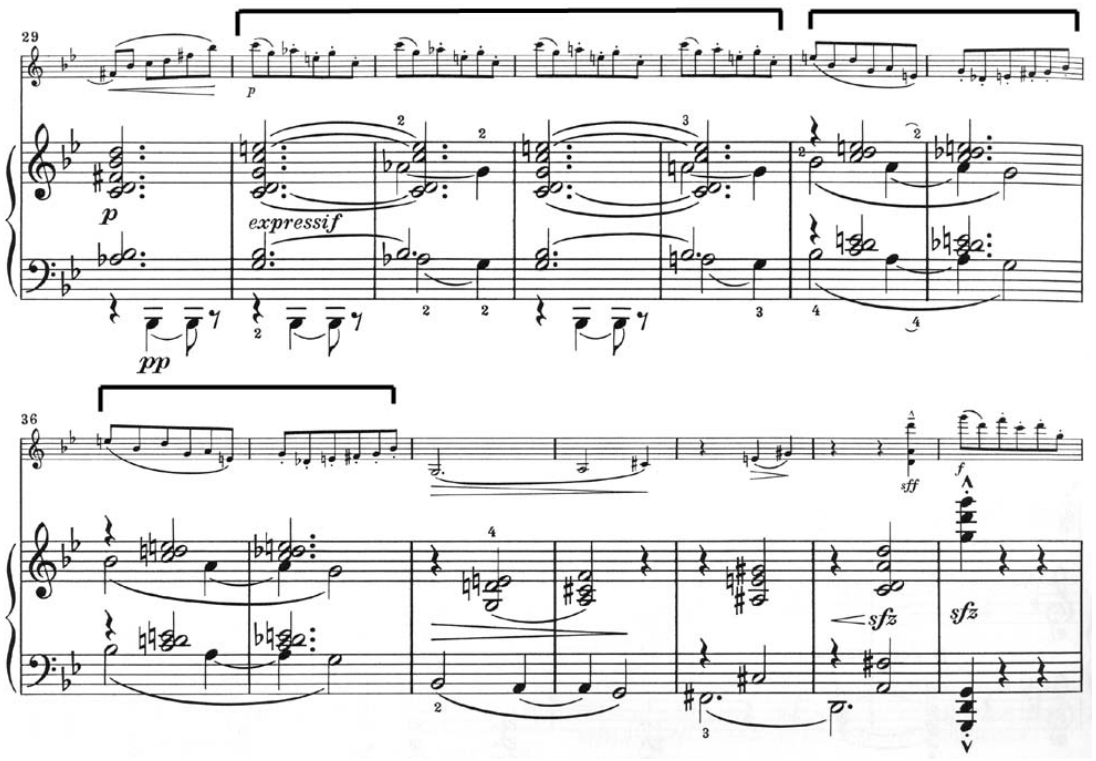



There are obvious similarities between certain melodic aspects of Janáček's and Debussy's violin sonatas. In analyzing both works, we see that they are sectional in nature, with individual sections that are mostly brief and repetitive. Both composers use motives and transform them in order to create new material and new themes, rather than simply developing them. As Kwon states:

> Debussy's use of various types of melodic figures as motives and the use of extensive and elaborate repetitions are some of the principal ways in which melodic structure replaces tonal operations as determinant of formal structure.[110]

[110] Yoohee Kwon, "Tradition and Innovation in Three Late Sonatas of Claude Debussy" (DMA theses, University of Minnesota, 1997), 64.

Example 4.7: Debussy Violin Sonata, mvt. 1, mm. 29-42; The brackets show the motivic repetition and sectionalized phrases.



