

Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Palackého

**Music Theatre Translation in the Czech Republic:
A Closer Look at Singable Translations**

Diplomová práce

Olomouc 2024

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Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

**Music Theatre Translation in the Czech Republic:
A Closer Look at Singable Translations**

**Překlad hudebního divadla v České republice:
Zpívatelné překlady písňových textů**

Diplomová práce

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Studijní obor: Angličtina se zaměřením na tlumočení a překlad

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Olomouc 2024

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně a uvedla úplný seznam citované a použité literatury.

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Nejprve bych chtěla poděkovat Mgr. Jitce Zehnalové, Dr., vedoucí této práce, za letitou podporu, pomoc, příjemné konzultace, cenné rady a v neposlední řadě za dodání kuráže vstoupit do akademického světa. Další díky patří Tomášovi Novotnému za spolupráci a mentorské rady už během tvorby bakalářské práce a Michaelu Prostějovskému za ochotu mi představit realitu českého hudebního překladu a divadelního světa. Nakonec nesmím opomenout své zvířecí asistenty Edu, Oskara a Dalamánka, kteří se při psaní této práce starali o to, abych přišla i na neakademické myšlenky. Zvláštní poděkování věnuji i Greenymu a Pufetce, kteří se sice dokončení magisterského studia nedožili, ale prováděli mě celým vyšším vzděláním, jelikož byli po mém boku už při přípravách na maturitní zkoušky, poté mi seděli na rameni nebo na klíně během pandemií narušeného bakalářského studia a byli se mnou i při vzniku prvotního návrhu této diplomové práce.

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| SL | source language |
| TL | target language |
| ST | source text |
| TT | target text |
| V+W | Voskovec and Werich |
| INT1 | semi-structured interview with Tomáš Novotný |
| INT2 | semi-structured interview with Michael Prostějovský |
| MTI | Music Theatre International |
| <i>Hamilton</i> | <i>Hamilton: An American Musical</i> |

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1 Introduction

This work was written as a continuation of the research I conducted in my bachelor's thesis on music theatre translation, which focused on the preparatory analysis of a musical that a translator may find useful to do before starting the actual translation process. In my previous thesis, I worked with Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton: An American Musical*, and as a result, I was provided with plenty of material that enabled me to maneuver the complex yet still-not-fully-uncovered world that is music theatre translation, with a further concentration in singable and performable translations of replica stagings (see Šulcová 2021).

In this thesis, my aim is to provide comprehensive academic insight into the Czech world of song and music theatre translation, however, I have once again chosen to omit non-singable translations, i.e., translations in the form of subtitles and surtitles, and musical movies. That way, I ensured my material of choice would be strictly performable and theatre-based. This decision was made on the basis of the Czech Republic being what I would consider a *performable translation powerhouse*, with the majority of foreign media, both on a theatrical stage or on television, having at least one performable, i.e., singable or dubbed, form of translation, with the exception of opera.

Nevertheless, that does not mean the market for subtitles or surtitles is small. On the contrary, subtitles and closed captions are widespread across all streaming platforms in the Czech Republic and are gaining traction in translation studies research, too (see Pošta 2011 for a more technical discussion; Zychová 2021 for a discussion of author style transfer in subtitles). Yet, despite this popularity growth of subtitles, most theatres and the main television media outlets still favor performable translations, mostly due to the audience historically being used to such methods of cultural import (Desblache 2019). Academia, however, does not reflect that. Only very few researchers around the world have taken up performable–singable translation, such as Andrew Kelly (1992), Ronnie Apter and Mark Herman (1995; 2000; 2016), Dinda Gorlée (1997; 2005), Peter Low (2005), Johan Franzon (2008; 2015), and Marta Mateo (2008; 2012), all of whose work I have already become familiar with during my previous research and will continue drawing upon in this thesis as well.

Upon seeing this limited list, the question that may naturally arise is *what makes singable translation, especially music theatre translation, so unpopular in research*. It is without doubt a highly interdisciplinary field, essentially requiring the translator and music theatre translation researchers to have, aside from linguistic skills, above-standard knowledge of music and a capacity for mindfulness of an actor–singer’s capabilities, so that the finished product is singable and performable for the actor while being understandable for the audience. Franzon brings forward the term “phonetic aptness” when talking about singability as a property of a translated text itself (Franzon 2015, 334), and for the purpose of this thesis, it may also serve as a fitting umbrella term for the additional skill requirements of the translator. This complexity may paint music theatre translation as a rather exclusive field that only a select few may be able to master, and it might be why music theatre translation is largely disregarded in research. It is also mentioned only in passing during translator training, which I have observed was precisely the case in the Czech Republic at the time of this thesis being written, despite the aforementioned performable translation tradition.

Outside the Czech Republic, perhaps the most canonized findings on music translation have been brought forward by Peter Low, who introduced the *Pentathlon Principle* of properties a singable text should display—singability in the sense of “effectiveness on stage”, sense, naturalness, rhythm, and rhyme, which are sometimes augmented by a sixth property, i.e., dramatic effectiveness, (Low 2005, 191-211). Low’s work was further expanded by Johan Franzon who moreover focused on the available translation approaches and defining what singability as a term can mean (see Franzon 2008), which I have incorporated into the singable translation typological framework introduced in my bachelor’s thesis (see Šulcová 2021, 13). In addition, Franzon is one of the few musical-centric authors to question who a music theatre translator may be; whether they are more of a linguist, a lyricist, a singer, or any other actant in the whole translation process (Franzon 2008, 374), which played a key role in my decision to continue researching music theatre translation, albeit as a creative process this time around.

Since I wish to provide a truly comprehensive view of the Czech approaches towards song and music theatre translation, I have decided to turn to two of the most prolific Czech music theatre translators, Michael Prostějovský and Tomáš Novotný. My intention is to better understand the whole translation process, seeing as the already limited pre-existing theory does not sufficiently cover this aspect of the translator's work. Most musical-centric authors choose to, albeit usually very briefly, comment on the *skopos* of the text and how that might influence the translator's decision-making, however, the majority do not further elaborate on the translator's place and role in the whole process, as well as the precise involvement of other influencing factors, i.e., both human and non-human actants, to borrow the terms from Raila Hekkanen's *Actor-Network Theory* (2009, 10). Only a few authors are the exception, such as Klaus Kaindl (1995, in Mateo 2012) and Franzon (2008). This made me adopt a bottom-up approach where I first delved into the theoretical coverage of the translation process of performable drama to lay the foundation, then built upon it with findings on opera translation, added the metaphorical roof by analyzing the aforementioned coverage of the process in connection with musicals, and finally built a fence around the metaphorical house with accounts of professional Czech translators.

Despite the decision to also consider the sociological aspects of the translation process, which as I believe is inevitable with the involvement of the professional translators, the main topic of this thesis will nevertheless remain the singable and performable text and its detailed analysis. Regarding the data collection, I have decided to use qualitative semi-structured interviews, since the format allows relative communicative freedom while also sustaining enough attention on the discussed issue (Zehnalová & Kubátová 2021, 203). During the preparatory research, I have contacted and briefly interviewed the translators with no given structure, as my intention was to obtain a simplified view of their general stances towards the topic and their willingness to openly discuss such matters in an academic work.

I firmly believe this frequently overlooked area of translation studies would only benefit if it was enriched by accounts of translation professionals, although this raises the risk factor of low factual reliability due to relying on non-official and personal correspondence (email, phone calls, in-person meetings with and without structured questions) between me and the translators, who mostly come from a strictly theatre-and-performance-centered educational environment with little to no

translation training or linguistic background. This may lead to their accounts possibly not being supported by the recognized translation theory, and I am well aware of this possible shortcoming. Nevertheless, they have thoroughly established their position in the professional field, and their work is regarded very positively among the Czech expert as well as non-expert audience, which I believe adds value to their views on the subject matter. In the extreme case theory fails to support their ideas, I will attempt to make an educated judgement of their claims based on my 15+ years of experience with music theory and performance and provide an explanation for my reasoning.

Furthermore, in the fashion of my bachelor's thesis, this work will also venture into the history of song and music theatre translation in the Czech Republic and provide solid grounds as to why song and music theatre is relevant for contemporary translation theory, which is coincidentally said to be undergoing a “performative turn” (Wolf 2017) with a noticeable spike in the popularity of audiovisual translation. I therefore undertake to bridge the gap in the research of performable audiovisual translation, seeing as the Czech world of audiovisual translation gives me enough leverage to do so for reasons apparent in the theoretical part of this thesis.

As a form of theatre, the musical takes on multiple forms, and at-first seemingly simple creative decisions between individual stagings may completely alter the reception of the finished product, which is also the case of culturally imported translated musicals. When introducing a foreign Broadway or West End musical, it may be done either via a *replica* or a *non-replica* staging. The main difference between the two types of staging is, in the words of one of the interviewed translators, that the replica staging shall remain faithful to the original Broadway or West End staging as much as possible in all creative, visual, choreographic, scenographic, and semantic aspects (Prostějovský 2022, personal correspondence). This means that the non-replica staging would therefore allow all actants a relative degree of creative freedom, as the production team would be able to change certain aspects of the play, i.e., to omit or change a part of a song, or to not include an entire thematic whole (ibid) while still being considered a translation and not an adaptation or a brand-new musical.

If we take a brief look at the Czech scene, this can be observed in most of the foreign introduced musicals, with Prostějovský mentioning licensing or funding as the most influencing actants within the whole process (ibid). The presence of such actants poses the question of additional limitations imposed on the translation outside the self-evident musical constraints that are known to limit the text, which will also be covered in the interviews with the translators.

As was already insinuated, while the main focus of this thesis will be the translation of musicals, I will also breach the area of English song translation into Czech without the aspect of theatre, albeit in a very limited amount since the entire topic could be covered in another independent research. The late 1940s can be understood as a turning point in the Czech approaches towards translation, seeing as the sudden political changes led to a radical censorship and overall limitation in the translation of media originating in the Western Bloc (see Burian 1977 for further discussion), which also concerned the introduction of the first translated and truly American musical, *Finian's Rainbow* (*Divotvorný hrnec*), on the Czech stage in 1948. Despite these largescale limitations, some originally “Western” songs still made their way to the former Czechoslovakia, admittedly under great lyrical adjustment, and can be considered excellent examples of what is called a *replacement text* in music translation (see Low 2013).

In terms of the selection of material, the main analyses and interviews will cover Prostějovský's *Wicked* (*Čarodějka*) and Novotný's *The Last Five Years* (*Pět let zpět*). The material was chosen so that the two most common types of original works are represented, a complex Broadway or West End production and a smaller Off-Broadway work. Both musicals, however, underwent such changes during the translation process that they can now fall into the aforementioned non-replica staging category, with more details revealed in the actual analysis and translators' commentary. The methodology of all analyses will be introduced and explicated after the discussion of theoretical literature in order to stand on solid foundation.

1.1 Research Questions

My research questions are therefore as follows:

RQ1: What are the main parameters of a singable translation?

to pinpoint what makes a translation singable and performable;

RQ2: What is the process behind a singable translation?

to map how such translations are made;

RQ3: What are the influencing factors in the translation process?

to recognize all possible actants in the creation that may influence the final text.

Preliminary Answers

Since I have already conducted extensive research in this field, I can present preliminary answers to the research questions, which will be answered in greater detail in the conclusion of this thesis.

RQ1: What are the main parameters of a singable translation?

I expect Peter Low's skopos-based *Pentathlon Principle* of a singable—and by default performable—text (Low 2005, 191-211) to be true in practice, and the translators' accounts prior to the interviews have already partially proved my hypothesis (Novotný 2022, personal correspondence; Prostějovský 2022, personal correspondence).

RQ2: What is the process behind a singable translation?

The translators immediately felt the need to stress that they are not the only actants in the translation process, and that the final product was construed under the influence of a myriad of other actants (ibid) previously unmentioned in music theatre translation theory, which I intend to uncover.

RQ3: What are the influencing actants in the translation process?

Thus far, the translators mentioned the licensing companies, the target-culture production team, the source-culture production team, and the back-translation process, as well as the actors–singers (ibid). I have yet to pinpoint their specific influence on the process.

2 Previous Research

The nature of my bachelor's thesis did not allow me to research music theatre translation in a greater extent, nevertheless, it did allow me to develop a sufficient understanding of the field for more in-depth research. This section will serve as a means of further elaboration on my previous findings and it will put them in context with the ideas behind this master's thesis.

My initial ideas were in line with Klaus Kaindl's findings on the different modes the translator should preferably take into account when construing the target text, i.e., the pre-existing accompanying music and the staging (Kaindl 1995, cited in Mateo 2012), which included the choreography and movement limiting the actors' vocal abilities. This fusion of such constraining factors was then expected to result in what one may consider a singable and performable output.

Nonetheless, my initial work demonstrated this on a purely hypothetical and *ideal* translation process that involved an audiovisual recording of what I then called a "universal staging" (Šulcová 2021, 17) of the original work, and there was no consideration of a more *realistic* situation where the work would inevitably be introduced with countless changes made by various involved actants despite initially dedicating a research question to this matter. I shall correct myself and henceforth refer to the "universal staging" as a replica staging, which I have found is the more canonized term even in non-academic discussion, as can be seen in articles published on the *Playbill.com* website focusing on music theatre news, and to any other type of staging as a non-replica one. Additionally, I intend to broaden the scope of my research by including exclusively non-replica stagings in this thesis.

Moreover, I focused on the ever-lasting conflict between the two most popular types of music theatre in the Czech Republic, opera and musicals, and established a linguistics-focused distinction that further confirmed the hypothesis brought forward by Mateo, who states that opera is leaning more towards being a specific genre of music in lieu of a theatrical genre (Mateo 2012) as opposed to musicals. The fundamental difference was hidden in the *importance of the text* within the whole interwoven structure—the text in a musical holds more significance than in an opera—as was revealed in expert commentary by theatre critic Anthony Tommasini (2011, cited in Šulcová 2021, 8).

However, if we put these findings in the context of contemporary music theatre practice, especially in the Czech Republic, the discrepancy becomes more than clear. It becomes evident that the sung operatic texts need not to be understood, as the music alongside the singers' vocal register and the choreography on the already grandiose scene convey the librettist's intended message sufficiently. And should the audience feel the need to know what is being sung, it can be done so much more economically, albeit in a non-singable matter, via projected surtitles (see Mateo 2012 for further discussion), which is exactly the case of works shown at *Stavovské divadlo (The Estates Theatre)*, one of the main opera tabernacles in the Czech Republic.

From that, one may also get the impression that the opera is rather untouchable in its original form. The musical, in contrast, is by nature meant to be tangible and understandable, which will be discussed in more detail in section 3 covering the history and purpose of musicals, hence the continuous effort to produce singable translations of such works. As was also already mentioned in my bachelor's thesis, this is in line with the translation policies regarding musicals and opera in the Western world that Mateo comments on, stating it is musicals that are most often translated in a singable manner (ibid) out of all forms of music theatre.

It is also pointed out that singable operatic translations were historically regarded as distortions (Gallo 2006, 51, cited in Šulcová 2021, 10), which may be considered analogous to today's discussions vis-à-vis the line between translation and adaptation even in drama translation in section 4.1 and 4.2. We shall see how this fares in translation of musicals where largescale changes concerning even the themes of the libretto may be permitted, especially in *Wicked*.

In terms of the methodology used for analyzing a musical theatre work in my bachelor's thesis, I borrowed the two-level method used in theatre studies and was set on analyzing the text itself on one level, and the staging on another level (see Balme 2008, 147). However, it was not clear whether the levels were mutually influencing one another, therefore I tied it to Kaindl's holistic approach (see Kaindl 1995, cited in Mateo 2012) that included the music as well, and augmented it by adding Low's parameters of singability (Low 2005, 191-211) while repurposing them as individual points of focus in the analysis. Inasmuch as focusing on all parameters would fall beyond the scope of a bachelor's thesis, the main references were done to the rhythm and naturalness of phrasing, which coincidentally appeared

as the most suitable approach, if one considers the finished and unchanging nature of the analyzed material. In this thesis, my aim will be to discuss a wider array of Low's parameters with the actual translators, and to comment on their tendencies and decisions regarding the prioritization of said parameters. This will allow me to interject and further inquire about the influencing actants in the decision-making process.

Additionally, I will now also adopt a more conservative approach towards the pre-existing music compared to the one that advocated for the translator to make changes to the musical composition, as was promoted by Low (2005), Franzon (2008), and also Apter and Herman (2016), which served as the theoretical backbone of my bachelor's thesis. More details on the musical changes made by the translator will be discussed in section 5.1.3.4.

3 The History of the Musical and its Translation in the Czech Republic

This thesis will portray the musical as a true token of American culture that is imported into other cultures by the means of translation in order to fill a cultural gap in the target theatre system (Mateo 2008, 331). The conception of this unique type of theatre takes us to the very birth of the United States as an independent nation in the second half of the 18th century, where the only stage available was a musical stage (Mates 1987, 5), which meant that this art form had a relatively undisturbed environment to develop in.

However, when contrasted with the independently evolving European form of music theatre, opera, there was no difference in the prestige of both art forms as we may notice now (ibid, 6). Both were simply considered cohesive musical shows that revolved around given themes, and neither was understood as a more cultured experience the way the opera is now, nor a profit-driven commercial form of entertainment as the current musical can be described.

In spite of that, there was one differentiating feature, “the abilities of the performers appearing in them” (ibid). This may seem like a broad statement, however, when one focuses on the singing styles of the works as we now know them, the difference becomes more than clear. Opera requires a classical singing style, while musicals aim for a more pop-sounding voice. This leads us to the difference of music genres specific to the individual types of theatre, and while opera can be relatively easily placed in the category of classical music, musicals contain such a wide range of music genres that are governed by the main theme or topic of the work, from my observation, and therefore it would be impossible to find an overarching genre to encompass them all.

There inevitably comes the question *why incorporate music theatre, especially a form of theatre as heterogenous as the musical, in translation studies*. After all, it can be deconstructed into the areas of drama and poetry translation theory, both having been covered in great detail already (see Levý 2011), but there appears to be one underlying issue. Scholars most often tend to focus on the works’ “literary merit” instead of their “theatrical” or perhaps even performable merit, to borrow

Mates' (1987, 7) terms. Therefore, approaching music theatre as an independent performable audiovisual translation discipline can be considered one of the prime movers of Wolf's (2017) "performative turn" in the study of translation.

The discipline enables in-depth semiotic analyses of the "hybrid, bastard, mixed" theatrical works (Mates 1987, 7) and may even be regarded as the true essence of audiovisual translation thanks to its myriad of communicative channels that mutually influence and constrain one another, especially in the interplay of the lyrical content and the music, where the libretto "must (...) allow room for musical development" (ibid). Additionally, consideration of the music sets the conditions for a more complex study of theatre works, especially when approaching them holistically. In drama, Mates states that it is impossible for two characters to speak at the same time (ibid), since that would result in unintelligible gibberish, whereas the addition of music may bring clarity to their words (ibid) through two distinct melodies. Music theatre translation therefore uncovers an additional layer of drama translation.

Moving past the mere written form of the works, music theatre also offers sociological insight behind the translation process, which is considerably more complicated than literary translation, as is shown in section 4. It opens the door for the study of individual human and non-human actants that may influence the final form of the target text (TT), and it shows the duty towards the actants the translator carries and is expected to incorporate into the finished product, which is discussed in section 5.1.3 in more detail.

