

Letting the Music ‘Speak For Itself’? Dvořák as Strategist

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‘I only write music and let it speak for itself’ – such was Antonín Dvořák’s attitude, according to Josef Kovařík, the composer’s personal secretary in New York. Indeed, throughout his career, Dvořák seemed reluctant to share his views publicly. He did not contribute articles to Czech periodicals, his acquaintances were well aware of his dread of making public appearances and speeches, and contemporary critics often commented on his humble and unenterprising nature.

*Yet Dvořák was not as passive as his alleged statement to Kovařík would imply. While visiting England during the 1880s, he became particularly concerned about forging a certain kind of image for himself in the Czech lands. Not only did Dvořák take an interest in English reviews of his music, he also sent several of these critiques to his contacts at home with the request that they be reprinted in Czech translation in the newspapers and journals of Prague. He proved to be equally strategic in some of his other professional choices, including the surprising decision to dedicate his patriotic cantata *Hymnus: Heirs of the White Mountain* ‘to the English people’, which can be understood as a clever tactical ploy, meant to signal the composer’s international credentials to audiences at home.*

Drawing upon various letters and the many excerpted English reviews that appeared in the Czech press, this article shows that Dvořák played an active part in determining which aspects of his reception in England would be relayed to the Czech public. More broadly, the article examines Dvořák’s role as strategist – an aspect of the composer’s career that has remained largely unexplored. Ultimately, Dvořák was mindful of what Michael Beckerman calls ‘the public-relations aspect of nationalism’, and the suggestion that he was content simply to let the music ‘speak for itself’ does not tell the whole story.

Introduction

‘I only write music and let it speak for itself’ – such was Antonín Dvořák’s attitude, according to Josef Kovařík (1871–1951), the composer’s personal secretary in New York.¹ Indeed, throughout his career, Dvořák seemed reluctant to share his views publicly. Unlike Bedřich Smetana, who was known for his controversial opinion pieces for the newspaper *Národní listy* in the early 1860s,² and Zdeněk

¹ Joseph Kovařík, ‘Dr. Dvořák as I Knew Him’, *Fiddlestrings* 1/8 (1924): 4.

² Smetana became especially involved in music criticism during the 1863–64 season, and his heated exchanges with František Pivoda are particularly well-documented in the scholarly literature; see, for instance, John Clapham, ‘The Smetana-Pivoda Controversy’, *Music & Letters* 52/4 (1971): 353–64.

Fibich, who contributed regularly to the music journal *Dalibor* in the 1880s,³ Dvořák did not write a single article for the Czech press,⁴ and as a result, his exact perspective on many of the prevailing issues of the day – both aesthetic and political – has been difficult to ascertain. Yet, this rather reticent public persona should not be taken at face value. Projecting a ‘shy’ image of himself might be understood as a viable strategy for self-advancement. Moreover, Dvořák was not as passive as Kovařík suggested. Dvořák first emerged on the Prague scene in 1873,⁵ and his in-person English debut came roughly a decade later, though he made some contacts in Austro-German circles in the intervening years. It was precisely during his visits to England, beginning in the mid-1880s, that Dvořák became particularly concerned about forging a certain kind of image for himself in the Czech lands. Far from taking a hands-off approach, Dvořák played an active role in determining exactly which aspects of his reception in England would be relayed to the Czech public. As demonstrated below, he took a carefully contrived path of self-promotion – one that was naturally voiced most explicitly during his trips to England, over a comparatively short period of time in his career.

Not only did Dvořák take a keen interest in English reviews of his music while he was abroad, but he also sent many of these reviews back home with the request that they be reprinted in Czech translation in the newspapers and journals of Prague. In his attempts to influence the ways in which he was being portrayed in these Czech periodicals, Dvořák enlisted the help of several prominent figures on the Prague music scene. Among them were Václav Juda Novotný and Emanuel Chvála, leading critics and promoters of Dvořák’s music during the 1880s, as well as philologists Josef Zubatý and Václav Vladimír Zelený, who mainly contributed to Dvořák’s cause by translating his English reviews into Czech, but occasionally acted as music critics in their own rights. With the exception of Chvála, each of these individuals accompanied Dvořák to England at one time or another and had the opportunity to witness the composer’s reception there first-hand. When not serving as travel companions, these men were on the receiving end of countless reviews that Dvořák saw fit to send to Prague for re-publication. The periodicals in which these reviews were to appear, as mentioned by Dvořák in his letters, include *Dalibor*, a specialized music journal; *Národní listy*, which had by then become the main outlet of the more progressive political party in the Czech lands – the ‘Young Czechs’; and two Prague dailies that were owned by the Conservative ‘Old Czech Party’: *Pokrok* and the German-language *Politik*. Collectively, these publications represent a large range of groups co-existing in 1880s Prague, which suggests that Dvořák was hoping

³ Upon Václav Juda Novotný’s resignation as editor of *Dalibor* in May of 1881, the incoming editor and publisher František Urbánek writes that he relies on the contributions of three individuals in particular: Otakar Hostinský, Emanuel Chvála and Zdeněk Fibich; see Fr. A. Urbánek, ‘Ctěným pp. odběratelům “Dalibora”’ [To the honoured subscribers of ‘Dalibor’], *Dalibor* 3, 2nd ser., no. 13 (1 May 1881): 97. Fibich is likewise listed among the journal’s contributors in the 1884 and 1885 volumes of the journal.

⁴ Dvořák did co-author two articles for the American press: Antonín Dvořák, in collaboration with Henry Finck, ‘Franz Schubert’, *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* 48 (1894): 341–6; and Antonín Dvořák, in collaboration with Edwin Emerson Jr., ‘Music in America’, *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 90 (1895): 429–34.

⁵ Dvořák’s 1873 debut is discussed at length in Eva Branda, ‘Capturing the Zeitgeist: Dvořák’s Prague Debut and the Politics of Patriotism’, *Music & Letters* 102/2 (2021): 1–39.

for a wide readership.⁶ Though the occasional translated review did appear in the newspapers as per Dvořák's request,⁷ it was the editorial staff at the journal *Dalibor* who really took up the task with a vengeance. Beginning in 1884, *Dalibor* ran a series of articles on Dvořák's trips to England; each of the articles contains a detailed report of the composer's successes and excerpted English reviews in Czech translation.⁸ Since Dvořák was the mastermind behind much of the excerpting, this *Dalibor* series shows that the notoriously reticent composer⁹ took a more active part in managing his press than previously presumed.¹⁰

⁶ For a discussion of the origins and nature of this two-party system in the Czech lands, see Bruce Garver, *The Young Czech Party, 1874–1901, and the Emergence of a Multi-Party System* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978).

⁷ For example, excerpts from several positive reviews of the *St Ludmila* (*Svatá Ludmila*) oratorio appeared in *Národní listy* and *Politik*: Unsigned, 'Hudba: Triumfy Antonína Dvořáka v Anglii' [Music: the triumphs of Antonín Dvořák in England], *Národní listy* 26/295 (24 Oct. 1886): 5; Unsigned, 'Theater, Kunst, und Literatur: Ueber die erste Aufführung von Dvořáks neuen Oratorium' [Theatre, art, and literature: about the first performance of Dvořák's new oratorio], *Politik* 25/295 (24 Oct. 1886): 9.

⁸ Czech press coverage of Dvořák's trips to England includes the following articles: J. z. K., 'Antonín Dvořák v Londýně' [Antonín Dvořák in London], *Dalibor* 6, 2nd ser., no. 11 (21 Mar. 1884): 104–6; Josef Zubatý, trans., 'Hlas novin anglických o Antonínu Dvořákov: *The Times*' [English newspaper articles on Antonín Dvořák: *The Times*], *Dalibor* 6, 2nd ser., nos. 11–13 (21 Mar., 28 Mar. and 7 Apr. 1884): 106–8, 115–18, 124–5; Unsigned, 'Antonín Dvořák v Londýně II' [Antonín Dvořák in London II], *Dalibor* 6, 2nd ser., no. 12 (28 Mar. 1884): 114–15; V. U., 'Antonín Dvořák v Londýně III' [Antonín Dvořák in London III], *Dalibor* 6, 2nd ser., no. 13 (7 Apr. 1884): 123–4; Unsigned, 'Hlasy novin anglických o Antonínu Dvořákov: *Birmingham Daily Post*' [English newspaper reports on Antonín Dvořák: *Birmingham Daily Post*], *Dalibor* 6, 2nd ser., no. 15 (21 Apr. 1884): 143–4; ik., 'Druhá cesta mistra Dvořák do Anglie' [Dvořák's second trip to England], *Dalibor* 6, 2nd ser., no. 35 (Sept. 21, 1884): 341–6; Josef Zubatý, 'Dvořák v Birminghamě' [Dvořák in Birmingham], *Dalibor* 7, 2nd ser., no. 32 (28 Aug. 1885): 315–16; 'Mistr Dvořák v Birminghamě' [Master Dvořák in Birmingham], *Dalibor* 7, 2nd ser., no. 7 (7 Sept. 1885): 324; Josef Zubatý, 'Mistr Dvořák v Birminghamě' [Master Dvořák in Birmingham], *Dalibor* 7, 2nd ser., nos. 33 and 34 (28 Aug., 28 Sept. [sic] and 14 Sept. 1885): 315–16, 323–4, 335–9; Josef Zubatý, 'Pátý pobyt mistra Antonína Dvořáka v Anglii' [Antonín Dvořák's fifth stay in England], *Dalibor* 8, 2nd ser., no. 41 (7 Nov. 1886): 403–4.

⁹ Jarmil Burghauser, for instance, highlights this aspect of Dvořák's personality, stating, based on retrospective accounts, that a small circle of Dvořák's early friends found him to be 'shy and reticent, but very intransigent and obstinate in the opinions he held'; Jarmil Burghauser, 'Metamorphoses of Dvořák's Image over Time', in *Rethinking Dvořák: Views from Five Countries*, ed. David R. Beveridge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996): 13.