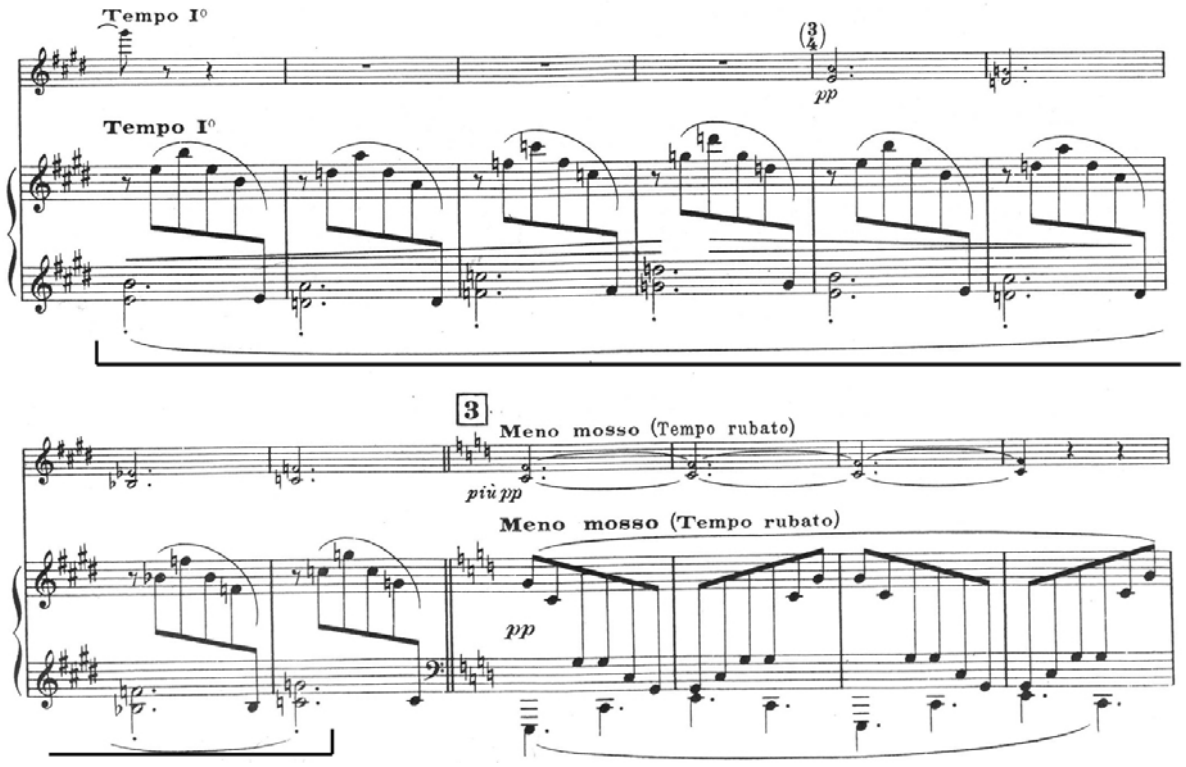

This so-called "anti-development style" is apparent in both sonatas. Comparing Debussy's work to Janáček's, it is possible to detect very similar treatment of motives. They are used until exhausted, then repeated, and thus act as referential points that unify the structure.

## Harmony

Both Debussy and Janáček explored a number of similar tonal language techniques in their violin sonatas, such as how they positioned the subdominant key in their compositions. Debussy extensively exploited tonic and subdominant versus dominant and tonic key relationships (heightened by modal mixture). This was typical for Janáček as well. For major keys, extended subdominant or dominant prolongation without tonicization of these scale degrees alludes,

respectively, to the Lydian and Mixolydian modes.[111] In minor keys, when the subdominant is transformed into a major triad by alteration, its juxtaposition against the tonic produces a Dorian modal effect. The Violin Sonata begins with just such a passage in G minor (see example 4.6).[112] Further on in the movement we reach C major at m. 105, achieved by the open fifths movement from measure 98 (see example 4.8).

Example 4.8: Debussy Violin Sonata, mvt. 1, mm. 98-109; Modulation to C major, brackets show the movement of fifths.

