Text As Muse, Muse As Text:  
Janáček, Kamila, and the Role of Fantasy in Musical Creativity

Only in art does it still happen that a man who is consumed by desires performs something resembling the accomplishment of those desires and that what he does in play produces emotional effects—thanks to artistic illusion—just as though it were something real.
—Sigmund Freud

So read how we have simply dreamt up our life.
—Leoš Janáček

Prelude

On June 27, 1928, in one of the last of the many “intimate letters” he exchanged with the love of his life, Kamila Stösslová, Leoš Janáček reported that the Moravian Quartet had that day come to his home in Brno to play for the first time his last major work, the String Quartet No. 2, “Intimate Letters.”

I listen. Did I write that? Those cries of joy, but what a strange thing, also cries of terror after a lullaby. Exaltation, a warm declaration of love, imploring; untamed longing. Resolution, relentlessly to fight with the world over you. Moaning, confiding, fearing. Crushing everything beneath me if it resisted. Standing in wonder before you at our first meeting. Amazement at your appearance as if it had fallen to the bottom of a well and from that very moment I drank the water of that well. Confusion and high-pitched song of victory: “You’ve found a woman who was destined for you.” Just my speech and just your amazed silence. Oh, it’s a work as if carved out of living
flesh. I think that I won’t write a more profound and a truer one. So I end. (Janáček, 1994, p. 317)*

Having “carved” a work “out of living flesh,” thus did he “end”: less than two months later, Janáček was dead.3

When in 1917 Janáček first met Kamila Stösslová, he was sixty-two years of age to her twenty-five; they were both married, and she had two small children (Fig. 1). His ensuing voluminous correspondence tells more than the story of an unlikely (and likely unconsummated) romance: it tells of the astonishing outpouring of creativity during the last decade of Janáček’s life, during which he composed four major operas and both of the two string quartets. Long recognized as the inspiration of several of these late works, Kamila has always been of great interest; many have speculated as to why this uneducated, somewhat childlike, unrefined woman who barely returned Janáček’s lavish affection became his abiding muse. The notion that he preferred simple, unpretentious women flies in the face of his previous torrid affairs with prominent singers and musicians. More persuasively, in his remarkably sensitive analysis, Janáček scholar John Tyrrell apprehends the critical role of fantasy in the relationship.

The big advantage of Kamila Stösslová was that she was so passive…Making no demands and seeming quite uninterested in Janáček’s compositions, Kamila Stösslová turns out to have been his ideal muse: Janáček needed an empty canvas for his fantasies. Both the “Kamila Stösslová” and the works this imaginary person inspired were Janáček’s creation. Her very passivity allowed ample room for projection, her physical distance in Písek a positive advantage: too much reality would have burst the bubble. (2007, p. 849)4

Here, I will extend Tyrrell’s foundational idea—that Kamila unwittingly facilitated Janáček’s fantasy-based creativity—by fur-

* All subsequent letters from Janáček to Stösslová will be cited by date only; all page references are from Janáček, 1994. Janacek wrote many more letters to Kamila than she to him, and far more of his letters have survived.
Contextualized by critical historical and biographical events, a close reading of his letters to Kamila and the texts on which he based his important late works will allow a glimpse of the complex tangle of emotions and conflicts that he organized and rationalized within the narrative rubric of fantasy. Further, I will attempt to show that the contours of Janáček’s passion for his muse were not purely “imaginary,” but in fact patterned after the significant literary works he chose to set to music. In other words, he used his muse as substrate and shape the way a tailor builds a garment on a dressmaking form, mapping her object representation and his relationship to her onto the various characterizations and narratives specified by those texts. Although Janáček explicitly linked Kamila to some works and not to others, here, I will suggest that her influence is discernible in all the major works he composed after making her acquaintance. And while all but one—the Quartet No. 2, “Intimate Letters”—are based on literary works, I will reconstrue this quartet as a condensed distillate of the various texts around which Janáček constructed his fantasy love—including, and perhaps most significantly, an occult literary work that has not
yet been identified. If Janáček’s muse was modeled on texts, then those texts, too, were his muse.

Janáček was highly attuned to his extensive fantasy world, and eager to articulate it. He often acknowledged that it opposed more painful realities; more often, it seems, it displaced them. And, among modern composers, he was singularly, resolutely dedicated to the accurate expression of his entire inner world, including and perhaps especially his fantasy life, in music. Janáček built his fantasy life around literary texts, and recast them in a series of musical masterpieces that now reside at the center of the canon of modern classical music. He is thus an ideal subject for the exploration of the impact of significant cultural products on fantasy, and, in turn, of the impact of fantasy on the creation of new cultural products. In particular, that Janáček’s choices of texts influenced his fantasy relationship with Kamila suggests that cultural fantasy exists in constant dynamic interaction with individual unconscious fantasy, within which it is absorbed, incorporated, and re-expressed in new works of art. I also will argue that, in addition to organizing, abstracting, and symbolizing the composer’s frustrated wishful fantasies, their transformation into musical works of art effected their mysterious, material realization.

Perhaps Janáček’s greatest influence prior to Kamila was his fanatical nationalism. As I discuss elsewhere (Tutter, in press), the composer was a child of the Czech National Revival, and he trained his rage, rooted in childhood poverty and abandonment, onto the Austro-Hungarian Empire, whose forces dominated the Czech lands for three centuries. Janáček’s conscious incorporation into his compositions of the melody and rhythm of spoken Czech speech and folk music valorized his culture and defied institutionalized Habsburg politics of cultural erasure. At the end of the First World War, a diminished Austro-Hungarian Empire was forced to concede to demands for Czech independence, and the state of Czecho-Slovakia was established (see Table 1). A miracle for most Czechs, these events may have incidentally defused Janáček’s nationalism of some of the energy that sparked works like Taras Bulba (after Gogol’s novella). On the other hand, the creation of a Czech state may have freed him to devote more energy to the affable,
Table 1. Timeline of Janáček’s life and compositions, with influential works.

| Janáček’s Life and Selected Compositions | Selected Works of Influence         |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1859 Faust, Gounod (opera)             |                                    |
| 1859 The Storm, Ostrovsky              |                                    |
| 1862 House of the Dead, Dostoevsky      |                                    |
| Janáček marries Zdeňka Schultzová     | 1881                                |
| Olga Janáčková born                    | 1882                                |
| Vladimir Janáček born                  | 1888                                |
| Vladimir Janáček dies, age 2           | 1890                                |
|                                        | 1891 “Kreutzer Sonata,” Tolstoy     |
|                                        | (published)                         |
|                                        | 1899 “Lady with a Little Dog,” Chekhov|
|                                        | 1903                                |
|                                        | 1910 Symphony No. 8 (Faust II), Mahler|
|                                        | 1911 “The Devil,” Tolstoy (published)|
|                                        | 1917                                |
|                                        | 1918                                |
|                                        | “The Vixen Bystrouška,” Tešnohlídek |
|                                        | 1920                                |
|                                        | 1921                                |
|                                        | 1922                              The Makropoulos Case, Čapek |
|                                        | 1923                                |
|                                        | 1924                              The Cunning Little Vixen |
|                                        | 1925                                |
|                                        | 1926 Glagolitic Mass                |
|                                        | 1928 From the House of the Dead     |
|                                        | 1928 Quartet No. 2, “Intimate Letters”|

Attractive young woman who caught his attention, turning what might have otherwise been a pleasant friendship into a consuming passion.

The Diary of One Who Disappeared

Vacationing by himself in the picturesque Moravian spa town of Luhačovice in July 1917, Janáček was taking a stroll when he was struck by a curious sight: the young woman who took rooms in the house across the way, Kamila Stösslová, sitting tearful on the grass. In a 1925 letter to Kamila, he reminisces: “like an exhausted bird who doesn’t yet know how to fly, you
sat down on the grass. I addressed you: ‘You must be a Jewess!’ You replied: ‘How do you know?’” (6 June 1925, p. 72). Janáček regarded her ethnicity as part of her exotic charm; he does not report his answer to her question, but the olive complexion, large dark eyes and long, curly black hair he so often admired may have led him to guess. Shortly, he made the acquaintance of Kamila’s husband, David Stössl, whose imminent departure on business was the source of her distress. Thereafter, Janáček sent Kamila a rather formal note that evinces some of the typical characteristics of his correspondence: a worshipful idealization of her; a ritual, melodramatic complaint of misery and loneliness; and a relative lack of sensitivity to her own difficulties.

Dear Madam, Accept these few roses as a token of my unbounded esteem for you. You are so lovely in character and appearance that in your company one’s spirits are lifted; you breathe warm-heartedness, you look on the world with such kindness that one wants to do only good and pleasant things for you in return. You will not believe how glad I am that I have met you. Happy you! All the more painfully I feel my own desolation and bitter fate. Always think well of me—just as you will always stay in my memory. Heartily devoted to you, Leoš Janáček (16 July 1917, p. 3)

Kamila’s husband having been conveniently dispatched, Janáček was all too happy to serve as her escort for the remainder of her stay. The busy working of his imagination (and his capacity for projecting his envy) is already evident in the gloomy inscription written on a photograph he sent her after she departed: “We used to walk together, people envied us—and yet you only talked about your family happiness—and I about my unhappiness” (24 July 1917, p. 4).

