

Abstract

This thesis concerns the song cycles *Gypsy Melodies* op. 55 (1880) and *Biblical Songs* op. 99 (1894) by Antonín Dvořák. The main question is how the composer musically reads the text and how he represents and further develops its sense.

Two musical settings of Adolf Heyduk's poems *Cigánské melodie* (1859) are discussed in the first part: At first *Gypsy Melodies*, a cycle of fourteen songs by Karel Bendl written in 1861-62 and 1875 that also provides context for Dvořák's *Gypsy Melodies*, and then the latter song cycle by A. Dvořák. Both works are analysed in detail and compositional principles of musical setting of the sense of the text are characterized. Some parallels as well as differences are to be found not only in the two ways of setting the same texts but also in more general terms. Another topic discussed are the certain ways of representing the idea of *the exotic* in Bendl's and Dvořák's *Gypsy Melodies*.

In the second part Dvořák's musical setting of the sense of words in his *Biblical Songs* is described and explained. The certain principles used (concerning musical developing of the atmosphere and its changes and representing the sense of some particular words) are rather similar to the compositional approach to the text in his *Gypsy melodies* as well as in the other songs researched (Dvořák's *Evening Songs* (1876), Bendl's *Gypsy Melodies*). However, some other images inspired by the text are musically represented in *Biblical Songs*:

The *exotic* is evoked here, too, although in a significantly less apparent way than in *Gypsy Melodies*. Most of the exotisms in *Biblical Songs* were probably inspired by such imagery as words talking of a distant land, its music and songs of the people of Sion, mentioned in the text of the psalms set to music. The unusual musical landscape of *Biblical Songs* can also be partly explained as the typical sound of Dvořák's compositions of the so-called American period.

Another image, evoked not only by the sense of the text but rather by its origin, is the sound of *sacred music* which is also represented in these songs and so is in Dvořák's *Psalms 149* op. 79 for a choir and orchestra (1879, 1887). Analysing this composition provided some valuable findings on the compositional approach to the text of a similar origin and, thanks to some more similar features, also context for further reflections on Dvořák's *Biblical Songs*.