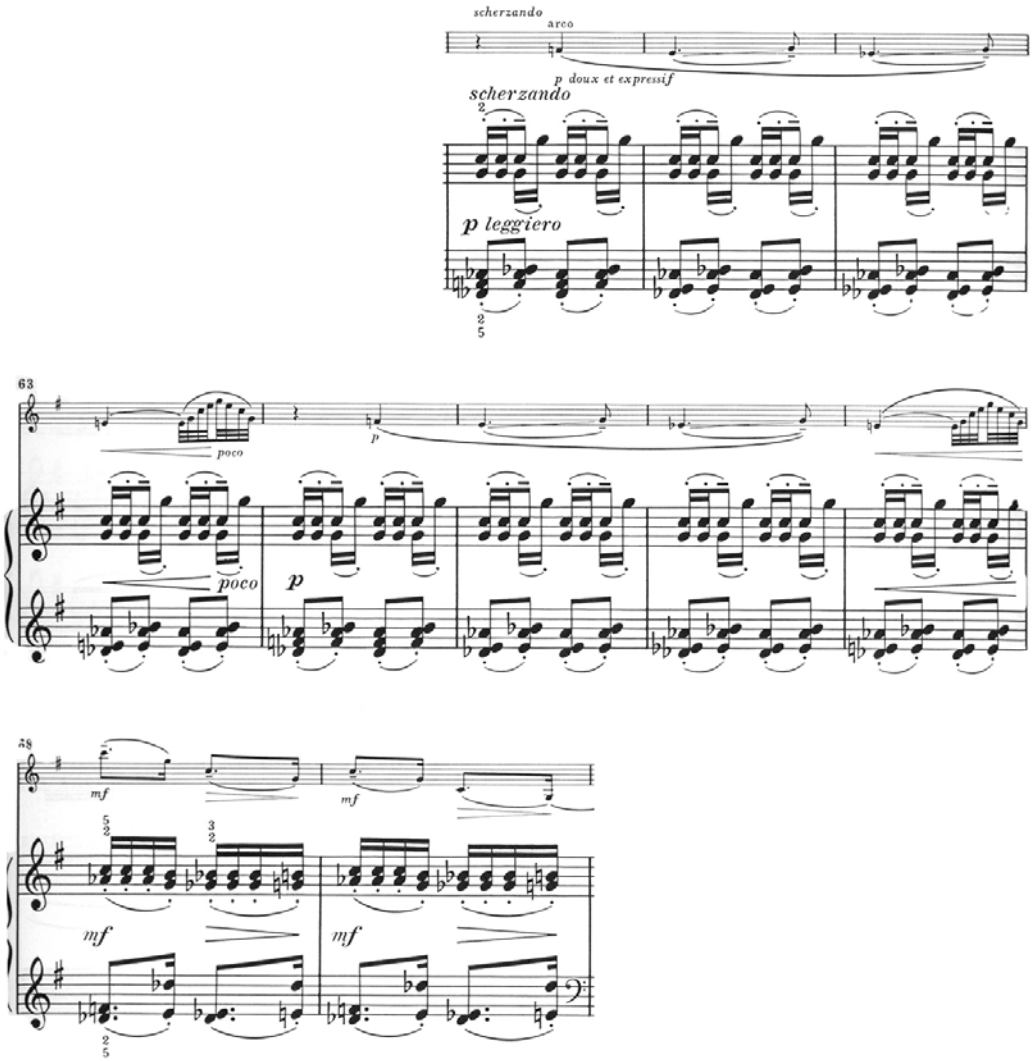



No modulation is performed to establish the C-major key area, but the following fifteen measures clearly sound in C major. There is also no confirmation of C as the tonal center. This is a typical

[111] Richard S. Parks, *The Music of Claude Debussy,* Composers of the Twentieth Century, ed. Allen Forte (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 42.
[112] Ibid., 41.

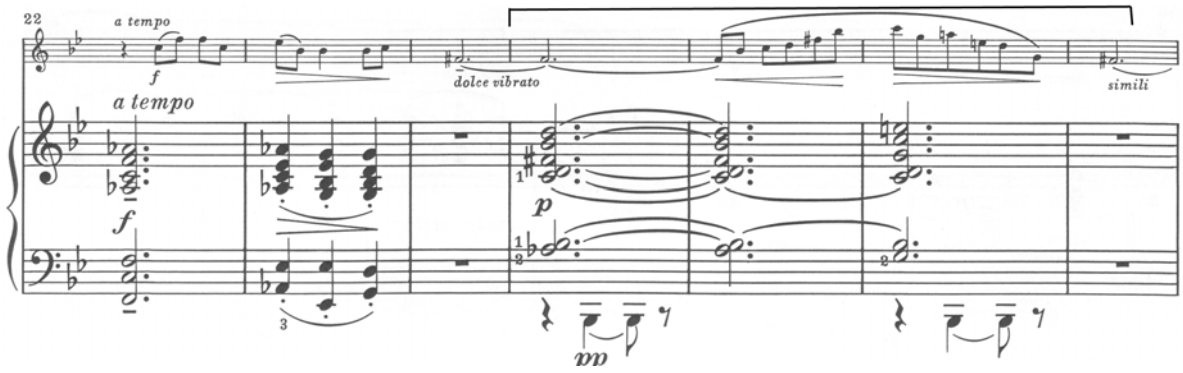
example of floating tonality and modal inflections on a higher structural level. A similar moment is found in the second movement (mm. 60-69), where Debussy rests his harmonic flow on a D♭ major/minor tonal center, a flat dominant, but without its confirmation. It is also interesting to point out the effect of bitonality in the same passage, juxtaposing the keys of C major in the violin melodic line and D♭ major in the piano.