As Diane M. Paige (2003) chronicles, Janáček’s subsequent absorption with Kamila, his new muse, would last a lifetime. Her influence on Janáček’s musical life was momentous and instantaneous. Shortly after she left Luhačovice, he began a new project, *The Diary of One Who Disappeared*, a song cycle set
to the poem of the same name recently published in *Lidové noviny*, a Brno daily. Originally presented as the true story of an anonymous boy’s seduction by the Gypsy girl whom he impregnates, the poem was later revealed as the work of the Moravian poet Ozef Kalda. The project was an idea Janáček had played with for months, but had not yet seriously cultivated; he made it plain that when composing it, he had Kamila in mind:

Those postcards of yours! They’re like speech without speaking, like a song without words... In the morning I potter around in the garden; regularly in the afternoon a few motifs come to me for those beautiful little poems about that Gypsy love. Perhaps a nice musical romance will come out of it—and a tiny bit of the Luhačovice mood would be in it. (10 August 1917, p. 10)

A year later, he was more openly flirtatious, coyly writing Kamila, “It’s too bad my Gypsy girl can’t be called something like Kamilka” (2 September 1918, p. 23). He would henceforth regularly refer to her as such: “Wherever I am I think to myself: you can’t want anything else in life if you’ve got this dear, cheerful, little ‘Gypsy girl’ of yours” (30 April 1927, p. 105).

Janáček had surreptitiously watched at the window for Kamila during that fateful first summer in Luhačovice. Once he spied her stepping onto her balcony, wearing only a white shift. It was a scene he would refer to again and again: “So tell me how I should imagine you. In the morning?—I have you in my mind’s eye just as you went out barefoot on to the ‘balcony’ in Luhačovice with your black hair undone” (31 January 1924, p. 44; see also pp. 32, 48, 73). And it was this scene a besotted Janáček joyfully relived when he traveled to Písek to pay the Stössls a visit:

And do you know what else makes me glad? That once again I saw your raven-black hair, all loose, your bare foot: and you are beautiful, wonderfully beautiful...And your eye has a strange depth, it’s so deep that it doesn’t shine. (1 July 1924, p. 48)
These rhapsodic comments are eerily reminiscent of another scene—the time in *The Diary* when Johnny first catches a glimpse of the Gypsy girl, Žefka. If Kamila inspired the programmatic music of *The Diary*, then the text appears to have inspired Janáček’s gripping fascination with this vision of Kamila:

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I startled this young gypsy girl
Lightfooted as a deer
Black ringlets on her mushroom breast
Her eyes like the night air,
Two eyes that cut deep into me
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Janáček couched other perceptions of Kamila in metaphors found in *The Diary*. Compare “If it weren’t for you, from whom the sparks fall on me and catch fire, I’d not be what I am!” (14 December 1927, p. 163) and “sparks almost fly from you” (29 February 1920, p. 31) to Kalda’s “Night-sparkle from a fire /The brilliance of her gaze.” Žefka’s lines:

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Johnny, you are welcome
Underneath the greenwood.
What star kept you on course
Well and truly guided?
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run remarkably parallel to Janáček’s lament:

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It seems to me that you’re a star which has its course in the heavens and I another one; I run along my own course, I think that I’ll soon catch up with that first little star, I run and I run—but not a bit of it! Our courses never meet. (10 March 1924, p. 45)
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Likewise, the question that Janáček poses Kamila—“And should I fear you? Oh, no, little soul, I don’t fear you” (30 April 1927, p. 106)—echoes the question that Žefka poses Johnny: “Are you scared of me, love?”/“Scared? Why should I scare from you or anyone?” Janáček’s evocative expression of sexual longing—“I think if only I could be that rock on which you lie, that water which washes you, that sun which dries you and burns you...
black (8–9 May 1927, p. 113)—recapitulates the seduction scene in *The Diary*:

> “Now Johnny, I’ll show you
> How sunburnt gypsies sleep.”
> With that she broke a branch
> And laid it on a stone:
> “There now, my bed is made.”

And a more explicit image from *The Diary*—“She opened her blouse, / She showed her unsunned self”—surfaces in Janáček’s fanciful imagining of Kamila: “if in the heat at the oven you were like a half-naked savage” (11–12 July 1928, p. 328).

In 1927, on his last Christmas Eve, Janáček unequivocally connects a passage in *The Diary* to his oft-stated longing to father a child with Kamila—a Christmas gift which, given their marital status and Kamila’s wary respectability, would have been as miraculous as the virgin birth of the Christ child.

> You noticed a nice passage in my *Diary of One Who Disappeared*! You know, it would be like under that fir tree of mine in my forest. And there’s another nice one! At the end—Žefka with the child in her arms—and he follows her. And I always thought about you in that work. You were that Žefka for me! (24 December 1927, p. 171)

The lines in *The Diary* to which Janáček refers—

> To find my life, I lose it
> Destiny directs me.
> Life’s doorway stands open.
> Žefka waits and calls me,
> Nursing our firstborn son.

—reappear with minor alterations in a letter written a few days later: “Bring us together, fate, give to us those moments about which we don’t talk, in which there’s forgetfulness, in which a new world opens—and a new life grows!” (27–28 December 1927, p. 174).
Lacking a child, Kamila herself would do: “You’re so lovable that if you were even smaller I’d place you in a crib like the Christ-child and I’d cradle you into sweet dreams” (19 October 1927, p. 135). Waiting impatiently for her long-awaited arrival in his hometown in Hukvaldy—the visit during which he would die—he floated an alternative fantasy: “And what if you were to take [her son] Otuš with you to Hukvaldy?…they’d think that he was ‘our’ son” (10 June 1928, p. 305).

The fantasies stirred by The Diary set up a subtle dichotomy. On one hand, the forbidden but darkly alluring Žefka/Kamila is the incarnation of earthy sensuality and fertile womanliness, a good wife and devoted mother. On the other hand, in Janáček’s time the Gypsy was very much a devalued Other, a socially denigrated object of resentment, fear, and hatred; in order to raise a child with a Gypsy woman, Johnny must forgo his family—indeed, his entire life—a conflict that brings him intense grief. While exciting, Janáček’s love for Kamila would have constituted a tremendous if tacit danger, if ever it did jump the banks of fantasy. Janáček used the affectionate apppellations “Gypsy,” “black Gypsy,” and “Negress,” more-or-less interchangeably: “that black Gypsy girl in my Diary of One Who Disappeared—that was especially you even more” (24 July 1924, p. 53); “I am glad only that I can think to myself ‘She’s mine, that dear Negress!’” (8 May 1928, p. 270). Such comments, as well as offhand references to Josephine Baker (e.g., 8 May 1928, p. 272, 275) suggest that Janáček saw Kamila through the current cultural prism through which the Negro woman was regarded with xenophilic fascination, and seen as “a ready-made representation of the cultural, racial, and sexual other” (Cheng, 2006, p. 95), brimming with barbaric female sexuality—a Hottentot Venus.

Kamila’s “blackness” earned her yet another appellation: “So are you black like a little devil?” Compare Žefka’s song from The Diary—

“I’ll sing. Listen now. 
Hear my gypsy song now.”
Then she joined her hands
Singing her sad hurt
And the notes she sang
Ravished his young heart

— to Janáček’s: “I have a little devil who’s sometimes naughty and sometimes is close to tears. Do you know her? I’ve put her into my heart, and now that heart sings out such notes, now laughter and then crying!” (21–22 October 1927, p. 137). That “my devil” was also less than a completely benign term of endearment is suggested by another text: “The Devil,” a novella by Tolstoy (2009a).

The story of the dangerously seductive, forbidden female “Other” who steals the inexperienced sons of upright families is a pervasive European trope. Usually a Gypsy or Jew, another common variant of the infiltrating other involves the peasantry, who, while Christian, were for all intents and purposes equally taboo among the upper social classes. This is the subject of the semi-autobiographical “The Devil,” written in 1899 but not published until 1911—after Tolstoy’s death, and a few years before The Diary appeared (Tolstoy, 2009a). “The Devil” is a vehicle for Tolstoy’s warning morality (in later life, he counseled celibacy): Evgeny, a principled and well-intended young member of the landed gentry is overwhelmed by compulsive sexual longing for the peasant woman, Stepanida, with whom he had relations prior to his marriage, but whom he had subsequently and earnestly foresworn. Like Kamila’s husband, Stepanida’s husband is almost always away. Like Johnny and Žefka, Evgeny and Stepanida meet in the forest, a mystical, primeval space. And like Kamila, Stepanida is a vigorous, fecund woman, with “dark, shining eyes” (p. 170)—the image of robust health. In contrast, Evgeny’s new wife Liza is a lovely, slender woman with a “very delicate, white, yellowish” complexion, entirely devoted to meeting her husband’s needs. Liza, a “useful, irreplaceable advisor” (p. 180), is loving rather than sensual, ethereal rather than physical. Less than surefooted, she stumbles in the garden; less than fully fertile, she miscarries after jumping out of a carriage.

Tolstoy equates female desire such as Stepanida’s with menace; irresistible and seductive, this femme fatale consumes Evgeny, despite his genuine love for his wife. Invoking an un-
exorcised demon, “passionate lust seared him, clutching his heart like a hand” (p. 188); increasingly tormented, Evgeny meets with inevitable disaster. The ambiguity introduced by the title (just who is the “devil”?) is resolved only at the end of the story, when Evgeny realizes “She’s a devil. An outright devil. She’s taken possession of me against my will” (p. 204). Yet some uncertainty regarding Evgeny’s culpability remains, Tolstoy atypically providing two alternative endings: one in which Evgeny commits suicide, and another in which he kills Stepanida.