¹⁰ The following excerpts are an example of scholarship in which Dvořák's self-marketing is overlooked, implying that it was a series of entirely fortuitous events that advanced Dvořák's career and that he was merely a passive benefactor of this good fortune: 'Dvořák was among the more fortunate ones, for the tide began to turn in his favor even before he reached full maturity as a composer. It was from Vienna that he received the invaluable initial support that made it possible for his music to be heard and appreciated beyond the frontiers of his beloved homeland'; John Clapham, 'Dvořák's Relations with Brahms and Hanslick', *The Musical Quarterly* 57/2 (1971): 241–54, esp. 241. In a similar vein, Clapham writes: 'Dvořák's good fortune in winning this award [the Austrian State Stipend in 1874] led to a remarkable burst of creative energy'; John Clapham, *Dvořák* (New York: Norton, 1979): 36. Klaus Döge likewise gives unequivocal credit to Brahms – and, to a lesser extent, to Simrock – for making Dvořák 'famous' beyond the borders of his homeland: 'Jeho *Moravské dvojzpěvy* vyjdou v nakladelství respektovaném v celém hudebním světě, na

Some of Dvořák's other professional choices, including the dedications of his compositions, can also be viewed through this strategic lens. In describing virtuoso musicians of the eighteenth century in general, Dana Gooley observes that they tended to be somewhat unabashed in their self-promotion; 'they proudly paraded their letters of recommendation', writes Gooley, 'and pompously dedicated commemorative compositions to the local sovereigns before whom they appeared. The more prestigious and powerful the patron, the better'.¹¹ While Dvořák was certainly more subtle in his approach – operating in the very different social and cultural climate of the late nineteenth century – he did seem surreptitiously to employ some of the same tactics as these eighteenth-century musicians in an attempt to court the public in the Czech lands. This is particularly evident in the dedication of one of Dvořák's most overtly patriotic and personally nostalgic works, his cantata *Hymnus: Dědicové Bílé hory* (*Hymnus: Heirs of the White Mountain*, 1872). The Prague premiere of *Hymnus* in 1873 marked an important juncture in Dvořák's career. The piece was remarkably well received, and in the decades that followed, both Dvořák himself and his critics in Prague would continue to look back on this event as the composer's first major success.¹² As this was his official Czech debut, the work's eventual dedication 'to the English people' seems rather surprising. As discussed below, the change in dedication occurred during Dvořák's sojourns in England during the mid-to-late 1880s and this meant withdrawing the initial dedication that Dvořák had intended – to Vítězslav Hálek, the author of the *Hymnus* text. Unusual though it may seem on the surface, this English dedication can be understood as a clever tactical ploy, meant to signal the composer's international

obálce bude jeho jméno, jeho dílo se bude prodávat a jméno dosud zcela neznámého pražského skladatele Dvořáka pronikne za hranice české vlasti. Dvořák nikdy nezapomněl, že iniciátorem tohoto vývoje byl Johannes Brahms' ('his *Moravian Duets* were to be published by a publishing company that was respected all over the musical world [Simrock], his name would be on the cover, his work would be sold, and the name of the hitherto unknown Prague composer – Dvořák – would penetrate beyond the border of the Czech nation. Dvořák would never forget that the initiator of this development was Johannes Brahms'); Klaus Döge, *Antonín Dvořák: Život, Dílo, Dokumenty* [Antonín Dvořák: Life, works, documents], trans. Helena Medková (Zürich am Mainz: Atlantis Musikbuch, 1997): 129–30. Though Dvořák's early Czech biographer Otakar Šourek offers a more nuanced telling of the story, emphasizing the mutual respect and camaraderie between Dvořák and Brahms, his ultimate conclusion is much the same: 'intervencí Brahmovou otevřela se Dvořákovi cesta k přednímu nakladatelskému podniku světovému i cesta k úspěchům v cizině, a to vše bylo pro českého skladatele něčím dosud nepoznaným, ba netušeným, tím spíše pro skladatele tak skromného a ústraní se držícího, jako byl Dvořák' ('Brahms's intervention opened the way for Dvořák to the foremost publishing firm of world renown and to success abroad, and all of this was something unprecedented for a Czech composer, indeed unsuspected, especially for a composer so humble and withdrawn as Dvořák was'); Otakar Šourek, *Život a dílo Antonína Dvořáka* [The life and works of Antonín Dvořák], vol. 1 (Prague: Hudební Matice Umělecké Besedy, 1916): 289.

¹¹ Dana Gooley, 'Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso as Strategist', in *The Musician as Entrepreneur, 1700–1914: Managers, Charlatans, and Idealists*, ed. William Weber (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004): 146.

¹² According to the *Sunday Times*, Dvořák stated in 1885 that *Hymnus* 'gained a great success and gave [him] vast encouragement', and in an 1886 interview for *The Pall Mall Gazette*, he allegedly said: 'at home in my own circles I was by this time [mid-1870s] pretty well-known as the composer of a Bohemian Patriotic Hymn'; Unsigned, 'From Butcher to Baton: An Interview with Herr Dvořák', *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 22 (13 Oct. 1886): 415; reprinted in David R. Beveridge, ed., *Rethinking Dvořák: Views from Five Countries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996): 291.

credentials and clout to audiences at home. Both his excerpted English reviews and his *Hymnus* dedication show that Dvořák was quite adept at handling the 'business' side of his profession, and they provide a rare glimpse at Dvořák's role as his own strategist. At the same time, they illuminate a desire to protect Dvořák, and other composers of the nineteenth century, from potential accusations of strategic self-promotion.

More broadly, then, the case of Dvořák points to nineteenth-century notions of the 'artist'.¹³ It casts a spotlight on the false perception that composers are somehow removed from the concerns of everyday life. Specifically, it calls into question the Romantic-era insistence that composers eschew 'materialistic' pursuits in favour of devoting themselves solely to lofty, artistic goals. To some extent, such views of the artist continue to linger, obscuring the labour involved in musical creation in favour of a focus on music's metaphysical value alone. In highlighting the tactics and strategies that Dvořák used to advance his own career, this study not only offers a more nuanced interpretation of Dvořák's public personality, but – more importantly – it pushes back against prevailing perceptions of the 'artist' in general.

'A good impression on the nation': Dvořák's Excerpted English Reviews in the Czech Press

In a letter to critic Eduard Hanslick (1825–1904) dated 6 November 1886, Dvořák writes enthusiastically about his reception in England: 'there may not be a country outside of my homeland, where my works are so cultivated, valued and loved', he muses.¹⁴ Making no fewer than nine trips to England in the span of just over a decade between 1884 and 1896, Dvořák established a good rapport with English audiences. This would prove to be advantageous not just in securing his reputation abroad, but also in elevating his status among his Czech compatriots, and discussions of Dvořák's largely favourable English press are particularly prominent in the composer's letters from the 1880s.¹⁵ In some of his early correspondence from England, Dvořák presents the idea of publishing translated English reviews in Czech periodicals as a matter of mere practicality. Writing to Novotný while on his first trip to England – at a time when he was not yet confident with his English-language skills – Dvořák claims that these reprints in translation are his fastest means of finding out what is being written about him in London: 'as usual, I have received the Prague paper today' states Dvořák, 'and in it, I have

¹³ This topic has been theorized in the scholarly literature. See, for example, Martha Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) and William Weber, *The Musician as Entrepreneur, 1700–1914: Managers, Charlatans, and Idealist* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

¹⁴ 'Es gibt vielleicht nicht sobald ein Land außer meiner Heimat, wo meine Werke so gepflegt, geschätzt und geliebt werden'; Milan Kuna et al., eds, *Antonín Dvořák: Korespondence a dokumenty*, vol. 2 (Prague: Editio Supraphon, 1988): 205 (letter dated 6 Nov. 1886).

¹⁵ For more extensive discussions of Dvořák's reception in England, see Jitka Slavíková, *Dvořák a Anglie* [Dvořák and England] (Prague: Paseka, 1994) and John Clapham, 'Dvořák's First Contacts with England', *The Musical Times* 119/1627 (1978): 758–61. The cities that Dvořák visited included Birmingham, Cambridge, Leeds, London and Worcester.

finally learned the content and meaning of the London critiques, for I am so busy that I do not have time to ask someone for a translation'.¹⁶ Soon, however, the reprinted English reviews became a conduit through which Dvořák could assure readers at home of his unwavering devotion to the Czech nation and his aim to bring international glory to the Czechs. Already in the same letter, Dvořák thanks Novotný for overseeing the Czech publication of these reviews and adds: 'I do not even have to tell you that it makes me very happy and I am overjoyed, when the good Czech people can find out about the triumphs of a Czech artist'.¹⁷

Dvořák's desire to be portrayed as a Czech 'nationalist' in these reprinted English reviews largely dictated which portions were highlighted and which portions were downplayed or omitted. For instance, when sending an article from the London *Daily News* to Zubatý in August of 1885, Dvořák gives specific directions with regard to the translation. The article reports on a rehearsal of Dvořák's cantata *The Spectre's Bride*, Op. 69 (*Svatební Košile*, 1884) and ends with the following sentence in the English original: 'at [the rehearsal's] conclusion, Herr Dvorák [sic], whose English is not quite so fluent as that of Herr Richter, addressed in German a few words of hearty praise of the magnificent manner in which the orchestra had read his difficult music at sight'.¹⁸ Fearing that this sentence might incite criticism among the Czechs – that his speech in German might be construed as part of an effort to present himself to English audiences as a German composer – Dvořák writes to Zubatý: 'please do not mention that I had to speak a few words in German because I do not know English yet ... Perhaps you might write that I spoke in Turkish! You know how things are at home'.¹⁹ Dvořák's quip demonstrates that he knew the Czech readers for whom these translations were intended. Having been censured in *Dalibor* some five years earlier for allowing exclusively German titles and texts to be published on the scores of his vocal works,²⁰ Dvořák was sensitive to his Czech audience and careful to avoid actions that might give rise to controversy.²¹ A year later, in October of 1886 – in its coverage of Dvořák's fifth trip to England, specifically to Leeds – *Národní listy* specifies the language that Dvořák used to address his audience at a concert because it was not German this time;

¹⁶ 'Jako obyčejně, tak i dnes přišly Pražské listy ... z nichž jsem se teprv obsah a smysl londýnských kritik vlastně dozvěděl neb jsem ustavičně zaměstnán, že ani k tomu nepřijdu, abych někoho požádal o přeložení'; Milan Kuna et al., eds, *Antonín Dvořák: Korespondence a dokumenty*, vol. 1 (Prague: Editio Supraphon, 1987): 403 (letter dated 20 Mar. 1884).

¹⁷ 'Nepotřebuji Vám tedy ani říkat, že mě to velice těší a jak se z toho raduji, když tak ten dobrý český lid se dozví o triumfech českého umělce'; Kuna et al., eds, *Antonín Dvořák: Korespondence*, vol. 1, 403 (letter dated 20 Mar. 1884).

¹⁸ Unsigned, 'The Birmingham Triennial Festival: Final London Rehearsal', *Daily News* (21 Aug. 1885): 5.

¹⁹ 'Nezmiňujte se ale o tom, že jsem musel promluvit pár slov německy, poněvadž anglicky ještě neumím ... Napište třebas, že jsem mluvil turecky! Víte jak to u nás chodí'; Kuna et al., eds, *Antonín Dvořák: Korespondence*, vol. 2, 86 (letter dated 21 Aug. 1885).

²⁰ For a full discussion of these German titles and texts, see Eva Branda, 'Speaking German, Hearing Czech, Claiming Dvořák', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 142/1 (2017): 109–36, esp. 115–22.