Example 4.9: Debussy Violin Sonata, mvt. 2, mm. 60-69



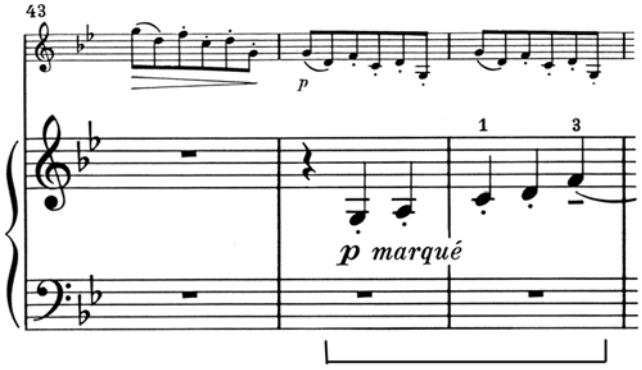
Modality is often cited as an important feature of Debussy's music. Passages evocative of Dorian or Phrygian rather than minor, and Lydian or Mixolydian rather than major, are often found in his compositions. In comparison to Janáček who favored Lydian minor, alterations of major and minor, and other folk-influenced modal characteristics, Debussy uses more modal variety, together with synthetic modal scales in his sonata. Besides Mixolydian and Lydian modes (mm. 35-45), the second movement brings with it a more complex set of modal scales just a few measures later (mm. 72-78 and mm. 101-107). Debussy smoothly moves from Super Locrian (or Phrygian), over Lydian to Major. The third movement (mm. 45-48) presents a leading whole-tone scale G, A, B, D♭, E♭, F. Like Janáček, Debussy favors whole-tone and pentatonic referential collections. In his Sonata, he finds several occasions to use these particular scales. For example, in the first movement exposition, mm. 25-28 and m. 33 are basically whole-tone collections. In both cases, they are used as bridge-like connecting material.

Example 4.10: Debussy Violin Sonata, mvt. 1, mm. 22-28; The whole-tone measures are bracketed.



An example of the pentatonic scale is found in measure 44 of the same movement.

Example 4.11: Debussy Violin Sonata; Mvt. 1, (mm. 43-45); G pentatonic scale




Debussy's extensive use of modality points to influences from a variety of sources; church music, Russian music, folk music from various regions, as well as music from the Far East. The inspiration from folk music and Russian music in particular connect Debussy's work to that of Janáček. In 1893 a Papal decree[113] allowed for the singing of Gregorian chant again, so Debussy proceeded to attend services at the Abbey of Solesmes. At the same time his classmate D'Indy[114] inspired him to take more of an interest in folk songs and their modal qualities.

In addition to modality, Janáček and Debussy shared other harmonic language characteristics. Both composers frequently used lengthy pedal points in their works. Pedals had a particular purpose to limit or avoid, rather than emphasize, any clear harmonization of the melody they supported. Specifically, Debussy used parallel chords of the fifth (see example 4.8), octave, and ninth. These were called "choral melodies" or enriched unisons, and contributed to the development of bitonality by serving as pedals over which different chords could be placed.

[113] Virginia Raad, *Folklore and Reminiscence in Claude Debussy,* Liber Amicorum Isabelle Cazeaux: Symbols, Parallels and Discoveries in Her Honor, ed. Paul-André Bempéchat (New York: Pendragon Press, 2005), 45.
[114] Ibid.

