

Jiří Zahrádka on the critical edition of The Makropulos Case

<? echo \$this->teaser; ?>

Mr. Zahrádka, could you introduce this special place we find ourselves in?

Zahrádka: We are in Janáček's house, where Janáček lived from 1910 until his death in 1928 and where he composed his opera *The Makropulos Case*. He composed it on this Ehrbar piano from 1878, which was his wedding gift and to which he remained faithful for his entire life.

What sources is the critical edition of The Makropulos Case based on?

Zahrádka: The critical edition of Janáček's penultimate opera, *The Makropulos Case*, uses the standard strategies required by the Universal Edition. This means that the work, this edition of it, should be as faithful to Janáček's intentions as possible. It should be rid of any later changes as well as compromises that have been made in the score. For example, concerning the extreme range of instruments – the highest octaves for violins, the requirement for a five-string double bass, and so on. All this should be taken into account in the edition, so that it corresponds as closely as possible with the composer's intentions. Of course, for this, a variety of sources are required. The UE critical edition uses all the extant sources.

This publisher is fortunate to really have all these sources at their disposal. These include not only the autograph manuscript of Janáček's composition, but also its first copy by Sedláček, into which Janáček recorded his corrections and which he then sent to UE. There is also the Brno score – the score used for the Brno première. They also have the original of Kundera's piano vocal score, as well as its copies, including those used at the rehearsals for the first production. There are also foundry proofs of the first piano vocal score, Janáček's corrections sent to UE and three versions of Janáček's libretto, which is an adaptation of Šapek's drama. All of these have been taken into account in UE's critical edition. So the edition is to the greatest possible extent a collation of all available material, and the score is created in the way Janáček most likely

envisaged, without any compromises.

The edition is to the greatest possible extent a collation of all available material, and the score is created in the way Janáček most likely envisaged, without any compromises.

Handwritten musical score for "Věc Makropulos" (1923) by Leoš Janáček. The score is written on aged paper and includes the title "Věc Makropulos" and the subtitle "I. jednání" (Act I). The instrumentation listed on the left includes 4 Flutes, 2 Oboes, 3 Clarinets, 2 Bassoons, 4 Corns, 4 Trumpets, 3 Trombones, 4 Horns, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass. The score is written in a mix of Czech and German, with the title "Věc Makropulos" and the subtitle "I. jednání" in German. The notation is handwritten and includes various musical symbols, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. The paper shows signs of age, including discoloration and a small circular stamp at the bottom center.