We shall now take a closer look at Czech theatre studies expert and professional translator Michael Prostějovský's coverage of the development of the musical as a specific type of theatre. Its earlier forms from the 19th century can trace their roots to extravaganza, vaudeville, operetta, and variety show (Prostějovský 2008, 21), however, when we arrive to the 20th century musical, one will undeniably notice certain pop and jazz elements both in music and the choreography. This multi-genre fusion can be culturally considered "American national music"¹ (ibid, 26), as unnatural as it may feel for a European reader who is familiar with their own national music rooted in slightly more conservative folk traditions. However, the musical had also undergone noticeable development even throughout the last century.

¹ In Czech: "(...) národní americké hudby."

The 1910s saw an emergence of cohesive works circling around a specific theme, as opposed to the colorful variety shows or extravaganzas, which also led to the establishment of musical “stars” among the performers. Slowly, the actual plot of the plays moved from a secondary position to the heart of the show in the 1920s, and this was reflected in the lyrical composition of the songs, which transformed from mere musical fillers between the spoken word that propelled the story forward into epic musical wholes that told the story instead (ibid). The first work to fully reflect this was Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II’s *Show Boat (Lod’ komediantů)* in 1927, which is generally considered to be the first real musical as we now know it (ibid, 26-27).

Show Boat triggered a major shift that reached as far as the choice of the topic covered in the musical. This helped separate it from opera even further, because it moved past the fanciful motives and weaker plot of the opera with the intention of being tangible even for the middle and lower social classes (ibid). The topics therefore changed to speak of contemporary ordinary life and problems, which were no exception to occasional satirical coverage as a form of escapism (ibid, 27-28).

In the 1930s and 1940s, the stage musical fell victim to the rise of film (ibid, 27), and in order to catch up with the unrelenting form of media that allowed a greater array of special effects, further innovations were due in the theatres. More effort was put into perfecting the form, and by the 1950s, stage works rivaled filmed musicals with seamless transitions between dialogue and songs (ibid, 28-29), which the current audience now takes for granted. One of such works, *Finian’s Rainbow (Divotvorný hrnec)*, created by Burton Lane, Edgar Yip Harburg, and Fred Saidy in 1947, holds a special place even in the Czech world of theatre, seeing as it was the very first Broadway musical that made its way to Czechoslovak soil (ibid, 30).

It premiered at the *Divadlo ABC* theatre in 1948, only a year after its original premiere, which is considerably faster than the current translation processes not only here but all over Europe. The German translation of *Hamilton: An American Musical*, to give an example of a recent translation, took four years to finish (Paulson 2022).

Turning back to Czechoslovakia, the creative team behind the Czech version were Jiří Voskovec and Jan Werich, the founders of the avant-garde *Liberated Theatre (Osvobozené divadlo)* movement that operated from 1926 to the beginning of the Second World War. It introduced the Czechoslovak audience to a more laid-

back form of satirical theatre, which primarily involved drama and simpler forms of music theatre, translated or adapted work, as well as plays written in Czech (see Burian 1977 for further discussion). While Voskovec and Werich (V+W)'s entire creative output is undoubtedly worth researching in more detail, their post-war work is of most relevance for the purpose of this thesis, since it involves full-fledged music theatre in its familiar contemporary form.

However, V+W's mission of bringing *Finian's Rainbow*, an American musical, from their Western exile to the more and more USSR-oriented Czechoslovakia, was not exactly without problems. The year of the Czechoslovak premiere, 1948, was the year of the communist coup. This meant that all media and art forms were under close scrutiny of the Communist party, lest they push "Western" or anti-communist ideas on any level. This naturally led to very heavy regulations and censorship across all art forms and print (Bednařík & Cebe 2008), which, in the context of theatre, resulted in largescale adaptations of newly introduced titles, or outright banning of certain works. Whether this was also the case of *Finian's Rainbow* will be analyzed in the following section to illustrate what adjustments, if any were deemed necessary, had to be made for an American musical to be played in a communist country.

3.1 Finian's Rainbow and Czech Song Translation up to 1989

3.1.1 Finian's Rainbow

The plot of the English original work centers around Finian, an Irishman who arrives with his daughter at the fictional town of Rainbow Valley, Missitucky, with a stolen pot of gold that he is set on burying in the ground in hopes of the gold multiplying and making him rich like all Americans are ([The Guide to Musical Theatre n.d.](#)). This may be the first issue in Czechoslovakia, seeing as Finian is unmistakably after the "American dream" and willing to leave his home country for it.

However, it is shortly revealed that the locals do not seem to be doing as well as had been rumored, since they are about to lose their property over the taxes the local Senator demands to be paid. Finian's daughter then meets Woody, the locals' representative, whom she later falls in love with. Through shared efforts, Woody and Finian rid the locals of their troubles, and all seems to be turning for the better among

the community, which lives in near-harmony despite consisting of different races (ibid). This further highlights the thought-provoking nature of music theatre as Prostějovský (2008) mentions in section 3.

Nevertheless, Finian's past comes back to haunt him and he encounters Og, the Irish leprechaun he stole the pot from. Finian learns that Og cannot live without the pot, but he selfishly buries it anyway ([The Guide to Musical Theatre n.d.](#)). This may play into the narrative the Communist Party was trying to push, i.e., that the capitalist world is inherently selfish, and we shall see if it is projected into the Czechoslovak version. Og soon starts losing his magical form and turns human. The next morning, they meet again, and in fairytale fashion, Og warns Finian that no wishes should be uttered near the gold, because the gold will disappear after three wishes.

The evil Senator appears once again and attempts to create more chaos among the community via blatant racism and implementation of discriminatory rules. Finian's daughter confronts him, unknowingly standing above the buried pot, and says she wishes he were *black*². This casts a spell on him, causing him to change race and become African American. The community then learns that there is gold in their county, and that does not go unnoticed by large American companies (ibid). Again, one could expect this motive to be retained in the adapted version. All locals acquire credit, which essentially puts an end to the looming racist divide.

However, the trouble does not end here, because a girl discovers the pot of gold and takes it away. On top of that, the Senator runs into Og and explains his situation. Og, seemingly the only character with a moral compass, assesses him and decides to change him from within, but not his looks. A wedding is held between Finian's daughter and Woody, and Finian's daughter is accused of witchcraft because of the spell she unknowingly cast on the Senator. The Senator is also present at the wedding and is quick to defend Finian's daughter, but seeing as he is an African American trying to stand up to the establishment, he is not taken seriously. Finian, the only one aware of the pot's magical powers, takes it upon himself to save the Senator, but he soon discovers the pot is missing.

The girl who knows where the pot is, however, is nonverbal, and in his frustration, Og wishes she was able to speak, coincidentally standing above the gold.

² Literal wording in the musical.

Once he hears her voice, he realizes what happened, and confronted with the more and more human-like feelings he has been harboring towards her, he uses the remaining wish on the Senator, turning him Caucasian again, and becoming fully human. In the end, Finian realizes that the pot and the promised wealth are by that point well out of his reach. He bids the community goodbye and embarks on another quest for his rainbow, a symbol for a better life ([GHAA Videos 2017](#); [The Guide to Musical Theatre n.d.](#)).

We can see that the entire work is dealing exclusively with issues typical for the United States, i.e., racism, societal divide, the American Dream, and immigration, which are relevant to this day. However, I believe it is exactly the way it confronts societal and moral troubles in the Eastern Bloc's biggest competitions that may play into the Communist Party's aim to paint the West, and especially the United States, as an unworthy part of the world. Nevertheless, at this point of the thesis, we can only speculate which direction the adapted version could have possibly headed, and in the following section, we shall see how V+W's version actually looked in detail.

3.1.2 *Divotvorný hrnec*

According to Jiří Voskovec's accounts in a 1981 interview, the original idea behind introducing *Finian's Rainbow* on a Czechoslovak stage was to offer a theatrical counter-alternative to the quickly-spreading Russian propaganda (Liehm 1990, 13) that was seeping through even in dramatic works. We can therefore say that my original hypothesis about politics being at play was correct, however, I was greatly misled in terms of the political adjustments. Instead of following and succumbing to Communist ideology, V+W decided and were unexpectedly allowed to present this musical essentially as it was, without any largescale censorship.

This does not mean that there had not been any changes made to the musical. V+W have chosen the approach of bringing the work towards the audience and took some highly creative liberties while doing so. To list the most notable alterations, Og the Irish leprechaun became the mythical Czech *vodník* (vodyanoy water spirit) and earned a new name, Čochtan, which is a derivate of the verb *čochtat* (to dip in water) with no phonetic similarity to its English counterpart in terms of singability. Another name change can be observed in Finian, who was turned into a Czech immigrant called Josef Maršálek, once again bearing no phonetic similarity. Perhaps the largest

change can be found in V+W's substitution of the US-specific sharecroppers for Czechoslovak and inherently socialist cooperative farmers, which can be explained as a possible attempt at appealing to the Communist Party and having the play approved of for introduction in Czechoslovakia.

We can see that V+W primarily focused on retaining the original idea and purpose of the musical, but seeing as some of the key elements present in the original work have been erased and replaced, i.e., the names, the Irish culture and the American agricultural workers, the Czech version may be considered an *adaptation*, as is covered in section 4.3.2.

An analysis of the Czech staging of *Finian's Rainbow* has already been done in 2008 by Andrea Fraňková, a theatre studies expert, where it is further pointed out that V+W did not have the financial means to purchase the sheet music for the orchestra (Fraňková 2008, 10-11), meaning that some changes must have inevitably been done even to the music, further supporting the notion of the *Divotvorný hrnec* not being a translated musical, but an adapted one, albeit still singable.

3.1.3 Czech Cover Song

Seeing as interlingual cover songs, although rightfully considered singable texts, create a separate discipline in translation studies, this sub-chapter will contain only a very brief coverage of the problematic on the Czech musical market between the 1950s and 1990s. The specifics of the meaning-transfer typical for these musical works will be covered in the context of Peter Low's *replacement texts* (see Low 2013 for further discussion) in greater detail in section 5.1.3.2. Michael Prostějovský, one of the interviewed translators, had spent a significant portion of his career creating such replacement cover versions of the otherwise unattainable songs produced in the Western Bloc, and our discussion of his experience translating music theatre works has also touched on this topic. The following description will therefore draw on the semi-structured interview with Prostějovský conducted on April 3, 2024.

When tasked with such a lyrical transformation, the translators–lyricists were told that the original lyrical contents were of no importance, which allowed their creativity to run free. Occasionally, the translators–lyricists were provided with an unrelated theme to base the textual contents on, nevertheless, most of their focus fell on the phrasing and corresponding singability of each word and syllable on the given notes. At this point, one might question *how such grave changes were permitted*.

These creative ventures were allowed for one specific reason; there was no source-language controlling actant to approve this transcreation. The only concern at that time was the acquisition of the license to play the music, and the original copyright holders did not preoccupy themselves with text revisions nor back-translations (Prostějovský 2024, INT2). In rare cases, this led to the creation of multiple replacement texts for one original song, e.g., ABBA's *The Winner Takes It All* being trans-created as *A ty se ptáš, co já* by Zděnek Borovec, performed by Helena Vondráčková, and also *Když vítěz mává nám* by Pavel Kopta, performed by Karel Gott. Fellow translation studies graduate Petr Uram researches Czech cover songs in a popular-science manner (see Uram 2021) and has comprised a [YouTube playlist](#) of over 1,000 Czech replacement text songs. While I do believe the Czech cover song tradition to be worth more in-depth research, the main focus of this thesis will nonetheless remain music theatre texts.

4 The Translation Process

In this chapter, we shall take a closer look at how the translation process is recorded in music theatre translation theory and what the assumed role and status of the translator is. It has not been lost to my attention that both the English-speaking and the Czech-speaking worlds appear to show relative uncertainty about what the author of the text and the finished product should be referred to as, and this overview is intended to provide an explanation of the presented views together with a possible solution to the problem at hand.

A special sub-chapter will be dedicated to Susan Bassnett's discussion of translation processes between the 1970s and 1990s in theatrical works without the musical aspect, but in connection with performability nonetheless, then I will continue by adding a brief exploration of opinions on this topic made by established theatre translation scholars until the year 2000 prior to the rise in popularity of translation of musicals. After that, I will delve into the accounts of contemporary music theatre translation scholars made between the 1990s and 2010s with a nod to opera translation practice, and conclude this investigation with the remarks of Czech professional translators whose experience spans over most of the covered eras in section 7.1.

4.1 Susan Bassnett

Bassnett approaches the translation process from a predominantly sociological standpoint with the intention of shining a light on the translator's inferior position amidst the other involved actants. According to her, translation has always been "a question of power relationships" even outside the context of theatre, with the translator very often unfortunately getting the short end of the stick (Bassnett 1991, 101).

Seeing as the author had had over 20 years of experience with theatre translation by the 1990s, she displays a good understanding of the situation in the British world of theatre. She brings forth the policy of the *British National Theatre* that was in effect at the time of her academic exploration being written, where the person referred to as a *translator* was tasked with producing a literal translation

(*ibid*), possibly to extract the intended meaning with their linguistic and cultural expertise. Then, their draft was passed onto a *monolingual editor*, most often an established playwright whose involvement was sure to lure in a larger audience for bigger profit, with the final credit for the target text and the larger amount of financial compensation being given to the *editor*–playwright (*ibid*).

As is further pointed out, no matter how turbulent the economic situation of 1970–1990s Britain was, profit was the key aspect of theatre, with translation ethics being of the least concern (*ibid*, 102). Consequently, the introduced texts were greatly altered, i.e., “cut, reshaped, adapted, rewritten,” but they were still referred to as *translations* (*ibid*). This, however, was not welcomed by Bassnett, whose stance towards the texts being called translations was rather negative, nevertheless, in her later publications, she paradoxically opposed even the terms *adaptation* and *version* (see Bassnett 1998, 98 in Aaltonen 2000, 45) when discussing newly introduced foreign theatre plays.

From her writing, one persistently gets the impression that the translator, already in an inferior position, is forced to work in complete isolation with no material or other expert to consult. Perhaps this reflected real translation practice in the 20th century, but it is by no means applicable to today’s standards, as will be shown in the discussion with Czech translators in section 7.1. What is relevant to this day, however, is the question of cultural adjustments and the need of updating the text (Bassnett 1991, 102), which I believe would now be a matter of the copyright and licensing terms for each country. These alterations may give rise to what one can indeed call *versions* of the original work, nevertheless, I would suggest we talk about *translation versions* in this context.

Bassnett moreover raises the question of the interpretation of a given work and possible distortions of the meaning and the intention of the original author (*ibid*, 104). It is safe to assume that non-musical theatre stagings are introduced in a less-controlled environment where it is admittedly possible to stray from the author’s original intended ideas at any level under the director’s artistic decisions. This is very well illustrated in the various historic / steampunk / modern stagings of Shakespeare’s plays in the Czech Republic, most often introduced in regional theatres, which I believe is precisely the point Bassnett is making in her publication, seeing as the only cohesive element among these works is the connection to Shakespeare’s name, and not the staging nor the updated plot lines. To support this,

she refers to author Luigi Pirandello's tendency to see the "actors, translators and illustrators (...) as betrayers of the author" (ibid), especially because of the deviations that may arise during the introduction process. However, I shall once again stress this may be the case only in theatre translation without the musical aspect, seeing as in music theatre, the translation process and stage introduction are undoubtedly much more controlled.

In connection with theatre semiotics, Bassnett discusses the possible reading interpretations that may influence the presentation of the final product on the stage: a pre-performance literary reading (to get the gist of the story), a post-performance literary reading (to implement signs that may manifest during the performance), the director's reading (to shape the sub-systems into a larger system), the performers' reading and the theatre technicians' reading (to focus on singular sign systems), and lastly an interlingual translator's reading, the latter of which is most usually left out in the process according to the author (ibid, 106-107). In defiance of the last claim, I believe the interlingual translator's reading is exactly what shapes the pre-performance part, seeing as Bassnett herself has insinuated that they are the first one to analyze the text (ibid, 101) and most likely to extract the author's intended meaning for the involved crew.

Upon closer examination, one may notice that this list uncovers how other actants may be involved in the process, and it further confirms that the creation of the final text product and the performance is, in fact, a team effort where the individual actants' interpretations and experiences become intertwined, which is also noted in Sirku Aaltonen's (1997) work as well as the translators' accounts in section 7.1. Based on this simplified overlook of the interpretations and involved actants, we may reconstruct a hypothetical translation process with a few minor adjustments.

4.1.1 A Hypothetical Theatre Translation Process

In an idealized version, the translator, i.e., Bassnett's *interlingual translator*, is first presented with the source text (ST) and possibly familiarized with their role and status in the process. They produce the first draft that captures the intended meaning with no elements of performability. I believe the director's intervention is in place at this point, as this draft may largely influence their interpretation of the original work if the director or the target production team are not as fluent in the source language. The director may then implement some elements of their interpretation into the draft,

and the text is passed on to the editor in charge of producing a performable text, be it the translator or another involved actant with linguistic knowledge. All this can be considered the *pre-performance*—or rather *pre-rehearsal*—part of the process, to borrow Bassnett's term.

One may then expect the performable draft to be taken to rehearsals where the text is further fine-tuned thanks to it finally becoming a part of a larger system with other influencing sub-systems of signs. The performers may subsequently provide more insight regarding the performability of the text, seeing as they are the ones that have the largest ability to *test* it. However, there inevitably arises the question of the weight of their insight, since this could potentially mean that every crew of actors on every stage may influence the final form of the target text to a greater degree, which may seem unrealistic at first glance.

I therefore believe it would be best to try and establish some sort of hierarchy regarding the weight of the involved actants' influence at this point, where the performers' input, no matter how valuable, will expectedly fall subordinate to the director's word. We may refer to this as the *post-rehearsal* part of the process, as there is a clear implementation of elements stemming directly from seeing the text in practice. In terms of the theatre technicians' reading, I expect their work to be influenced by the target text and not the other way around, as it would be the case with the aforementioned actants, and therefore find there is little need to discuss their reading for the purpose of this thesis.

As ambitious as this proposed translation process may be, it is based purely on speculation and unascertained clues found exclusively in Bassnett's extensive work, and it may greatly stray from the reality of theatre translation practice. What the process is clearly missing is a checks-and-balances system and legal limitations to ensure the target production team does not turn too far from the original ideas, although this may be the responsibility of a licensing company or possibly some other involved actants from the original production team. However, neither are mentioned in the author's writings, nor are named any specific case studies that would illustrate the practice in Britain in greater detail, despite there being comments on their existence (see Bassnett 1991, 111). Yet a welcome change had come in the late 1990s when theatre studies expert Sirku Aaltonen decided to record theatre translation practice in Finland.

4.2 Theatre Translation Scholars

In her complex exploration of the Finnish world of theatre, Aaltonen opts for a functional approach and draws on the pre-existing translation typology brought forward by theoretician Dudley Andrew where a translation can be *transformative*, i.e., using “the same dramatic structures or style of presentation,” *intersectional*, i.e., intentionally fronting a feature or an aspect including changes in scene order, characterization or setting, and finally a translation verging on what we would now consider an *adaptation* that borrows an idea from the original work and builds a new piece on top of it (Andrew 1984, 98, in Aaltonen 1997, 89). No matter the selected approach, she believes the translation process to be a purposeful activity primarily aiming towards *functionality* (Aaltonen 1997, 89-90), in this case performability and singability.