²¹ Zubatý complied with Dvořák's request in his translation of the article for *Dalibor*; no mention is made of the German address: 'at the conclusion [of the rehearsal] Mr. Dvořák spoke several heartfelt words of praise, acknowledging the impeccable way in which the orchestra [members] sight-read their parts'; 'k závěrku [zkoušky] proslovil pan Dvořák několik slov srdečného uznání výtečného spůsobu, jakým orchestr provedl z listu svojí úlohu'; Josef Zubatý, 'Dvořák v Birminghamě', 316.

citing the *Daily News*, the Czech newspaper reports that Dvořák thanked the crowd in English, a language that would have undoubtedly been deemed much more acceptable to Czech readers.²²

Beyond issues of mere language, Dvořák seemed keen on drawing public attention to his own patriotism. He was very particular, for example, about how his interview for the *Pall Mall Gazette* was to appear in Czech translation. This interview – famously entitled 'From Butcher to Baton' – tells Dvořák's 'rags-to-riches' story and concludes with a strong patriotic statement from the composer:

Twenty years ago, we Slavs were nothing; now we feel our national life once more awakening, and who knows but that the glorious times may come back which five centuries ago were ours, when all Europe looked up to the powerful Czechs, the Slavs, the Bohemians, to whom I, too, belong, and to whom I am proud to belong.²³

In a letter to Novotný dated 15 October 1886, Dvořák is adamant that these remarks be reproduced for the Czech public, stating:

I would like to draw attention especially to the last sentence [of the interview], where I said that all of Europe used to gaze at our nation with admiration and that a time of glory will hopefully come again; our nation may be small, but we can nevertheless show what we were, what we are, and what we will be!²⁴

²² A Czech translation of the quotation from the *Daily News* appeared in Unsigned, 'Hudba: Triumfy Antonína Dvořáka v Anglii' [Music: The Triumphs of Antonín Dvořák in England], *Národní listy* 26/295 (24 Oct. 1886): 5. The translator takes great liberties with the text: 'Zřídka byl zde viděn potlesk takový, jakým byl Dvořák vyznamenán; a když po druhé a po třetí český skladatel byl vyvolán a obecenstvo nepřestalo volati, tu objevil se Dvořák, veden jsa nejznamenitějším komponistou anglickým, sir Arthurem Sullivanem; nadšení dosáhlo vrchole, když Antonín Dvořák děkoval v jazyku anglickém. Pamatujme, že ovace podobné se dostalo pouze Lisztovi, staříckému Nestoru výkonného umění' ('Rarely has such applause as Dvořák was awarded been witnessed; and when the Czech composer was called out twice and three times and the audience did not stop with their calls, Dvořák made an appearance, led [onto the stage] by the most significant English composer, Sir Arthur Sullivan; the enthusiasm came to a climax when Dvořák thanked [the audience] in English; let us remember that only Liszt, the elderly Nestor of the performing arts, received similar ovations'). The actual quotation appears in the *Daily News* as follows, with no apparent mention of Liszt or Dvořák's speech in English (the translator must have received information about Dvořák's speech elsewhere): 'Few novelties produced at Leeds have ever excited the widespread interest felt in "Saint Ludmila" ... yet the applause at the end was as great as that showered down when the first part concluded; and after acknowledging the plaudits, Dvořák had again to return, led on this time by Sir Arthur Sullivan. Clearly then, no work could have had a more flattering verdict passed upon it at first hearing'; Unsigned, 'Leeds Musical Festival', *Daily News* 36 (16 Oct. 1886): 6.

²³ Unsigned, 'From Butcher to Baton: An Interview with Herr Dvořák', 415; This statement is preceded by the following sentence: 'With regard to music it is with the English as it is with the Slavs in politics- they are young, very young, but there is great hope for the future'.

²⁴ 'zejména Vás upozorňuji na konečnou větu, kde jsem řekl, že kdysi celá Evropa hleděla na náš národ s obdivem a že snad zase pro nás opět nadejde doba slávy a že, ač malý národ, že přece dovedeme ukázat, co jsme byli a co jsme a budeme!'; Kuna et al., eds, *Antonín Dvořák: Korespondence*, vol. 2, 184–5 (letter dated 15 Oct. 1886).

Dvořák followed this up three days later with another letter, providing detailed instructions for the Czech version of the interview to translator Zubatý: 'see to it that it gets reprinted above all in *Národní listy*; I think that it will make a good impression on the nation. Leave out the biographical details, but make sure that the last exchange is reproduced in full. The nation will rejoice'.²⁵ Though Zubatý evidently managed to have it reprinted in *Dalibor* only, he complied with Dvořák's specifications in all other respects. Aware of the kind of effect that Dvořák's statement was supposed to have on Czech readers, Zubatý prefaced the translated quotation with a few sentences of his own, emphasizing Dvořák's loyalty to his Czech roots, in spite of his international accolades: 'All, who have had the privilege to meet him in person, will know about Dvořák's sincere patriotism', writes Zubatý. He continues:

Last spring, [serving as a companion on one of Dvořák's trips to England], I had the opportunity nearly every day to become convinced of the fact that Dvořák is not any different in far-away England than here in Prague. Even so, we are filled with renewed joy when we see that, in his national pride, our master distinguishes himself from countless other artists, great or small; we see that our delight in his renown will never be marred by accusations of national indifference.²⁶

There can be no reason to doubt the sincerity of Dvořák's remarks about his homeland; however, his eagerness to have them reprinted in translation also indicates a certain consciousness of his 'nationalist' reputation in the Czech press. As David Beveridge points out, 'the outburst of nationalist sentiment at the close of this interview was intended for the Czech audience at home as much as for the British'.²⁷

Dvořák was not always as direct as these examples suggest, often leaving it up to the discretion of the Czech critics to determine which excerpts of the English reviews were suitable for reprinting. This is evident in his approach to the reviews of the *St Ludmila* oratorio, Op. 71 (*Svatá Ludmila*, 1885–86). Writing to Zubatý on 18 October 1886, Dvořák provides the following rather vague instructions:

Translate all [of the critiques and] give them to Novotný, so that he can adapt them as he sees fit. Perhaps he might write a feuilleton for his journal *Hlas* and then you – or he – can put those critiques that seem best into *Politik* or *Národní listy*. The best ones are probably those that were printed in the *Daily News*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Saturday Times* (especially), *Daily Chronicle*, *Globe*, *Standard* ... Only be sure to give all of the

²⁵ 'Dejte to zejména do *Národ[ních] listů*, myslím, že to v národě dobře bude působit. Životopisná data vynechte, ale zejména další rozmluvu ku konci článku dejte celou. *Národ* bude jásat'; Kuna et al., eds, *Antonín Dvořák: Korespondence*, vol. 2, 188 (letter dated 18 Oct. 1886).

²⁶ 'Známe sice všichni, komu bylo přáno setkati se s ním osobně, upřímně Dvořákovou vlastenectví, a pisatel těchto řádků měl loňského jara skoro každým dnem příležitost přesvědčiti se, že Dvořák v příčině té není jiným v daleké Anglii než u nás v Praze, ale přece vždy novou radostí nás naplňuje vidíme-li, že nikdy nebude nám kaliti slávu jména jeho výčitkou národního indiferentismu'; Josef Zubatý, 'Páty pobyt mistra Antonína Dvořáka v Anglii', *Dalibor* 8, 2nd ser., no. 41 (7 Nov. 1886): 403.

²⁷ David R. Beveridge, ed., 'Appendix: Interviews with Dvořák', in *Rethinking Dvořák: Views from Five Countries*, ed. David R. Beveridge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996): 292–3, n. 53. Beveridge is making reference to the interview cited above: 'From Butcher to Baton: An Interview with Her Dvořák'.

newspapers the same critiques, perhaps two, three or more, but excerpted or however you would like.²⁸

Though much is left unspecified, even this example demonstrates that Dvořák usually chose the articles that were to be sent home himself and rarely did so without commenting on them in some way in the accompanying letters. He also had clear preferences when it came to English critics. Dvořák saw Joseph Bennett (1831–1911) of *The Daily Telegraph* as his staunchest defender in England and regarded Francis Hüffer (1845–89) of *The Times* as the least willing among the English to lend support to his cause. In a letter addressed to Chvála, dated 26 October 1886, Dvořák alludes to a difference of opinion with Hüffer at their first meeting and attributes the critic's reserve to this incident: 'I had a conversation with [Hüffer] two years ago and we did not agree', writes Dvořák, 'I told him my honest opinion and ever since that time, his behaviour toward me is somewhat reserved and he makes use of every opportunity to take a stab at me'.²⁹ In contrast, Dvořák was consistently pleased with Bennett's reviews of his music, occasionally referring to him as the 'English Hanslick' – a nickname that indicates both the critic's willingness to promote Dvořák's music abroad and his authority in the journalistic press. This view of Bennett is echoed in Czech periodicals. Reporting on Dvořák's first London trip, an anonymous critic in *Dalibor* writes:

Thanks to criticism and English journalism, Dvořák is a popular individual today, and an individual who is a favourite not only in musical circles, but also in the eyes of the wider London audience. Especially favourable criticism on Dvořák was written by the critic Bennett, a diligent English soul, who, in his newspaper *The Daily Telegraph*, truthfully related Dvořák's past full of obstacles and his significance for Czech national music.³⁰

As expected, then, Dvořák tended to forward Bennett's articles to his contacts in the Czech lands and to avoid passing along Hüffer's critiques. Articles from *The Daily Telegraph* are reprinted in *Dalibor* quite frequently, but articles from *The Times* are rarely to be seen.

²⁸ 'Přeložte je všechny jak jsou, dejte to Novotnému, ať to zpracuje jak sám bude chtít. Snad by mohl udělat fejton pro svůj časopis *Hlas* a Vy pak dejte – neb on sám – do *Politik* a *Národ[ních]* listů kritiky, které budou nejlepší se Vám zdát. Nejlepší asi jsou *Daily News*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Saturday Times* (obzvláště), *Daily Chronicl[e]*, *Globe*, *Standard* ... Jenom tedy dejte všem novinám stejné kritiky, třebaš ze dvou, třech a více, ale v krátkosti nebo jak myslíte'; Kuna et al., eds, *Antonín Dvořák: Korespondence*, vol. 2, 188 (letter dated 18 Oct. 1886).

²⁹ 'Měl jsem s ním před dvěma lety rozmluvu a tu jsme se spolu nepohdli, řekl jsem mu své upřímné mínění a od těch dob chová ke mně jaksi zdrženlivě a kde může, rád mě šfouchne'; Kuna et al., eds, *Antonín Dvořák: Korespondence*, vol. 2, 196 (letter dated 26 Oct. 1886).

³⁰ Dvořák refers to Bennett as the 'main representative of criticism [in England]' (hlavní representant zdejší kritiky); Kuna et al., eds, *Antonín Dvořák: Korespondence*, vol. 2, 38 (letter to Novotný dated 24 Apr. 1885). 'Dvořák jest dnes – díky kritice a žurnalistice anglické – osobností populární a osobou oblíbenou nejen v kruzích uměleckých ale i v nejširším londýnském obecnstvu. Zvláště sympatickým učinil Angličanům Dvořáka kritik Benett [sic], poctivá to anglická duše, který v listě svém *Daily Telegraphu* prostě a věrně vylíčil strastiplnou minulost Dvořákovu a jeho význam pro českou národní hudbu'; Unsigned, 'Antonín Dvořák v Londýně II' [Antonín Dvořák in London II], *Dalibor* 6, 2nd ser., no. 12 (28 Mar. 1884): 114–15.