So, too, did Kamila wholly captivate Janáček. In one of numerous letters notable for themes of domination and submission, he states that it is his desire for her that constitutes her “power over me. This is your dominion; the kind rule of the little Negress. I’ll obey her, I’m completely devoted to her. She’s bewitched herself from all sides so she won’t escape. Even I must tie her up, bind her strong hands—no, she, Kamila, also knows how to fold her hands submissively—really she could do so” (18 March 1928, p. 233). After acknowledging his subjugating devotion, Janáček needs to regain control, and immediately reverses the terms.8

It is fair to presume that Janáček was familiar with “The Devil.” A romantic pan-Slavist, he read deeply and widely, and enjoyed Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Gogol, among others, in the original Russian. He founded a Russian reading circle in Brno and based many of his works on Russian texts, including the 1923 String Quartet No. 1, subtitled after another story by Tolstoy—“The Kreutzer Sonata” (Tolstoy 2009b), which restates themes from “The Devil” even more emphatically. Before turning to these works, however, let us consider two operas that form a bridge to The Diary.

**Kát’a Kabanová and The Cunning Little Vixen**

After completing The Diary, Janáček next composed the opera Kát’a Kabanová, a story of forbidden love adapted from the 1859 drama, The Storm, by the Russian playwright, Aleksandr Ostrovksy.9 The heroine, Kát’a, has an inattentive husband (a familiar theme) and finds love in the arms of another man.
Intolerable guilt and humiliation drive her to confess her sin, and she devolves into madness, and then to suicide. *Kát’a Kabanová* was the first opera in which Janáček acknowledged Kamila’s inspiration. As if to publicly confirm this, he assigned all future royalties to her in his will.

Janáček told Kamila that when he first met her, he “saw for the first time how a woman can love her husband...that was the reason why I took up *Kát’a Kabanová* and composed it” (29 October 1921, p. 34). Practically begging her to come to the Brno premiere of the opera, he describes how he drew on visual imagery during its composition:

> During the writing of [*Kát’a Kabanová*] I needed to know a great measureless love. Tears ran down your cheeks when you remembered your husband in those beautiful days in Luhačovice. It touched me. And I always placed your image on [the character of] Kát’a Kabanová when I was writing the opera. (25 February 1922, p. 38)

But while Kamila was “continually present in all parts of the opera where expressions of love occur” (12 January 1928, p. 185), her “great measureless love,” unlike Kát’a’s, was saved not for her would-be lover, but for her husband.

An earlier, more reflective letter reveals Janáček grappling with the painful discrepancies between fantasy and reality. Its angry undertone of envy appears to reflect the strain of appreciating Kamila’s sustained devotion and fidelity to her husband as he himself grew more deeply in love with her:

> What can I say about myself? You know I dream up a world for myself, I let my own dear people live in my compositions just as I would wish. All pure invented happiness. On you real joy, real happiness, smiles at least sometimes. But on me? When I finish a work—even this dear *Kát’a Kabanová*—I’m sad about it. As if I were parting with someone dear to me. (23 May 1921, p. 33)

The fictional Kát’a, “my own dear,” is virtually animated: for Janáček, Kát’a was Kamila, and Kamila was Kát’a, a woman he had to part from. Finishing the opera also meant leaving behind an organizing narrative fantasy that had for the moment
all but subsumed reality—a farewell to an intensely emotional engagement with a melded character that confused the boundaries of fiction, imagination, and identification.

Janáček did not credit Kamila as a directly inspiring his next opera, the 1923 *The Cunning Little Vixen*. Based on a story by Rudolf Těsnohlídek also serialized in *Lidové noviny*, *Vixen* tells of a forester who traps the vixen Bystrouška (“Sharp Ears”) and tries, but fails, to domesticate her and make her his “pet.” While the beautiful Bystrouška—an animal incarnation of the woman who cannot be “tamed”—was perhaps a less than proper role openly to assign to Kamila, his increasing infatuation and attendant frustration with his unattainable muse seems to have found expression in this rustic fantasy with its elusive vulpine heroine.

In some of the most stirringly beautiful musical passages in *Vixen*, Bystrouška’s fox “husband” sings, “You are as lovely as ever…Do tell me how many more cubs we will have!” She admonishes him—“We’ll talk about it again in the springtime”—and he replies enthusiastically, “I’ll wait! I’ll wait!” Janáček was not as patient. In lieu of Kamila’s presence, her letters attained the status of animate erotic objects—tangible, sensate, *physical* extensions of its writer: “I read your letters frequently: I’m glad I have a girlfriend” (9 January 1922, p. 36); “You wait for my letters and I pant for yours” (30 June 1924, p. 47); “Do with this letter, this confession of mine, what you will. Burn it, or don’t burn it. It brings me alive. *Even thoughts become flesh*” (25 April 1927, p. 103, emphasis added). His grasping dependence on her returning his attention is evident from his nearly constant complaints about Kamila’s less than reliable, often tardy correspondence, relayed in a fretful, chiding tone: “Today’s Tuesday—and no letter from you…I think you’re ill…I’m worried…How instantly it spoils my mood!” (27–28 December 1927, p. 174); “Your letters come to me like a warm ray of spring. I smile, at once I see everything in a welcoming light. And when there’s no letter, straightaway it’s as if I’m in twilight. I grow sad” (15 March 1928, p. 229). Kamila knew that Janáček understood her letters as a sort of proof of their fantasized relationship, and knew that he was desperate for her to play along; evidently, the extent to which she did was sufficient to sustain and even nourish the illusion.
Much to Janáček’s dismay, Kamila was, understandably enough, more reluctant to make public appearances at premières, especially if either of their spouses were absent. After refusing many such invitations, in 1918 the Stössls agreed to be Janáček’s guests at the Vienna premiere of Jenůfa, most likely tempted by the promised introduction to the Kaiser (he did not appear). Afterwards, Janáček reacted to Kamila’s perceived coolness and lack of gratitude with cold fury, his first display of overt anger toward her in his letters: “I waited for your first response after returning from Vienna and nothing, absolutely nothing from you” (16 March 1918, p. 15).

If Kamila, who for the most part neither directly gratified his fantasy nor consistently confronted him with reality, was for Janáček a human Bystrouška, he openly identified with the forester: “I have begun writing The Cunning Little Vixen. A merry thing with a sad end; and I am taking up a place at that sad end myself” (10 February 1922, p. 37). Janáček waited far longer than Bystrouška’s husband: it would be a decade before Kamila allowed him to kiss her. Here, he softens and offsets his wish for controlling possession with fantasies of protection:

Oh, I’ll bind you hand and foot! And you won’t untie yourself...And I’d put you into cotton-wool so no-one could harm you...Strange that on my last visit it was as if I’d caught the most beautiful little bird in a cage, so it seemed to me. And I’ll take care that it won’t fly away from me. Only when it’s nicely domesticated will I then open the door for it. You dear little bird of mine! (17 February 1928, p. 205).

But this “beautiful little bird” would not be caged. Irritated when yet again Kamila turned down an invitation to a premiere, Janáček falls back on the motifs of coercion and retaliation sounded in Vixen:

I now see that you’re the sort of domestic cat that one has to take away somewhere in a sack—and still it runs home...And if I don’t get a letter from you, I’ll set off some day and bang on your door at night so much that you’ll get a fright. (21 May 1925, p. 69)
Resonating with the “bang on the door” that would give Kamila a punishing “fright,” the angry forester follows the fugitive Bystrouška to her lair, and shoots her—just as Evgeny kills Stepanida.

An impossible love can only be framed in the future; as Janáček seems to realize near the end of his life, he would wait forever:

And I think to myself that if only it could be that this double life were cut short and everything were to flow only in a single stream...And so it gets more distant—and a year, I no longer believe this “in a year’s time.” Something sad always comes rushing out of the blue...like a spider I weave a net round about, and the wind tears it. Again and again, hopelessly. (29 June 1928, p. 319)

Janáček’s fashioning his muse as an abandoning, elusive imago also drew on his past history. His musical skills earned him a scholarship to the Augustinian monastery conservatory in Brno, and so it came to be that at the age of eleven, this provincial, Czech-speaking boy left his home in Hukvaldy, a tiny rural village in eastern Moravia, to live in a gritty, largely German-speaking city. He would not see his family for four years, during which he lost first his father and then his adored older sister, Rosalie, losses from which he never quite recovered (Tutter, in press). In Janáček’s early cantata Amarus, after a poem by Jaroslav Vrchlický, an abandoned illegitimate child, aptly named Amar, grows up in a monastery: he dies, literally starved for love. As Janáček explains to Kamila,

Amar is the child of love—and dies when he has seen two lovers, and the desire for love in him sprang to life in vain: he was a monk...it’s nice of you to at least come into my dreams. It’s too little; it’s like showing someone a crust but not giving it to him to eat. And he’s so hungry, almost dying of hunger. (1 June 1928, pp. 292–293)

Jiří Janáček, Leos’ paternal grandfather, was the illegitimate child of his widowed mother, Dorota Janáčková, who after losing her husband became housekeeper to the Augustinian priest
Father Herman. While Father Herman may or may not have been Jiří’s father (it cannot be certain, but it seems likely, given that Jiří was born almost a year after his supposed father passed away), the unusually cultured and educated priest was surely his mentor. Jiří was guided carefully into a career as a skilled organ builder and cantor, a combination of schoolteacher, musical instructor and church musician; his sons, including Jiří Jr., Janáček’s father, followed in his footsteps and also became cantors. Janáček clearly identified with Amar; certainly his letters to Kamila portray himself as perpetually alone, miserable, and starving for love, although he in fact had many social and professional ties in the world of music, literature, and education that kept him constantly engaged. His uncertain ancestry and identification with Amar encourages the proposition that his childhood abandonment and the native talent that resulted in that abandonment were inextricably bound with a secret illegitimacy. As the grandson of a bastard, and possibly the great-grandson of a priest—or a Gypsy or a Jew, and who knows, perhaps like Amar also a bastard himself—he was worthy of banishment and not of love, and would die for lack of it.