Questioning the role and status of the translator within the whole process, Aaltonen ties the issue to the matter of centrality or peripherality of the translated work in the context of the target world, where the translator assumes either the role of a *creator* or a *mediator* (ibid, 91). This may prove to be especially relevant in the discussion of the post-revolution music theatre scene in the Czech Republic, seeing as English (together with German) is the language musicals are now most often translated from. Understandably, these languages have changed their status in the Czech world of translation after the fall of the Communist regime (see Zubáková 2017; Zehnalová & Kubátová 2022 for more discussion of the current situation in the Czech Republic), and we shall see whether this manifests itself in the translators’ testimony.

Regarding the situation in Finland, Aaltonen’s *translator-creator* is allowed to “work within the theatre” (Aaltonen 1997, 92) and may not be of linguistic background at all, which leaves the role to the involved dramaturges or directors who reportedly need not limit themselves in terms of possible adjustments to the text. In contrast, Aaltonen’s *translator-mediator* is what I would consider equivalent to Bassnett’s disregarded *interlingual translator*, seeing as they are allowed only limited manipulation with the text and have no further decision-making power in the staging, with Aaltonen further comparing their ties to the text to that of the actors, pointing towards a certain disconnect (ibid). This is in relative agreement with the

suggested hierarchy in my hypothetical translation process, and I shall therefore rightfully consider the input of the translator and the actors to be subordinate to a higher authority, most often the director. But this once again circles back to the question of whether the director should have complete reign over the process, and it appears that it cannot be answered only within the domain of non-musical theatre.

Aaltonen thus briefly enters the world of music theatre and explains the role of two new actants, *the licensing company* and *copyright holders* (ibid, 91). It is precisely these actants who are meant to serve as the controlling elements to limit the director that I was searching for in my hypothetical process, and I shall incorporate them into the augmented model below. Aaltonen also brings forward an example from actual practice where the licensing company did not approve the translation of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats* after witnessing the rehearsals because the translation "violated the spirit" of the original work (ibid).

In order to raise this kind of critique, the licensing company must have needed a target-language speaking proxy, or there might have been a back-translation process by which the assessment could have been made. I suppose this calls for the involvement of another actant, a possibly impartial and otherwise uninvolved *back-translator*. The hypothetical translation process would therefore be amended as follows:

Throughout the process, there is also a supervising actant who had to have come into contact with the target text in the pre-rehearsal part. This could have been done via a back-translation that displays all possible deviations from the source text. Prior to the rehearsal performance, the supervising actant was most likely able to fully compare the meaning of the source and target text, and upon seeing the rehearsal and post-rehearsal performance, the full picture could finally be painted. They will have been able to hear the actual realization of the target text and witness the possible creative adjustments.

Let us now continue with Aaltonen's contribution. In her later exploration of theatre translation, she also includes the findings of Mary Snell-Hornby who assumes a more practical stance towards the text, essentially stating that it should be construed with emphasis on the rhythm and understandability, with the performers' natural rhythm of breathing being the key aspect (Snell-Hornby 1984, 104-108, in Aaltonen 2000, 43). This may be greatly problematic in music theatre translation, seeing as the music oftentimes dictates the performers' manner of breathing,

however, it also indicates the necessity of some cooperation between the translator and the performers at the point of the target text creation. While this sort of cooperation may appear obvious even to a layperson very remotely familiar with this field of study, the exact involvement of individual actants in such a translation process is simply not sufficiently recorded in academic literature or never mentioned explicitly, leaving new researchers with a haystack of information to find the needle in. This is precisely why I greatly support the notion of professional translators being observed at work and having their experience incorporated into theory.

It appears that Aaltonen arrived at a similar conclusion, seeing as she eventually did turn to the accounts of actual professional translators and their comments on the process as well as the finished product. She analyzes the potential cooperation between two translators on a singular work via the accounts of translator Bill Findlay. His description of the process shows the labor being clearly divided; one translator produces a literal draft with annotations, including use-descriptions and cultural explanations, and the other fine-tunes the subsequent draft, with the first translator being available for linguistic consultation (Findlay 1994, 729 in Aaltonen 2000, 44).

She then departs from her initial ideas of an intersectional or transformative translation (see Aaltonen 1997, 89) and once again questions *how one should call the person creating the target text and the target text itself*, this time among actants directly involved in practice. The issue is illustrated in David Johnston's interview with playwright-turned-translator David Hare on the situation in the English-speaking world. The two agreed that there is no clear distinction between a *translation*, an *adaptation*, or a language *version* of the original work, with Johnston further recalling a pamphlet including all three in one description of a singular play (Johnston 1996, 143 in Aaltonen 2000, 45).

I still firmly believe the person credited for creating the target language text fully assumes the role of a *translator* in the process, regardless of their other occupation or education, and the final product could still be referred to a *translation* or possibly a *translation version*, if it has not undergone any functional changes that will be elaborated on in the next paragraph. In lieu of that, my view may be biased because of my attempts to portray music theatre texts as material worth researching in translation studies, not as some offhand and completely reworked adaptations in the most negative sense, not worthy of attention.

Unexpectedly, upon taking a closer look at translation practice, one may see that non-academics do not regard *translations* so highly. This is shown in David Edney's accounts of theatre directors preferring to call the target text *adaptations* and seeing it as a very positive denominator, because the target text is so well-constructed and natural it "does not read like a translation" (Edney 1996, 230, cited in Aaltonen 2000, 45). In terms of Edney's preference as a professional translator, he states he would rather the text be called a *translation*, since he interprets an *adaptation* to have added-in effects that were not present in the original work (ibid), which is in line with the view I presented. The sentiment is also shared by translator Steve Gooch who states that an *adaptation* includes an *additional purpose*, perhaps for the work to be applicable in a different context (Gooch 1996, 20 in Aaltonen 2000, 45), and I believe this is exactly the case of *Finian's Rainbow* in Czechoslovakia where we cannot talk about the work being a translation anymore due to such changes. Overall, it still appears that non-linguistic actants prefer the term *adaptation* when introducing a new title.

In a brief glance at the contractual habits of the BBC provided by Stephen Mulrine, this hypothesis is confirmed. One can easily see that *adaptations* are valued highly and better compensated financially than *translations* (Mulrine 1996, 127 in Aaltonen 2000, 45), which are most likely expected to be literal and non-performable. One cannot help but wonder whether we shall, as translators, strive to change the way translations are perceived by non-linguists, and show that translations can also be performable without needing to categorize them as what we are taught adaptations to be.

In summation, the remarks in theatre translation theory without the musical aspect touch on the individual actants influencing the final product only very remotely so far, however, they very well illustrate the differences in approaches towards the text from the linguistic experts' point of view, who prefer the text be called a *translation*, in contrast with non-linguistic actants, who see *adaptation* as a more suitable denominator. Whether this is also the case in music-augmented theatre translation shall be uncovered in the next section.

4.3 Music Theatre Translation Scholars

To continue my selected chronological approach, we shall first delve into how the issue was handled in what I would call the direct predecessor to the translation of musicals, opera translation. At first, one may think the findings circling on opera translation may be adopted rather easily for the translation of musicals, after all, both types of theatre can be described virtually in the same way: the translator should preferably take into account the music, the text, and the staging, yet there are many stark differences lurking in all of the mentioned systems to look out for.

Opera, as a genre of music, can be considered relatively predictable. It rarely strays from the classical composition and is noted to be accessible for any listener (Desblache 2007, 156), especially in terms of the lyrical content, which cannot be said about the genre-defying musical that oftentimes aims at a specific audience both in the main motives and the choices in music. This can be seen in Lin-Manuel Miranda's *In the Heights* musical ode to the Upper Manhattan Hispanic community packed with fast-paced hip hop and salsa music, or Dave Malloy's *Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812* reminiscent of languid Russian folk melodies paired with borderline operatic vocals to underline its foreign and historical setting, to list some contemporary examples. An opera translator would therefore need to be predominantly familiar with classical music and vocal performance, while the musical translator would need to branch out into various distinct musical and vocal techniques, and their work could additionally border on poetry translation in extreme contemporary cases.

Another divergence can be noticed in the (un)intelligibility of the text within the whole structure. Most operatic works played on Czech soil were written no later than the 18th or 19th century, which brings its own specifics to the approaches towards the text in opera. Librettists and composers were historically recorded to quarrel over the importance of the text within the work (see Gallo 2006, cited in Šulcová 2021, 9), but even a layperson listener may notice who had prevailed. The vocal line in opera noticeably serves more of a decorative function rather than an informative one, which then renders the text subordinate to the music. This is also confirmed in Desblache's discussion of operatic texts (see Desblache 2007, 158) and further analyzed in section 5.1.1 in the context of *semiological musicology*.

The creative team behind a translation of a musical can therefore be expected to put more emphasis on the text and make it not only intelligible, but also sensible. Based on that, I believe it is best to tread lightly and approach the following accounts from opera translation theory with some reservations. I shall therefore see them as the progenitor of musical translation approaches and be especially mindful of the described dissimilitude.

4.3.1 Opera-Centric

Only few can be considered such opera translation powerhouses as Ronnie Apter and Mark Herman. Researching and translating operatic texts since the 1980s, the collaborators have compiled numerous translation reviews and commentaries, some of which also comment on the creative process behind a translation and the involvement of other actants. According to their 1995 review, the responsibility behind the quality of the translated work falls namely on “the translators, the performing companies, and the audiences” (Apter & Herman 1995, 26), and also all the actants’ expectations from the introduced work (ibid), which is a rather broad crowd that one has fair difficulty finding the major authority in.

It is unclear whether their definition of a performing company includes actants such as the director, nevertheless, I assume the director is not seen as much as an active actant in the performance the same as a singer, and that they would otherwise be specifically named. What I find uncommon, however, is the mention of the audience as an actant influencing the product, seeing as I would originally classify it as a mere recipient of the translation that is presented as-is. Alas, Apter and Herman point to the *audience’s expectations* as the key influencing factor (ibid).

Historically, the debate regarding the operatic text did not end with the discussion of its linguistic importance within the whole system. Another point of focus was the *manner of translation*; up until the 19th century, singable translations were seen as a slight against the original work (Gallo 2006, cited in Šulcová 2021, 10), and thus the works were played in the source language with a translated pamphlet to be distributed, shall the audience want to read it. However, this came to an abrupt end with the emergence of blackouts in the auditorium that “prevented opera goers from reading libretti during the performance” (Desblache 2007, 163).

This shaped the audience's expectations to the ones of today where we expect to see either a singable translation, or a source-language version with projected surtitles above the stage, which is also true for the Czech theatres. However, Apter and Herman (1995) note that even if an opera is presented via a singable translation, it does not necessarily have to be in the language of the country it is played in.

Out of habitual expectation, the Metropolitan Opera in New York introduces foreign operas not in an English translation version, but in Italian, no matter the original language, under the pretense of Italian being the “most musical of languages” (Apter & Herman 1995, 27) for the audience's ear. This is reminiscent of a pop-culture example of such decision-making in Miloš Forman's (1984) Oscar-winning film *Amadeus*, where the musical committee of the Habsburg court argue with Mozart about the language his opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio* should be written in, with Mozart vouching for German as the language of the people, and the committee proposing the usual melodic but not broadly understandable Italian.

Continuing with the European audience, albeit the contemporary non-historic one, it also has some specific expectations from a music theatre work that may influence its final presented form. Desblache attributes it to the 21st century recipients growing accustomed to seamlessly flowing *dubbed* forms of foreign media translated into their specific language, and therefore expecting such smoothness from sung media too (Desblache 2019, 83), which we can presume to include musicals as well. This therefore strengthens my initial hypothesis about the Czech Republic, the literal heart of Europe, being a *performable translation powerhouse*, and broadens my initial set of influencing actants by including the audience and its expectations.

Apter and Herman also comment on the involvement of the more expected actants, such as the conductor (Apter & Herman 1995, 28) and by extension the music director as well. They talk about their own experience of translating the Czech opera *Dvě vdovy* (*Two Widows*), with the conductor insisting they add a syllable and split two originally legato notes in the word *love*, as it would allow him to signal a musical change for the orchestra more easily. They conclude that this would worsen the quality of the translation, seeing as the accented note would then fall on the first additional syllable and the key word would be acoustically suppressed (ibid). This serves as a great example of the myriad of aspects the translator is expected to take into consideration.

Another unnamed actant, which I believe to be the licensing company, the original author, or the commissioner due to the nature of the constraint they bring on, has been noted to ask opera translator Andrew Porter to keep “important words (...) and especially the proper names exactly where Wagner placed them” because they might be significantly motivated and placed on specific harmonies (Porter 1976, cited in Apter & Herman 1995, 27). This means that the translator’s role is not only to oblige such constraining requirements from non-performing actants, but also to act as a mitigator for singers to give their best performance by writing “good translations that are worth singing well and acting well” (Apter & Herman 2000, 32), which is a significantly greater burden than theatre translators are noted to bear in the translation process. With that, one could easily expect the opera translator to be much more appreciated and treated better than the aforementioned theatre translators in Aaltonen’s overviews (1997; 2000), however, that is unfortunately not true even in this augmented process.

This social aspect of the translators’ work is covered in Lucile Desblache’s 2007 publication primarily focused on non-singable opera translation, which expertly describes the situation at hand, nonetheless. Upon her observation of theatre practice and the use of surtitles, she states that while “translation is definitely becoming more visible in the world of opera, the translator is remaining as invisible as ever” (Desblache 2007, 165), despite carrying such a burden. Furthermore, actants such as the conductors or producers consider surtitles a hindrance to the proper enjoyment of an operatic work (Higgins 2005, cited in Desblache 2007, 165), which only adds to the negativity expressed towards the translator’s best efforts. It appears that neither non-singable nor singable translations are received with positivity even among their fellow actants in the process.

When discussing the denominators of the target text and its author, Apter and Herman refer to the author of the target text simply as the *translator* (see Apter & Herman 1995; 2000). Desblache, however, appears to differentiate between a singable and a non-singable text. If we were to follow her line of thought, we would call what we now refer to as a singable translation an *adaptation*, and a non-singable product a *translation* (Desblache 2007, 165), further adding to the already long list of possible names and distinctions of the final product with no consensus in sight.

Allow me to draw a metaphorical line at this point of the exploration, since Peter Low's (2002) scholarly input becomes relevant to the field of study as of now. Low's presence marks a turning point in which music theatre translation scholars redirect their attention from opera alone and start including more contemporary works in their research with the rise of non-singable surtitles, which, according to Low, inevitably opened the floodgates for the translation of musicals as well (Low 2002, 99).

4.3.2 Musical-Centric

The efforts to establish musicals as material worthy of translation research have indeed taken some time, and certainly not in the way as we now know it. Musicals did receive an occasional mention in the previously discussed works, but nothing was explicitly stated about how (and if) they are translated. What was covered, however, was a way of translating that is undoubtedly much less financially daunting, i.e., surtitles, which experienced its biggest boom in the 1980s and 1990s (Low 2002, 99). Though not exactly singable, they still stand at the beginning of the aforementioned turn towards other genres of music theatre and music, and some findings on surtitles may prove to be relevant even in the research of singable translation.

Outside the discussion of the specificity of constraints imposed on surtitles and how different they shall be approached from video-specific subtitles, Low focuses on the materials and insights a translator may be provided with during the process. He states that the translator may be given a musical recording (ibid, 105), which I assume is now the standard procedure in singable translation, seeing as the text and the music are inherently interwoven, and construing a translation without rhythmic or musical references may therefore be impossible. Additionally, Low mentions being provided with stage directions when translating, since movement on stage can influence a singer's vocal capabilities, which shifts the translators' responsibilities to accommodate these needs as well (ibid).

However, abiding only the stage cues and directions found in the source material may sometimes cause problems, and this is precisely where the *director's intentions* may become the main influencing actant. Low circles back to finishing a translation and presenting it to the director, who he nicknames the translator's "client" (ibid, 103), but the director had decided to omit some props directly present

in the source text and, as a result, forced Low to alter the translation as well (ibid, 107). Similar—albeit admittedly more extreme—accounts were presented by Apter and Herman just two years prior, where the director outright asked them to cut a part of a dialogue from the text (Apter & Herman 2000, 32).

Regardless, the director's intentions may exceed mere omission in the text. As a part of their creative vision, they may reach as far as “cultural transposition” (Low 2002, 106) or modernization of the work, as was previously touched on in connection with regional introductions of Shakespeare's plays in section 4.1, which should naturally be reflected in the textual contents too (ibid). I suppose modernization changes are only very rare in musicals, since they are most often presented as they were written, with the original key elements still being present even in non-replica versions. This has been illustrated in my bachelor's thesis in the discussion of the multiple professional versions of *The Phantom of the Opera*, which I all presume to have incorporated the famous chandelier and the Phantom wearing some sort of a mask across all productions (see Šulcová 2021, 17).

Another supporting point can be drawn upon mere observation of the scenographic and staging strategies employed in operatic works introduced by the current artistic directors of the Czech National Theatre, the duo *SKUTR* formed by Martin Kukačka and Lukáš Trpišovský. The duo's distinctly minimalistic style and tendency to modernize gave rise to the infamously atypical 2006 staging of Mozart's great opera *Don Giovanni*, which was played on the very same stage the work originally premiered on in 1787 (Danková 2013). Based on this historical connection, one could expect the directors to maintain the unique 18th century spirit of the work and pursue their trademark aesthetics in other plays, but the opposite was true; the characters rode motorcycles as their grand entrance on the stage, and the growing tension as the story progressed had a verbal-visual manifestation when the characters painted the word “VENDETTA” on the originally-white minimalistic backdrop in black paint³.

³ Description based on my viewing of the opera in June 2012 at the *Estates Theatre* in Prague.

This further underlines how opera allows for a greater amount of the target language (TL) production team's artistic invention to be incorporated into the introduced work as opposed to the musical. We may therefore view opera as an in-between step dividing the less-closely watched theatre translation process without the musical aspect, and the carefully observed translation processes of musicals.

Admittedly, *SKUTR*'s version of *Don Giovanni* was introduced in Italian with Czech surtitles and the orchestra was still classical, therefore we cannot speak about linguistic nor musical modernization, however, every other aspect that could have been changed had indeed undergone major shifts. This, as I have insinuated at the end of the previous paragraph, is perhaps not to be expected in the field of musicals, possibly due to their intention to reflect on real societal issues, which is also discussed in section 3 in the history of the musical as an art form.

Regarding the cultural transposition mentioned by Low (2002, 106), these shifts do in fact concern the musical as well. Aside from the politically-driven cultural changes made in the 1948 staging of *Finian's Rainbow*, more recent cultural changes can be noticed in Tomáš Novotný's translation of *The Last Five Years*, especially in section 8.4. Circling back to the undeniable authority of the director, Low further insinuates that the director may also simply be too preoccupied to hear out the other actants' input, especially amidst the already chaotic rehearsals (Low 2002, 103), and some rightfully raised claims may therefore be left unanswered.

Subsequently, Low (2005, 191-211) returns to the study of music and translation three years later with the *Pentathlon Principle* of singable texts, which is undoubtedly more hands-on, however, it will be of most relevance in section 5.1 focused exclusively on the discussion of singability as a property itself. Nevertheless, the academic work is worth mentioning even at this point of the thesis, because its breakthrough publication created years of silence in the field of music theatre translation for the work to be fully understood and implemented in future research. The ice was later broken by Johan Franzon (2008) and Marta Mateo (2008), whose writing will become the focus now.

4.3.2.1 First Steps

I emphasize Franzon's contribution mainly because he was one of the first scholars to branch out outside classical music and include other genres in the field of *music translation*, which is more than welcome in the non-genre-specific world of musicals. Aside from the noticeable broadening the field, he was also among the first post-2000s authors to explicitly question who a musical translator may be on the translation market as we now know it.