Once again, Dvořák's image as a nationalist was the issue at stake in these choices, as indicated in a letter that the composer wrote to Novotný in April of 1885, following the London premiere of his Symphony in D minor, Op. 70.³¹ Of Bennett's assessment, Dvořák writes: 'as always [he] has understood my work completely'.³² Bennett repeatedly drew attention in his articles to the 'nationalist' elements in Dvořák's music, and his review of the D-minor Symphony is no exception. In Bennett's view, every movement of the work bears the mark of its nation, and he even goes so far as to dub the piece 'Slavonic' Symphony – a remark that Czech critics were doubtless keen to reprint.³³ Whereas Dvořák approves of Bennett's critique, he expresses a sense of frustration over Hüffer's review: 'four years ago, [Hüffer] declared my Sextet [Op. 48, 1878] to be a masterpiece and original, and now he finds fault with my so-called Slavic originality. In short, this is complete nonsense, and it is not worth discussing any further'.³⁴ These words were provoked by Hüffer's review of the Symphony, which begins with the following statement:

In [Dvořák's] earlier orchestral works, the *Slavonic Rhapsodies*, and even in parts of the first symphony, the popular songs and dances of his country played an important part, and gave, as it were, their typical cachet to his imaginings. We pointed out more than once that, charming though these reminiscences might be, they did not suffice to establish the reputation of a great composer, that to prove himself such Herr Dvorak [sic] would have to *sink his nationality* for a season and be his own individual self. In his D minor symphony he has certainly done the former. With the exception, perhaps, of some rhythmical idiosyncrasies in the scherzo, and again in the last movement, there is nothing that a German or an Englishman might not have written as well as a Slav. Unfortunately, however, the individuality here is not sufficiently strong to atone for the loss of national colour.³⁵

Even Hüffer's decision to address the composer as 'Herr Dvorak' was likely to stir contentions – both because of the misspelling of Dvořák's surname and the German honorific, implying to Czech readers that Dvořák was somehow presenting as a German composer when abroad – much less the critic's comments on the symphony's lack of substance when stripped of its so-called 'national colour'. As expected, Hüffer's critique of the D-minor Symphony was excluded from

³¹ Kuna et al., eds, *Antonín Dvořák: Korespondence*, vol. 2, 38 (letter dated 24 Apr. 1885).

³² 'úplně mé dílo jako vždy pochopil'; Kuna et al., eds, *Antonín Dvořák: Korespondence*, vol. 2, 38 (letter dated 24 Apr. 1885).

³³ According to Zubatý, Bennett writes as follows: 'Every movement bears the mark of not only the composer, but also his nation, and this symphony, though it has no title, could be called "Slavonic" with just as much reason as Mendelssohn's A minor is named "Scottish"' (Každá věta nese na sobě znak netoliko skladatelův, nýbrž i znak jeho národa a symfonie tato ač nemá zvláštního titulu, mohla by snad býti nazvána 'Slovanskou' s touže oprávněností, jako se jmenuje Mendelssohnova z A-moll 'Skotskou'); Josef Zubatý, 'Třetí Dvořákův pobyt v Anglii' [Dvořák's third visit to England], *Dalibor* 7, 2nd ser., no. 20 and 21 (28 May 1885): 196.

³⁴ 'O mém sextetu unapsal před 4 lety, že je to mistrovské dílo a originalní, a nyní mi vše tu tak zvanou orig[inalitu] slov[anskou] vyčítá. Zkrátka je to strašná volovina a nestojí abych o tom dále mluvil'; Kuna et al., eds, *Antonín Dvořák: Korespondence*, vol. 2, 38 (letter dated 24 Apr. 1885).

³⁵ Unsigned [Francis Hüffer], 'Philharmonic Society', *The Times* (24 Apr. 1885): 13. (The emphasis is mine.)

Dalibor. Clearly, Dvořák was determined to share with his Czech audiences those articles that portrayed him unequivocally as a Czech composer writing nationalist works and to suppress reviews that might contradict that image.

Czech critics assisted Dvořák in highlighting the positive aspects of his English reception. They frequently teased out the most enthusiastic parts of a given review and withheld any sections that were likely to cause offence, even when Dvořák did not ask them to do so.³⁶ For example, Hüffer's largely complimentary article on Dvořák's *Stabat Mater*, Op. 58 (1876–77) is reproduced almost in its entirety in *Dalibor*, translated by Zubatý, but the paragraph in which Hüffer criticizes Dvořák's 'cavalier' approach to declamation is conspicuously absent, as is Hüffer's assertion that the piece lacks the kind of passion that can be heard in the sacred works of Beethoven and Berlioz.³⁷ Based on the existing correspondence, it would appear that Dvořák did not have a hand in orchestrating these omissions. Likewise, Dvořák does not give any particular directions to Zubatý, when sending along the review of *The Spectre's Bride* that was published in the *London Standard*.³⁸ Zubatý, however, takes great liberties with his translation, only including the portions of the original review that report on the warm reaction of the audience³⁹ and omitting the sentences that address the 'repulsiveness' of the cantata's storyline.⁴⁰ These examples show that Dvořák's contacts in Prague did

³⁶ Often critics do not provide any indication of the omissions, and the Czech reprints of the English reviews read more like loose paraphrases of the original than literal translations.

³⁷ Unsigned [Francis Hüffer], 'Dvořák's *Stabat Mater*', *The Times* (15 Mar. 1884); Josef Zubatý, trans., 'Hlas novin anglických o Antonínu Dvořákovi: *The Times*', 107–8; the omitted passage: 'Herr Dvorak [sic], indeed, treats his text quite cavalierly as ever Handel or other early masters ventured to do. He even ignores the most ordinary rules of prosody. In one place he scores "pendebat" with the accent on the second syllable, in another with the accent on the first, being evidently undecided whether that verb belongs to the second or third conjugation. And similar solecisms of declamation abound throughout the work. But these after all are minor matters if the numerous and in many cases original beauties are considered. Herr Dvorak [sic] does not give us as humanly impassioned a rendering of the sacred tragedy as Beethoven, or, in a different manner, Berlioz, might have done'.

³⁸ Kuna et al., eds, *Antonín Dvořák: Korespondence*, vol. 2, 89–90 (letter dated 2 Sept. 1885).

³⁹ The following part is included: 'The production of Herr Dvorák's [sic] cantata *The Spectre's Bride* created quite a sensation, moving the Festival audience to a stronger declaration of approval than had yet been evinced. Never was applause more fairly earned by the executants, and never did a composer win a more richly merited triumph ... Enthusiasm such as was bestowed upon *The Spectre's Bride* has seldom been heard at Birmingham; and the composer, who conducted, received a greeting at the close that will still ring in his ears when he returns home to Prague' (Provedení p. Dvořákovy kantáty *The Spectre's Bride* vzbudilo pravou sensaci, povzbudivši obecnost festivalu k mocnějšímu projevu nadšení, než k jakému kdy před tím se dalo povzbuditi. Ani jednou před tím nedostalo se účinkujícím hojnější žně potlesku, ani jednou nedobyl si skladatel triumfu zaslouženějšího ... Enthusiasm takového s jakým přijata byla Dvořákova skladba, žřídka byl Birmingham svědkem; a skladateli, jenž sám řídil, dostalo se po ukončení takového potlesku, že mu ještě bude zníti v uších, až se vrátí do Prahy); Unsigned, 'The Birmingham Music Festival', *The Standard* no. 19071 (28 Aug. 1885): 3; Josef Zubatý, trans., 'Mistr Dvořák v Birminghamě', 324.

⁴⁰ The following part is excluded: 'The choice of such a lugubrious, repellent subject as the Bohemian version of the ancient fable, wherein the dead lover comes to claim his living bride, and forces her to journey with him to the place of his sepulture, appears to me to be oddly at variance with the ostensible purpose of a "Festival"'. Unsigned, 'The Birmingham Music Festival', 3; Josef Zubatý, trans., 'Mistr Dvořák v Birminghamě', 324.

much of the excerpting themselves, and they were important allies in presenting Dvořák to Czech readers in the best possible light. The foreign press – especially the long-standing and well-established English press – was manipulated in this way for home consumption. Though acting in concert with a network of critics, editors and translators, it was ultimately Dvořák who took the initiative and sought to micromanage his public image in the Czech lands from the distant shores of England.

Such involvement with the Czech press was rare for Dvořák. He did not see to it that positive Austrian and German critiques were reprinted in Czech periodicals,⁴¹ nor did he send any of the highly favourable American reviews of his music back home for re-publication. It seems to have been with good reason that he failed to take such an active part in these other contexts. Czech newspapers and journals tended to have correspondents in German-speaking Europe, thereby eliminating the need for Dvořák to act as his own manager there. Additionally, Dvořák's American sojourn during the 1890s – though of much longer duration than any of his other travels – received far less press coverage in the Czech lands than his earlier trips to England;⁴² this is likely because Dvořák's reputation at home was well-established by then, and perhaps he no longer felt the need to consolidate it. Dvořák's apparent efforts at self-promotion from England were, thus, quite exceptional, but not entirely uncharacteristic of him. After all, Dvořák read reviews of his music on a regular basis throughout his career and was not indifferent to the opinions of his critics, be they Czech or foreign. His extensive revisions to the opera *Dimitrij*, Op. 64 (1881–82, rev. 1894) were triggered in large part by Eduard Hanslick's assessment of the work, and Dvořák's willingness to take advice from others was looked upon as a tremendous asset by many critics writing for *Dalibor*. He is praised several times on the pages of the journal for the 'self-criticism' and 'self-denial' that he showed in undertaking a complete rewrite of his early opera *Král a Uhlář*, Op. 14 (*The King and the Charcoal Burner*, 1871, rev. 1874) for the benefit of performers and audiences at Prague's Provisional Theatre.⁴³ Alan Houtchens expresses it well, when he writes that 'being very sensitive to fluctuations in public taste and attentive to critical reviews of his

⁴¹ On the whole, articles published on Dvořák in German-speaking Europe were not as consistently favourable as his English reviews.

⁴² Articles in *Dalibor* on Dvořák's American stay are comparatively brief and lacking in detail. See for example, Unsigned, 'Vřelé uvítání mistra Dvořáka krajany v Americe' [A warm welcome for Dvořák by his countrymen in America], *Dalibor* 14, 2nd ser., nos. 43–44 (5 Nov. 1892): 338. It is possible that the comparative lack of engagement with American views was also due in part to the large geographical distance between the United States and Prague.