## Form

According to Kwon, Debussy had previously avoided the term "sonata," preferring programmatic titles.[115] Many Debussy scholars have argued about the formal structure of his Violin Sonata movements, particularly the first. Some of them tried, as in the case with Janáček's Sonata, to analyze it from the standpoint of conventional sonata form; others, however, completely rejected that approach.[116] Wilson classified all the movements of the Debussy's last three Sonatas as "anti-developmental," and in that way proclaimed them more typical of French classical sources, rather than of German romantic instrumental traditions.[117] Historians Hsu, Grolnic and Peters comment that, in his letters to Hartmann, Debussy invariably rebuffed Hartmann for proposing a work in Germanic form.[118]

In her dissertation on Debussy's sonata forms, Theresa Davidian summarizes the analytical approaches of several Debussy's scholars familiar with the Violin Sonata's form. The theorists Wilson, Park, and Kecskemeti, together with Davidian, agree that the first movement displays a strongly modified sonata form.[119] Davidian finds it difficult to recognize the full significance of the second theme (m. 18), which in her opinion contains no contrasting tonal area and only a succession of descending parallel chords over a tonic pedal.[120]

Remembering Janáček's first movement, it is possible to identify similarities between these two sonatas on a structural level. There is a tendency for both composers to sectionalize the texture. According to Davidian's analysis and my own research, the first movement of Debussy's Sonata unfolds into three general parts, just as in Janáček's first movement. These general parts are

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[115] Yoohee Kwon, "Tradition and Innovation in Three Late Sonatas of Claude Debussy," 42-43.
[116] Theresa Davidian, "Debussy's Sonata Form" (Ph. D. diss. University of Chicago, 1988), 186.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Hsu, Samuel, Sidney Grolnic, and Mark Peters, eds. *"Claude Debussy As I Knew Him" and Other writings of Arthur Hartmann* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 297.
[119] Davidian, "Tradition and Innovation in Three Late Sonatas of Claude Debussy," 186-191.
[120] Ibid., 191.

divided into a number of sections, (the first part containing two main sections, each with five subsections.)[121] The subsections in Debussy's Sonata are fairly short and repetitive. Even though this repetition of melodic material throughout the Sonata brings it closer to a classical sonata scheme, as does its cyclic structure, it is not as obsessive as in Janáček's Violin Sonata, where the composer uses only a single motive to build up sections. The first movement of Debussy's work is much closer to the textbook model of sonata form, simply by virtue of his opposing two themes in the opening part of the first movement. Janáček uses just one.

Debussy's development section is longer than Janáček's, yet based equally on pedals and key center floatation. Both Sonatas lack an extensive development section because of the two composers' similar tendencies to repeat and vary already stated themes and sections, instead of developing one through the motivic, melodic and harmonic modification techniques used in the Romantic period. Romantic composers used development sections to manipulate motives and themes from the exposition taking them through different keys, extending, liquefying, and ornamenting the material. In this way they created extreme contrast for the recapitulation section, which brings the same key for the two themes from the exposition. The final sections in the sonatas of Debussy and Janáček differ from the opening; however, they nonetheless act as returns, with the same melodic material recurring in Debussy's Violin Sonata, though in a different context and with a varied order.

The second and third movements of Debussy's Violin Sonata feature ternary design and employ different principles of reprise that provide the basis for unique forms. Parks explains this phenomenon, called "endless variation," as opening material modified to generate new, but related music fabric, which then becomes the basis for still more new material.[122]

[121] For a more detailed structural overview, see the Davidian dissertation, 192.
[122] Parks, "Structure and Performance: Metric and Phrase Ambiguities in the Three Chamber Sonatas, " 220.

A schematic overview of the second movement follows:

[A B A′ ] [C ] [A² B² Coda]

This scheme can also be understood as being in a sort of sonata-rondo form.[123] None of the material is exactly repeated since Debussy always employs variation to the repeated material. The third movement in particular is also comparable to Janáček's work with the incorporation of varied repetitions.

A schematic overview for the third movement follows:

[A B B′ ] [ C ] [A′ B² B³] Coda

This ternary-derived arch-type is essentially a tripartite design, where, in the B² section, inner subsections are reversed in appearance, adding to the cyclic form of the entire movement. We find a similar effect in the second part of Janáček's second movement, where he reverses varied repetitions of the themes. (See schematic outline of this movement on page 50).