Ironically, finding love and fathering a child with Kamila would have recapitulated any imagined illegitimacy, while making this transgression a chosen one, and therefore under his control. Janáček gleefully entertained the notion of an immaculate conception akin to the Christ child’s, cheekily noting Kamila’s considerable and increasing girth: “I’m glad you’re ‘blooming like a rose’ now. And those ‘little madams’ know that women often bloom like that when there’s another life in bud” (16 February 1928, p. 204); “Everyone will gaze at you to see if you’re already broader than you’re tall! ‘But that’s strange! Unbelievable!’” (4 March 1928, p. 218); “[The doctor’s] demeanour as he measured all of you! Wasn’t he thinking of something too? Why did he think that I so feared for your health?” (13 April 1928, p. 250).

The lush, pastoral ecstasy evident in the sheer musical poetry of Vixen expresses Janáček’s longing to return to the countryside of his youth with Kamila and their child, a means toward reversing his losses and repairing his abandonment and shame. In the forest, life is eternally renewed, a hopeful antidote for loss. Bystrouška’s offspring ensured her immortality: at the
end of *Vixen*, the forester recognizes her in her many cubs. As consuming and frustrating as she was, Kamila was for Janáček, like Bystrouška for the forester, a figurehead of everlasting life—a theme that germinated in *Vixen* and would flower in his next opera, *The Makropoulos Case*, which he composed after the *Quartet No. 1*, to which we will now return.

*Quartet No. 1, “Kreutzer Sonata”*

Often overlooked in favor of the eroticism of the *Quartet No. 2*—and its designation as inspired by Kamila—the *Quartet No. 1, “Kreutzer Sonata,”* is no less an emotionally taut, exquisitely fraught masterpiece, written furiously in less than two weeks time. As with *Vixen*, Janáček did not credit Kamila with a role in its composition, and only mentions it in their correspondence just before its premiere. It is perhaps no wonder that he did not openly associate Kamila with the protagonist of Tolstoy’s eponymous novella: “I had in mind a poor woman, tormented, beaten, battered to death, as the Russian writer Tolstoy wrote in his work *The Kreutzer Sonata*” (14 October 1924, p. 57). Of note, Tolstoy took the title of his short story from Beethoven’s *Violin Sonata (“Kreutzer”)* No. 9. Janáček thereby assumes a place in an esteemed lineage, while underscoring the fluid transformation and mutual inspiration of literary and musical art.10

“The Kreutzer Sonata” is a story-within-a-story: on a train, Pozdnyshev tells a fellow passenger the story of how he became convinced of his wife’s infidelity and kills her in a jealous rage. It concerns similar themes as its contemporaneous story, “The Devil,” but whereas the latter work presents an idealized view of married life, Pozdnyshev goes to great lengths to explain his total disaffection with and contempt for the institution of marriage. Janáček likely related to Pozdnyshev’s description:

…as most often happens, the husband and wife take upon themselves the external obligation to live together all their lives and already hate each other after the second month, wish they were divorced, and still live together, then what comes of it is that terrible hell from which people drink themselves to death, shoot themselves, kill
and poison themselves or each other. (Tolstoy, 2009b, p. 100)

Indeed, within two months of marriage, Leoš and Zdeňka were at each others’ throats, and Leoš moved out just after the birth of their first child, Olga, in 1882. At one point he drew up, and later revoked, a “divorce” certificate, which, while carrying no legal weight, seemed to Janáček to justify the open infidelities that eventually drove his wife to make at least one suicide attempt. While many of the complaints about marriage that Janáček and Pozdnyshev shared are somewhat generic—the quarreling about money, the painful silence of what both call the “abyss”11 (Tolstoy, 2009b, p. 117; Janáček, 1994, p. 140), more specific parallels may well have spoken to Janáček. Perhaps most meaningfully, Pozdnyshev’s “first baby was unwell… [the] dear doctors discovered that she ought not to nurse” (Tolstoy, 2009b, p. 123), but he begrudged the expensive wet nurse, complaining:

...one cannot raise a hand to condemn them, the mothers from well-to-do families...when one remembers what they suffer over their children’s health...[Madame Pozdnyshev] was entirely taken up by them—it’s terrible. There was no life of our own at all...Sometimes it seemed to me that she was doing it on purpose, that she was pretending to worry about the children in order to defeat me. (p. 126)

So, too, was Janáček’s daughter Olga sickly at birth. Much to his wife’s distress, he resented the extra cost her special care entailed, refusing to pay for a wet nurse and, like Pozdnyshev, openly envying the attention his wife paid their baby. He reconciled with her once she bore him a son; over time, he also grew to cherish his frail daughter. A grief-stricken and immensely guilty Janáček paid dearly for his earlier behavior when his two-year old son Vladimir died from scarlet fever; a decade later, Olga died from rheumatic heart disease at the age of twenty-one. He wrote the consummately lyrical opera Jenůfa—the story concerns infanticide—while Olga was dying; it is dedicated to her. With no little bitterness, Janáček claimed that Zdeňka refused to have any more children. Whether or not
this was the case, his childlessness after the deaths of his two children surely spurred his wish to have children with Kamila, his own wife long past childbearing age.

Pozdnyshev was no more approving of extramarital affairs than marriage: “depravity, true depravity, lies precisely in freeing oneself of moral relations to a woman with who you enter into physical contact” (Tolstoy, 2009b, p. 102). Moreover, such depravity is irreversible: “a man who has known several women for his own pleasure is no longer moral, but corrupted forever—a fornicator” (p. 105). Part confession, part self-defense, Pozdnyshev’s narrative is presaged by a treatise on the abominable animal nature of man, a rant saturated with seething, corrosive contempt—for men, who lust after and objectify women; for women, who exploit their control over men; and most of all, for the perverse use of glorified “romantic love” to disguise lust. Thus, “In practice, love is something loathsome, swinish…people pretend that the loathsome and the shameful is beautiful and lofty” (p. 119):

Men…don’t know, and don’t know because we don’t want to know, while women know very well that the most lofty, poetic love, as we call it, depends not on moral qualities but on physical intimacy and, with that, on hairstyle, the color and cut of a dress…she knows that we men all lie about lofty feelings—we need only her body. (pp. 107–108)

It is this “lofty” pretense that I imagine most resonated with Janáček, as it precisely describes one of his means of struggling with his tremendously charged and conflictual desire for Kamila. Witness the dialogue between Bystrouška and Lišak, the fox that courts her, in the libretto that Janáček himself wrote for Vixen. Lišak seizes Bystrouška, but she insists on knowing what makes her so special to him: “Why me, why exactly me?” Lišak replies, “I’m not a liar, I’m not a lying fox…it’s not your body, it’s your soul I love. Don’t shake your head. You will see, my Bystrouška, you will see that novels, even operas will be written about you” (Janáček, 2003, pp. 128–130). Although Janáček all but tells us that Lišak is “a lying fox,” and all but identifies Kamila as the fox he would like to cage,
only a year before he wrote the libretto he was still trying to deny any untoward feelings for his resistant muse: “It’s an ideal friendship, and I’m so glad that it’s so pure and elevated above everything bad” (30 August 1922, p. 39). This was in fact his express stance from the start, when, in a stunning display of righteous pseudo-naiveté and serial negation, he insisted that there had been no impropriety on his part:

I can’t explain why you don’t write to me. I haven’t done anything to you, I haven’t wanted anything from you. I really don’t know. I examine myself and look into myself for a serious wrong done against you—but I don’t find anything. (2 September 1918, p. 23)

Ultimately, Janáček could not maintain this façade. In a letter written a year after finishing the “Kreutzer Sonata” quartet, he concedes the very sort of “depraved” lust that Tolstoy proscribes, and that he previously disavowed, similarly intensified by arousing physical closeness, dress and hair, and then attempts to sanctify these feelings via the sacrament of marriage:

…that you were standing close to me in some room in Brno, in a salon, so close that I was unutterably hot; then I didn’t know, did I embrace you, or did I only want to embrace you? The people here and there, waiters perhaps, looked at us. But so what? You, elegantly dressed... But it was so lifelike that I wished that the beautiful, intoxicating dream wouldn’t stop...with that black hair of yours loose—it was like a storm cloud and it was a wonder that lightning didn’t flash from it; and when you bent down, I saw, but rather I didn’t see, I suspected—but I say to you, after all it was just a dream—it was the curve of your surely beautiful breasts! Surely, surely beautiful. Dream or reality?...My wife! See, how easily it comes! The dear Lord cares for us, and is good! What can’t be in any other way he gives at least as a dream. (27 July 1924, p. 54)

Janacek battles more than his growing desire: he also confronts the growing tension between gratifying dream and
disappointing reality. A fantasy “wife” is at least less “depraved” than a fantasy “mistress.” When in *Vixen Bystrouška* asks “What are you thinking of doing to me now?” even Lišak takes precautions; he may be a perjurer, but he is a prudent one, and exclaims, “then straight to the pastor!” (Janáček, 2003, p. 134). Accordingly, whenever plausible, Janáček reports publicly and proudly referring to Kamila as his “wife”: “I buy a stamp at the kiosk. ‘Has madam left already?’ Reply: ‘Yes, my wife has already left’” (1 September 1927, p. 129). He took special delight in leaving their married “signature” in guest books: “We’ve given our joint visiting-card to everyone. He who wants to read it, let him go to Karlštejn [castle], there he’ll find it in the [visitors’] book. It’s clear there: Drph. Leo Janáček and Kamila, i.e., Janáčková” (11 April 1928, p. 246). He was also careful to distinguish Kamila from his previous and highly visible extramarital lovers, most notoriously the soprano Gabriela Horvátová—yet no sooner had Kamila removed Horvátová’s portrait from his study (she had taken pity on Zdeňka), Janáček replaced it with a photograph of Kamila.