⁴³ 'The composer Antonín Dvořák has undertaken the task of setting to music all over again the libretto of the opera *The King and the Charcoal Burner*, putting aside his earlier work, the performance of which could not be realized on our stage because of its complexity. Such *self-criticism* and *self-denial* calls for unlimited praise and admiration. Let us hope that such characteristics would appear more often in our composers!' (Skladatel Antonín Dvořák odhodlal se, libreto ku zpěvohře *Král a Uhlář* zcela znovu v hudbu uvést, odloživ zcela stranou dřívější svou práci, jejížto provedení jedině za příčinou přílišné její složitosti na našem jevišti nemohlo být uskutečněno. Autokritika taková i sebezapření podobné vybízí k neobmezené chvále i obdivu. Kéž by se vlastnosti té skladatelům našim častěji dostávalo!); R., 'Zprávy z Prahy a venkova' [News from Prague and rural areas], *Dalibor* 2, 1st ser., no. 17 (25 Apr. 1874): 134 (emphasis mine).

compositions, [Dvořák] was instinctively motivated by healthy doses of pragmatism and even opportunism'.⁴⁴

'With feelings of deep gratitude': Universality, Self-Promotion and the English Dedication of Dvořák's *Hymnus*

One of the clearest examples of the pragmatism that Houtchens describes is the way in which Dvořák handled performances in England of his cantata *Hymnus*. Although this work is largely unknown today, its Prague premiere in 1873 was a pivotal moment for Dvořák, and for several decades, Czech critics would continue to remind their readers in Prague of the event, not only because of its personal significance to Dvořák, but also because of its exceptionality in terms of scale and spectacle.⁴⁵ *Hymnus* further struck a chord with Czech audiences in 1873 owing to its nationalist content, for which there was a real appetite at that time. The text is taken from an epic poem in rhymed verse entitled *Dědicové Bílé hory* (*Heirs of the White Mountain*), written in 1868 by Czech poet Vítězslav Hálek. The White Mountain, to which the title refers, is situated on the Western outskirts of Prague, and it was the location of a crucial battle that the Czechs fought and lost against the Bavarian and imperial troops on 8 November 1620. This military defeat had far-reaching consequences for the Czechs, bringing about a loss of independence and a nearly three-hundred-year period of Austrian rule. A critical event in Czech history, White Mountain was explored by various writers during the latter half of the nineteenth century, when the 'national revival' (národní obrození) was gaining momentum, and Hálek's allegorical drama conforms to this larger trend. Set in 1640 – some 20 years after the pivotal battle took place – Hálek's drama features both historical and fictional characters, who describe the repercussions of White Mountain to a blissfully ignorant individual, identified as the 'genius'. After bearing witness to the atrocities that resulted from the lost battle, the characters join together in the concluding *Hymnus*, which, while acknowledging past sorrows and suffering, is ultimately meant to convey a sense of hope for a brighter future. It is only this very last part of the drama that Dvořák set to music in his cantata. The text of *Hymnus* ends with declarations of love for the mother country, including the line: 'Let us love her, as no nation has loved before.'⁴⁶ Appropriate to the text, Dvořák's *Hymnus* begins softly and builds to a bombastic climax. By choosing E-flat major as the tonic key for a composition

⁴⁴ Alan Houtchens, 'Antonín Dvořák', in *Nineteenth-Century Choral Music*, ed. Donna M. Di Grazia (New York: Routledge, 2013): 392.

⁴⁵ The following statement appears in several of the composer's obituaries (published in 1904): 'it was only in 1873 that Dvořák was able to bring himself before the public for the first time, with a very deep work, *Hymnus* from Hálek's *Heirs of the White Mountain*; on account of its grand scale, distinctive characteristics and well-handled technique, it still earns a spot among Dvořák's most remarkable works' (Teprve r. 1873 poprvé podařilo se Dvořákovi uvést se před veřejnost dílem hluboce založeným Hymnem z Hálkových Dědiců Bílé hory, jehož mohutný obrys, výrazná charakteristika a skvělé ovládnání stránky technické staví je dnes ještě mezi nejznamenitější díla Dvořákova); O. Sl. N., 'Dr. Antonín Dvořák', *Hlas Národa* no. 122 (2 May 1904): 1; Unsigned, 'Slavný český skladatel hudební Dr. Ant. Dvořák' [The famous Czech composer Dr. Ant. Dvořák] *Národní Politika* 22/122 (2 May 1904): 1; and Unsigned, 'Antonín Dvořák', *Pražské Noviny* no. 122 (2 May 1904): 1.

⁴⁶ 'Milujme ji [...] jak žádný národ ještě nemiloval'; Vítězslav Hálek, *Dědicové Bílé hory: Báseň* [*Heirs of the White Mountain: Poem*] (Prague: E. Grégr, 1869): 87.

that expresses heroic resolve, Dvořák seems to be tapping into a tradition that dates back to Beethoven, and one that also included more contemporaneous composers like Wagner. In its original form, Dvořák's *Hymnus* calls for an orchestra, with a large complement of brass and percussion instruments, and it was premiered by a 250-member chorus. Though the orchestral writing would later be reduced, such performing forces were massive by late nineteenth-century Czech standards, making the work sound like a communal nationalist plea.

The earliest Prague performance of *Hymnus* was also set against a very particular political backdrop, too complicated to be discussed at length here.⁴⁷ In short, the work was written soon after a campaign had been mounted – with the support of Cisleithanian Minister-President Karl Sigmund Hohenwart – that sought to grant the Czechs greater independence within the Habsburg Empire. Even though Minister-President Hohenwart was initially disposed to appease the Czechs and promised to enable them to attain a kind of 'separate status' with respect to the then Austro-Hungarian Empire, thereby increasing Czech autonomy, external pressures led Hohenwart to go back on his word; and these events, which unfolded in 1871, were widely seen as a devastating blow to the Czech national cause.⁴⁸ The *Hymnus* premiere took place in early 1873,⁴⁹ when the abortive Hohenwart episode was still fresh in people's memories, and the piece likely fared so well with audiences at that time because it seemed to encapsulate what everyone was feeling in the aftermath of this recent Czech defeat.⁵⁰

While the Prague premiere marked Dvořák as a fighter for the Czech cause, the work's English afterlife is equally intriguing and speaks to Dvořák's role as his own strategist. In a letter written in March of 1884 and addressed to Czech composer and conductor Karel Bendl, who had directed the Prague premiere of *Hymnus*, Dvořák describes a London performance of his *Stabat Mater*: 'imagine the New Town Theatre⁵¹ [in Prague] about five times larger than it is', he writes, 'then you will know what Albert Hall is like, where 10,000 people listened to *Stabat Mater* and 1,050 musicians and singers played and sang [it], accompanied by that colossal organ!⁵² Dvořák's enthusiasm is palpable, as he marvels at the kinds of performing forces that were available to him in England – ones that were unimaginable in the Czech lands. When more works were solicited from Dvořák for performance in that country, *Hymnus* was a logical choice. Having been premiered at a concert that broke Czech records in terms of grandeur, the

⁴⁷ For a detailed discussion of the *Hymnus* premiere, see Branda, 'Capturing the Zeitgeist'.

⁴⁸ For a discussion of the 'Hohenwart episode', see Hugh LeCaine Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2004): 133–6; Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848–1948* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002): 15–47.

⁴⁹ The exact date of the performance was 9 March 1873.

⁵⁰ For a more detailed discussion, see chapter 2 of Eva Branda, 'Representations of Antonín Dvořák: A Study of his Music through the Lens of late Nineteenth-Century Czech Criticism' (PhD diss, University of Toronto, 2014).

⁵¹ The New Town Theatre is the venue at which Dvořák's *Hymnus* was premiered in 1873.

⁵² 'mysli si Novoměstské divadlo asi pětkrát tak veliké a poznáš, co je to Albert Hall, kde 10,000 lidí "Stabat Mater" poslouchalo a 1050 hudebníků a zpěváků hrálo a zpívalo, a přitom ty kolosální varhany!'; Kuna et al., eds, *Antonín Dvořák: Korespondence*, vol. 1, 410. This is an exaggerated claim, since the Royal Albert Hall does not hold that many people at maximum capacity.

work must have seemed uniquely suited for performance in England – a place with a rich choral tradition. That *Hymnus* was given an English premiere in the mid-1880s is not unusual; much more puzzling is the English dedication that the piece now bore.

Given the references to seventeenth-century Czech history in its text and the heated political circumstances of its Prague premiere, it is surprising that Dvořák dedicated *Hymnus* 'with feelings of deep gratitude to the English people', when it was published by Novello (Fig. 1). Two other aspects of the dedication are striking. First, the dedication was made in 1885, a full 12 years after the work was premiered. Emily Green observes that it was rare during the nineteenth century for dedications to be added to pieces in repeated printings, and if any change was made, dedications tended to be removed over the course of time.⁵³ Even though *Hymnus* did not appear in print before 1885, the English dedication must be counted as an addition or rather a change of mind because Dvořák initially dedicated the work to the author of its text: Vítězslav Hálek; the poet is clearly identified as the dedicatee, in Dvořák's hand, at the top of the second page of the original autograph score (Fig. 2). Dvořák was able to withdraw the dedication to Hálek likely because few people were aware of it, since the work still had only existed in manuscript up to that time, and the poet had passed away in 1874.

The second aspect that makes this dedication unusual is that it is directed at a people. Composer-to-composer dedications were common during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁵⁴ Dvořák, however, dedicated works to only four composers: Karel Bendl, Johannes Brahms, Pablo de Sarasate and Josef Hellmesberger (see Table 1). Other Dvořák dedicatees included critics, such as Ludevít Procházka and Eduard Hanslick; people in positions of power, such as the Imperial Princess Stefanie and Josef Hlávka, the president of the Czech academy of arts, sciences and literature; and Dvořák's friends and family members (see Table 2). Otherwise, the vast majority of Dvořák's dedicatees were performers.⁵⁵ Thus, the dedication to the English *people* is anomalous. The only comparable dedication is the inscription 'to my nation' that appears on the printed score of Dvořák's String Quintet in G major, Op. 77 (1875). In contrast to *Hymnus*, the String Quintet has no obvious elements that critics might call 'Czech'; in fact, the very genre of the string quintet likely would have been perceived as rather 'unCzech' at a time when Bohemian composers, who wanted to make some kind of nationalist statement, tended to favour large-scale genres, primarily

⁵³ Emily H. Green, 'Between Text and Context: Schumann, Liszt and the Reception of Dedications', *Journal of Musicological Research* 28/4 (2009): 331–3.

⁵⁴ Mark Evan Bonds, 'The Sincerest Form of Flattery?: Mozart's "Haydn" Quartets and the Question of Influence', *Studi musicali* 22 (1993): 365–409; Jan La Rue, 'The Haydn-Dedicatee Quartets: Allusion or Influence?' *Journal of Musicology* 18/2 (2001): 361–73; Jim Samson, 'Dédicaces reciproques: Les études de Chopin et de Liszt', in *Frédéric Chopin: Interpretations*, ed. Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger (Geneva, 2005): 127–37.

⁵⁵ For all information on Dvořák's dedications, I have relied upon Jarmil Burghauser's thematic catalogue: Jarmil Burghauser, *Antonín Dvořák: thematický katalog, bibliografie; Přehled života a díla* [Thematic catalogue, bibliography; survey of life and work] (Prague: Bärenreiter, 1996).