In reality, a professional translator is not very likely to be approached and entrusted with a song translation (Franzon 2008, 374), possibly under the impression that their expertise automatically falls within the more usual domains, such as technical, legal, or medical texts, which is indeed supported by the more complex training these fields receive in translation studies university programs, especially in the Czech Republic, where the coverage of audiovisual translation is noticeably limited. Instead, Franzon notes that music translation most usually falls into the hands of non-linguistically trained "songwriters, singers, opera specialists and playwrights" (ibid), where there are no questions raised about the individuals' knowledge of music. However, it is worth noting that Franzon predominantly covers Nordic languages similarly to Aaltonen, and that there might be cultural differences at play, not allowing for such generalizations to be made about the Czech environment as of yet. Nevertheless, all will be made clear in the discussion with the translators.

The already chaotic discussion regarding how to refer to both the target text and its author becomes even more complicated, since Mateo brings in a new transformative-sounding denominator for the target text production process instead of *translation* or *adaptation* and opts for the term "rewriting" instead (Mateo 2002, in Mateo 2008, 321). Franzon follows her steps six years later and analogically nicknames the author of the target text the "rewriter" (Franzon 2008, 377).

The authors, whatever we choose to refer to them as, are said in Franzon's research to be hesitant to call their TL product a *translation*, which can be seen in the accounts of translator Malvina Reynolds (1964, 6, in Franzon 2008, 377), who says that her task merely was to "make a singing song" in the target language (ibid). At this point, Franzon steps in and states that the practitioners should make no such

reservations, and that the product can indeed be called a *translation* (ibid), which is in line with my views that are already attested for in the previous sections.

Franzon further delves into a discussion of the involvement of other actants and the specific, albeit quite limited, role of the translator. It appears that he is aware of the possible limitations of the translator's skills in music, and he advises that the translator leaves the implementation of musical changes to the involved conductors, singers, and other involved professional musicians (ibid, 384). While this may give the impression that the translator's scope of work is being deliberately narrowed down to the original purely linguistic role discussed by Bassnett (1991), I believe the focus should be shifted to the insinuation that the text may influence the composition of the music.

This is a major leap from the opera-centric views that paint the music as an untouchable element, and we can clearly see the importance the lyrical content holds in musicals. However, even if a change was to be made to the music, contractual limitations may take precedence (Franzon 2008, 386), and even if such a change were to elevate the final product, it may simply not be allowed. This approach is also discussed by Mateo (2012) who largely covers the tradition in Spain, which is nearly identical with the audiovisual translation tendencies in the Czech Republic. According to her, music is seen as an "untouchable" actant that dictates the linguistic decision-making process (ibid).

Concurrently, Mateo (2008) also focuses on non-operatic music theatre translation, although in a significantly more involved manner that includes close observation of the actual practice. To voice my support for this approach, it is apparent that it enables her to directly identify the influencing actants, which are the "audience needs and expectations, production elements, and commercial and economic factors," as well as the local "translation policy" in a Tourian sense (ibid, 321).

In her exploration of the preparatory pre-translation stage when the work is selected, Mateo also deems useful the "critical reviews and newspaper articles that accompanied them" (ibid, 329), which I believe to be of better use in the case of revivals to reflect the target audience's needs from the previous staging. Additionally, the ST reviews may reflect a biased perspective from the culture they were written in, likely rendering their points not applicable to the standards of the target culture. What I agree with and intend to follow is the inclusion of the

“producers’, translators’, directors’ and actors’ published comments” (ibid), as these had already been proven to give the researcher direct and authentic accounts in Aaltonen (2000) eight years prior.

During this preparatory pre-translation stage, audience expectations appear to be the ruling actant since they can dictate the translation strategy. Once again borrowing Toury’s terminology, Mateo describes the Spanish tradition as creating acceptable translations, i.e., versions that are tailored to fit the target culture (Mateo 2008, 328). However, it appears that this decision to have the translation fit the culture is made before a translator is brought into the process, and therefore made without consulting a linguistic and cultural expert.

If we look at who, out of all the involved actants, is the one that has the power to change the work, everything once again points to the director similarly to theatre translation without music. Nevertheless, once the introduction process is fully set in motion, it becomes clear that all creative decisions truly do need to be approved of by a higher authority transcending the director.

To oversee the process, Mateo mentions the presence of a “team of directors from the source production” (ibid, 326), similarly to those who had been previously noted to intervene even in Aaltonen (1997, 91) as a supervising element during the preparation of Lloyd Webber’s *Cats*. Mateo brings forth the commentary of Gómez Cora, who states that Spanish production companies opt for the same creative teams that work on Broadway or the West End to introduce the Spanish versions of the works (Cora n.d., in Mateo 2008, 336), essentially bringing in as much of the original work as possible. I therefore see no reason to doubt that these claims serve as a definitive confirmation of a supervisor’s presence in my hypothetical translation process.

On the contrary, the controlling element may even consist of more than just the foreign directors. Mateo further describes a *holding company* responsible for staging musicals in her country that is tasked with selecting a work to be translated (Mateo 2008, 330), and one can assume that the company will want to ensure everything is done to its liking. This way, we can pinpoint supervising elements on both the source and the target side.

Yet, through all supervision, one type of change appears to be outright welcome, *acculturation*. Introduced into theatre translation studies by Aaltonen (2000, 55), later discussed by Low (2002, 106) under the name “cultural transposition,” this form of cultural adjustment is once again painted as a step that is necessary for reaching audience satisfaction, which also further underlines the commercial nature of this form of theatre. It includes changes in humor, backgrounding of certain themes, but also addition or omission of certain scenes or musical numbers (Mateo 2008, 335), and shows that the situation in the Czech Republic and Spain may very well be identical, since it transforms the individual works into non-replica stagings. This changes my original assumption of non-replica stagings being transformed purely because of the production team’s creative vision; instead, it is done for reaching maximum relevance on the music theatre market.

In terms of the discussion regarding what to call the finished product and its author, Mateo expresses disagreement with explicit differentiating between a translation, an adaptation, or a version, and regards all as synonyms. Instead, she prefers the term “rewriting” (Mateo 2002, in Mateo 2008, 321). To support her decision, she refers to Johnston (1996, 65-66 in Mateo 2008, 321) as well as Aaltonen (2000, 41-46) and calls the original distinction a “false dichotomy” (Mateo 2008, 321).

Mateo turning to Aaltonen’s *Time-sharing on Stage* (2000) appears rather unexpected, seeing as this was one of the only theoretical works in theatre translation to cover the views of non-linguistic actants and to critically evaluate their approaches. Moreover, as was already covered in section 4.2, there does seem to be a palpable difference between a translation and an adaptation (see Edney 1996, 230 in Aaltonen 2000, 45) at least among non-linguists in the world of theatre, and if we were to judge the visibility of the linguistic and non-linguistic actants, the non-linguistic actants would naturally be in the spotlight considerably more, which may add weight to their opinion even among laypersons. Despite all that, the discussed works are considered pivotal in the field of musical-centric translation research, and the presented opinions have undoubtedly undergone some fine-tuning in the following years to reflect the actual practice better.

4.3.2.2 *Growing Interest*

After a brief period of relative silence, music translation theory with and without theatre was once again picked up. Among the key figures now stood Peter Low (2013) and Johan Franzon (2015), who were later joined by Ronnie Apter and Mark Herman (2016) whose scope of work has expanded to include a broader area of song translation outside opera.

At this point of the field's development, Peter Low's focus has shifted to finding the true differentiating element between what one could consider a translation, an adaptation, and a version of the original work. To support his arguments, he analyzes examples of real transformed target texts, which also served as an inspiration for my selected approach in this thesis. Nevertheless, it appears that Low was aware of the academic breakthrough he brought on in 2005 with the *Pentathlon Principle*, and now he takes a step back to observe all the academic development.

As one may notice, Low is in general agreement with the direction research has been going in, however, he opposes Şebnem Susam-Saraeva's opinion on differentiating between the individual types of source text transfer. Susam-Saraeva states that looking for a distinction between a translation, adaptation, and version is outright "undesirable" in music-focused translation studies research, mainly due to the lines between the strategies being too blurry (Susam-Saraeva 2008, 189), to which Low offers an analogy with researchers and professionals alike continuously stressing the differences between *translation* and *interpreting* as a counterargument (Low 2013, 237). He stresses that pinpointing the distinction should very well be a point of focus in research, since it is "always desirable for scholars to seek and retain great precision in the use of terminology that defines and distinguishes" when the texts do clearly differ in his eyes (*ibid*, 237-238). Despite this being a mere matter of opinion, Low's further argumentation seems rather convincing.

In a step-by-step approach, Low initially presents his educated hypotheses based on experience and observation of practice, and subsequently formulates a set of conditions to be considered when deciding which type of source text transfer is at play. Low founds his case on the accounts of translator Georges Bastin, whose opinion is that "as long as the main function of the activity is preserved," the text shall be considered a *translation* (Bastin 1998, 8 in Low 2013, 231), which does

seem logical to a certain degree, but an issue arises when one considers the power of *skopos*.

If the *skopos* states that the TT is to be transformed in a way that goes against the original function, which can be done as a part of acculturation when one motive is deliberately backgrounded or foregrounded, or when informative pragmatic texts are transformed to such a degree during the interlingual transfer they could be considered new stand-alone items, these texts are still referred to as *translations*. I believe the main issue lies in the deviation from the original ideas of the STs that is allowed under acculturation, and it appears that Low also sees some limitations in Bastin’s claims. Low closes off his initial hypotheses with a *translation*, in his eyes, maintaining the key features of the ST and having considerable semantic agreement with it (Low 2013, 231).

Delving further into the depths to find a true distinction, Low presents his own distinguishing test that compares the textual contents of the source and target material. He also gives the potential assessor the space to discuss what they may consider a significant motive or a key feature, with the entire test being governed by the importance of semantic fidelity (ibid, 237). To make the test more transparent, I have transformed it into the following table:

Figure 1: Low’s dichotomy.

| Conditions | Text type |
|--|------------------|
| <i>Significant details of meaning have been transferred</i> | Translation |
| <i>Significant details of meaning have not been transferred</i> as a result of an unconstrained creative decision | Adaptation |

(Low 2013, 237, direct quotation in italics)

In Low’s own words, an *adaptation* includes not transferring features “which easily could have been” (ibid), and I admit having transformed the wording in the table to fit the terminology used in this thesis. An *adaptation* is further called a “derivate text” (ibid), which appears to postulate an independent textual unit working with the themes of the original work under deliberate creative and transformative decisions outside acculturation, where the retention of the key motives and plot points plays only a minor role. This is in line with the canonized definition of an adaptation as we

now know it, however, it should not be confused with what Low refers to as *replacement texts* (ibid, 238), which are discussed in more depth in sections 3.1.3 and 5.1.3.2.

Low brings forward a supporting example of when Eric Bland and Mort Schuman introduced a Belgian revue off-Broadway in 1968. The work was originally written in French but presented in English off-Broadway, and its transformed form had a severe semantic disconnect from the source text. The transcreators were very much aware that it could not be considered a translation nor an adaptation, and therefore chose to introduce it only by its name with an added and vague “English lyric by” (ibid, 232). Had the work been introduced now, there surely would have been a controlling actant involved that would oversee how the transformation is unfolding and intervene, if need be, which shows how the working conditions have evolved over time. If we were to search for an explicitly mentioned influencing actant however, Low discusses only the *copyright law* as a constraining element (ibid, 241).

Two years later, Franzon turns to music translation once again, albeit with a focus on subtitling and non-singable texts. That, however, does not make his contribution any less paramount, seeing as he mentions student translators receiving deliberate training in song translation (Franzon 2015, 334), which is a significant step forward in terms of a translator’s preparedness to enter this seemingly impermeable market.

While no specific training institution is explicitly mentioned, the manner of translating is hinted to be singable, seeing as the students appear to have practiced adjusting the TT to fit the music better (ibid). This insinuates that the consensus even in translator training is that the music is unchangeable, and the power of music is highlighted even more in Franzon’s discussion of subtitled translation, where he notes the subtitles and surtitles to occasionally gain “songlike” visage and follow the rhyme and rhythm (ibid, 341), despite functioning on a purely visual channel and being subject to other types of constraints.

In terms of actual translation practice, Franzon assumes a relatively liberal stance and does not concern himself with any specific actants that may influence the translator’s work and the finished product as far as singable translation goes, choosing to elaborate more on the ever-growing area of surtitles and subtitles instead. Despite all that, he still considers a “musically conscious” translator to be in a

superior position (ibid, 343) to his or her non-music-educated colleagues, should they be included in the translation process.

He further stresses that a singable translation very often requires some degree of “compromise or creative recreation” (ibid, 342) during the process, giving space to some deviation from the source material, and that not every feature of the original work can be transferred equally at all times (ibid), which I presume to include features of singability as well as some themes and topics covered in the work mainly due to acculturation. However, there still appears to be a relative uncertainty as to how much external influence is incorporated into the translator’s work in this publication of Franzon’s, since he paints the translator to have almost unlimited authority over the target text creation, which has already been disproven at many points in this thesis.

4.3.2.3 Current Perspectives

Even though Franzon’s focus had shifted more towards non-performable translation, Apter and Herman still oscillate between practical and academic coverage of singable translation. Their 2016 publication is more than relevant for this thesis despite their main focus seemingly remaining translation of opera. However, touch on the current practice in the most relevant theatres in the United States, which do include Broadway, and I therefore believe their accounts may be applicable even to the translation of musicals.

The authors’ previous work (1995; 2000) was predominantly descriptive and included commentary of excerpts taken from the translations they either produced or encountered. While that is still true even in this publication, one may also notice their writing has taken on a rather prescriptive character with many recommendations on translating such a specific musical piece. They also stress that the production of a performable translation is indeed “a collaborative effort involving the participation of many groups and individuals with overlapping but not identical requirements” (Apter & Herman 2016, 22). Additionally, they map the translation process and subsequently point to individual actants and their requirements that may or may not influence the final product.

During the translation process, Apter and Herman state that the target text is created to meet the requirements of the artistic director from the producing company (ibid). However, the text could have also been reviewed and amended by the conductor and the stage director (ibid), which makes the highest authority unclear. As for the performers, it seems that they may have some sway and voice their input if they believe it would be for the good of the translation. Still, it is apparent that their power is somewhat limited and that they are located lower in the hierarchy of influencing actants, seeing as the translator's word is said to take precedence over the actors' (ibid, 23).

In spite of that, Apter and Herman suggest that the translator should not assume an untouchable role, on the contrary, according to their experience, the translator should be open to provide an alternative translation even if nothing seemingly calls for it (ibid, 24). This might be especially relevant during rehearsals or readings that, as we now know, may or may not call for the translator's presence, depending on their designated role as a *creator* or *mediator*, to borrow Aaltonen's (1997, 92) terminology from section 4.2.

Nevertheless, as much as open-minded the translator is recommended to be, Apter and Herman go directly against Franzon, who suggests the translator leave all musical changes to musically trained actants (Franzon 2008, 384) in section 4.3.2.1. Instead, they stress that the translator should preferably only rarely allow non-linguistic actants, namely the "publishers, directors, conductors, or performers" to implement changes to the text by themselves, and that the translator should ideally establish themselves as the linguistic authority in the process (Apter & Herman 2016, 25). This does have some implications for Aaltonen's terminology mentioned above, since it is suggested that the translator is certainly going to be included in the process and not just serve as the initial *mediator*. Whether this applies in the Czech Republic too or if it is merely a matter of cultural difference will be discussed with the interviewed translators.

In the discussion regarding the suitable denominator for the target text, Apter and Herman's approach is unlike any other mentioned in this thesis. While they do feel that there is a difference between the two transformed texts, they admit that the issue is not so black-and-white, and that some of the TTs may indeed stand somewhere between translation "proper" and adaptation (ibid, 58). I believe it was precisely this blurry line that Susam-Saraeva (2008, 189) mentioned in her research

that was later criticized by Low (2013, 237-238) in section 4.3.2.2. In search for a specific name to represent these uncertain texts, they turn to Franzon's *creative transposition* (Franzon 2005, 264, cited in Apter & Herman 2016, 58) and use it as an umbrella term for all in-between texts.

As for the real decision on what type of target text one may be dealing with, they focus on whether the transformed text can "stand on its own" (Apter & Herman 2016, 58), which I understand as a text that is independent of the original work. Such texts are therefore naturally classified as *adaptations* (ibid), but when one considers the other textual parameters that Apter and Herman see indicative of an adapted text, it becomes apparent that they are much more strict than other music theatre translation scholars. Similarly to Low (2013), they present their own means of determining the text type based on the severity of the changes made to the text that can be summarized as:

Figure 2: Apter and Herman's dichotomy.

smaller degree of change → *translation*,
greater degree of change → *adaptation*

(Apter & Herman 2016, 58)

At first, the model appears relatively vague, and one may feel the need to pinpoint a set of specific parameters that help establish the severity of the changes. Apter and Herman do exactly that and bring in examples of changes they observed in practice, essentially showing that *adaptation* entails changes to the sense of the source text, while *translation* tolerates adjustments that do not influence the storyline, such as changing the number of props that are used (ibid). However, this dichotomy is at conflict with Mateo's research covered in section 4.3.2.1, where she states that changes made to the original work for the sake of its *relevance* in the theatrical world of the target language and its "social relevance" among the target audience are a natural part of *translating* foreign musical works (Mateo 2008, 329-332).

Without referencing Mateo, Apter and Herman also employ the term *relevance* and consider works that undergo the corresponding adjustments, including the bridging of cultural differences that we may also understand as acculturation, to be *adaptations* (Apter & Herman 2016, 59-60). This would mean that the Czech version of *Cats*, where Michael Prostějovský altered the culturally-specific London street

names to ones that the Czech audience would be more familiar with (Prostějovský 2024, INT2), would be an adaptation of the original work, which I believe to be quite a radical approach.

Further in my analysis of Apter and Herman's discussion of adapted works, I encountered an approach that may be accepted in opera, but completely unfeasible in musicals. Since most operas introduced in the Western world were written before copyright was made a priority in their distribution, there will inevitably exist multiple versions of each work. Stage directors are therefore permitted to create their own versions by putting together their own adaptation from individual excerpts of the existing versions (ibid, 59), which seems almost unthinkable in the closely observed introduction processes behind musicals.

On the other hand, what one may expect to happen when introducing a musical is "re-translating" (ibid, 66), and I have put together an example to show when such steps may be taken. If an introduced musical work is based on a literary piece that had been translated prior to the theatrical introduction, the audience might have already grown familiar with the literary translation. As a result, they may expect it to be incorporated into the musical version due to its strong association with the work, no matter the potential semantic difference.

Apter and Herman describe an analogical case where the first (literary) translation may be suitable for use with some minor singability adjustments, and it may therefore seem natural to reach for it. However, the copyright holder may step in and prohibit any changes to be made (ibid), which then renders the original translation useless. Another constraining actant may be the *royalty costs* (ibid), and that very often results in the creation of a completely new target text, which is then called a "re-translation" (ibid).