After their fleeting, yet evidently unforgettable physical intimacy, Janáček in the last two years of his life vacillated between celebrating Kamila’s sensuality and viewing her as wholly “pure,” practically virginal. He sometimes reverted to calling her by her maiden name: “You’re no longer for me anything other than Kamila née Najmanová” (28 February 1928, p. 213). His “little devil” had morphed into the “guardian angel” who “released” him “from the clutches of that disgusting H[orvátová]” (8 June 1927, p. 121):

> I knew you as emotionally deep, so honourably sacred, so sensible, so true, strong, quiet, devoted that I stand before you as before an apparition which only the good Lord could have sent me...I can’t get to sleep until I tell you that you’re more precious to me than my life. Just stay by me, my good angel. (20 August 1927, p. 127)

> You’re as necessary to me as the air...None of my compositions could grow from this desert at home. I’d die like any ordinary unwanted person. You’re my light: I live as long as it burns. In my life you saved me from
that terrible perverted woman Horvátová, you save me again and again…I adore you for your tenderness, for your pure womanhood, because you suffer for me. One day Zdeňka will see that you protect me and that she was unable to do so. (29–30 May 1927, p. 118)

Kamila, however, was apparently no angel. Janáček’s recollection of her reaction to his confession of love suggests that she was finally stirred by his advances: “you cried out ‘I’ve never experienced this until now!’” (13 April 1928, p. 249).

In “The Kreutzer Sonata,” Pozdnyshev warns of the erotic power of music, comparing it to the experience of sexual awakening:

...music generally is a fearful thing...take, for instance, this Kreutzer Sonata, the first presto. How can that presto be played in a drawing room among ladies in décolleté?...After that presto...It was as if something were saying in my soul, “So it’s like that, not at all as I thought and lived before.” (2009b, pp. 146–147)

Indeed, all the movements of Janáček’s “Kreutzer Sonata” are marked con moto, invoking the “fearful” presto first movement of Beethoven’s sonata. But if Janáček identified with anyone in Tolstoy’s “The Kreutzer Sonata,” it was not the cynical wife-killer Pozdnyshev, but the violinist Trukhachevsky, who, Pozdnyshev was convinced, had seduced his principled wife via the dangerous “influence that music produces on impressionable natures...this man was bound not only to please her...but to conquer her, crush her, twist her, tie her in knots, do anything he wanted with her” (Tolstoy, 2009b, p. 140). Thus, if not already “tormented, beaten, battered to death” by her husband, Pozdnyshev’s innocent wife would have been seduced, “conquered,” “crushed” by Trukhachevsky, a man with music at his disposal—a weapon as sharp as Pozdnyshev’s dagger.

And if Janáček were Trukhachevsky, then Kamila was “the poor woman” he might “conquer” and “crush.” At times, he tries to reassure her: “You know that I wouldn’t harm you, and I know that you’ll see that I don’t get hurt” (30 June 1924, p. 47). At others, he trivializes her vulnerable position, and the
potential danger their relationship posed to her: “It’s good you
don’t want to go into the woods. I’d be this sort of protector:
I’d take you unawares. ‘Hands up!’, I’d cry; and then I’d hug
you and kiss you. A good protector, not so?” (5 May 1927, p.
108). More rarely, when the pull of fantasy recedes, he is more
tenderly, if transiently aware of the actual ramifications of a
“real” affair. Soon after finishing the Quartet No. 1, he wrote:

I know, don’t I, that I’ll never have you. Would I pluck
that flower, that family happiness of yours, would I make
free with my respect for you, who I honour like no other
woman on earth? Could I look your children in the eye,
your husband and parents? Could I walk into your home?
(15 July 1924, p. 62)

The Makropoulos Case

Opera was the ideal genre with which Janáček could in-
dulge his attraction to the fantastical, and The Makropoulos Case
was no exception. Soon after completing the “Kreutzer Sonata”
quartet, he wrote Kamila, “I’ve begun a new work and so I’m
no longer bored. A three hundred-year beauty” (11 November
1923, p. 43). Janáček adapted the libretto from the satirical
play of the same name by the Czech writer Karel Čapek. In
this twist on the Faust legend, the protagonist, Emilia Marty
(conveniently for Janáček, a famous opera singer) possesses a
secret recipe for a potion that grants three hundred years of
youthful existence to those who ingest it. In exchange for the
artistic perfection that immortality allows—over the years, her
voice does not age, and only improves—Emilia had to renounce
love, as she inevitably outlives all her lovers. Her female status
signals the condensation of the Faust theme with its associated
trope of the “eternal feminine.” In a variation of the chorus of
Maters who appeal to the eternal feminine to grant man salva-
tion at the conclusion of Goethe’s canonic Faust II (1984), the
three-hundred-year old beauty roams from country to country,
reinventing herself: Elena Makropoulos became Eugenie Mon-
tez, then Else Muller, Ekaterina Myshkin, Elian MacGregor, and
finally Emilia Marty.
The Faust legend was a staple of nineteenth century Romantic music. Charles Gounod’s 1859 opera Faust was one of Janáček’s favorites; while courting his future wife, he attended a dress ball dressed as Faust, accompanied by Zdeňka as Margarethe. Both Hector Berlioz and Richard Wagner, composers whom Janáček greatly admired, wrote programmatic music after the legend (The Damnation of Faust, 1846, and A Faust Overture, 1855, respectively), and the finale of Gustav Mahler’s 1910 Symphony No. 8 famously sets to music the concluding chorus of Goethe’s Faust II. Thus the Faust legend was very much in the musical air when Janáček saw Čapek’s play in 1922; he was also in love with a young woman with whom he imagined he would father the children that would allow his lineage to survive.

Indeed, six months into the writing of Makropoulos, Kamila had become for Janáček the incarnation of the eternal feminine:

And, sometimes, ah, I fear to say it...because it’s something not to be uttered...They say of me that I’ll live forever; that’s metaphorical. But it’s possible to live forever in other ways. Eternal life springs from you, from that dear Kamila. (8 July 1924, p. 49)

In a letter from Frankfurt, he more explicitly demonstrates his identification with Goethe and the attendant concerns of fate and immortality in which he had wrapped Kamila:

You know, there’s something in one which lives independently, without our will. I walked around the town this morning just as the spirit moved me...I looked at one house and I read: “here lived Mariana von Willem, Goethe’s Sulejka.” What was it that led me here to this place of Goethe’s great love?...on your house you’ll now put up the sign: “here lives Mrs. Kamila ‘the hoped-for wife’ of Drph. Leoš Janáček.” And it will be said one day when other people come, and those two ‘hopeful’ dear people, who loved one another—will be no more. Such is life! Be well, my wife. (1 July 1927, p. 124)

Confirming his identification of Kamila with the character of Emilia Marty, after a rehearsal for a staging of Makropoulos
Case, a satisfied Janáček reported to Kamila, “it will turn out well. Mrs. Kerová, who is taking [the role of Emilia Marty], has movements like you...that lady seems just like you in her gait and her whole appearance” (28 February 1928, p. 213).

But Kamila also recalled that “three hundred-year-old woman” in less complimentary ways. Having bartered eternal love for eternal life, Emilia Marty, in her various identities, takes on serial lovers, watches them age, and then abandons them for a new country, a new name, and a new admirer, leading Janáček to give her a chilly nickname: “That ‘icy one’ had unsuspected success! Such that she sent cold shivers down everyone’s spine” (21 December 1926, p. 97). In a heated moment after the dress rehearsals, he predicts that Kamila will, as usual, not show for the premiere of Makropoulos Case, and taunts her:

I think that for me you’ll turn into that “icy one”...Those outfits of hers! In Act 1 a sort of greenish fur as a lining. Those pearls and long gold earrings (!) In Act 2, a white fur, a long train, in Act 3 a dress made out of gold...What a sight! And everyone falls in love with her...so you’ll come and see that “icy one” in Prague; perhaps you’ll see your photograph. (28 January 1927, p. 98)

The stress on the “icy one’s” costumes encourages comparison to “The Kreutzer Sonata,” and Pozdnyshev’s cynical observation that “the color and cut of a dress” was more important to a man than a woman’s moral virtues. Janáček had just completed the String Quartet No. 1, “Kreutzer Sonata” when he began work on Makropoulos Case, during which time he first began to make note of Kamila’s clothes. As if visualizing her literally turning into the well-dressed mezzo-soprano complete with her multiple costume changes, Janáček imagines Kamila in various outfits: “You’re here in wicked red, in twittering blue. Another time your eyes peer out in a ladylike fashion from beneath your wide-spreading hat, here again beside me a young and tender apparition in a white dress and blue slippers” (4 July 1924, p. 49). This was soon followed by Kamila’s appearance in a dream—“You, elegantly dressed” (27 July 1924, p. 54). At the premiere of Makropoulos Case three years later,
Returning to the topic of dress, he reported in an evident flight of fancy:

...in Brno they’re already saying how smartly and with what good taste you go about in Písek. What if they knew about that dress for the concert, and that blue and white dress when the aeroplanes were circling. You have no idea how you’re watched in Písek. I’m glad you arouse attention. (8 October 1927, pp. 131–132)

Janáček had reconceived his Hottentot Venus as a famously best-dressed diva—“a Venus in furs”.13

At the same time, pity and compassion for the “icy one” allowed him to envision Kamila as suffering—“you’re poor Elena Makropoulos” (8 June 1927, p. 121)—perhaps guarding against yet other emotions: “I’m finished with The Makropoulos Case. Poor 300-year-old beauty! People thought she was a thief, a liar, an unfeeling animal...they wanted to strangle her...I was sorry for her” (5 December 1925, p. 81). Here projected onto others, feelings of homicidal rage toward his youthful, elusive muse may have elicited reparative protective feelings: “But don’t walk in the woods! Kamilka, I’d worry about you; you wouldn’t be able to defend yourself against evil men. Promise me that” (5 May 1927, p. 108).