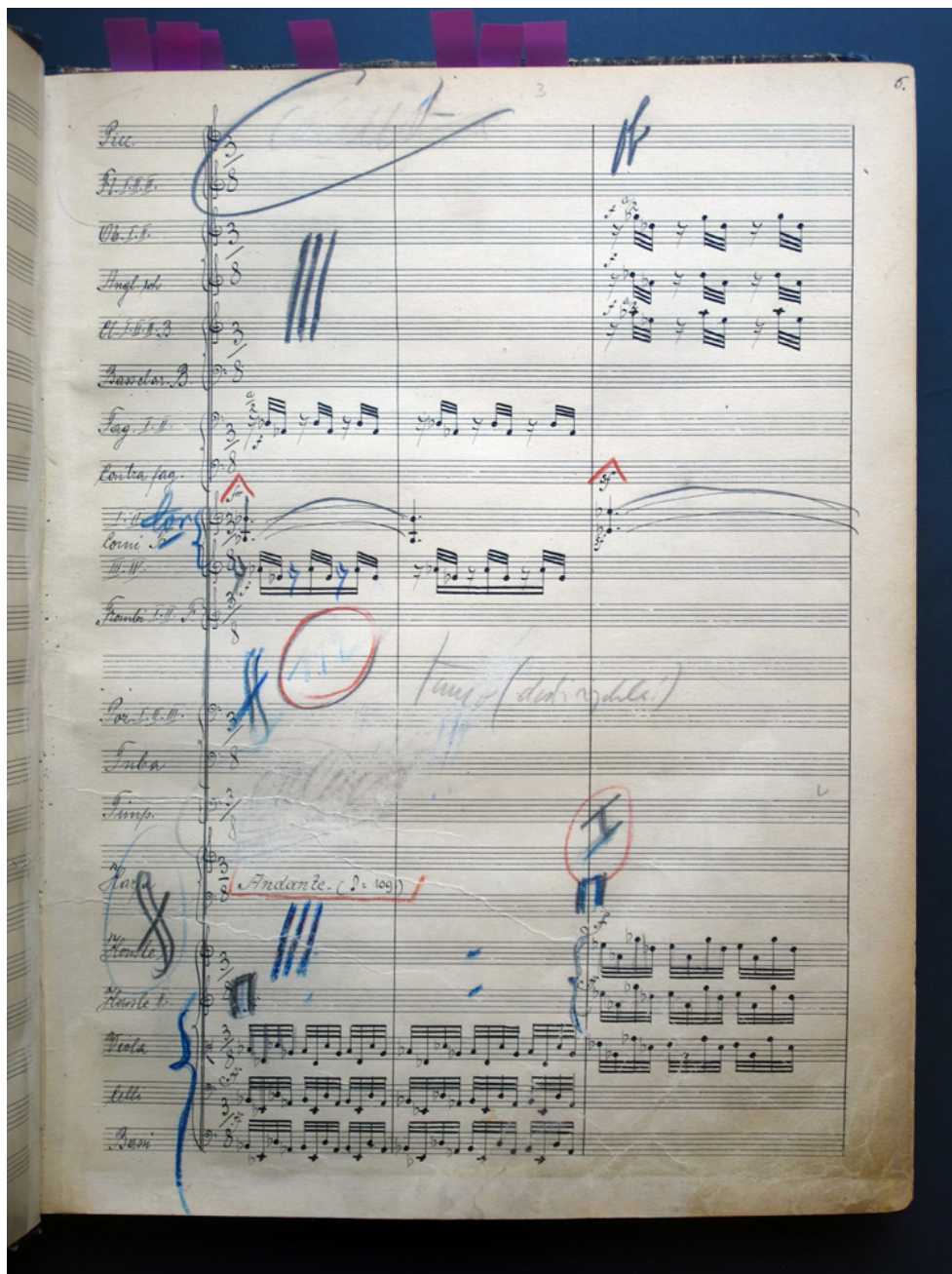
Janáček's autograph

Andante (♩ = 109)

-5-

Handwritten musical score for a symphony, page 5. The score is for a 3/8 time signature and is marked "Andante" with a tempo of 109 beats per minute. The instruments listed on the left are Piccolo, Flute, Oboe, English Horn, Clarinet, Bassoon, 2 Trumpets, 3 Trumpets, Trombone, Tuba, and Tympani. The score is written in a single system with multiple staves. The music is in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like "f" and "sf". There are also some red markings, possibly indicating corrections or specific performance instructions. The page is numbered "-5-" at the top center.

Handwritten musical score on aged paper, featuring multiple staves and various musical notations. The score includes parts for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Horns, Trumpets, Trombones, and Tuba. The tempo is marked "Andante. (D. 109)". The score is heavily annotated with blue ink, including large "X" marks, circles, and a large "K" at the top right. The page is numbered "3" in the top right corner.



Kulhánek's copy

Vec Makropulos

(1842)

I. jechání

Handwritten musical score for the first movement, "I. jechání", of the opera "Vec Makropulos" (1842). The score is written on multiple staves, with various instruments and vocal parts indicated on the left side. The notation includes notes, rests, and dynamic markings, with some parts written in red ink. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system ending with a double bar line and the second system beginning with a new staff.

Instrumentation and Parts:

- 4 Flauty (Flauty)
- 2 Oboe (Oboe)
- 2 Bassoon (Bassoon)
- 3 Cell (Celli)
- 2 Bass (Bassi)
- 4 Corn (Corni)
- 4 Trumpet (Trumpet)
- 3 Trombone (Trombone)
- 2 Horn (Horn)
- Viola
- Cello
- Bass

Key Features:

- The score is written in a handwritten style, with some parts in red ink.
- The notation includes notes, rests, and dynamic markings.
- The score is divided into two systems, with the first system ending with a double bar line and the second system beginning with a new staff.
- A small circular stamp is visible at the bottom center of the page.

Andante (♩ = 109)

-5-

Handwritten musical score for the first system, featuring the following instruments and parts:

- Picc.** (Piccolo): Treble clef, 3/8 time signature.
- 3 Fl.** (Flutes): Treble clef, 3/8 time signature.
- 2 Ob.** (Oboes): Treble clef, 3/8 time signature.
- Angl.** (English Horn): Treble clef, 3/8 time signature.
- 2 Clar.** (Clarinets): Treble clef, 3/8 time signature.
- Bass.** (Bassoon): Bass clef, 3/8 time signature.
- 2 Ag.** (Agonists): Treble clef, 3/8 time signature.
- C. Ag.** (Cello Agonist): Bass clef, 3/8 time signature.
- Stripa** (String Part): Treble clef, 3/8 time signature.
- 4 Cor.** (Cor Anglais): Treble clef, 3/8 time signature.
- Trb.** (Trumpet): Treble clef, 3/8 time signature.
- 3 Fox.** (Fagott): Bass clef, 3/8 time signature.
- Tuba**: Bass clef, 3/8 time signature.
- Symp.** (Symphony): Bass clef, 3/8 time signature.