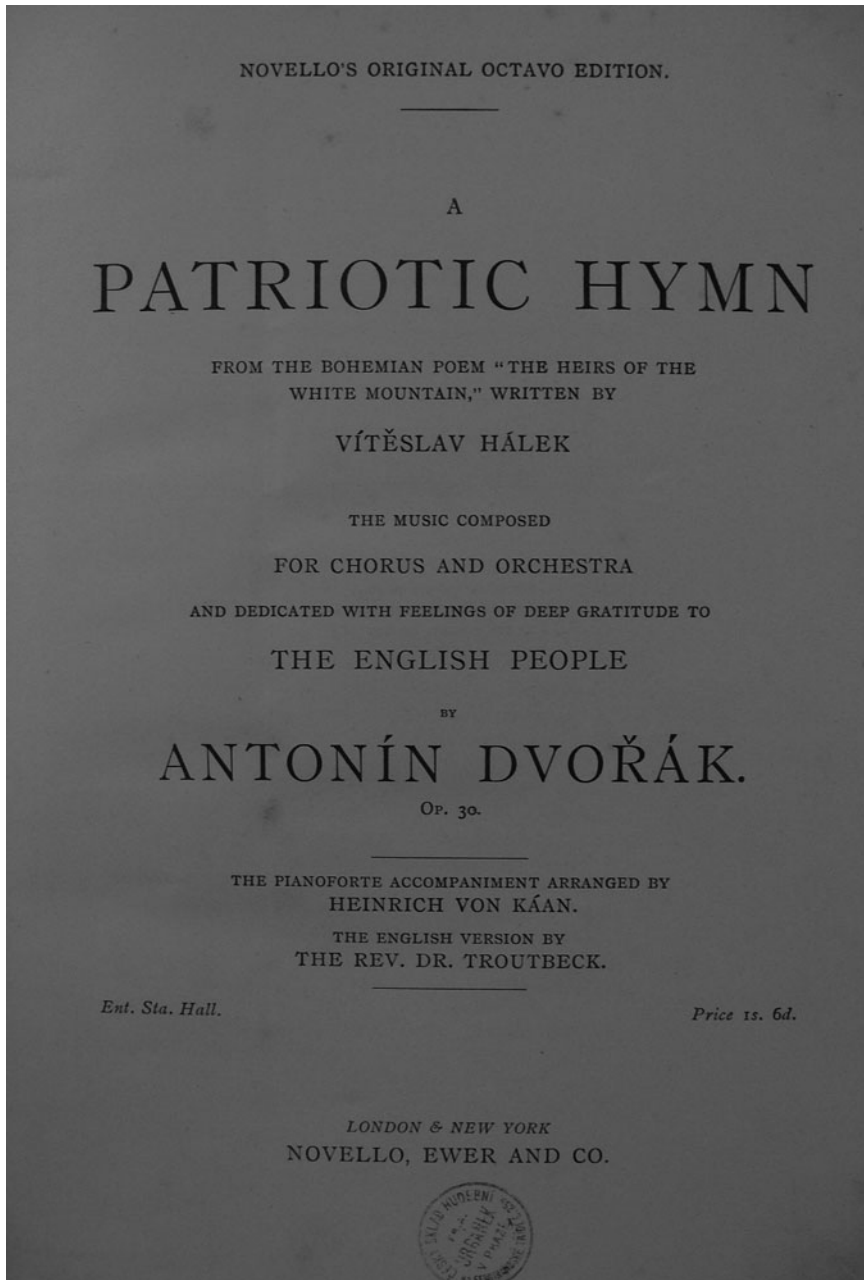


Fig. 1 Cover of the published Novello score, showing Dvořák's dedication. Source: Antonín Dvořák, *A Patriotic Hymn* (London: Novello, 1885)

opera. Also, Dvořák's dedication of the String Quintet contains the wording 'to my nation' and not 'to the Czech people' – a subtle, but important distinction. The notion of dedicating a work to a *people*, as Dvořák does with his *Hymnus*, has

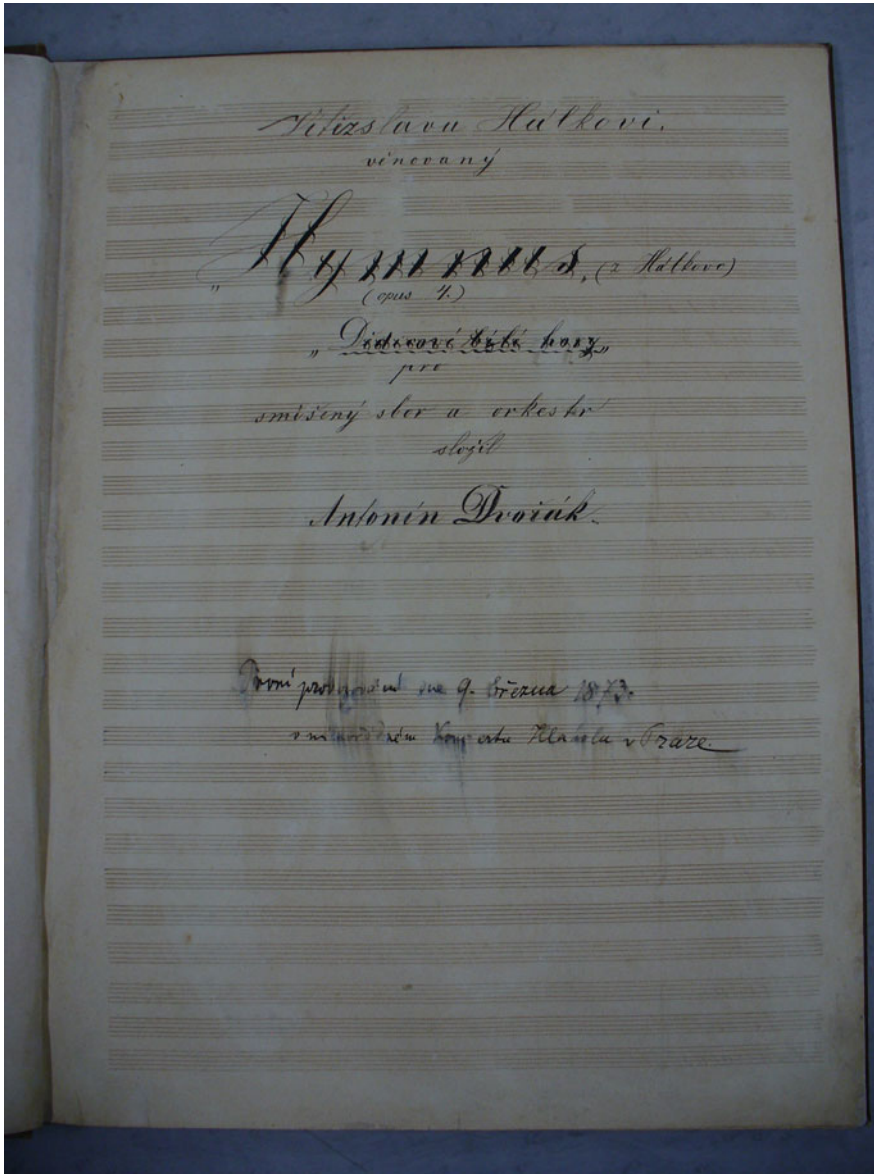


Fig. 2 Dvořák, *Hymnus*, second page of the original autograph score. English translation: "Dedicated to Vítězslav Hálek, Hymnus (opus 4) (from Hálek's) "Heirs of the White Mountain" for mixed chorus and orchestra, composed by Antonín Dvořák (smudged content: First performed on 9 March 1873 at the extraordinary Hlahol concert in Prague). Used with the permission of the Antonín Dvořák Museum, National Museum, Prague (1436)

greater specificity, and it has less of an explicitly partisan orientation than *nation* would have had. Since Dvořák encountered English people primarily as audience members at concerts of his music during his trips to England, this phrasing implies that the dedication can somehow be related to Dvořák's English reception.

Table 1 Dvořák's Dedications to Composers. Source: Jarmil Burghauser, *Antonín Dvořák: Thematický katalog, Bibliografie; Přehled života a díla* [Thematic catalogue, bibliography; survey of life and work] (Prague: Bärenreiter Editio Supraphon, 1996).

B	Work	Year	Dedicatee
11	<i>Cypresses</i> (voice and piano)	1865	Karel Bendl
75	String Quartet in D minor	1877	Johannes Brahms
89–90	Mazurka (violin and piano/orchestra)	1879	Pablo de Sarasate
121	String Quartet in C major	1881	Josef Hellmesberger
123–4	Songs to words by Pflieger-Moravský	1881?/1882?	Karel Bendl

Table 2 Some of Dvořák's Other Dedications. Source: Jarmil Burghauser, *Antonín Dvořák: Thematický katalog, Bibliografie; Přehled života a díla* [Thematic catalogue, Bibliography; Survey of life and work] (Prague: Bärenreiter Editio Supraphon, 1996).

B	Work	Year	Dedicatee
45	String Quartet in A minor	1874	Ludevít Procházka (critic)
49	String Quintet in G major	1875	'Svému národu' ['To my nation']
95b	O sanctissima (two voices and organ)	1879	Alois Göbl (friend)
117	<i>Legends</i> (piano)	1880–81	Eduard Hanslick (critic)
133	<i>From the Bohemian Forest</i> (piano)	1883–84	Stefanie (Crown Princess and Archduchess)
175	Mass in D major	1892	Josef Hlávka (President of the Czech Academy of Kaiser Franz Josef for sciences, literature and arts, Prague)
183	Sonatina in G major	1893	Dvořák's children

Emily Green proposes that, among other functions, dedications served as public gifts that required reciprocation.⁵⁶ She goes on to point out that dedications did not necessarily reciprocate dedications, but could be offered in return for other types of gifts, like good reviews. This idea of dedication as a form of gift-giving seems to apply well to Dvořák. One cannot help but notice that Dvořák's dedication of his D-minor String Quartet, Op. 34, to Brahms came in 1877, just after Brahms had introduced Dvořák to the Berlin publisher Fritz Simrock. Similarly, Dvořák dedicated his Wind Serenade, Op. 44, to critic Louis Ehlert in 1878, when Ehlert's favourable article on Dvořák was still hot off the press. In both cases, Dvořák's dedications can be understood as gestures of reciprocation – as Dvořák's way of recognizing the part that these men played in the furthering of his career. That the English dedication of *Hymnus* contains the words 'with feelings of deep gratitude' implies that it too was meant as a gift. Dvořák may have wished to thank the English in a public way for their enthusiastic reception of his music. Although Dvořák's works were heard in England as early as 1879, he really

⁵⁶ Green, 'Between Text and Context', 312–39.

burst onto the English scene in 1884, the year in which he visited the country for the first time. As stated above, eight more visits to England would follow, most of them during the 1880s, and the dedication of *Hymnus* in 1885 came at about the time when Dvořák had reached the peak of his success there.

Dvořák was the first Czech composer to receive considerable recognition abroad, and the desire to give credit to English audiences is understandable; why Dvořák would do it with this particular piece is less clear. An assumption that holds true for any dedication is that the dedicated work should be well liked by the dedicatee. *Hymnus* was performed at St James's Hall in London, in English translation, only *after* it had been published by Novello; this means that the dedication was in place before Dvořák knew how *Hymnus* would fare with English audiences and critics. If the reviews that were published following the 1885 London premiere are any indication, the dedication seems to have been somewhat miscalculated. According to the critic writing for the *Morning Post*:

the music is meritorious and effective, but does not belong to the category of inspired creations, and the difficulties required to be conquered before an adequate representation of the author's ideas can be fully realised are more than the generality of choral societies will likely care to overcome for so small a result as is likely to follow.⁵⁷

A similar assessment is given in *The Monthly Musical Review*: 'the performance was not very good, but the work itself is too complicated in construction, and therefore fails in the effect which is aimed at'.⁵⁸ The English reviews were not all bad – the reviewer for *The Times* reports that the work was 'favourably received'⁵⁹ – however, these articles do call into question Dvořák's decision to dedicate *Hymnus*, rather than another piece.