The Makropoulos Case can be understood as a meta-narrative of the ballad of Janáček and Kamila, in that Elena Makropoulos’ assumption of various identities parallels Kamila’s assumption of the various fictional characters that populate Janáček’s compositions—including the over-arching role of the eternal feminine embodied by Elena/Emilia. For I would argue that Kamila was all women to Janáček: girlfriend and bride, surely, as well as a worldly diva in “wicked red” and a virginal “apparition in a white dress.”14 She was his mother, the barefoot “protectress” in a white cotton shift, ready to take him back into her cottony womb, where he would once again be “complete”:

Think about [you] so much as if I were wrapped round, like that little caterpillar wrapping and turning itself from a caterpillar into a pretty butterfly. I’ve wrapped myself
up too and what I’m wrapped up in is my Kamilka. In her I’m complete, with all the joys of life. (10 June 1928, p. 306)

She was also the mother of his son, undoing the loss of Vladimir: “Today I wrote that sweetest desire of mine in music… You’re having a child. What fate in life would that little son have?” (8 February 1928, p. 200). And she was his daughter “Kamilka” (“little Kamila”), a replacement for Olga: “I feel so much that you’re the beloved child that the good-natured fates have sent” (29 May 1928, p. 288). Before one premiere that she did attend, he confided to Kamila that Zdeňka feared that “next to you she’ll appear like Cinderella. I told her to pass herself off as your mother, who has given everything nice to her daughter” (23 March 1920, p. 28). This new daughter he could fuss over, however, and keep from disappearing: “you’re like warm breath, which should be wrapped up and nursed, worried over, so it doesn’t disperse” (19 October 1927, p. 134).

Indeed, as if to make up for not having “worried over” his own children, Janáček filled page after page with concerns over the robust Kamila’s health. “Remember, illness strikes a person when he least expects it. Thus that fear of mine about you” (2 June 1928, p. 293). After hearing that Kamila had suffered from a minor cold, he wrote:

...your illness came to mind continually. But I’m troubled. Even you believe firmly in premonitions; and I’m almost fearful. It’s because you’re left on your own. And one always has to watch over a sick person. Illness isn’t lightly borne…My Kamilka, be well for me! (1 April 1928, p. 239)

He dispensed pills prescribed by his own doctor, recipes for home remedies, and copious words of advice—“Dear child, in general it’s necessary in that damp cold to heat your bedroom and dry out the air” (22–23 November 1927, p. 151):

And now my care for you: every day before you go to bed, drink a small glass of fresh water…it will keep you
in freshness and in health...if you were to fall ill I’d suffer more than you. No, now you overflow with health, no bad thoughts. (1 July 1924, p. 48)

The changes that Janáček made to Čapek’s play downplay its satirical aspects (the play can be read as a comment on the three-hundred-year history of the Czechs “selling their soul” to the Austro-Hungarian empire) in favor of the tragic. While in Čapek’s version, a young admirer ousts Emilia by burning her recipe for the magic potion, Janáček alters this succession scenario: in his libretto, Emilia chooses to burn it herself. Like Amar, she can no longer live without love.

**Glagolitic Mass and From the House of the Dead**

Janáček’s two great last works, the *Glagolitic Mass* and *From the House of the Dead*, have not traditionally been associated with Kamila, but with the composer’s return to patriotic Czech Nationalist themes (Tutter, in press). The *Glagolitic Mass*, set in Old Slavonic, was composed on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the First Czech Republic, but its music is anything but retrograde, and it sounds like no other Mass. Its magisterial opening fanfare gives way to passages of striking, jagged music, including two berserk, wrathful organ solos. The *Glagolitic Mass* was written during the summer of 1926, a particularly embittered time for Janáček, who found himself alone in his beloved Luhačovice, Kamila having once again refused to accompany him without her husband. Tortured by idealized memories and furious with Kamila, he punishes her with his suffering:

...loneliness falls on me here...Now one remains here alone...So I withdraw into my shell, which has no window...At breakfast, lunch and dinner I sit alone...Memories—they’re like a faded flower. And I’d like to smash them to pieces, at least they wouldn’t hurt any more. (15 August 1926, p. 95)
It’s had the effect on me here as when leaves fall on the countryside in the autumn. Everywhere you hear it whispering simply: it was once, it was once! I don’t understand you at all now... Just as if I were simply crying into a wilderness and the echo of my own words returns coldly to me. (24 August 1926, p. 95)

This agitated desolation resounds through much of the *Glagolitic Mass*, and Janáček made painfully plain to Kamila that she is its source: “You can see what sadness and memories about you, of places where I used to see you in Luhačovice, you can see what sort of influence they had on this venerable work” (28 March 1928, p. 237).

Yet this work also has moments of transcendence and solemn joy; as Janáček explains, they also reflect a fantasy that offset his isolated dejection. *The Glagolitic Mass* was, among other things, a wedding mass, written for his own nuptials:

Today I wrote a few lines about how I see my cathedral. I’ve set it in Luhačovice. Not bad, eh? Where else could it stand than there, where we were so happy? And that cathedral is high—reaching right to the vault of the sky. And the candles that burn there, they are the tall pine trees, and at the top they have lighted stars. And the bells in the cathedral, they’re from the flock of sheep... Into that cathedral two people enter, they walk ceremonially... And these two want to be married. And it’s strange that all the time there are just these two. So, priest, come at last! Nightingales, thrushes, ducks, geese make music! For their general now wants to marry that little Negress, that small, tender—that dear Kamila. (24–25 November 1927, p. 153)

Having personally conducted their wedding ceremony, for all intents and purposes Janáček considered Kamila his “dear wife of mine... Already, my little soul, you must be more Janáčková than Stösslová. Altogether now only Janáčková!” (28 February 1928, p. 213).

In the spring of the last year of his life, Janáček began his final opera, *From the House of the Dead*. Again, he wrote the
libretto himself, adapting it from Dostoevsky’s autobiographical novel, *House of the Dead*, in which a group of prisoners in the Siberian gulag recount how they came to be incarcerated. It was its story within a story—the prisoners mount a production of a play concerning infidelity—that apparently caught Janáček’s eye (Vogel, 1962). He assigned one of its characters to embody Kamila: “You’re in my new opera under the name Aljeja: such a tender, dear person” (27–28 May 1927, p. 115). Yet I argue that Kamila also figures into the opera in a more indirect yet more far-reaching way: she was one of the many sources, and surely the most immediate one, of the misery and guilt that imprisoned Janáček, a profound agony expressed from the start in *House of the Dead*, which opens with the anguished siren of violins and the sound of clanking chains.

The scant few kisses that Kamila had allowed Janáček had set him aflame, fostering high hopes that his dream of a life with her could somehow now become a reality. More than half of his letters to Kamila date to this period, between 1927 and 1928, and most detail this most optimistic expectation. On the eve of the New Year, 1927, he rhapsodizes:

> And now I’ll go to bed with your reassurances and my single life’s wish, that you’ll be wholly mine, and God grant that new life in your sacred womb—in this hopeful year and the sooner the better—yes soon, if I were to see you very soon…? (pp. 179–180)

Such wishes were accompanied by heightened anxiety and a compensatory reliance on destiny: “a premonition keeps on whispering that times of decision are coming” (28 February 1928, p. 213); “we put ourselves in the hands of fate. We’ll take from its hands what it brings us…Surely you have to and will look everyone straight in the eye. So don’t be frightened, Kamila…Wouldn’t I protect you?” (9 November 1927, p. 143)

Once again, Janáček’s alterations to his source are telling. Most significantly, in Dostoevsky’s *House of the Dead*, the prisoners find an eagle with a broken wing and try to rehabilitate it; it refuses food and does not heal, however, and they release it to die in freedom. In Janáček’s hands, the eagle’s wing mends and the prisoners allow it to fly away at the opera’s end. Janáček
uses the eagle as a vision of the newly independent Czech state—of which the eagle is a symbol—and also, I suggest, as a reflection of his wish to be liberated from the cost of his desire and the confines of morality and guilt: “to be a man again who doesn’t worry about his body and lets his soul fly wherever it most wants to” (18 March 1928, p. 233). The man who could not cage his wild bird himself felt like a caged, crippled one; he told his muse, “If I didn’t have you…I’d have to despair of my life…The most terrible tortures are when someone wants to imprison the soul, when someone wants to chain up feeling, feeling from which every joy of my life wells up” (1–2 December 1927, p. 158). Further supporting the notion that he wished to identify with the freed eagle is a letter Janáček wrote to Kamila after he finished *House of the Dead*: “Everywhere someone’s missing for me. I walk about like a lost sheep…Not like an eagle which looks round, soars and finds the way!…I’m not myself, I’m not completely yours!” (20 February 1928, pp. 209–210); “if I could carry you off and always have you with me from now on, that would be the proper conclusion to everything. And so I’m like a bird which cannot fly and which simply runs around on the ground” (30 May 1928, p. 290).

Janáček would enjoy no such relief from his incriminating guilt. He reports a dream that encourages the idea that he believed that he had indeed committed at least one, perhaps capital crime:

So, my dear soul, yesterday and today I’ve finished that opera of mine.

*From the House of the Dead.*

A terrible title, isn’t it?…And in the night I dreamt that in the eiderdown a dead man was lying on me, so vividly that I felt his head! And I cried “but I’ve done nobody any harm!” (16–17 October 1927, p. 133)

Like *Makropoulos Case*, *House of the Dead* can be construed as a meta-narrative, the prisoners’ stories of their crimes comprising an allegory for the group of programmatic works that explicate
Janáček's real and fantasized indictments: infanticide, illegitimacy, and infidelity.