## Violin technique

### *Left hand techniques*

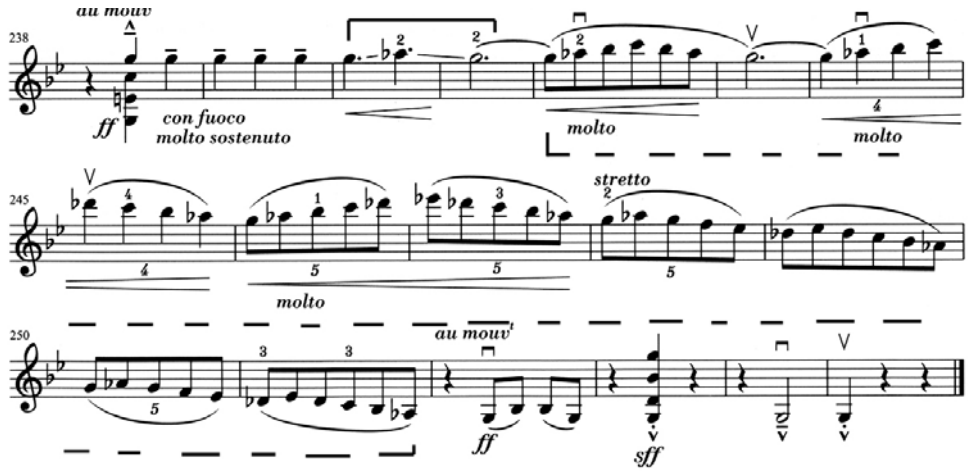
Violinists need to achieve similar left hand technical accomplishments in both these sonatas. Like Janáček, Debussy imposes unusual modal inflections and chromatic changes upon the player, thereby increasing intonation difficulties. The already mentioned whole-tone scales, as well as different church and synthetic modes, ostinatos, tremolos, and other means of suspended harmony, all impose additional demands on the left hand.

As with Janáček's Sonata, when playing Debussy's violin part, one must apply "crippling" fingering, finger extensions, and non-fixed left hand positions. Because of increased difficulties for the left hand an especially good sense of intonation is essential in this composition.

[123] Ibid., 222.

Some examples of awkward intervals are found in mm. 116-125 and from m. 238 through the end of the first movement.

Example 4.12: Debussy Violin Sonata; Mvt. 1, (mm. 238-end); difficult passage for intonation.




Debussy's new approach to left hand technique that includes forward and backward glissando effects represents a musical and technical advance. This specific technique is not found in Janáček's work. Specifically indicated by the composer, it creates an impression of smooth change, a sort of an "endless note," and contributes to the overall improvised mood. An example of it is found in the first movement mm. 72-73, 136-137, and 140-141; in the second movement in mm. 61-62, 65-66, 121-122 and 125-126; and in the third movement in mm. 85 and 88. (See example 4.12).

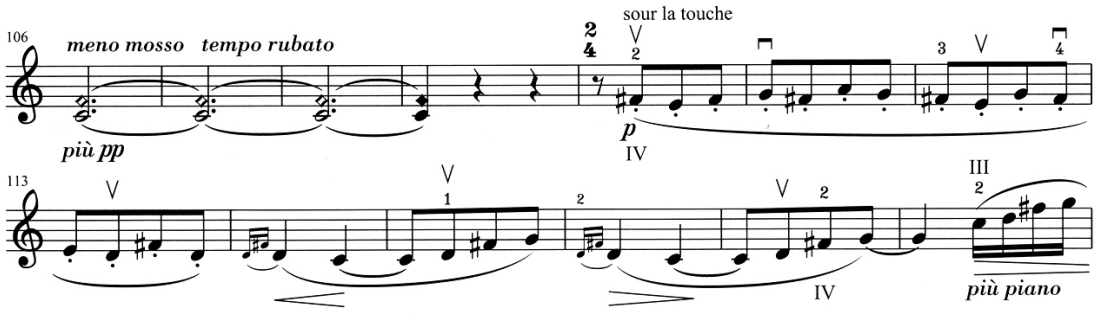
Another left hand technique used by Debussy but not by Janáček involves harmonics. Although not used extensively, their purpose is to achieve different shadings or colors in the composition. Two such places are found in the first movement, in measures 106-110 and 163-170

where the harmonics serve as a pedal tone (see example 4.8). As in Janáček, the left hand in Debussy's Sonata is exposed to long trills and intruding ostinato patterns.