One explanation for the choice is simply that *Hymnus* was Dvořák's first English publication. Dvořák may have wanted to include a nod to the English people on the title page of his first printed Novello score, regardless of which piece was being published. Another possibility is that this gesture of gratitude was orchestrated by someone else. David Beveridge suggests that the English dedication was in fact publisher Alfred Littleton's idea and Dvořák acceded to it without giving much thought to its appropriateness.⁶⁰ As evidence for this interpretation, Beveridge cites a letter from Littleton to Dvořák dated 2 February 1885: 'do you wish the dedication to the "English people" to stand: if so, I think it should be printed on a separate page and you should add a few words from yourself'⁶¹ (see Fig. 3).

Littleton's request for Dvořák to add a few of his own words has led Beveridge to suspect that the idea of the dedication did not come from Dvořák and that the composer was merely asked to confirm it and help with the wording. On the back of the letter from Littleton, Dvořák begins to draft out the dedication, jotting down the words 'composed and dedicated to the English people in token of my deepest gratitude' (see Fig. 4).


⁵⁷ Unsigned, 'St. James's Hall', *Morning Post* no. 35224 (14 May 1885): 2.

⁵⁸ Unsigned, *The Monthly Musical Review* (1 Jun. 1885): 139.

⁵⁹ Unsigned, 'Mr. Geaussent's Concert', *The Times* no. 31447 (15 May 1885): 3.

⁶⁰ David Beveridge made this suggestion to me in a conversation on 7 December 2010.

⁶¹ Milan Kuna et al., eds, *Antonín Dvořák: Korespondence a dokumenty*, vol. 6 (Prague: Editio Supraphon, 1997): 18.

S 76 | 

be in Bohemian &
 human?
 Do you wish the dedication
 to the "English people" to
 stand: if so I think it
 should be printed on a
 separate page and you
 should add a few
 words from yourself.
 With kindest regards
 I am
 Yours most sincerely,
 Alfred Littleton

Fig. 3 Letter from Alfred Littleton to Dvořák (2 February 1885). Used with the permission of the Antonín Dvořák Museum, National Museum, Prague (S 76/1105)

Though it would later be edited out, Dvořák's statement that *Hymnus* was 'composed' for the English people is extraordinary, since he wrote the work in the early 1870s at a time when he still had no hope of it being performed outside of the Czech lands. What Dvořák is probably alluding to here are his revisions. Before submitting it to Novello for publication, Dvořák toiled over the score for the better part of three months.⁶² This was not the only time that Dvořák revised *Hymnus*; he had already reworked it extensively in 1880. Thus, the 1885 version might be understood as a new piece, requiring a fresh dedication to reflect its changing audience.

Dvořák may have altered the music of *Hymnus*, but – at least to the Czechs – its text remained the same and the overwhelming impression from the 1873 premiere was not easily erased. These factors indicate that the dedication of *Hymnus* was more deliberate than the theories presented thus far would suggest. After all,

⁶² John Clapham, *Antonín Dvořák: Musician and Craftsman* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966): 242.

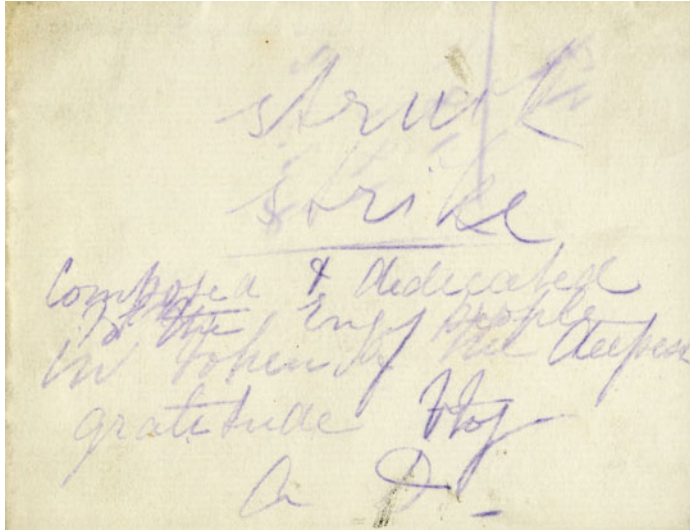


Fig. 4 Dvořák drafts out his English dedication on the back of Littleton's letter. Used with the permission of the Antonín Dvořák Museum, National Museum, Prague (S 76/1105)

Dvořák's correspondence shows him to be a tenacious individual, not easily bullied into making a dedication that he did not want to make.

A passage taken from the anecdotes of Zubatý, who accompanied Dvořák on one of his trips to England, gives some insight into this issue. Granted, Zubatý wrote these anecdotes in 1910 – a full 25 years after the events being described had occurred and against the backdrop of what would soon become a rather heated debate in the Czech press over Dvořák's legacy. Even so, Zubatý offers a unique perspective on Dvořák's patriotism when abroad:

Dvořák was Czech with every breath, even if he had an aversion to all loud displays of patriotism ... It is interesting and instructive that the same Dvořák, who was the sworn enemy of empty radicalism, could not help but conduct himself as a Czech, body and soul, when he was abroad ... Upon arriving in London [in 1885], Dvořák was surprised by posters, advertising that 'Herr Anton Dvořák' will conduct his new symphony on this and that date. Dvořák immediately insisted that he be addressed in Czech on the posters as 'pan Antonín Dvořák'. The consortium of German artists invited him at that time to an evening [celebration] being prepared in his honour; similar celebrations had been arranged in the past for Bülow, Richter and others. With many thanks, Dvořák refused, explaining that he is not a German artist.⁶³

⁶³ 'Čechem byl Dvořák každým dechem, třeba se mu přičilo každé hlučivé vlastenčení ... Je zajímavé a poučné, že týž Dvořák, který doma byl zapřísáhlý nepřítel všeho planého radikalismu, v cizině nedovedl vystupovati než jako Čech tělem i duší ... Při příjezdu do Londýna [v roce 1885] byl překvapen Dvořák plakáty, dle nichž 'Herr Anton Dvořák' bude řídití dne toho a toho novou symfonií. Dvořák si hned vymohl, aby byl na plakátech titulován po česku "pan Antonín Dvořák". Klub německých umělců jej tenkrát zval k

The 'empty radicalism' referenced in this excerpt could perhaps be understood as an oblique reference to Richard Wagner, whose extreme egotism undoubtedly hovered over the ways in which composers spoke about themselves in the 1880s. More explicitly, however, Zubatý contends here that Dvořák was more comfortable giving voice to his 'Czechness' in London⁶⁴ than in Prague, and the English dedication of *Hymnus* might be seen as a manifestation of this tendency.

Whether referring to music performed at home or abroad, by the mid-1880s, Dvořák spoke of art as lying outside the domain of politics. In a letter to Simrock dated 10 September 1885, Dvořák writes: 'what do we have to do with politics; let us be glad that we can devote ourselves to the service of beautiful art!'⁶⁵ Given Dvořák's attitude as revealed in this letter, the dedication of *Hymnus* to the English people might be interpreted as an attempt to make the work's message less obviously Czech and more universal – a patriotic plea to which any nation could relate. In some ways, the Czech reviews from 1873 already suggest that *Hymnus* would lend itself well to such a goal. Most Czech critics discuss the work's 'patriotic enthusiasm' or 'patriotic fervour', without making specific reference to its 'Czechness'.⁶⁶ The writer of one of Dvořák's obituaries would even claim that *Hymnus* was not Czech enough.⁶⁷ Perhaps as a means of deflecting attention away from its specifically Czech origins, Novello added 'Patriotic' to the title of *Hymnus* for its English publication.⁶⁸ If universality was Dvořák's aim, the English reviews indicate that he had mixed success. The critic writing for *The Graphic* in 1885 states that 'as music, [*Hymnus*] cannot be considered apart from its essentially nationalistic surroundings'⁶⁹ and a reviewer for *The Musical Times* writes in 1886 that 'the work is so thoroughly national in feeling

večeru, chystanému na jeho čest, jako podobné večery byly pořádány před tím na př. Bülowi, Richterovi a j. Dvořák s díky odmítl s odůvodněním, že není německým umělcem'; Josef Zubatý, 'Z Upomínek na Antonína Dvořáka' [Memories of Antonín Dvořák], *Hudební Revue* 3/1 (Jan. 1910): 20.

⁶⁴ On some level, this is significant because it speaks to the role of London as a hub of nationalist display. It is worth noting that London served as something of a clearinghouse for the patriotic movements of diverse countries.

⁶⁵ 'was geht uns beide die Politik an, wollen wir froh sein, daß wir nur der schönen Kunst unsere Dienste weihen können!'; Kuna et al. eds, *Antonín Dvořák: Korespondence*, vol. 2, 94;

⁶⁶ These terms are used in Novotný's review (signed x): 'vlasteneck[ý] nadšen[í]' and 'vlastenecký ten zápal'; x., 'Zprávy z Prahy a z venkova', 88–89.

⁶⁷ 'Finally *Hymnus* brought [Dvořák] into the light of day, but not into artistic maturity; [it] only [brought] success and public interest. This work of a smaller form shows an advanced musician, but also one who is too immersed in the models of old Classical masters. There are no signs of his own expression or of the character of Czech music' (Konečně "Hymnus" (1873) uvedl jej v jasný den, ale ne tvůrčí uvědomělosti, nýbrž pouze v den úspěchu a veřejného zájmu. Dílo toto menších forem okazuje vyspělého hudebníka, však až příliš vnořené ve vzory mistrů staroklasických. Po vlastním jeho výrazu i po charakteru české hudby není v díle tom nijakých stop); Ad. Piskáček, and Unsigned, 'Dr. Antonín Dvořák', *Hlas Národa* no. 123 (3 May 1904): 1.

⁶⁸ In the aforementioned letter to Dvořák, Littleton explains the title: 'we were obliged to call it a patriotic hymnus as we felt it impossible to say Fatherland while all the text was about Mother Country'. Kuna et al., eds, *Antonín Dvořák: Korespondence*, vol. 6, 18 (letter dated 2 Feb. 1885).

⁶⁹ Unsigned, 'Music', *The Graphic* no. 807 (16 May 1885): 490.

as to appeal only to the composer's own countrymen'.⁷⁰ One critic offers a different perspective, stating that '[the voices] rang out in the unaccompanied phrases at the close with a richness of quality and full volume which would have extorted the admiration of a Yorkshireman'.⁷¹

Irrespective of Dvořák's exact intent, the English dedication of *Hymnus* did serve as the inscription for a public gift. Whether it was meant as a response to the enthusiasm that English audiences and critics had shown for Dvořák's music or as a gesture of thanks for his first English publication, Dvořák certainly had reason to feel 'deep gratitude to the English people'. Perhaps the gift lay in Dvořák's attempt to take a nationalist piece, associated with a politically charged occasion, and refashion it for an entirely new context, thereby infusing it with a greater degree of universality. Some gifts are taken by the receiver and yet never quite relinquished by the giver.⁷² This is especially true for a musical composition, because no matter who it is dedicated to, it still somehow belongs to the composer. Thus, the true recipient of the dedication – the one to benefit most from the giving – could be Dvořák himself. By dedicating it to the English people, Dvořák may have used *Hymnus* as a vehicle to raise awareness in England of Czech national aspirations, while simultaneously drawing attention in the Czech lands to his personal successes abroad. The role of the English can be compared to the part of the ignorant 'genius' in Hálek's allegory, to whom seventeenth-century Czech history is told. Seeing the past sufferings and hopes of the Czechs, as expressed in the *Hymnus* text, might have been intended to inspire compassion and lead the English to make certain connections to contemporary Czech politics. As a desirable 'by-product', the dedication also allowed Dvořák to let Czech audiences know about the kind of following he had gained in England – one that would warrant expressions of deep gratitude. Foreign acclaim, or indeed affirmation, was typically held in high regard among the Czechs at this time; in many cases, it was only after works by Czech composers achieved recognition on foreign stages that Czech audiences really started to take notice of them.⁷³ In light of these realities, the dedication was significant because of the message it conveyed about Dvořák to audiences at home, and the attendant elevation in status that it would confer on him.