**Quartet No. 2, “Intimate Letters”**

As indicated by its title, the *String Quartet No. 2, “Intimate Letters”* is based not like the majority of Janáček's works on a published text, but on the letters that record the history of Janáček's great passion: “I’ve begun to work on a quartet; I’ll give it the name *Love Letters*. I'm now able to write about them even in music” (29 January 1928, p. 193):

> The first movement I did already in Hukvaldy. The impression when I saw you for the first time! I'm now working on the second movement. I think that it will flare up in the Luhačovice heat...In [this] work I’ll be always only with you! No third person beside us. (1 February 1928, p. 196)

For Janáček, the quartet was both “aural history” and a reliving of that history, an evocation of presence in the present tense, blended with “presentiments” of a wishful future magically foretold. He no longer had to filter or re-construe those memories or wishes through a fictional or fantastical narrative:

> It's my first composition whose notes glow with all the dear things that we've experienced together. You stand behind every note, you, living, forceful, loving. The fragrance of your body, the glow of your kisses—no, really of mine...Those notes of mine kiss all of you...But everything’s still only longed for! You yourself said that I've not yet experienced everything! Well, this is only a presentiment. How will it be after everything comes true that was longed for in the work! (15 April 1928, p. 253)

In particular, the third movement was to tell of “a great longing—and as if it were fulfilled” (19 February 1928, p. 208): it would “be very cheerful and then dissolve into a vision which
would resemble your image, transparent, as if in the mist. In which there should be the suspicion of motherhood” (8 February 1928, p. 199):

Today I wrote that sweetest desire of mine in music. I fight with it, it triumphs. You’re having a child. What fate in life would that little son have?…It sounds just like you are, turning from tears to laughter. (8 February 1928, p. 200)

And yet after he finished “Intimate Letters,” Janáček seemed disappointed by its failure to more concretely fulfill his longings, the future it foretold no longer so happy. Instead, the quartet became “a confession of love and a language of longing, the language of longing never satisfied” (19 May 1928, p. 283). In the following letter, he struggles to understand: if he could transform his very real longings into music, then why couldn’t—why didn’t—that music transform his longing into reality?

These notes fashioned after you! If we hadn’t had so many honestly experienced moments together, without delusions, without pretense, the notes wouldn’t have sprung out just like a spark springs out when I strike flint with iron. They are born of what the kissing was made of...And then the notes fly faster, they sing with a presentiment of blissful moments, they already sing a lullaby—and there’s still no child anywhere! (19 April 1928, p. 258).

Seemingly surprised that the “honest” notes he composed did not themselves give birth, still Janáček did not give up hope. Once the quartet was completed, he dedicated it to Kamila. Vacillating between accuracy and fancy, he asked her:

And now Kamilka, decide how it should be printed: Either Dedicated to Mrs. Kamila S. or Dedicated to Mrs. Kamila Stösslová, or Dedicated to Mrs. Kamila Neumannová S.
I’d like to have your maiden name…People will ask there “which lady?…Mrs. Dr. Janáčková? Is she young, dark, with dark eyes and hair? Sort of chubby? Yes, yes it’s her!” (25 May 1928, p. 286)

In a sobering document, Robert Klos (1994) details the myriad legal obstacles Kamila and Janáček would have encountered had they actually attempted to divorce their respective spouses so as to be free to marry. Even if Janáček lived, in Klos’ estimation, the challenges would have taken many years to resolve. Until then, Kamila could only have borne Janáček an illegitimate child; had she done so, she would almost certainly have faced the loss of her two older children and any social standing she had—as did Tolstoy’s most famous heroine, Anna Karenina. On the other hand, it is fair to suspect that it was precisely the impossibility of Janáček’s love that allowed his prolonged idealization of his muse. He, too, seems to have wondered what he stood to lose from the consummation of his love:

My life is sadder, more disordered, which is why I bind it with this “art” of mine, I glue it together, I re-create it in my imagination more tolerably for myself. Who knows, if fate had united us closely, whether I would have needed this art, whether it would ever have made itself felt within me at all? Whether in your eyes which look on so sincerely there wouldn’t have been the whole world for me. (20 August 1924, p. 55)

Implicit in this question is its corollary: whether in Janáček’s mind, he would have had to forfeit his creativity—and hence, a version of immortality—in exchange for the consummation of his passion, like Emilia Marty, who renounced love for the sake of her immortal art. Then again, Amar died for want of love, and ultimately, so did Emilia. Death and endless lovelessness seemed to be the only two outcomes available in Janáček’s world. And yet his art allowed him to materialize an otherwise impossible love—if not in a carnal way, then in a visceral, experiential, and arguably equally “real” way.

After years of entreaties, Kamila finally visited Janáček at home in his beloved Hukvaldy; she arrived with her husband
(who departed shortly thereafter) and her son Otto, and stayed in a second floor room that Janáček had had constructed especially for her. A week later, Janáček contracted pneumonia and died, his beloved by his side. On August 10, 1928, two days before he passed away, he made his last entry in the album he bought to record their visits, alongside his last musical composition, a fragment called “The Golden Ring”:

And I kissed you.
And you are sitting beside me and I am happy and at peace.
In such a way do the days pass for the angels. (p. 345)

Coda: “Lady with a Little Dog”

While this sort of study inevitably entails a degree of psychodynamic formulation, I have not attempted to construct a more complete analysis of Janáček’s relationship with his muse—let alone of Janáček himself. Rather, I have used their relationship as a case study to attempt a better understanding of the relationship between the inner world and its cultural matrix, an interaction that has received some attention from cultural historians, but that has largely escaped extensive examination by Anglophone psychoanalysts. One germane exception is Person’s (1991) consideration of romantic love:

The ingenuity of the cultural innovation of romantic love is that it brings together into one story line—the story of idealized mutual love—the possibility of simultaneously fulfilling many disparate wishes, fantasies, and needs. As a cultural construct, it appears to have as much to do with the resolution of issues of authority and personal autonomy as with narcissistic repair or the disposition of libido. (p. 383)

If the “story line” of romantic love is a cultural construct capable of colonizing individual fantasy, then it follows that other, more specific narratives may also infiltrate inner life, their outlines and details chosen to accommodate and address individual needs, conflicts, and other psychic components. I
have argued that classic literary texts functioned as a major substrate of Janáček’s fantasy world and object relations, and that by embodying the fictional characters that peopled that fantasy world, Kamila helped catalyze the transformation of those texts into musical composition: “through you I look into the world and through you I hear the world, and see it” (7 May 1927, p. 111). If the enduring works of art that together form the cultural canon can be understood as reflecting shared or universal cultural fantasies, then it may be conjectured that the evolution of culture proceeds via a continuous revolving cycle, whereby cultural fantasy gains repeated residence in the inner world, which is given license to appropriate it, alter it as necessary, and transformatively re-express it. Janáček often wondered (wishfully, it seems) whether his letters would ever be read by others, and was loath to destroy them (the naughtiest ones were burned). By preserving his letters, he ensured that the inner world he so willingly committed to the page would remain singularly accessible. Unwittingly, he also opened a window onto a particular symbiosis: the very inseparability of cultural fantasy and individual fantasy—a filter through which the river of culture must continuously flow.18

It is not for lack of interest that I have not ventured to explore further how Janáček’s dynamics determined which texts he chose to interpret. One cannot help be struck by the recurrent themes of infidelity and the suffering, ultimately sacrificed female heroine. And it may be assumed that the Russian origin of many of those texts reflects his fervent Slavic identification, which followed him beyond literature to embrace contemporary trends in Russian intellectual thought. Janáček read broadly, his interests including psychology (he was fascinated by Wilhelm Wundt), physics (including Einstein and his theory of relativity), and philosophy. As exemplified by Janáček’s beloved Dostoevsky, Russian Symbolism, a movement that engaged aesthetics, religion, philosophy, and metapsychology, reached its apogee during Janáček’s lifetime. Its doctrines held that:

transcendence of the mundane on the part of the artist was only possible through his transfiguration by the power of love, which fused the feminine and masculine,
spirit and flesh, into a truly androgynous being that was neither the one nor the other, but a new, higher creation, a “spiritual corporeality.” Uncorrupted by the materialism of modernity, women represented the spirituality that could sublimate sexuality into a higher realm...Although the male was still, in the stereotypical gender typology of the day, the “active principle” to the female’s “passive principle,” he was, because of his sexual materiality and egotistic drive, dependent for his ability to produce true art on the idealized woman who was the incarnation of the moral selflessness, absolute perfection, and fullness that God had infused in her. (Izenberg, 2003, p. 25)

That these ideas also found expression in Janáček’s object representation of Kamila and relationship to her is clear from his letters, which, in addition to extolling her “moral selflessness” and “absolute perfection,” exactly specify the “spiritual corporeality” and fantasized fusion that Izenberg describes: “A love which wants to drown spiritually and physically and merge into one. You don’t know where you’d begin and where I’d end” (31 December 1927, pp. 179–180); “as I imagine it: one soul, one body!...all’s clear to me: you’re mine and I live in you” (2 May 1927, p. 106).

As Janáček was witness, “spiritual corporeality” was not so easy to attain; as Tolstoy so vigorously conveys, the spiritual ideal is in inevitable conflict with carnal passion. Other Russian authors were more sanguine to the vagaries of love, and more sympathetic to their characters’ struggles. I will hypothesize that “Intimate Letters” does in fact draw upon a text by one such author—indeed, a canonic one—as may, for that matter, all the works in which Kamila factors: a text not by Dostoevsky or Tolstoy, but Chekhov.