Moving to the actual translation process, Apter and Herman discuss the possibility of creating an indirect translation, i.e., a translation of a translation, which they call an "intermediate translation" (ibid, 61). One might wonder why this remedial strategy is even suggested, because it may seem like common sense to turn to a translator who knows the actual source language, and not the one the text was first translated into. A clue may be hidden in Mateo's comments on how a work is selected for a foreign language release. She recalls an actant involved in a Spanish introduction mentioning that when a musical piece was being selected, the production company chose the works upon seeing them on Broadway, the West End,

and then in Germany as a last resort (Alvarez 2003, in Mateo 2008, 330). This notably sizes down the pool of available works, especially when one is willing to consider pieces presented only in English or German. Surprisingly, one may find such translations even in the Czech world of musicals. The Czech translation of *Les Misérables* by Zdeněk Borovec, which is generally regarded as an objectively good translation even among professionals (Novotný 2022, personal correspondence), is an indirect translation of the English version.

Another previously under-discussed aspect of the translation process are “multiple translations” (Apter & Herman 2016, 157) that are created in the beginning stages, whose purpose is to fully map the individual aspects of the original work. This may include the explicit and implicit meaning, the literal interpretation, the aesthetic function of the work, or other cultural aspects (ibid). If we were to look at theatre translation holistically, there appears to be a connection to Susan Bassnett’s description of the multiple readings and drafts that are produced in the early stages of an introduction (Bassnett 1991, 106-107), as is shown in section 4.1, and Sirkku Aaltonen’s description of the division of labor between the involved translators (Aaltonen 1997, 91) in section 4.2.

4.3.3 Finding the Sense

Upon a closer look at all the discussed literature, it becomes more than clear that the field of music theatre translation still lacks a sufficient and systematic coverage of the translation process itself, including the division of roles of the involved actants. However, we can still try and recreate a hypothetical translation process from the overall implicit mentions in Bassnett (1991) and slightly more explicit coverage in Aaltonen (1997; 2000) if we ignore the musical aspect of the translation. We can summarize the process as follows:

Firstly, a SL work is selected for introduction in the target culture. This is presumably done prior to the involvement of a translator. However, when the time comes for one to be involved, there is an executive decision to be made regarding their role. They can either provide merely a literal translation and assume the role of a mediator, whose further involvement in the process is virtually nonexistent, or a creator, who is invited to be a part of the process and serves as the linguistic authority throughout (Aaltonen 1997, 92). Nevertheless, both types of translators are at first tasked with producing the first draft, which is meant to uncover the literal

meaning and set forth the first possible interpretation (Bassnett 1991, 101, 106-107). The draft is later passed on to the director, who appears to have the highest authority during the process, and the draft is subsequently adjusted according to the director's input. So far, this is what one could call the *pre-rehearsal* part of the process.

Secondly, the text is rewritten to be performable, and this can be done either by the translator, or another involved lyricist or playwright (Bassnett 1991, 101) that may or may not have linguistic education. Soon after, the rehearsals begin, and the real form of the text becomes visible. This point in the process may help locate problematic passages, and I presume this is when most of the fine-tuning takes place. However, we learn that the director is not the highest authority in the process, despite their alleged creative freedom. They answer to the licensing company or the original production company (Aaltonen 1997, 91), which may require some controlling agents to be present during the rehearsals. There is a high chance of these actants not knowing the target language, which is when a back-translation needs to be produced by a new and previously unmentioned actant, the back-translator. This part of the process would naturally be called the *post-rehearsal* one.

As convincing as this hypothetical translation process may be, it is still based on scraps and off-hand mentions by theatre translation scholars or the practicing translators they had interviewed. One should also take into account that Bassnett (1991) mapped only the translations made into English, while Aaltonen (1997; 2000) also analyzed the situation in Finland, which may have to rely on translating foreign works more often than the hyper-central English-speaking market.

If we searched for the right denominator for the target text in theatre translation without music, we would be met with Bassnett's disregard of every term that could be used, i.e., translation, adaptation, or version (see Bassnett 1998, 98 in Aaltonen 2000, 45) with no alternative offered. Aaltonen instead turned to professionals in the field, who offered an outside perspective on the trichotomy. It became clear that while scholars may sometimes fail or even refuse to see the difference between the text types, professionals dealing with non-linguistic actants acknowledge that there is a typological difference (see Aaltonen 2000, 45). I believe that translation theory should reflect this fact, as it is these actants that make the final product visible for the audience.

The research on theatre translation with consideration of music paints a somewhat clearer image of the process due to a significant portion of the researchers being actual professional translators in the field. They reflect their experience in their publications (see Apter & Herman 1995; 2000; 2016), however, none directly cover the actual translation process.

As for the other involved actants, we can broaden the scope by putting a name on the previously generalized ones, which may be the performing companies, i.e., the actors and the musicians (Mateo 2008, 329), and the artistic directors, i.e., the music director, the conductor, and the stage director (Apter & Herman 2016, 22). This complex process is then further constrained by non-human actants, such as the music itself, which is considered unchangeable at this point, and the license (Aaltonen 1997, 91) or copyright law (Low 2013, 241) that may forbid virtually any adjustment to be made to a replica staging.

In terms of the actual process, more details of the translator's work are uncovered, and there is a significant difference between this type of process and the one that does not include music; *the translator is already assumed to take on the role of the creator and expected to take an active part in the whole process*. However, it is once again stressed that the individual entrusted with creating the target text may not necessarily be linguistically trained, and that the actants in charge of the introduction may directly opt for a playwright or a lyricist to be the translator (Franzon 2008, 374).

To aid their work, the translator may be provided with a musical recording of the original work, presumably to keep track of the rhythm and phrasing, and sometimes even the stage directions to cover the visual aspect of the product (Low 2002, 105). Based on the manner of their involvement in the process and the necessity of their presence, we can once again attempt to pinpoint the weight of the influence the other actants may have on the target text.

This way, the translator–creator may serve as the linguistic authority, and they can consider input from the actors and musicians the same way as in the non-musical theatre translation process, i.e., with the performing actants having the smallest say due to them also being subject to the director and the production company. The director may influence the translation to a greater degree, because they wish to make the final product the most enjoyable for the target audience. This may include changes for the purpose of seeking relevance in the target culture and subsequent

acculturation (Mateo 2008). In spite of that, the entire effort will be overseen by either the licensing company or members of the SL production team, who are ultimately in charge of the final decisions (see Aaltonen 1997, 91; Mateo 2008, 336).

The discussion regarding the most suitable name for the target text becomes even more complicated, however, we can divide the scholars into two groups based on their attitude towards the issue at hand. The first being those who do not feel there should be a difference made between a translation, an adaptation, and perhaps a version. This disregard can be seen in the writings of Marta Mateo (2008) and Şebnem Susam-Saraeva (2008), with both authors essentially stating that searching for a difference may be futile, and also in the work of Johan Franzon (2008) who refers to nearly all text types as translations.

As for the group that promotes distinguishing between the target texts, we can name Ronnie Apter and Mark Herman (2016) and Peter Low (2013), with the scholars creating their own distinguishing system. Low based his model on semantic fidelity and the necessity of changes that were made to the text (see Low 2013, 237), while Apter and Herman focused on the degree of change the original plot had undergone (see Apter & Herman 2016, 58). The latter researchers are also much stricter in what can be considered a translation; in their eyes, a text that has been changed due to acculturation may very well be considered an adaptation.

In my opinion, I believe theatre translation theory should differentiate between the text types, however, some finishing touches need to be made in the existing models to include non-replica stagings and acculturation changes. I stand behind the notion that as long as the licensing company or copyright holders see fit to permit the change, the text could be called a *translation* or a *translation version*, and an *adaptation* in any other case where the controlling actant is either not involved or a license is not needed due to the number of creative changes.

5 The Matter of Performability and Singability

Performability, also singability in the case of music theatre translation, is now generally regarded as a regular property of a given text covered by numerous authors without the need to question its existence (see Kelly 1992; Low 2005; Franzon 2008). The current theoretical consensus states that the presence of singability as a textual property is determined by the skopos of the translation task, as is illustrated in Susam-Saraeva's (2008, 191) questions of the given mode of translation and the transitivity of the text, and also Franzon's (2008, 376) *Five choices in song translation*. Therefore, when a text is considered singable or performable, it is altered to accommodate the performer, i.e., the singer of the text, based on the translator's or other influencing actant's phonetic and semiotic aptness.

However, in the field of theatre translation, the term *performability* has historically stirred up a hornet's nest, with well-established scholars going great lengths to discredit its legitimacy. This was especially the case of translation studies expert Susan Bassnett, who famously changed her views on the problematic throughout her career. This is described in great detail and contrasted with the issue of *readability* by Ekaterini Nikolarea (2002).

In *The Case Against Performability* (1991), Bassnett argues that the notion of a theatre text being "incomplete" or "partially realized" without its performance is nonsensical (Bassnett 1991, 99). According to her, asking the translator to create an "a priori" product intended for a performance on the basis of pure "ad hoc" imagination illustrating the performance is an unattainable task (ibid, 102), which is indeed correct. The fault in her argument, however, lies in her disregard of the translator being an active participant in the whole staging process, as is current practice. This will be shown in the translator interviews, especially in the accounts of Tomáš Novotný, who is also a musical actor and dramaturge.

Additionally, Bassnett makes it a point to question the role of the translator in such a complex system, and rightfully assumes a protective stance towards the hypothetical involved "interlingual" translators (ibid, 101), who are given a lower status in the whole process. However, she does not consider the fact that translators are not mere interlingual experts in communication, as one may get the impression from her arguments (ibid).

Music theatre translation, without a doubt, exceeds the purely interlingual level of communication, and breaches the territory of intersemiotic translation, which naturally needs the translator to be familiar with the other semiotic codes at play, i.e., to have “phonetic aptness” (Franzon 2008, 334) in the case of working with music. All things considered, this could result in translators with musical knowledge or singing experience being in a more favorable position, which is also mentioned by Franzon (2015, 343) in section 4.3.2.2. The translator may have more aptitude to recognize a text that is *easier* to sing and, subsequently, be understood by the audience, albeit possibly only subjectively without any theoretical grounds at first.

This may be in line with what Bassnett refers to as a “concealed gestic text,” which, she states, cannot be incorporated into a theatre translation (Bassnett 1991, 102). In music theatre translation, we may consider singable properties a *concealed audial text*. Although both groups of these concealed properties do remain mostly intangible for now, I believe they sometimes seep through the cracks of the text in the form of noticeable poetic devices such as rhymes, assonance, or intentional changes in phrasing, even without an active performance to demonstrate. The same could be said about sheet music with an embedded vocal partite, where the non-final form of the oral text becomes more than apparent.

To highlight her point, Bassnett further says the notion of performability can be rebutted when one is asked to work with a text that was written previously with no intention of being performed (ibid, 104). Working with the premise of the text being unchangeable, this is where the other parts of the system that is a musical may come into play. As one may understand it now, a musical is a set of mutually-influencing systems—the text, the music, and the staging including visual signs such as choreography and props—which is attested for in my analysis of *Hamilton* (Šulcová 2021). The text in its written form may then remain unchanged and at-first unperformable, but the rhythm and articulation of the accompanying music may transform it into a performable form. An example of this can be found in the biblical citations and direct historical quotes in the song *One Last Time* in *Hamilton* (ibid, 38-39), which also become performable. The theoretical discussion of the translation process in this thesis has shown that if a translator is presented with a musical piece that includes such texts, they not only have the pre-existing music to guide them, they can also rely on the input of the production team or additional provided materials (Low 2002, 105), and the idea of the translator working in complete

isolation and being the only person responsible for the linguistic product is completely irrational.

Before the aforementioned shift in her paradigm, Bassnett is noted in Nikolarea's work to consider it "impossible to separate text from performance" (Bassnett 1991, cited in Nikolarea 2002). She believed it is these two systems that give the basis for a complete theatrical performance (ibid), which suggests that she was aligned with the current views to a certain degree. In addition, she correctly stressed that should a text reach a "higher status" than the performance, it may lead to there being only one "right way" of reading and performing the work (Bassnett 1981, 38, in Nikolarea 2002), further confirming my hypothesis of the text being merely an influential *sub-system* in the whole performance.

As a matter of fact, Bassnett was one of the few scholars pioneering the presence of performability in a text, drawing on the Prague School's theories in semiotics, as well as Tadeusz Kowzan's findings on the extralinguistic and paralinguistic elements of a theatrical text (Nikolarea 2002), which are relevant in theatre studies to this day. However, 1985 was the year of change for Bassnett. She unexpectedly turned her back on performability, calling it an excuse for the translator's choice of strategies, and going as far as dismissing the signs of performability that are noticeable in the translated text (ibid) under the following reasoning, which circles back to the absurd notion of the translator having no external actant influence their work:

It seems to me that the time has come to set aside "performability" as a criterion for translating too, and to focus more closely on the linguistic structures of the text itself. For, after all, it is only within the written that the performable can be encoded and there are infinite performance decodings possible in any playtext. The written text, true though it may be, is the raw material on which the translator has to work and it is with the written text, rather than with a hypothetical performance, that the translator must begin. (Bassnett 1985, 102, cited in Nikolarea 2002).

It is worth noting that the analyzed work of Bassnett focuses on theatre translation without the musical element. However, I find that music provides the precise missing evidence of the existence of performability, and strongly believe it is worth being included in academic discussions of the matter at hand. While the author's ideas regarding translation practice may now seem preposterous, the author refers to actual translation processes in the 1980s and 1990s (see Bassnett 1991 for more details), nevertheless, one cannot expect these examples to reflect current practice, hence my efforts to update the commentary on translation practice. Seeing as Bassnett's contemporaries, such as Ronnie Apter and Mark Herman, have continued with their research of opera translation throughout the 1990s well into the 2010s (see Apter & Herman 1995; 2000; 2016), as well as Linda Gorfée (1997), the notion of performability or singability stands unshaken on solid ground.

5.1 The Parameters of Singable Translation

5.1.1 The Semiotics of Text and Music

To better understand the complex interplay of the two strong systems, we shall take a closer look at the two possible approaches towards what is called a musical text. This matter falls within the domain of semiological musicology, expanded by musicologist Francesco Orlando, who primarily based his research on the works of fellow musicologist Nicolas Ruwet and linguist Roman Jakobson. Orlando suggests decomposing the text into two mutually influencing sign systems, the musical system and the verbal system (Orlando 1975, in Gorfée 1997, 238), or in modern terms, the audio non-verbal system and the audio verbal system, and to analyze their influence through the following viewpoints.

The first of the two dissenting approaches is *musicocentrism*. It is based on the premise of music taking precedence over the text in the semiotic interplay of the two systems, which is also dubbed “intermedial transcodification” (Gorfée 1997, 243), and works primarily via the “principle of assimilation” of the text to the music (Langer 1953, 154, in Gorfée 1997, 237-238). The principle can essentially be deconstructed as follows: as expected, “the meaning of the words influences the interpretation of the musical discourse” before, during, and after the musical performance, including the purely instrumental passages, all while the properties of

the musical system, namely the “pitch, duration, loudness, timbre and dynamic” influence the meaning of the words (Gorlée 1997, 238), with music having the upper hand.

While this may be true for both opera and musicals to a certain extent, seeing as the entirety of section 4.3 and its subsections stressed the constraints the often-unchangeable music may impose, I have enough reason to believe that this analysis of the influencing systems functions on a considerably deeper level, and that is the composition of the work. If we take the opera and the musical, opera is thought to be more of an actual genre of music (Mateo 2012), which signals greater emphasis on the musical form rather than the verbal content or even the storyline. This way, the work is naturally composed for the music to take precedence over the words shared via the human voice, which can then be considered more of another musical instrument within the whole system conveying the intended meaning.

Overall, what I have not noticed being taken into consideration is the unintelligibility of the words and the amount of meaning that can be inferred upon hearing the verbal content in big-note arias outside recitatives or significantly less complex musical passages, which also coincides with the classical singing style. Therefore, while the verbal text does truly undergo great assimilation to be a part of a musicocentric whole, this seems to be exclusive to operatic works and not the musical.

The opposing approach is called, albeit in a slightly transformed sense, *logocentrism*. It is based on Jakobson’s “notion of expansion” (Jakobson 1960, in Gorlée 1997, 243), which is surprisingly presented as a synonym for the aforementioned assimilation or “insertion” (Orlando 1975, in Gorlée 1997, 243), although the substance of the approach lies in the complete opposite, i.e., the text playing the key role. The term *expansion* is considerably less limiting than the imperative *assimilation*, which is asking one sign system to greatly suppress itself to that the other can shine. It may also indicate that this is exactly when the systems are truly allowed to influence one another, although with slight emphasis on the intended verbal message, unlike in opera. Upon observation of any contemporary musical, it becomes clear that the key information is shared verbally, with music assuming more of an accompanying role, and the singing style being considerably more enunciated regardless of the overarching music genre, which is further supported by Gorlée implementing the term “musical intensification” (Gorlée 1997, 243) of the text.

To prove its independence, a verbal message is assumed to have the ability to take on musical elements even without direct musical accompaniment, and the idea is based on Jakobson's coverage of the poetic function where he names the "sound texture, metrical pattern, rhyme structure, alliteration and phrasing" to have such power (Jakobson 1960, 373, in Gorlée 1997, 243). In contrast to opera, these textual properties are indeed noticeable and intelligible within the system of a musical and are actively used in the overall signification and meaning transfer. They can be seen in purely verbal soliloquies or lamentations with underlying tension, such as Hamilton's rhythmic monologue upon realizing he had been shot in the song *The World Was Wide Enough* (Šulcová 2021, 41).

Musicals therefore need the translator to view the text as an *equal or superordinate* of the pre-existing music, which will be discussed in more detail in section 5.1.3, seeing as the verbal message is what generally propels the story forward. The translator therefore best not approach the task as mere "replacing" of the original sign system by the target one, as is stated in Gorlée's discussion of the musicocentric approaches (Gorlée 1997, 238). While the music can indeed be unchangeable the same as in opera, it is safe to say that the music in a contemporary musical is very unlikely to take precedence over the verbal message, unless it is deliberately done so by the author.

5.1.2 Initial Ideas

Continuing my exploration of Gorlée's work, we may first lay the foundation for singable translation of musicals on the practice in opera translation. As I already pointed out in the previous section, the opera is a musicocentric work which often results in the text not being easily understandable to the audience. Gorlée appears to have eventually come to the same conclusion, and she asks the rhetorical question of why even bother translating such detached texts (Gorlée 1997, 244).

As a steppingstone, Gorlée turns to Katharina Reiss' initial ideas regarding the non-pursued *audio-medial text*, and recalls her mentioning performability parameters such as intonation, prosody, and accents, i.e., accentuation as a part of phrasing (Reiss 1977, 100, cited in Gorlée 1997, 245), however, what Reiss is said to have overlooked, is the poeticism of the text (ibid, 245). Therefore, the Gorlée suggests turning to Eugene Nida's original accounts on a singable text. In his eyes, such a text

is merely a matter of musicalized poetry, and he stipulates a set of restrictions meant to limit how the text can be altered:

Figure 3: Nida's singable text.

1. the TT shall have equal length of phrases and equal number of syllables,
2. no changes should be made to the original phrasing and accents,
3. rhyme shall be retained as much as possible,
4. the translator should take precautions when selecting vowels that are intended to be realized on long notes.

(Nida 1964, 177, cited in Gorlée 1997, 245, my wording)

While I have no reservations to Nida's proposed constraints, I believe a further exploration of the suggested overlap of song and poetry translation is due. This can be done by turning to Nida's Czech contemporary, Jiří Levý. It can be easily said that Levý's work is incredibly influential in Central European translation studies and considerably ahead of its time, however, it was met with an unfortunate fate due to Levý living on the "wrong side" of the Iron Curtain. Therefore, it was impossible to translate his pivotal work, *The Art of Translation* (1964), in time for it to enter symbiosis with the developing Anglo-Saxon tradition. Nevertheless, the work had eventually been translated into English in 2011, and I can therefore easily incorporate it into Nida's suggested limitations.