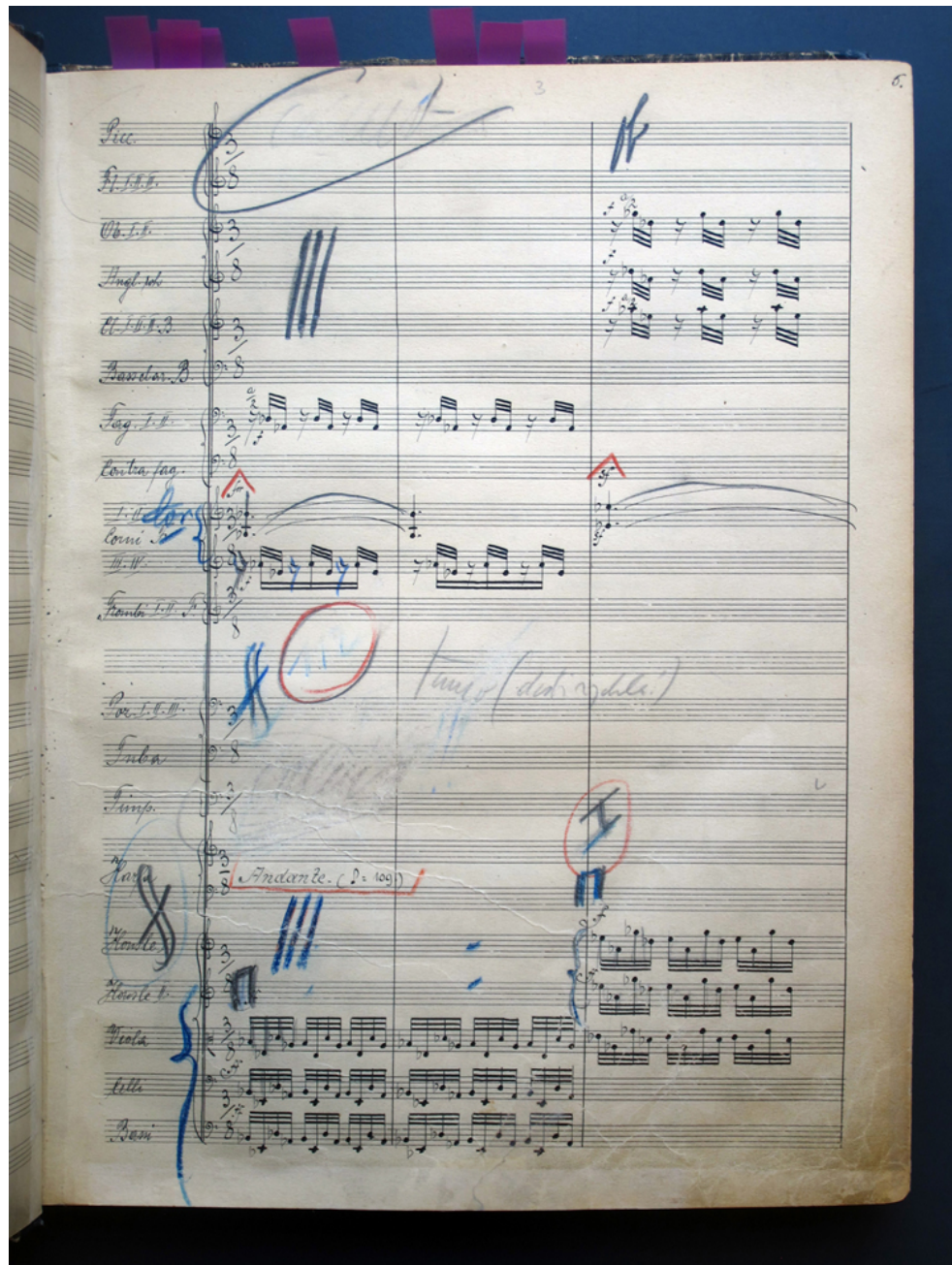
The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *f* (forte) and *sf* (sforzando).

Andante (♩ = 109)

Handwritten musical score for the second system, featuring the following instruments and parts:

- I. Fl.** (First Flute): Treble clef, 3/8 time signature.
- II. Fl.** (Second Flute): Treble clef, 3/8 time signature.
- Viola**: Treble clef, 3/8 time signature.
- Cello**: Bass clef, 3/8 time signature.
- Basso** (Bass): Bass clef, 3/8 time signature.

The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *f* (forte) and *sf* (sforzando). There are also red markings and a *pic.* (pizzicato) instruction.



Could you give us an example to illustrate the work with sources?