The protagonist of Chekhov’s 1899 story, “Lady with a Little Dog,” is Gurov, a middle-aged man with two children. He is vacationing alone at a spa in Yalta, where he meets, takes long walks with, and falls in love with Anna Sergeevna, a much younger, unhappily married woman with a little dog. Despite the fact that Gurov “despised” the whispered tales of immorality commonly associated with such places—for he “knew that these stories were mostly invented by people who would have
eagerly sinned themselves had they known how”—“these stories” would nevertheless become his reality (Chekhov, 2000, p. 362). Chekhov thus provided Janáček not only with an illustrative primer on the transformation of cultural fantasy into individual, albeit fictional reality, and hence into art, but also with a prime example of that cultural fantasy. Janáček was a willing student. Chekhov writes:

…often on the square or in the garden, when there was no one near them, [Gurov] would suddenly draw [Anna] to him and kiss her passionately. Their complete idleness, these kisses in broad daylight, with a furtive look around and the fear that someone might see them…seemed to transform him; he repeatedly told Anna Sergeevna how beautiful she was, and how seductive, was impatiently passionate, never left her side…Late almost every evening they went somewhere out of town; these outings were successful, their impressions each time were beautiful, majestic. (p. 367)

As if translated into a closely related (if more chaste) tongue, Chekhov’s descriptions of Gurov’s mid-life romance are audible in Janáček’s reminiscences. Like Gurov, Janáček was only superficially anxious about being seen with a married woman, and was in fact excited to meet Kamila in Luhačovice, where he could fill the role of the liberated lover: “[to arrive] at the same time to Luhačovice? I hope they won’t photograph us [together] straightaway at the station!… I’m looking forward to it… I have freedom of thought and feeling. I don’t hide what you are to me” (30 July 1927, p. 126). Excursions at that spa were just as wonderful as in Yalta: Janáček swooned,

I can’t think of anything now after all the beautiful things we’ve experienced here. The most beautiful of all was that they always saw us two, both of us [together], and that they certainly knew and said to each other: “these two are a world unto themselves!” (28 August 1927, p. 128)

Once home, Gurov cannot forget Anna:
…everything would suddenly rise up in his memory: what had happened on the jetty, and the early morning with mist on the mountains, and the steamer from Feodosia, and the kisses!…in his imagination the past would mingle with what was still to be. (Chekhov, 2000, p. 369)

Nor could Janáček forget Kamila:

…it was suddenly as if all those nice things fell into an abyss. You disappeared…I closed my eyes so as to see only you in my imagination” (5 November 1927, p. 140)

And these few days [left here] will go just as they went with you. Certainly I’ll have my eyes open—somewhere into the distance, and in them there’ll be your image. And people will think: “he sees her beside him.” (28–29 August 1927, p. 128)

Obsessed with her, Gurov travels to Anna’s hometown, and finds her, fittingly enough, in the local theatre. Similarly, Janáček was compelled to return to Luhačovice, the public stage on which the drama of his romance was played out:

And you bought pears and we ate them sitting there on the bench. Oh, how many trivial things like this there were. But it wasn’t boring! Everything pleased one—and now nothing. Just like in the theatre when the curtain’s down. (16 June 1925, p. 73)

It was with Kamila that the silver-haired Leoš first “experienced confessing love to someone. This never happened before, not even with Zdeňka” (2 May 1927, p. 106). Likewise, “only now when [Gurov’s] head was grey he had really fallen in love as one ought to—for the first time in his life” (Chekhov, 2000, p. 365). And while Gurov had “two lives: an apparent one, seen and known by all who needed it…which perfectly resembled the lives of his acquaintances and friends, and another that ran its course in secret” (p. 374), Janáček also had “an internal, secret life, he doesn’t long for anything—because he has a treasure beyond gold—and they call it Kamila” (4 December
1927, pp. 159–160). But he *did* long for something: “if only it could be that this double life were cut short and everything were to flow only in a single stream” (29 June 1928, p. 319). Gurov and Anna remained frustrated and unfulfilled, “as if two birds of passage, a male and a female, who had been caught and forced to live in separate cages” (Chekhov 2000, p. 376), while Janáček yearned “to live together [with Kamila]… we’d huddle up like birds in a tiny nest” (11 May 1928, p. 274).

Perhaps the most bluntly insightful expression of Janáček’s struggles is found in one of his last letters, written just before Kamila was finally preparing to join him in Hukvaldy. He confesses that he has discovered that he has a “double,” a caricature reminiscent of Pozdnyshev’s “fornicator”:

> Just imagine, there’s my double here in Brno. He’s strikingly similar to me; but—he’s loathsome to me. In years he’s much older than I am, and now takes a girl for his wife. He grins, you know; a grimace and a smile like an idiot. I love you unutterably, but something higher binds me to you, infinitely higher, bordering on sacrificing myself for you. Infinite longing for you is just one part of my love for you. There’s only lust on the face of that lecher. (26 June 1928, pp. 315–316)

Janáček’s unprecedentedly frank examination of his disavowed (but potentially imminently consummated) desire echoes Gurov, who realizes with remorse:

> …[he] had been affectionate with [Anna], and sincere, but all the same, in his treatment of her, in his tone and caresses, there had been a slight shade of mockery, the somewhat coarse arrogance of a happy man, who was, moreover, twice her age. She had all the while called him kind, extraordinary, lofty; obviously, he had appeared to her not as he was in reality, and therefore he had involuntarily deceived her. (Chekhov, 2000, p. 368)

At the end of “Lady With a Little Dog,” the only certainty facing Anna and Gurov is that “the most complicated and difficult part was just beginning.” This is also how the story of
Janáček and Kamila ends, and how it began too, for he had been looking for someone to play the role of Anna Sergeevna in Luhačovice long before he discovered the beautiful Gypsy Žefka. She would return as the seductive Stepanida, the desperate Kát’a, and the elusive Bystrouška; as Madame Pozdnyshev, she sentenced him to life; and as Emilia Marty, she locked him in her icy heart. There, in that prison, he wrote his “intimate letters” to Kamila—Janáček’s eternal feminine.

Notes
1. Freud, 1913, p. 90.
2. First entry, “The Album of Kamila Stösslová,” 2 October 1927; Janáček, 1994, p. 345.
3. Data concerning the life and work of Leoš Janáček are drawn from biographies by Tyrrell (2006, 2007), and those of Vogel (1962) and Zemanová (2002).
4. I am indebted to John Tyrrell, author of the definitive biography of Janáček (Tyrrell, 2006, 2007) and translator and editor of his letters (Janáček, 1994) and his wife’s memoir (Janáčková, 1998), whose exemplary scholarship made this study possible.
5. Other than the author’s previous study (Tutter, in press), the only psychoanalytic study of Janáček in the English language is that of Chipman (2000), whose brief study focuses on his contentious relationships with other men.
6. See Tutter (forthcoming) for an investigation of the variety of relationships between the artist and his or her muse.
7. All excerpts from The Diary of One Who Disappeared are from Kalda, 2000 (unpaginated).
8. Paige (2003) interprets themes of domination in Janáček’s letters to Kamila as implicating the trope of the “captured” muse. This trope contains separate threads, all of which require full explication. It includes, at the very least, interpersonal dynamics of domination and control, on the one hand, and the enactment of dominating possession via the composer’s embodiment of the muse in his music, on the other.
9. The plot of The Storm presages Tolstoy’s novel Anna Karenina. Janáček once began to compose an operatic version of Anna Karenina—in Russian—but then discarded the project.
10. Beethoven originally dedicated the work to the Afro-European violinist George Bridgetower, who performed its premier; the original manuscript bears the inscription Sonata mulattica composta per il Mulatto Brischdauer / gran Pazzo e’ compositore mulattico (“Mulatto Sonata composed for the Mulatto Bridgetower, a great fool and mulatto composer”). Beethoven and Bridgetower had at one time been “constant companions” but after a falling out, Beethoven rededicated the quartet to the renowned French violinist, Rodolphe Kreutzer (who failed to return Beethoven’s admiration, and declined to perform the work). Potentially germane given his penchant for calling Kamila his “Negress,” it is not clear whether Janáček knew of the sonata’s “backstory” or Beethoven’s (at the very least) passionate connection to the young, highly talented, and very attractive Mulatto prodigy (see Watson, 2012, pp. 131–133).
11. In her less-than-reliable memoir, Zdeňka Janáčková admitted that “one thing was certain”: the Stösslis “brought action and laughter into our sad quietness” when they visited (1998, p. 9).
12. Less explicitly and more darkly, Bartók’s 1918 opera Bluebeard’s Castle also draws on Faust and the eternal feminine.
13. The Austrian author Sacher-Masoch’s novel *Venus in Furs* was published in 1870 and was almost surely known to the literate, German-speaking Janůcek. In the novel, Severin quotes Mephistopheles from Goethe’s *Faust*: “Thou supersensual sensual wooer / A woman leads you by the nose” (Sacher-Masoch, 2000). While deserved, an exploration of the masochism inherent in Janůcek’s love for Kamila is outside the scope of this paper.

14. See Tutter (forthcoming) for a discussion of the painter Nicholas Poussin and his wife Anna Marie, who embodied the eternal feminine for the artist.

15. A *travesti* role, Aljeja is scored for a mezzo-soprano.

16. Janůcek soon changed the title of the quartet to *Intimate Letters*.

17. Another notable exception is Reis (2005).

18. Complementing the present study, Geoffrey Chew (2003) discusses the portrayal of the “decadent muse” in popular *fin-de-siècle* Czech literature as a potentially influential factor in Janůcek’s reliance on his muse.

19. Janůcek’s biographer, who also translated and edited Janůcek’s letters, confirms that nowhere in the courtship correspondence with Zdeňka or with any one else did he exhibit such passion (J. Tyrrell, personal communication).

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