In the context of singable translation, we can reach for Levý's findings on what is called the "syllabic verse" in poetry. There is an undeniable parallel between singable translation and this type of poetic text, seeing as one is also unable to alter the length of the source text phrases and number of syllables (Levý 2011, 202). In spite of that, in singable translation, one must also consider the placement of accents, which are not usually considered in a syllabic verse, and include the overall rhythmic structure in the text. These parameters essentially constitute what we now refer to as the *phrasing*. Therefore, if we circle back to Nida's first constraint, we can clearly see that it can be broadened by Levý's coverage of the topic.

During such a constrained transfer, especially between languages as different as Czech and English, one will inevitably encounter another great issue, prosody. Unlike English, Czech has "fixed initial word stress" (ibid, 207), which, during translation, indirectly asks for some syntactic adjustment within the phrase for the

sake of naturalness of the TL, naturally while keeping the length and the accents in their original position. This corresponds to Nida's second restriction, however, in singable translation, there is an additional constraint in the form of the encoded rhythm and tempo of the music. A possible solution can be found in the form of lexical "padding" that consists of short, semantically empty words (ibid, 193) that Levý further mentions in his discussion of rhymes, which is once again in agreement with Nida's proposed guide.

As a polyglot, Levý is very much aware that "only rarely does a rhyming pair of words in the target language correspond semantically to a rhyming pair of words in the source language," and stresses that languages which are closely related are in a favorable position (ibid, 192). In his consideration of the transfer between remote languages, he proposes possible strategies the translator may employ.

The first is the retention of the rhyme, however, that would entail lexical and phrasal shifts, which are already very limited due to the unchangeable rhythm of the music. As an alternative, he further suggests the inclusion of "some insignificant word" that may merely reiterate the already expressed meaning, presumably also without adjusting the phrase length and accents, and lastly, he recommends the use of the aforementioned "padding," especially in the context of longer poetic works (ibid, 192-193), which might also apply to song lyrics. Thus far, we may find largescale agreement between the two scholars, and while Levý also did focus on vowel qualities in translation, none of his findings are directly applicable to Nida's work, and we shall therefore move on to an author that does elaborate on the phonetic aspects directly within the context of song translation.

Gorlée (1997) subsequently turns to Ronnie Apter's overview (1989) of strategies in opera translation, and though I have already argued that opera and contemporary musicals both require different singing styles, my own professional singing experience leads me to believe that the strategy behind selection of vowels to be sung on long, high, or low notes transcends vocal coloring and stylization between the singing styles for the sake of correct singing technique. Therefore, I view Apter's findings as applicable to most kinds of singable translations.

Apter's breakdown of the vowels has a distinct didactic character, and while Gorlée presents her own summary (1997, 246), I propose my own simplification of the matter. We can focus on the pitch of the notes, which can be either *low* or *high* in layman's terms. High notes require the use of front vowels so that the singer's

soft palate can be properly raised, and low notes ask for the low back vowels so that the front of the singer's jaw can be adequately dropped (Apter 1989, 27). As for Nida's specific mention of long notes, Apter covers them only in terms of coloratura runs in opera that spread across multiple notes, and for those, the low front unrounded vowel is recommended the most (Apter 1985, 315). However, such vocal ornamentation is predominantly opera-specific, and we may need to turn to the professional translators regarding non-classical music.

Overall, it is more than apparent that the construction of a singable translation for opera falls under seemingly impossible constraints, and translations of musicals will surely be no exception. However, one must not forget that operatic approaches are musicocentric, which may take its toll on the foregrounded target text, especially in terms of naturalness. This particular parameter is only very rarely explicitly mentioned in all the covered literature thus far, which signals that it may even not be taken into real consideration during the translation process.

Adherence to the principles stipulated by Nida while ignoring naturalness may result in what Gorlée critically calls "operatic-translationese" (Gorlée 1997, 247), which can be recognized in "pseudo-dramatic language usage trimmed with gaudy tinsel, disfigured by bombastic clichés and hackneyed phraseology, inverted syntax, displaced accents, distorted rhythm and other infelicitous *ad hoc* solutions" (Honolka 1989, 80-91, in Gorlée 1997, 247).

As colorful as this list can be, I believe these features of the target text, despite being technically correct if we consider Nida's constraints (1964, 177, cited in Gorlée 1997, 245), are simply not implemented with the intention of being fully decoded in the music-led sign system, as is stated in the discussion of musicocentrism, and they should be accepted as such despite their lack of idiomaticity or naturalness. This may serve as another differentiating feature between opera and musicals, because the latter target text simply *must* be understandable and natural to the audience's ear, as will be uncovered in the next section.

5.1.3 *The Pentathlon Principle*

To broaden the findings on singability, we will now turn to Peter Low's (2005) exploration that resulted in the conception of the famous *Pentathlon Principle*. This work of Low's comes eight years after Dinda Gorlée's (1997) delve into the field, and Low approaches the existing findings from a distance with due critique. He moves past opera and includes a wider variety of music genres while also still considering the theatrical aspect.

In his eyes, there are multiple levels of song translation, with singable translation assuming the highest level due to its major dependence on functionality (Low 2005, 185). However, the levels will be analyzed using Johan Franzon's (2008) updated overview instead. Low supposes that for the target text to be functional, it must "give the overall impression that the music has been devised to fit it," and not the other way around (Low 2005, 185). This emphasis of functionality inevitably leads to the prioritization of certain textual features and subsequent sacrificing of the least-important ones (ibid, 186), which is a topic even in literary translation (see the notion of *aktualizace* in Levý 2011, 52). Despite all that, one cannot help but ask how to differentiate between the features and how to determine what shall be foregrounded or backgrounded.

The answer to this question can be found in Low's discussion of musicocentric and logocentric works, which he interprets somewhat differently than Gorlée (1997). He states that if a song is *musicocentric*, as a translator, he focuses on foregrounding the aspects of singability to the detriment of the sense of the target text, and if the song appears to be *logocentric*, he foregrounds the verbal message with less focus on singability and even rhythm retention (Low 2005, 200).

Nevertheless, he admits that not all works can be simply tagged either as logo- or musicocentric, and that at times, especially in jazz music, which was key in the earliest forms of musicals, one must find a *middle ground* (ibid). This I agree with and see as an extension of Gorlée's initial ideas, and I suppose Low's breakdown of musicocentrism (ibid) provides an additional explanation for the operatic texts resulting in the aforementioned "operatic-translationese" (Gorlée 1997, 247). I may therefore expand the initial strictly divided dichotomy of opera and musicals being exclusively musicocentric or logocentric, and approach the issue with Low's accounts in mind, all while striving for a middle ground.

From now on, musicals will be considered a blend of the two approaches, with both singability and the overlooked naturalness now taken into consideration. Ultimately, naturalness appears to be the implicit driving force behind Low's functional singable translation (see Low 2005, 185).

In his overview of the actual parameters of a singable text, Low first turns to the pre-existing frameworks introduced by Andrew Kelly (1992) and Richard Dyer-Bennet (1979, in Low 2005, 190) and uses them as steppingstones for his own *Principle*. The first analyzed framework is by Andrew Kelly, who approached the topic from a didactic point of view, namely in the context of foreign language classrooms where the language acquisition is facilitated through song translation. His seven proposed constraints are noted down in the form of the following "advice":

Figure 4: Kelly's singable text.

1. *Respect the rhythms*
 2. *Find and respect the meaning*
 3. *Respect the style*
 4. *Respect the rhymes*
 5. *Respect the sound*
 6. *Respect your choice of intended listeners*
 7. *Respect the original*
- (Kelly 1992, 92)

However, since his recommendations are intended for use in a classroom, they do not take on an overly imperative form and allow a certain amount of deviation, to the extent of stating that the original rhythm does not need to be fully observed (Kelly 1992, 95), which goes against the general consensus and insinuates that some adjustments could be made even to the seemingly unchangeable original music. One may admittedly find it surprising to see this dissenting opinion in such a pivotal work that is Low's *Pentathlon Principle*, especially without any disclaimer stating that Kelly's advice may not be applicable in actual practice.

Surprisingly, a similar opinion to Kelly's can be found in Apter and Herman's most recent publication. After spending over 30 years showing how constraining the music was during their translation processes, the two authors appear to have completely reworked their methodology and go as far as to introduce their own

recommendations regarding “allowable changes to the music,” which include a rather radical strategy involving addition and deletion of notes (Apter & Herman 2016, 17-18).

Whether this is reflective of contemporary practice in the Anglophone world, one cannot fully judge, as there still is a considerable lack of coverage in this field. Nevertheless, I have already turned to the Czech professional translators regarding this matter, and I have gathered enough evidence to support that the music still most often remains unchangeable, even in musicals and not just in opera, and if an alteration is proposed, the process is closely supervised and limited mostly to combining and splitting notes with occasional spreading or inserting of syllables (Prostějovský 2022, personal correspondence) to borrow Apter and Herman’s (2016, 18) terminology.

After Kelly, Low moves forward to the findings of Richard Dyer-Bennet (1979, 292, cited in Low 2005, 190), who appears to have also construed his own framework of a singable text. However, upon closer observation, it becomes clear that his constraints are just a reworked paraphrase of Nida’s (1964, in Gorlée 1997, 245) ones. Low also approaches the work with certain critique, especially in terms of the supposedly mandatory observation of rhymes to the point of their location being unchanged (Dyer-Bennet 1979, 292, cited in Low 2005, 190), which even a layperson may understand to be near impossible without delving into an exploration of the language system difference, such as Levý (2011, 192-193) has done in his research. As a solution for these insufficient frameworks, Low finally formulates his own overview.

The *Pentathlon Principle* is therefore introduced with the aim of serving as a guide to lead the translator through the complicated translation process. It is intended to help with the concurrent balancing of all the necessary aspects a singable text should exhibit, to provide assistance in the decision-making process in terms of the overall strategy as well as on the micro-level, and to help find the best possible target language solution (Low 2005, 191) amidst all the known constraints. It sets forth five criteria, metaphorically compared to the Olympic pentathlon due to them coming together to form one large textual whole, despite being concerned with diametrically different areas. Thanks to Low directly linking them to the specific actants they are meant to accommodate, they also provide an answer to the questions raised in section 4 regarding which actants may influence the final form of the target text.

The first parameter, *singability*, is linked to the accommodation of the performers, *sense* is connected to the author and their intended message, *naturalness* considers the audience, and *rhythm* takes into account the composer and the music, all while *rhyme* constitutes its own special case (Low 2005, 192) which will be discussed in more detail at a later stage.

5.1.3.1 Singability

Singability, as we already know, is a highly function-oriented notion that is considered the pinnacle of all possible forms of song translation. To get a closer look at all the levels we can divide song translation by, we may turn to Johan Franzon's *Five choices in song translation*:

Figure 5: Franzon's song translation strategies.

1. *Leaving the song untranslated*
2. *Translating the lyrics but not taking the music into account*
3. *Writing new lyrics to the original music with no overt relation to the original lyrics*
4. *Translating the lyrics and adapting the music accordingly – sometimes to the extent that a brand new composition is deemed necessary*
5. *Adapting the translation to the original music*

(Franzon 2008, 376)

While the first level does not lead to the creation of a TT, some theoreticians such as Justa Holz-Mänttari (1984, 17-29, in Franzon 2008, 377) still consider it an act of translation under the premise that the translator has inevitably had to make a decision regarding how to proceed with the ST. Nevertheless, we may not concern ourselves with the first level and immediately proceed to the second level, which is essentially the task of Aaltonen's (1997, 92) translator–mediator or Bassnett's (1991, 106-107) interlingual translator who is not an active agent throughout the introduction process.

As we have learned in section 4.3.3, a translator–creator is more likely to be involved in a musical translation instead. The second level may therefore also be of use only remotely at this point. The third level corresponds with Low's (2013, 238) *replacement texts*, which once again stray far away from the music theatre of our focus, however, there appears to be a breaking point in terms of the performability of

the TT, and this is the first level to take the performance of the text into consideration. Therefore, it is up to the fourth and fifth level to fully display the complexity of a singable text.

I believe the fourth level to be first to reach singable translation in the sense we know it, and upon a closer look, it promotes logocentrism in the purest sense. The music is nowhere near as binding and neither does it function as the primary channel of meaning transfer, instead it serves as a mere accompaniment of the verbal message which becomes the main focus. As a result, Franzon proposes his own permitted musical changes that he deems acceptable, including note splitting, merging, or even addition (Franzon 2008, 384).

The final level is much more closely linked to the translation of musicals, and Franzon himself relates it to actual translation practice, where the task of the translator inevitably falls to the modification of the verbal message in order to fit the music (ibid, 386). However, a potential issue may arise in Franzon's use of the term "adapting" as an umbrella for all the changes made to the text, i.e., "approximating more loosely," paraphrase, deletion, or addition (Franzon 2008, 386), which only adds to the unsystematic discussion in section 4.3. I believe a term such as *adjusting* would be a more suitable alternative in this specific context. Nevertheless, such adjustments clearly correspond with Low's idea of *musicocentrism* (see Low 2005, 200) discussed in section 5.1.3, and are often said to hinder the sense of the source text, with the music dictating the textual form through its melody and harmonic structure, as well as its expression of "meaning, mood or action" (Franzon 2008, 389-390).

Seeing as singability is said to be the translator's duty to the performers (Low 2005, 192), we must not overlook the musical influence on the target text and focus on the implications it may have for the phrasing and the performability of the final product. Low sees a problematic point in musical highlighting through dynamics, i.e., loudness in layman's terms, or through pitch change, which requires the translator to place equally emphasized or semantically heavy linguistic expressions in the places of musical highlighting, despite this adherence to the musical form taking its toll on the meaning of the text (ibid, 193), and subsequently the naturalness as well. This, however, may not be as problematic for some translators.

Similarly to Franzon (2015, 343) in section 4.3.2.2, Low states that a musically trained translator may find themselves in a superior position in the process, however, even an untrained linguist can identify problematic passages (Low 2005, 193) on the phonetic level of the text. He proposes this be done via recitation, which I believe still requires a certain degree of phonetic aptness, especially when locating disruptive consonant clusters and timing the syllables corresponding with fast-tempo music, to use Low's examples (ibid).

To support his claims, Low attempts to illustrate the difference in singability between the relatively semantically close monosyllabic words *strict* and *tight* that the translator might be deciding between. In his opinion, the first one is considerably less singable than the latter. He attributes it to the first word having only one vowel that is otherwise surrounded by consonants and consonant clusters, which naturally requires more effort for proper pronunciation, and therefore renders the latter a more suitable choice thanks to its “nice singable diphthong” and only two consonants. A similar comparison is made between the synonyms *tiny* and *little*, with the first one inevitably being preferred over the consonantly loaded alternative (ibid).

As for fast-tempo music, Low suggests the translator opt for commonly used words, which can be *it* or *the* in English, as he himself proposes (ibid), and one may then notice a parallel with Levý's work on theatre translation, where he considers the mental effort the audience must put in when faced with a less-frequently used word that is uttered on stage (Levý 2011, 133). However, there is no further in-depth academic coverage of the specific phonemes the translator should preferably lean towards, which calls for me to incorporate my own experience with classical singing.

Fast-paced music requires rapid and careful vocal articulation. This, I believe, can be better understood in the context of staccato notes, which take on a shortened form and are noticeably detached from the following notes. Ergo, such notes require vocal emphasis. However, added force in the singer's diaphragm may offset the vocal performance and cause them to be slightly out of key, most often hitting a lower pitch than intended⁴. Therefore, to avoid this, the singer may be mentally aiming for a slightly higher pitch, and this is where Apter's (1989, 27) breakdown of vowels in section 5.1.2 comes into play. The singer may almost unnoticeably front and raise the vowel that is located on the short note, which raises the pitch as a result.

⁴ Preferably all within a quarter tone or an even smaller musical interval if the singer is professionally trained.

This corresponds with Low's (2005, 193) suggestions of *it* and *the*, both of which contain a high front vowel. Thus far, we can also notice agreement with Apter's selection of well-singable front vowels to be put on high notes (Apter 1989, 27), even if they are high only in the singer's mind as an aid.

Nevertheless, the notes may not always be detached, and my explanation of the necessary shifts that take place on staccato notes may not be applicable to connected legato notes even in fast-tempo music. We can turn to Apter's pre-existing coverage of operatic coloratura runs, which are intrinsically rapid and most often connected, however, they are mostly sung on one singular phoneme, preferably the low front unrounded vowel (Apter 1985, 315), if we were to follow the recommendations in theory.

Thanks to its connected nature, legato singing requires less work from the diaphragm and is less susceptible to off-key divergence, seeing as the individual notes need not be emphatically separated, and the singer therefore does not necessarily need to front and raise the vowels. In spite of that, the vocal performance is still expected to be carefully articulated, and most of the effort thus falls on the singer's mouth movement. This corresponds with Apter's coverage of low back vowels that allow greater jaw mobility and are additionally said to be the most suitable for low notes (Apter 1989, 27), which is not of our focus as of now.

While I would like to agree with Low's idea of non-musically trained translators successfully making their way through the already complicated translation process, I still believe such decisions can only be made by individuals with years of practice not only in translating, but also in music performance and ideally in singing. I am in no way saying it is impossible, however, when one considers how detailed the phonetic analysis must be and how much thought goes behind the actual vocal performance, it becomes clear that non-melodic recitation may simply not be enough, and musically trained linguists may truly find themselves in a more favorable position. Translator training institutions, especially those in countries that have a whole array of material to work with, should therefore consider investing into more complex training that would allow translators to gain leverage even in such specific domains that move past the taught methods of non-performable audiovisual translation even at a more basic level.

5.1.3.2 Sense

This parameter is concerned with the transfer of the intended meaning under the ever-present musical constraints that may seep through as far as the syllable-count, which is discussed in section 5.1.3.4 in more detail. Due to the nature of these constraints, the translator will inevitably need to alter the intended message to some degree, and Low has chosen to analyze it only on the lexical level (Low 2005, 194).

His point of focus becomes lexical substitution between synonyms and near-synonyms, hypero- and hyponyms, as well as metaphors that move to a phrasal level (ibid). However, he avoids the most burning question regarding the sense of a singable text that concerns the syntactic and textual levels, i.e., where is the line between a translation and an adaptation. A potential answer to these largescale shifts may be found in section 4.3.2.2 that draws on Low's (2013, 237) as well as Apter and Herman's (2016, 58) frameworks, which were developed years after the *Pentathlon Principle* was introduced, additionally showing which direction Low has decided to continue in his research.

Low's 2013 exploration of the field has however shone a light on another way the meaning of a text can be approached in what he calls *replacement texts*. Such texts can be construed even by individuals who are not familiar with the source language (Low 2013, 231) by moving purely on the phonetic and rhythmic level of a singable text, because there is no obligation to maintain the original meaning of the author.

One may encounter this strategy in the translation of musicals when faced with a recognizably borrowed instrumental leitmotif referencing another work or even another song within one musical, albeit with no lexical correlation. The translator could therefore abandon the original sense of the segment and focus on transferring the replaced message, perhaps with a rhyme or a similar nod to the original message to highlight the music-based reference. However, many of my concerns remain unanswered in the scarce academic coverage of this topic.