Zahrádka: Here, we can show one small example. This is the first page of Janáček's autograph of *The Makropulos Case*, and here is the second copy by Jaroslav Kulháněk, which was the conducting score used at the première. And here already, we can see that these two manuscripts differ. For example, there are no timpani in the Brno score. There are timpani in the first, Sedláček's copy, which is stored in Vienna. This means that timpani are not included in the original score for the Brno première. The discrepancy between these sources is quite significant, and it is necessary to consider whether this was a mistake or an oversight, or whether there was a shift in Janáček's thinking about this work. It is also necessary to keep in mind that after Janáček heard the work, he made some corrections, even after the première. He did not make these corrections in the Brno copy but directed them towards Vienna,

where they were recorded in Sedláček's copy, and at the same time, in the copy made there in 1926. This means that UE had yet another period copy, which has also been worked into the critical edition. However, in 1928 UE managed to copy only the first act, as after that the score from Vienna went from Brno to Prague, where the amanuensis Sedláček again recorded some changes, and after that it was used for the Prague staging by Otakar Ostrčil.

And of course, this edition is also based on experiences from the first performance. This means that some changes and alternatives that were made by František Neumann, the outstanding conductor of Janáček's work, whose art Janáček valued greatly and thought exemplary, are taken into account here. And also the second performance under Otakar Ostrčil. Janáček was very happy with this performance, too. So, regarding some changes in tempo and so on – these are also recorded in the edited score, in the footnotes. There is also the significant and complicated issue of dynamics. In his autograph and also in the first copy, Janáček uses only very general dynamics. Janáček's dynamics are always very expressive, either grand forte or pianissimo. But with Janáček, forte is used in 90% of the score, which is, of course, absolutely impracticable. The adjustments in dynamics were done during rehearsals for the first staging.

Leo Janáček was always present at the rehearsals of his new pieces, and, together with František Neumann, he revised the dynamics. And so František Neumann created very good dynamics and, let us say, phrasing, too, throughout the whole opera, and Janáček was very satisfied. He even wrote to Universal Edition that the dynamics were exemplary and should be used in this way. But later this was forgotten, and more and more layers covered Neumann's dynamics, which we have uncovered in this edition. This means the edition uses the dynamics approved by Janáček.

The discrepancy between these sources is quite significant, and it is necessary to consider whether this was a mistake or an oversight, or whether there was a shift in Janáček's thinking about this work.

To what extent are Sir Charles Mackerras' suggestions taken into account?

Zahrádka: Given that Sir Charles Mackerras has been the most significant 20th century conductor of Leoš Janáček's work, and that he himself has done editorial work for this opera, his recommendations have been taken into account in this edition, and in some places the solutions recommended by Sir Charles Mackerras are given in the footnotes.

We must bear in mind that *The Makropulos Case* is a very demanding and difficult opera, and in some places it is on the borderline of playability, or rather beyond it. In interpretational practice, these places are dealt with in various ways. They were dealt with in various ways, by František Neumann at the Brno première, by Otakar Ostrčil, and during the entire era, especially in the 1960s and the 1970s. Sir Charles Mackerras has also dealt with these places in a different way. In this edition, I usually record these recommendations in ossia as suggestions or simplifications, or only in the footnotes, which specify whether this is how František Neumann dealt with it, or how Otakar Ostrčil solved it, or whether this is how Sir Charles Mackerras approached it. And it is then up to the interpreters or the conductor to decide which simplification or approach to such a place to choose, if they do not want to brave Janáček's original, which would, of course, always be the best.

*The solutions recommended by Sir Charles Mackerras are
given in the footnotes.*

The translation of the libretto by Max Brod also went through several creative phases. How has the critical edition dealt with this process?

Zahrádka: This edition draws on the first German translation of the opera by Max Brod. We must bear in mind that the relationship between Janáček and Brod was not the best at the time; they argued a lot about the libretto. Brod even suggested some small changes to the Czech libretto, which Janáček accepted and which even appeared in the first printed edition. But after Max Brod wrote an unflattering review of Janáček's new work and its first

performance, Janáček got even angrier with Brod and said that everything would be according to his wishes and that all Brod's changes would be erased. Eventually, they were reconciled. Simply, the issue of the translation, some dramaturgical changes and the changes to the libretto are very complicated and unclear. Such instances again clearly offer two alternatives: the ossia gives this option and the argumentation for it is such and such; or that version can be used and the argumentation for that version is such. And again they can choose which version to use.

This edition uses the dynamics approved by Janáček.

You have accompanied the critical edition of The Makropulos Case all the way to its première performance at the Janáček Brno 2014 festival.

Zahrádka: When possible, my editions for UE are always connected with the first performance in Brno, partly because the local orchestra has great experience with Janáček, and also because I am from Brno and so I can be a part of such a staging. As this is the first performance of this edition, I sit in on all orchestral rehearsals, correct things, observe how dynamics change and correct possible mistakes, so I am present at the process from its beginning to the première.