*Right hand techniques*

Debussy's Violin Sonata presents a tremendous challenge when it comes to the bow arm and the need to be very expressive in this music. The performer is constantly confronted with impressionistic colors, and the expression of despair, pain, and death. Achieving the precise quality of sound at any given moment is essential in order to approach the interpretation Debussy might have imagined. However, other than the music itself, Debussy gives us very few other clues as to how he might have wanted it to be played. Debussy uses specific bowing techniques such as: *staccato* (to evoke the sound of the bells in *Finale*, see example 4.7 and 4.13), *sur la touche* (to create the impressionistic *flautando* sound and enhance mysterious texture, see example 4.14), and expressive, long *legatos* (to create subdued articulation and accentuate colors above the real pitches). In contrast, knowing more about Janáček's compositional style and the historical circumstances surrounding his Violin Sonata helps the violinist approach an interpretation with more certainty, and it is perhaps easier to relate to those everyday sounds that he heard all around him.

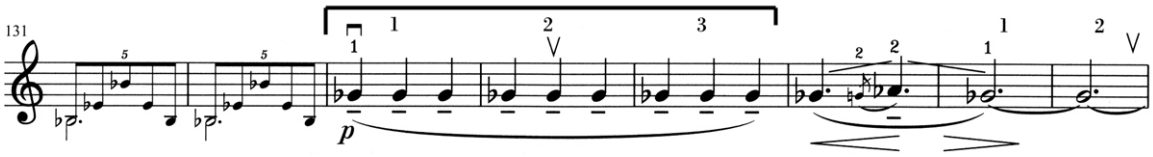
Example: 4.13: Debussy Violin Sonata, mvt. 1, mm. 106-118




Debussy uses another technique that is rarely found in Janáček's Sonata: *spiccato*. With it he maximizes the lightness of texture and adds to the overall elegance in color, an effect particularly well done in the first movement in mm. 30-37 as well as in mm. 42-56 and similar places. It also acts as a unifying feature between movements as it is transformed in the first theme of the second movement by adding *pp* dynamics and marking the theme *au mouvement* (indication for *a tempo*).

*Portato* bowing is found in both sonatas, although notated differently in each. In Debussy's first movement the notes in mm. 87-94 and 109-117 have dots and are slurred, while in Janáček's second movement mm. 37, 39, 41, etc., *portato* is marked as a dash over the note heads, but still with the slur.

Example: 4.14: Debussy Violin Sonata, mvt. 1, mm. 131-138




In summary, the connection between Debussy's Violin Sonata and Janáček's Violin Sonata is clearly shown on many different levels. Both composers were influenced by the traditional

music from their respective countries, by modern music trends such as exotic scales and modes, and by sociological circumstances surrounding these compositions. The innovations on the level of melody, harmony, form, and violin techniques employed in these sonatas make them unique and progressive.

# CHAPTER V

# CONCLUSION

The beginning of the 20th century brought many different directions to the development of the violin sonata as a genre. The most interesting transitions that occurred were those that departed from the essentially Germanic dominant traditions of late Romanticism.

Although Janáček was fully aware of the historical traditions and contemporary trends of the time, he maintained his originality throughout his work. The Violin Sonata stands as a true representation of his unique style. To comprehend Janáček's works, and especially his Violin Sonata, one must first become acquainted with his life's philosophy, the historical circumstances surrounding him, and his compositional influences. Each of these factors can help to explain something about Janáček's unconventional music. His unusual way of handling harmony, melody, and form broke down the "uniformity" of his predecessors.

Even though Brahms was always incorporating new and progressive elements in his music, his violin sonatas are highly romantic in their compositional style. Some of the elements Janáček uses in his Violin Sonata already existed in music for a long time, such as modality, rhythmic complexity, and uniquely developed forms. In Brahms' compositional style these were devices for enriching his musical language. In Janáček's music they were used to extend elements of expression.

There are many similar techniques and points of interest in both Janáček's and Debussy's violin sonatas, though these were handled differently in the two composers' works. Possibly in

reaction to general music trends, World War I, and the resurgence of nationalism at the time, the two composers generated similar atmospheres in their sonatas. Connections can also be made in certain aspects of form and harmonic language.

Throughout the analysis and the comparison of these three compositions it has become clear that Janáček's Violin Sonata broke away from the prevailing Germanic genre of the Romantic period. He courageously chose the difficult path of changing musical traditions and creating new rules and conventions. Often misunderstood, he suffered throughout his creative life, but he never gave up his basic beliefs. Today his Violin Sonata stands as a testament to him, his culture, and the times in which he lived. Many composers were potentially influenced by Janáček, among them Martinů, Enescu, and Ravel. This connection opens up many questions and is possibly a subject for further research.

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