Conclusion: Rethinking Dvořák's Role in Constructing his Public Image

The *Hymnus* dedication, taken together with Dvořák's tendency to determine which English reviews would appear in the Czech press, shows Dvořák to be rather deliberate in the way that he constructed his public image. This aspect of

⁷⁰ Unsigned, 'Monday and Saturday Popular Concerts', *The Musical Times* (1 Mar. 1886): 139–40.

⁷¹ Unsigned, 'Crystal Palace', *The Musical Times* (1 Mar. 1886): 140.

⁷² Annette Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

⁷³ For example, foreign attention led the Czechs to revisit Dvořák's opera *The Cunning Peasant* (*Šelma Sedlák*, 1877) in the early 1880s. In an article for *Dalibor* in early 1883, the reviewer describes the situation in very plain terms: '[*The Cunning Peasant*] is hardly known in Prague; only after its performance in Dresden and Hamburg did the majority of the audience become aware of it' (opera ta [*Šelma Sedlák*] v Praze je téměř neznáma; teprve provedením její v Drážďanech a Hamburku byla většina obecnstva na ni upozorněna); Unsigned, 'Drobné zprávy' [Brief news], *Dalibor* 5, 2nd ser., no. 2 (14 Jan. 1883): 16.

Dvořák's career has remained largely unexplored for two reasons.⁷⁴ The first has to do with prevailing perceptions of Dvořák himself. The image of Dvořák as a naïve composer – one who was dependent on the generosity of others for his success – has become ingrained. His dread of making public appearances and speeches was well known to his acquaintances, and Czech critics often make mention of his humility in their reports on his triumphs abroad.⁷⁵ Ironically, Dvořák's humble and unenterprising nature is emphasized in one of the very articles that he sent home for reprinting. Seeking to provide some background information on the composer before proceeding to review his *Stabat Mater*, the critic for *The Birmingham Daily Post* writes:

It would be superfluous on the present occasion ... to enter into biographical details. It will suffice to remark that Dvořák is evidently as modest and retiring as he is gifted; and that, but for the friendly intervention of Johannes Brahms, who was quick to recognise a kindred genius in the work of the Czech composer, and spared no pains to drag him from his comparative obscurity, Anton Dvorak's [sic] music might still have been a sealed book to the mass of music lovers among whom it has already created such a furore.⁷⁶

In particular, the phrasing that Brahms had 'to drag him from his comparative obscurity' implies that Dvořák was somehow disinclined to enter into the public sphere and pitch his music to a wide audience.

The second reason why Dvořák's role as strategist rarely comes to light is broader. Dana Gooley explains that, whereas eighteenth-century composers were often shameless in their efforts to appease their aristocratic patrons, self-promotion was frowned upon during the nineteenth century, as it seemed to run counter to Romantic ideology.⁷⁷ People liked to believe that composers' successes were the spontaneous outcome of their talents alone, rather than the result of careful planning and calculated activity. As Martha Woodmansee observes, these Romantic notions of the 'artist' can be traced at least as far back as 1785

⁷⁴ Michael Beckerman explores this topic, examining the ways in which Dvořák constructed his 'national style' in 'The Master's Little Joke: Antonín Dvořák and the Mask of Nation', in *Dvořák and his World*, ed. Michael Beckerman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993): 134–54.

⁷⁵ 'Those who know how Dvořák does not like to give speeches will be able to imagine what kind of discomfort was caused him when he was to address the assembled artistic elites of London – but he handled himself well, surpassing everyone's expectations and was able to celebrate his first ever success as an orator' (Kdo ví, jak nerad Dvořák řeční, učiní si pojem o tom, v jakých rozpacích byl, když měl shromážděnou uměleckou elitu londýnskou osloviti – podařilo se mu to však nade všecko očekávání skvěle a on také jako řečník slavil úspěch a sice prvý toho druhu); V. U., 'Antonín Dvořák v Londýně III' [Antonín Dvořák in London III], *Dalibor* 6, 2nd ser., no. 13 (7 Apr. 1884): 123–4.

⁷⁶ Unsigned, 'Festival Choral Society: Dvorak's *Stabat Mater*', *The Birmingham Post* (28 Mar. 1884): 4; though Czech critics did not reprint very much of this review in Czech translation, they did select this portion of it: 'Zde chceme připomenouti k [biografickým informacím] jen tolik, že Dvořák vyniká stejně svojí skromností a neláskou k veřejnému vystupování, jako svým velikým nadáním. Za uvedení jeho do světové literatury máme co děkovati Brahmovi, který v dílech českého skladatele ducha sobě spřízněného poznal, a žádné pýle nešetřil, aby skladateli tomu, dosud zcela neznámému, veškeré kruhy otevřel'; Unsigned, 'Hlasy novin anglických o Antonínu Dvořákově: *Birmingham Daily Post*', 143.

⁷⁷ Gooley, 'Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso as Strategist', 145–6.

when German philosopher Karl Philipp Moritz wrote his seminal essay,⁷⁸ arguing that art has 'intrinsic' value that is entirely independent from external realities and contexts.⁷⁹ Taking art out of the realm of the mundane, Moritz writes that the beautiful object 'constitutes a whole in itself' and 'yields a higher and more disinterested pleasure than the merely useful object'.⁸⁰ The implication is that the value of art is self-apparent, and doing anything to promote it would undermine that value. Later taken up by other individuals, including Immanuel Kant, these ideas shaped perceptions of the artist's role in society and initiated changes to the social and economic situation of the arts.

In spite of this shift in thinking, recent scholarship has shown that throughout the nineteenth century self-promotion and media manipulation were quite common, if covert in order to avoid the stigma associated with these pursuits. David Larkin, for example, draws attention to the various strategies Franz Liszt used during the 1850s to 'massage critical opinion' of his works and 'spin' the media in his favour.⁸¹ Yet, Liszt understood that he needed to be discreet in his approach. If composers took too much of an active role, they ran the risk of being accused of opportunism. William Weber points out that musical opportunism – the ability to spot and take effective advantage of an opportunity – was essential for professional musicians during this time and simultaneously scorned by society at large. As Weber puts it,

the most basic act of the opportunist was self-display – indeed, self-promotion. On a certain plane, an aspiring musician had to make claims for him or herself in ways that went beyond conventional music-making ... But self-promotion was often interpreted as going against social norms, either within the music profession or society itself.⁸²

Such thinking seems to have been just as pervasive among the Czechs during the nineteenth century as it was elsewhere; on occasion, *Dalibor* was used as a platform from which critics warned musicians of the dangers of becoming overly focused on material concerns. In an article from 1879 on art and education, for instance, critic Josef Srb Debrnov detects a general lack of true appreciation for music in the Czech lands and attributes this, in part, to materially minded musicians – ones, who, in his phrasing, 'revel in their own glory and self-conceit', rather than striving for 'the ideal in art'.⁸³ As much as composers sought to give the impression that

⁷⁸ The essay is entitled 'Versuch einer Vereinigung aller schönen Künste und Wissenschaften unter dem Begriff des in sich selbst Vollendeteten' [Toward a unification of all the fine arts and letters under the concept of self-sufficiency].

⁷⁹ Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market*, 11–12.

⁸⁰ Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market*, 12.

⁸¹ David Larkin, 'Sardanapalian Suppers and Secret Journalism: Media Manipulation in Liszt's Later Career', Paper Presented at the 20th Biennial Conference on Nineteenth-Century Music, University of Huddersfield, England 2–4 July 2018. Eva Chamczyk makes similar claims in relation to Polish composer and violinist Apolinary Kątski in 'Apolinary Kątski: A Nineteenth-Century Master of Self-Promotion', *Fontes artis musicae* 67/4 (2020): 331–48.

⁸² William Weber, 'The Musician as Entrepreneur and Opportunist, 1700–1914', in *The Musician as Entrepreneur, 1700–1914: Managers, Charlatans and Idealists*, ed. William Weber (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004): 5.

⁸³ Specifically, Josef Srb Debrnov makes the following statement: 'Many artists, instead of striving for the ideal in art, revel in their own glory and self-conceit ... material gains

they paid little heed to these 'material gains', as Srb Debrnov describes them, they still had to contend with the day-to-day realities of survival. These matters were very real for Dvořák, who had a wife and six children to support. When negotiating his salary with New York Conservatory head Jeanette Thurber in April of 1894, Dvořák signals both his need and his reluctance to behave in a mercenary fashion: 'the necessities of life go hand in hand with Art' he writes, 'and though I personally care very little for worldly things, I cannot see my wife and children in trouble'.⁸⁴

In keeping with these established social norms, Dvořák sought to assure the Czech public of the purity of his motives – that he was in fact doing everything solely for the purpose of putting the Czechs in the international spotlight. Behind the scenes, however, he was a shrewd businessman. Dvořák's plea to Thurber is reminiscent of countless exchanges that he had with the Berlin publisher Fritz Simrock in the hope of arriving at a lucrative deal on the publication of his music. Dvořák proved to be savvy not only in his dealings abroad, but also in his interactions with his compatriots. His letters from England written during the mid-1880s reveal that he understood the importance of forming connections with prominent Czech critics and promoters, cultivating and maintaining his personal image at home, using the Czech press – with its considerable local reach – to his advantage and conforming to the concerns of his Czech audience. In so doing, Dvořák shows – perhaps more clearly than those who were more publicly outspoken – the ways in which composers of the nineteenth century needed to negotiate between the demands of self-promotion and the need to maintain and perpetuate the notion that 'art' exists in an elevated plane – in a realm that lies beyond the concerns of everyday life. Moreover, by seeking to bring a distinctly Czech persona to the fore, Dvořák demonstrates that he was keenly aware of what Michael Beckerman calls 'the public-relations aspect of nationalism'.⁸⁵ Dvořák's remark, then, to Kovařík, suggesting that he was content simply to let the music 'speak for itself', does not tell the whole story.

are frequently their main goal' (mnozí umělci, místo aby hleděli dospěti k ideálu umění, více hoví své slávě a ješitnosti ... výtěžek materiální bývá často cílem hlavním); J. S. Debrnov, 'Umění a škola' [Art and education], *Dalibor* 1, 2nd ser., no. 8 (10 Mar. 1879): 59.

⁸⁴ Milan Kuna et al., eds, *Antonín Dvořák: Korespondence a dokumenty*, vol. 3 (Prague: Editio Supraphon, 1989): 256 (letter dated 5 Apr. 1894).

⁸⁵ Beckerman, 'The Master's Little Joke', 139. Beckerman puts it another way: 'if a nation sounds in the concert hall and no one hears it, can it really be national?'