Upon closer observation, another issue may arise in the translation of *jukebox musicals*, which consist of previously released songs, not necessarily by the same artist, with no staging or story in mind, as is the case with Catherine Johnson's *Mamma Mia!* based around the music of the Swedish group *ABBA*. I have noticed that such musicals already require the original meanings of the songs to be stretched

in order to fit the newly attributed story they become a part of, and the translator may find themselves *replacing* the previously known meaning and message with the one that corresponds with the story of the musical better, even if it causes semantic deviation on a larger scale.

The matter of sense may also become problematic in the discussion of songs that either do or do not move the story forward. Let us begin with the latter, which are not as key to the narration of the story. Such songs are most likely to be incorporated into musicals that are not fully sung-through and include a greater deal of spoken word, which might be the case of *Wicked*. As a result, they might serve more of an aesthetic function than their narrating counterparts. This leads me to the opinion that their verbal contents may not be as important as those that serve a narrative function, and therefore the translator may be allowed a greater degree of semantic freedom in their transfer, however, this claim is based purely on my limited observation and should be verified by the professional translators.

5.1.3.3 *Naturalness*

In Low's eyes, naturalness is a part of the translator's duty towards the audience (Low 2005, 192). He focuses on the work's syntactic and phrasal level (*ibid*, 195) and is concerned with how its imperfection may influence the reception of the work. He circles back to Gorlée's (1997, 247) illustration of operatic translationese found in section 5.1.2, and stresses how it is precisely these shortcomings that have a negative impact on the audience's enjoyment of the work, and not the number of successfully transferred rhymes, as is shown in section 5.1.3.5 to be the translator's misleading assumption about the reception of the text (Low 2005, 198).

If we move beyond the already covered grammatical levels, naturalness may also be a matter of a suitable register choice (*ibid*), which is also discussed in the context of Czech theatre by Levý. It is a well-known fact that all "characters have their own individual (...) manner of speaking" (Levý 2011, 136) that enables their characterization on a verbal level, not just by their costume or visage. The Czech stage is also used to certain stylization shifts in the characters' speech based on their personal qualities, e.g., "dramatic" characters are expected to use a variety of popular speech, "simple" characters opt for a colloquial standard, and "educated" characters usually employ the spoken standard Czech (Bečka 1948, 377, cited in Levý 2011, 134), however, this is discussed only in the context of theatre without music, and

whether this also applies in the translation of musicals is still not confirmed. Additionally, quite a large amount of the TT is also curated to fall easy on the audience's ear in terms of the processing effort required to fully decode what was heard (Low 2005, 195-196). This, I believe, is why song translation is regarded as one of the more difficult areas of translation.

We can talk about a successful translation when the text effectively communicates upon first exposure to the audience (ibid, 195), because the nature of the work does not make it possible for the transferred idea to be revisited at a later point, unlike a written non-audiovisual TT. As a rule of thumb, it may be deduced that the greater the processing effort on the behalf of the audience, the worse the lasting impression of the work is (Levy 2011, 133). The translator is therefore also tasked with making sure the verbal message is easily understood amidst the concoction of the melodies and rhythm.

5.1.3.4 Rhythm

Rhythm is portrayed as the translator's duty to the composer of the original music (Low 2005, 192). From that, scholars and professional translators alike have tried to encompass all musical constraints falling on the text, and Low has noticed that the constraints are most often interpreted as a matter of syllable-count agreement between the ST and the TT (ibid, 196). While he admits such an agreement is "highly desirable," he believes its canonized verbal formulation in academia, even among scholars with practical experience, is too uncompromising (ibid), and therefore asks for it to be revisited. We shall now take a closer look at the pre-existing accounts on rhythmic constraints to see how the issue of "fixed prosody," in the terms of Ronnie Apter (1989, 29), had been previously covered and where further elaboration is due.

Apter considers making sense of foreign rhythms "the translator's most difficult problem" within the whole translation process (Apter 1985, 316), and it is apparent that the music and the target language are competing against one another regarding which rhythmic structure should be followed. Language, as the audio verbal channel, has its own rhythm that can be defined by *stress* and *burden*. Apter understands *burden* as "the time it takes to say a syllable in normal speech" (ibid), the rather vague term *normal* most likely referring to musically unconstrained spontaneous speech. It is measured on a scale from *light* to *heavy burden* corresponding to short and long syllables respectively (ibid), which we can connect

to musical notes and their duration in the audio non-verbal channel. This way, we could achieve an ideal syllable and note length correspondence, however, it appears to be nearly unreachable in the context of interlingual translation, especially due to the systematic differences between languages. Nevertheless, the illusion of the target text being the one and only text the music was written for (Low 2005, 185) still must be maintained, but the question of which system in the audio channels should give way remains unanswered.

Low describes the technically correct translation process as searching for a TL decision that must fit the fixed musical structure, especially in terms of *syllable-count* correspondence, no matter the degree of naturalness or clumsiness (ibid, 197). By analogy, the same can be said about the *syllable-length* corresponding to the duration of the notes. However, in his opinion, the unchangeability of the music recorded by scholars prior to the introduction of the *Pentathlon Principle* (see Apter 1985 and 1989; Mateo 2001 as discussed in this thesis) does not reflect true practice, and Low states that some changes may in fact be permitted, e.g., the addition and deletion of syllables (Low 2005, 197).

This largely goes against the practice in the Czech Republic, which is comparable to the situation in Spain and Finland recorded by Mateo (2008; 2012) and Aaltonen (1997), all being countries that rely on the import of music theatre works from abroad, and therefore in need of licensed performable or singable translations. As confident as this opinion of Low's may sound at first, he immediately hedges it by shifting the focus to *recitatives* (Low 2005, 197), i.e., spoken passages in between musically accompanied parts, which even a layman would understand to not fall under the canonized constraints stemming from the musical composition.

Despite all that, Low still attempts to break the cycle of musical unchangeability and proposes a set of adjustments that can be made even to the melody (ibid) outside non-accompanied parts. Turning to recorded practice for a counterargument, we already know that changes to the music can be made with the permission of the licensing company and copyright holders, and in a very limited amount even if allowed. However, the license and other non-human actants appear to be completely overlooked in this publication of Low's.

Upon revisiting the pre-2005 discussions of theatre translation with music mentioned in the previous paragraph, Low truly does seem to have triggered a paradigmatic shift, which would explain Franzon's (2008, 384) and Apter and Herman's (2016, 17-18) sudden acceptance of such changes to the translator's authority to include musical adjustments. If we were to search for Low's motivation behind this major paradigm shift, all appears to point towards Andrew Kelly's (1992) seven recommendations, however, as was already mentioned, these recommendations were constructed for a foreign-language acquisition classroom, which renders them irrelevant in the context of actual practice where the translator is not the only actant responsible for the finished textual product.

5.1.3.5 Rhyme

As was already suggested, rhymes assume a special position among all the other parameters of the singable texts. In his observation of translated work, Low has noticed that translators are inclined to assign rhymes special priority in the text creation (Low 2005, 198). I believe this falls within the scope of Mona Baker's *translation universals*, especially within the tendency to exaggerate target language features in the translation (Baker 1993, 244-245), albeit in a slightly different format.

According to André Lefevere (2000, 240, cited in Low 2005, 198), this proclivity may lead to an "excessive padding" of the text, which was also discussed in relation to lengthier poetic works by Levý (2011, 192-193). Both Levý and Low are aware of the shortcoming such padding may have, especially in terms of the semantic shifts it may bring into the text. Levý's stance on padding is not critical, as long as the rhyme is not achieved "at the cost of unavoidably introducing entirely new semantic components" (ibid, 193), while Low recommends the avoidance of padding or even deliberate abandonment of rhyme, if the intended message should ideally be transmitted without any loss of meaning due to its importance (Low 2005, 198).

Therefore, if a translator is faced with a text rich in rhymes, they should pay special attention to not construing the target text around the rhymes, which are not as important as the intended message. This may raise the question of why not omit the rhymes completely, however, Low deems this rather extreme strategy as ridding the text of its essence, and suggests at least some rhymes be retained (ibid, 198-199).

I would broaden this by redirecting the translator's attention to the sheet music and analyzing it for potential musical highlighting that may attribute importance to the rhyme, which would then serve as an indicator of whether to keep the rhyme.

Analyzing the pre-existing music may also help the translator do the opposite, i.e., to recognize when a rhyme will be musically backgrounded or even swallowed by the musical accompaniment. Low also appears to be aware of this and recommends not aiming for a "perfect" rhyme, with an "imperfect" rhyme being an adequate-enough solution in his eyes (ibid, 199). Imperfect rhymes, dubbed "rhyme's cousins" by Apter, include *off-rhyme*, e.g., line-time, *weak rhyme*, e.g., major-squalor, *half rhyme*, e.g., kitty-pitted, *consonant rhyme*, e.g., slat-slit, as well as *assonance* and *alliteration* (Apter 1985, 309-310). Based on my perception of translated and original works, I believe such disfigurement truly does not lower the quality of the target text, especially a singable one, because its full realization with the musical accompaniment will indeed hide the supposed imperfections.

5.1.4 Three Layers of Singability

Another approach towards singable texts can be found in Johan Franzon's *Three Layers of Singability* (2008, 390), which was published only three years after Low's groundbreaking principle. Franzon talks of three matches a singable translation should achieve in order to be considered fully functional: *a prosodic match*, *a poetic match*, and *a semantic-reflexive match* (ibid). This theory of Franzon's can be approached as the aftermath of Low's work, since it contains substantial evidence of the paradigm shift within music theatre translation, and it will therefore be compared to the previously covered findings of Low, Apter, and Levý.

The *prosodic match* is said to manifest in the text as the rhythm, stress, matching syllable count, intonation, and "easy singing" sounds, which is attributed to following the musical melody (Franzon 2008, 390). However, we have already become familiar with all the manifestations in section 5.1.2 and 5.1.3.4. The first one encountered was the matching syllable count, which had previously been discussed in the earliest works on versology and song translation by Levý (2011, 202) and Nida (1964, 177, in Gorlée 1997, 245), and until the creation of Low's principle, translation theory has not strayed away from the described precise observation of the number of notes and corresponding syllables, as can be seen in section 5.1.3.4. Stress and the ease of singing had both been discussed by Apter (1985, 316; 1989, 27), the

first in the context of foreign language prosody and its musical interplay, and the latter as a set of an experienced translator's recommendations.

The second match, *poetic*, is derived from following the musical structure, i.e., the actual musical performance, which seeps into the text through the means of rhyme and the use of poetic devices. Additionally, Franzon introduces a new manifestation, the "location of key words" (Franzon 2008, 390). Rhyme and its attributed importance had been discussed by Low (2005, 198) in the previous section, and poetic devices were brought into song translation theory in Gorlée's coverage of Jakobson (1960, 373, in Gorlée 1997, 243) in section 5.1.1. Franzon, despite introducing the notion of key words, which I believe to be of great importance within the musical text, does not elaborate on the topic further, apart from its connection to the composition of the music (Franzon 2008, 390). This leaves the definition relatively open, and I shall therefore address the strategies regarding key words with the translators.

The very last match is *semantic-reflexive*. It follows the means of musical expression and can appear in the text as "the story told, mood conveyed, character(s) expressed; description (word-painting); metaphor" (ibid). Upon a closer look, one may see Franzon treading the waters of semiological musicology similarly to Gorlée (1997) in section 5.1.1 and Low (2005) in section 5.1.3, however, his discussion is once again only surface-level and no clear link to either of the mentioned academics' coverage can be observed.

Despite all that, I still believe this match to be beneficial in understanding Low's (2005, 200) situating of the musical as a *middle ground between musico- and logocentrism*. If we adopt Low's definition of musicocentrism that promotes the music governing the form of the text (ibid) and broaden it by Franzon's explicit mention of "the story told" as an aspect to be considered (Franzon 2008, 390), we may arrive to a middle ground between the two approaches that attributes due significance to both channels, however, a proper exploration of this topic falls beyond the scope of this thesis, and I will base my final—and at this point limited—opinion on the translator's accounts.

6 Methodology and Interview Guide

The academic coverage of the topic at hand has provided me with enough information to base my questions for the translators on. They will be addressed in the form of qualitative semi-structured interviews, which will give the translators space to elaborate on a topic further, shall they feel the need to, although all within the boundaries set by the targeted questions. This section will provide an explanation why this specific type of interview is suitable for the purpose of this thesis.

In order to conduct a qualitative semi-structured interview, the interviewer is expected to formulate questions based on an “extensive literature review” of the researched area (Bariball & While 1994, Kraus et al. 2009, in Kallio et al. 2016, 6), in this case, singable music theatre translation. The questions will then be presented to expert practitioners, i.e., Michael Prostějovský and Tomáš Novotný, with the aim of seeking empirical knowledge intended to fill a gap in the academic coverage of the issue at hand.

To aid the data collection, the creation of an *interview guide* is suggested, which allows for a certain degree of reciprocity and spontaneity between the interlocutors while staying on topic (Kallio et al. 2016, 2-6). Therefore, the interview guide can be seen as practical “guidance on what to talk about” (Gill et al. 2008, cited in Kallio et al. 2016, 2), as opposed to an otherwise unstructured interview that relies on the participants’ willfulness to provide detailed information on their own initiative. The interview guide is specifically designed to elicit “similar types of information from each participant” (Holloway & Wheeler 2010, cited in Kallio et al. 2016, 2), albeit with consideration of the translators’ individual experience that inevitably will differ, which a fully structured interview would otherwise not permit.

The interview guide itself is recommended to be divided into sound and consistent wholes that cover the established main themes, i.e., the translation process and the singable product, and should preferably also include a closer elaboration on the themes in the form of follow-up questions (Kallio et al. 2016, 6-7) that help steer the conversation in the desired direction (Baumbusch 2010, cited in Kallio et al. 2016, 7). The questions may either be open-ended to give the recipients space to express their ideas in unconstrained detail, or they may be more directed as specific wh-questions (Chenail 2011, cited in Kallio et al. 2016, 7).

Seeing as the recipients will be translators that are not active in academia, with the exception of Michael Prostějovský's occasional venture into theatre studies, and therefore are detached from the translation studies coverage of their field, an explanation of the main pillars of this thesis, i.e., the work of Low (2005), Apter (1985; 1989), Mateo (2008; 2012), and Franzon (2008), may be provided to the translators alongside the interview, which will, thanks to its nature, be able to accommodate it. In fact, the recipients' lack of awareness of the subject, as minor or major as it may be, is not considered a problem in a qualitative semi-structured interview (Kallio et al. 2016, 6), which only proves its usefulness for this thesis.

Concerning the ethics of the interviews, data will not be collected nor recorded unless strictly necessary for the purpose of the thesis, the main means of data collection being an audio recording in this case. The participants will individually express explicit consent with their involvement in this research in written form, and all will be informed of their right to withdraw from the research, to not answer a specific question and to personally review their processed answers.

The analyzed translations will be approached in terms of their fulfillment of the criteria of a singable text presented in Peter Low's (2005) *Pentathlon Principle*, with specific questions aimed at the translators' individual decisions and the influence another actant may have had on the finished product. The translators will once again be given space to elaborate on their work at their will. Seeing as the translators provided me with a wide variety of materials from various stages of the translation process, the exact methodology chosen for each musical will be described at the beginning of each analysis.

6.1 The Interview Guide

The main areas of focus will therefore be the translation process itself, the translators' understanding of a singable text, and the final product of the translation process. The interview guide will be presented in Czech during the interviews to accommodate the translators, and both the guide and the translators' accounts will be translated into English for the purpose of this thesis by me.

Figure 6: The interview guide.

The Area of Focus and Additional Questions⁵

1. The Translation Process

- a) How were you asked to join the translation process?
- b) What competences should a translator preferably possess to translate such a text?
- c) Were you the only linguist tasked with producing a translation?
- d) What materials can a translator expect to be provided with before commencing their work?
- e) How many translations were produced throughout the process? Were all meant to be singable?
- f) Can the translation be influenced by any other actant involved in the process or is the translator the sole linguistic authority?
- g) Is there a hierarchy between the actants and their respective power over the translation?
- h) Could you describe your role within the process in detail?
- i) Is the process overseen by a higher authority, e.g., members of the SL production company or the licensing company?
- j) How much thought is given to the audience's expectations when producing the translation?
- k) How do the approaches differ in replica and non-replica stagings?
- l) How are foreign works selected to be translated?

⁵ The list of the additional questions is non-exhaustive due to each translator having different experience, and the questions will be further extended by spontaneously occurring ones based on the translators' accounts.

2. A Singable Text

- a) What differentiates a singable text from a non-performable one?
- b) Are there any specific aspects of singability you take into consideration?
- c) How would an ideal singable text look according to your expectations as a professional translator? Would it be different to the audience's layperson-like expectations?
- d) If we consider the approaches towards the translation of opera and musicals, would there be much difference in your eyes?
- e) How much power does the music have over the text? Can the music be adjusted?
- f) How much depth do you go to when selecting a singable translation solution? Does the text ever call for a phonetic analysis?
- g) Do you take into consideration the choreography that is required from the performers or any other stage-exclusive aspect?
- h) Is there any area of translation you could compare song translation to? In what regards?

3. The Target Text

- a) What would you preferably call the target text, e.g., a translation, an adaptation, or any other denominator? Why?
- b) How many singable drafts were produced before the final version?
- c) Which song was the most demanding for you? Why?
- d) Have any of the controlling actants influenced the translation not to your liking?
- e) Do you have any additional comments on the target text?

7 The Translators' Accounts

7.1 The Translation Process

7.1.1 Tomáš Novotný

The semi-structured interview with Tomáš Novotný had taken place on March 23, 2024, a performance day for the translator. In this thesis, it will be referred to as INT1 due to Novotný being the first officially interviewed translator outside our pre-thesis communication.

At the beginning, I dedicated some time to inquire about how Novotný joined the translation process, and his experience was rather unique. Originally, when he became familiar with the work, he would translate it just for his own entertainment with no licensing constraints in mind, which allowed him to learn the ropes of music theatre translation and a great deal of linguistic and musical experimentation. Later, he started working as a dramaturge and actor at *Národní divadlo moravskoslezské* (*National Moravian-Silesian Theatre*) in Ostrava and his colleague, director Gabriela Petráková, expressed interest in *The Last Five Years*.

Only then had the translation become official. Novotný stated that he preferred this slow transition from an amateur translation to the official one because he avoided the time pressure that is most often put on music theatre translators. Nevertheless, once he became the official translator, the work needed to be approved for the Czech release. It was not until the day before the first rehearsal that the theatre received the permission to continue with the translation as-is, and upon a closer look at the pre-approval translation draft and the final version, one can clearly see that the translation did not need to undergo any major adjustments (Novotný 2024, INT1).

When asked about how a musical is selected for translation outside this unique experience, Novotný mentioned fellow translator and dramaturge Hana Nováková, who is also associated with the Ostrava theatre, and explained her approach. She apparently travels to the West End to see the plays for herself, which should be the norm, according to Novotný, however, such travels can prove to be time costly. Novotný therefore resorts to internet research of works introduced on Broadway and

the West End, with the *Tony Awards* being his main indicator of quality amidst the sea of produced works (ibid).

I have expressed concerns over the indirect translation this may lead to, which is discussed in section 4.3.2.3 in more detail, seeing as some of the works introduced on Broadway or the West End may already be translated. This was precisely the case of *Les Misérables* in 1985 on the London theatre scene, which was then translated into Czech from English, however, Novotný is not too concerned by this. On the contrary, in his opinion, a translation and an additional budget may add further substance to an otherwise unpolished original work, which he says was the case of Zdeněk Borovec's version of *Les Misérables*.

As for the materials a translator should be ideally provided with upon being tasked with such a complex translation, Novotný lists the sheet music, the original libretto including stage directions, and a recording (ibid), essentially proving Low's (2002, 105) accounts in section 4.3.2 to be true. However, drawing on his experience as a performer, Novotný informed me of one previously unconsidered risk a SL cast recording can bring, i.e., the performers' own interpretation being projected onto their performance, which may even change the rhythm of their singing. As a result, he considers consulting the sheet music more than necessary (Novotný 2024, INT1).

Moving towards the more practical aspects of the translation process, I have asked Novotný about the number of translations that were produced for *The Last Five Years*, seeing as Aaltonen (2000, 44) had pointed to the possible types of translations that may be created throughout the process, and the corresponding role division between translators and editors in section 4.2. With Novotný being the only linguist included in the process and him unintentionally allowing himself considerably more time than any other translator would be given to produce a target text, only one translation—already singable—was created (Novotný 2024, INT1). When I put into perspective the practice described in section 4.2, Novotný was immediately opposed to it, saying that no such division of labor has a place in the Czech world of theatre, also due to budgetary reasons (ibid).

As a follow-up, we focused on the non-linguistic, human and non-human, actants that may influence the target text. After the translation is finished, it is then passed on to the musical director who will propose changes from a musician's point of view (ibid). The translator should ideally be included in the process the same as Aaltonen's *translator-creator* (see Aaltonen 1997, 92) and be present as the staging

is put together. After the music director, the other greatly influencing actants can be the performers, as Novotný states it is they who have to work with the finished product, and therefore are entitled to their input (Novotný 2024, INT1). Therefore, as was theorized in the hypothetical translation process in section 4.1.1, while it may seem uncommon, every translation is inevitably changed by the singers' input, and almost no universal music theatre translation exists on the Czech stage. In rare cases, when the cast list is already known prior to the creation of the translation, the translator may even adapt the target text to better fit the individual actors' vocal capabilities. As for the director and dramaturge, their influence may be largescale, both creative and acculturative (ibid).

Continuing with acculturation, I asked Novotný whether the audience was considered during the translation process and if there were any changes made to the text for the audience's better enjoyment. Unsurprisingly, implementation of such a foreign work depicting the life of two rather ordinary Americans whose lives differ greatly to the ones of the Czech populace required some adjustments to be made for it to be accepted by a Czech audience (ibid), which can be seen in more detail in section 8.4. Novotný admits that local theatres may be disadvantaged when compared to the Anglophone ones, seeing as the foreign theatres may actually actively include the audience during workshops, i.e., unofficial showings that allow the production team to pinpoint rough parts both in the text and the performance based on the audience's reactions. Czech theatres do not allow this for the aforementioned monetary reasons, and mostly due to the lack of special dedicated theatres where only one work is played, as it is on Broadway (ibid).

A semi-new actant is introduced at this point, the translation editor. Even though they are already mentioned in section 4.1, their work appears to be slightly different in the Czech environment, and even the translator as an actant is approached differently. As opposed to Bassnett's (1991, 101) accounts, the two linguistic actants may cooperate instead of one taking over the other's job, and both are credited under the finished product with their respective roles (Novotný 2024, INT1).

Lastly, the controlling actant is addressed. The licensing company truly does become familiar with the target text through a back-translation, which may sometimes diverge from the original work under all the acculturation changes and negatively influence the right holder's view of the translated work even if it performs

well in the target language (ibid). Novotný once again recalls Zdeněk Borovec's translation of *Les Misérables*, which also was not immediately approved despite it being better than the English version at times in Novotný's eyes (ibid). This therefore further confirms the presence of a back-translator in the process, whose scope of work I intend on exploring in more depth with Michael Prostějovský.

7.1.2 Michael Prostějovský

Section 3.1.3 on the Czech cover song translation already includes the details of the interview with Prostějovský, and due to its later date, it shall be referred to as INT2.

Similarly to Tomáš Novotný, Michael Prostějovský had also joined the translation process in a fairly unconventional way when the original translator, Adam Novák, had seriously injured himself and could not finish the translation on his own. Coincidentally, Prostějovský had previously translated selected songs from *Wicked* for his actor colleagues to sing at auditions (Prostějovský 2024, INT2), which is another similarity between him and Novotný who had been translating *The Last Five Years* non-officially as a recreational activity, and Prostějovský was therefore immediately considered as Novák's collaborator. Soon after, the translators divided their labor, with Novák translating the spoken passages, and Prostějovský translating the sung material (ibid).

I have brought forward the division of labor described in sections 4.1 and 4.2 with multiple translators creating translations with various focus and then passing the text on to another linguist, and Prostějovský did in fact find some resemblance in the process behind *Wicked*. Novák adjusted Prostějovský's work in terms of unified terminology and additional semantic fine-tuning, since he was the one with greater knowledge of English. Prior to that, Novák had already created his own translations of some of the songs, however, in order to maintain a given translation style, Prostějovský was tasked with producing completely new song translations (ibid). He further commented on Bassnett's interlingual translator (Bassnett 1991, 106-107) and said that such a role may sometimes be needed in the translation process when the translator-creator is not as familiar with the SL as expected, with him occasionally requiring such translations of specific non-German works (Prostějovský 2024, INT2).

This brings us to the skill requirements of a musical translator. Prostějovský stressed that the translator should master the target language and preferably have some basic knowledge of music theory. In his opinion, there is no need for the translator to be able to sight read, but they should understand how rhythm works and know how to read music at least to the extent that would allow them to recognize problematic pitch changes that should be reflected in the TT. Additionally, he named his “three enemies” of a music theatre translator, i.e., 1. *the original plot* to successfully transfer the intended message, 2. *the music* and its unchangeable dynamics, note length, and accentuation, and lastly 3. *the target language* due to its prosodic uniqueness (ibid).

In the discussion of the denominator of the finished product, Prostějovský was hesitant to call it a *translation* (ibid), seemingly in agreement with Apter and Herman (2016, 58) in section 4.3.2.3, and called both the action and the TT *přebásnění* in Czech (Prostějovský 2024, INT2), which can be translated as Mateo’s *rewriting* in section 4.3.2.1. He also said to have adopted his German colleague Michael Kunze’s “*Deutsch von ...*” to introduce his final product, which he changed to “český text: (...),” i.e., *Czech lyrics by* (ibid), similarly to Bland and Schuman’s tactic in section 4.3.2.2. Additionally, I have noticed Prostějovský using the terms *translation* and *to translate* in a very similar spirit to the director mentioned by Edney (1996, 230 in Aaltonen 2000, 45) in section 4.2, which can be attributed to the translator not originally being a linguist.

In terms of the influencing actants, Prostějovský recalled lyricist Lynn Ahrens’ rather strict requirements for the German translation of *Rocky the Musical* (2012), essentially requesting largescale semantic correspondence across the two language versions, and almost identical rhyme retention. When the time came for a Czech translation to be produced, Ahrens, upon receiving the back-translation, proclaimed that the text was impossible to sing, and required changes to be made on all textual levels. Prostějovský was redirected to Stephen Flaherty, the composer, to address the issue at hand. However, the composer saw no problem with Prostějovský’s original translation, and so the less faithful target text was approved (Prostějovský 2024, INT2). Having also translated the musical *Cats* into Czech, Prostějovský could comment on the accounts of Aaltonen (1997, 91) regarding the licensing company’s non-acceptance of the foreign language version of the musical in section 4.2. He tied

it to the work of the back-translator (Prostějovský 2024, INT2), whose precise role in the process had been a mystery so far.

Overall, their responsibility is to produce a non-singable SL translation of the TT that allows the responsible committee to determine the faithfulness or semantic correspondence of the translated text to the original work, which Prostějovský emphasized is not an indicator of the translated work's actual quality or functionality. With *Cats*, he was asked for the back-translation of the song *Memory* and his song of choice, which had been personally assessed by T. S. Eliot's wife (ibid). Needless to say, *Cats* was permitted a Czech introduction in 2004.

The materials Prostějovský is usually provided with upon embarking on the translation journey include video and audio recordings, a piano score, and the SL libretto. Then, he says to reserve four to five months to produce a version of the translation that can be taken to rehearsals where other actants may have their say (ibid). Similarly to Novotný, Prostějovský allows the performers to suggest changes that would enable a better vocal performance, which may include selection of specific vowels to be put on corresponding notes and deletion of consonant clusters that arise upon the actual performance of the text. However, not all suggestions can be fully implemented.

In some cases, Prostějovský remembers the directors going as far as adjusting the TT to their creative vision (ibid), as I originally thought in section 4.3.2.1, which may in fact lead to unauthorized adaptations of the original work. These instances call for Prostějovský to assume complete linguistic authority, a role not as easily accepted by some members of the production company. In his eyes, the translator is not subject to the director's authority, instead, they answer to the original author and the actants in charge of approving the translation, with the director's power not fully reaching the form of the text. Eventually, Prostějovský admits that every production requires some degree of change imposed by the director to be accepted, and that the process indeed is a shared effort of compromise (ibid).

Continuing his discussion of the constraining actants, Prostějovský also names the copyright holders, who may or may not be closely involved during the process, as well as the author, who the translator finds himself turning to for semantic clarification to fully grasp the intended message of the work (ibid). I further suggested the audience to be considered an actant worth including, and Prostějovský fully confirmed the workshop arrangement in Anglophone countries mentioned by

Novotný in the previous section. However, in his experience, the audience attending the workshops usually consists of seasoned viewers, and very little layman audience (ibid).

In the case of *Wicked*, the TL production team was joined by members of the SL production team, including the author of the musical, Stephen Schwartz, for the final dress rehearsal week to bring the work closer to the original vision. This enabled the author to implement last-minute changes and to personally assess the functionality of the translation post-rehearsals (ibid), which brings us to the specifics of the Czech staging.

I enquired after the nuances between the license for a replica and non-replica staging and how it may influence the course of action. Prostějovský supplied that a replica staging entails the purchase of a license not only for the music, libretto, and partite, but also creative direction, scenography, and costuming that is legally required to be identical to the foreign original production (ibid). Nevertheless, the budget of Czech theatres is too tight for a full replica staging to be introduced on a Czech stage, and due to legal limitations, the TL production companies are entrusted with an additional task in their non-replica stagings, i.e., ensuring no creative element of the TL version of the musical is noticeably inspired by the original staging (ibid), aside from the music and the lyrics, of course.

Additionally, Prostějovský talked more about his specific role in the process that transcends the expected role of a typical translator. Throughout the years, he had worked as an advisor or supervisor on top of his linguistic role, and his frequent contact with SL production companies had brought him to the founding of his own licensing agency, *Musical Media*. The purpose of the agency is to purchase licenses for foreign musical works, which are then distributed to Czech theatres. The theatres and their production companies working on the purchased musical title therefore answer to *Musical Media*, which allows Prostějovský to approve some creative changes, should the TT production company request it, albeit all within the contractual limitations set by the copyright holders (ibid). When Prostějovský is asked about an adjustment beyond the power of his agency, he turns to the global licensing agency *Music Theatre International* (MTI) or even directly to the copyright holders (ibid), who have previously been noted to possibly take an active role in the TL production process.

We concluded our discussion of the translation process by focusing on how a foreign work is selected for a translation. Prostějovský noted it can depend on the education of each production company (*ibid*), to which I mentioned Mateo's (2008, 330) coverage of the selection process in Spain in section 4.3.2.3, and Prostějovský immediately confirmed that traveling to see the foreign musicals in-person is a significant part of the learning experience that can even lead to the formation of bonds between the production teams and further successful cooperation (Prostějovský 2024, INT2).

7.2 The Parameters of Singable Translation

7.2.1 Tomáš Novotný

My first question regarding the topic of singability as a textual property was focused on what distinguishes a singable text from other aesthetic texts. In Novotný's eyes, the specifics lie in the text being governed by the music (Novotný 2024, INT1). To that, I have brought up the two theoretical points of view in section 5.1.1 and 5.1.3, musicocentrism and logocentrism.

We both agreed that there is a palpable difference between a musicocentric opera where the verbal content is backgrounded due to its relative non-importance in getting the desired artistic message across, and an intelligible musical where the verbal channel is the main channel for transmitting the author's message, with music playing more of an accompanying role and constraining the syntax and length of syllables. Nevertheless, we concluded that the accompanying music still dictates the form of the target text and that it should be respected, although Novotný noted that some translators may choose to make musical adjustments as well (*ibid*).

In terms of the parameters of singability Novotný observes in his translations, he, as a non-linguist, relies on his musical and phonetic aptness, and therefore most often bases his decisions on what his trained musical ear accepts as an adequate solution. He lists the length of notes, musical and verbal accentuation in the phrasing, and also euphony in the sense of the translation bearing phonetic similarity in the quality of vowels across the languages, which he admits being almost unreachable at times (*ibid*).

Let us now focus on Novotný's list of parameters in more detail. The length of notes naturally influences the length of syllables and words, however, when one focuses on all the possibilities of musical composition, more questions arise. While it is impossible to cover all compositional variations, a general recommendation can be made regarding a sequence of long notes. In that case, Novotný's experience has shown that selecting multiple monosyllabic words to be placed on the long notes is a better strategy than dividing a multisyllabic word across multiple notes (ibid). Additionally, I have asked whether there is some phonetic consideration behind the pitch of a note, and Novotný was in full agreement with Apter's (1989, 27) recommendations in section 5.1.2, however, he considers such a detailed phonetic analysis as is suggested in the *Pentathlon Principle* in section 5.1.3 to be unnecessary and time costly, seeing as most of the phonetic imprecisions are discovered and perfected throughout the rehearsals during actual performance (Novotný 2024, INT1).

Another parameter that Novotný observes are the rhymes, and his reasoning is nearly identical with the one of the translators included in Low's (2005, 198) principle in section 5.1.3.5 who, according to the scholar, put unnecessary emphasis on this textual feature (ibid). Novotný sees them as the translator's duty to the author who, in his mind, places the rhymes in their respective positions for a specific artistic purpose, and the translator should therefore do their best to honor this decision (Novotný 2024, INT1).

After analyzing all the aspects of singability, I asked Novotný about the quality of a singable text and how it can be recognized, because a clear connection can be made to a poor performance of either aspect. From the translator's accounts, it appears that *naturalness* is the most important indicator of quality, which can be judged by the audience's reaction to the work (ibid). This opinion of Novotný's is essentially parallel to Low's introduction of the *Pentathlon Principle* stating that the text should appear as if it was the language the music was originally written for (Low 2005, 185). The professional translator stresses that the work should flow in the target language the same as it did in the source language, especially in the sense of immediate acceptance of the presented work (Novotný 2024, INT1), which also corresponds to Levý's (2011, 133) discussion of the required processing effort in section 5.1.3.3. Additionally, Novotný says that this also concerns the potential

humorous aspect of the work (Novotný 2024, INT1), which is not included in any of the literature covered in this thesis.

Staying on the topic of additional aspects of a singable text, Low proposes a potential sixth parameter to be considered, dramatic effectiveness, once again for the purpose of functionality (Low 2005, 211). This may be interpreted as the translator taking note of the action on the stage, e.g., the choreography, which may impair the singer's performance due to the required movement, and the translator therefore choosing to adjust the target text accordingly alongside the previously covered aspects. To this, Novotný adds that the source text may already be accommodative in this respect, since it also might have undergone adjustments while the staging was being put together (Novotný 2024, INT1), and his following comment has provided another clue regarding the hierarchy in the power of individual actants' input influencing the target text.

In some instances, the TL production company may opt for a new choreography to be incorporated into the work, and should the choreographer be too ambitious and require movement that is overly complex, the performers may dismiss the choreographer's creative proposals by reminding them of the already demanding music and vocal line (*ibid*), which is undeniably a fact that can be learnt only by observing professionals at work.

7.2.2 Michael Prostějovský

Despite being a theatre studies expert, Prostějovský has not undergone academic training in translation or linguistics, however, he does have over fifty years of experience creating replacement texts and Czech translation versions of musicals. Nevertheless, even though practice had led him far from systematic theoretical guidelines, his description of a singable text is almost in full agreement with Low and Franzon's remarks in sections 5.1.3 and 5.1.4, as can be seen in the discussion below.

In Prostějovský's view, a singable text differs from other textual forms in its necessary consideration of the musical rhythm and melody (Prostějovský 2024, INT2). To that, I added the dramatic aspect of the music theatre text and put it in contrast with song translation in general. That is where Prostějovský noticed a further difference in the creative freedom the translator can be given, which corresponds to Franzon's (2008, 376) levels of a singable translation discussed in section 5.1.3.1.

Mere song translation can start at the third level, which was the mainstream tendency in the Czech replacement text–cover tradition dating as far as the 1950s (Prostějovský 2024, INT2), whereas the interlingual transfer of a music theatre text comes closer to the fifth level (Franzon 2008, 376).

As is already known, music theatre works also hide some intradisciplinary nuances, i.e., the musicocentrism of opera and not-quite-logocentrism of the musical. I urged Prostějovský to elaborate more on the difference between the two types of a singable text, and he proposed his own deconstruction of an operatic work where he added another level between the foregrounded music and backgrounded lyrical content in the form of theatre dramatics (Prostějovský 2024, INT2), which I have come to understand as Low's (2005, 211) parameter of dramatic effectiveness.

Staying on the topic of musicocentrism and logocentrism and its role within a musical, Prostějovský's accounts suggested the final distinction may lie in the type of the song (Prostějovský 2024, INT2), once again agreeing with Low's (2005, 200) understanding of the problematic discussed in section 5.1.3. The translator divides the musical songs into two types, an *aria*, which is described as an emotional performance where the music and the artistic form is foregrounded, and *plot-moving* songs, where the lyrical content takes the center stage (Prostějovský 2024, INT2), essentially confirming my hypothesis in section 5.1.3.2. A musical work is more than likely to contain both types of songs, and no generalizing statement can therefore be made about its overall position on the theoretical scale. However, this is precisely what sets it apart from the monolithic music-led composition of the opera.

When asked about what to take into consideration while construing a singable text, Prostějovský said that we should respect the rules set by the music. This may include the length of notes and accentuation; however, the text should most importantly be fitted to the music (*ibid*). This concerns the phrasing and the naturalness of the language, an aspect of singability the translator himself says to be overlooked in opera (*ibid*). I have taken notice of Prostějovský breaching the territory of Low's parameters and provided a brief summary of the theory.

In terms of singability, he views the proposed phonetic analyses as a good starting point, however, he admits having truly learnt the ropes during actual practice and adds that there cannot be a universal guideline on how to proceed in the translation process (*ibid*). As for the sense of the text, his view on the matter has already become quite clear in section 7.1.2 when he mentioned the original plot

among the music translator's three enemies (ibid). Additionally, another clue is hidden in his discussion of the authority the translator answers to within the process, i.e., the author and the composer. Therefore, it is safe to assume that he considers the author's intended message to be sacrosanct and a parameter to be especially mindful of. This can be augmented by the music written by the composer, which provides an answer to Prostějovský's stance towards the rhythm (ibid).

The last remaining parameter of singability is rhyme, and this is where Novotný and Prostějovský's approaches begin to differ. Novotný's strategy is very academic compared to Prostějovský, which can be seen in section 7.2.1 with Novotný placing great importance on the rhyme structure. He interprets it as the author's intentional aesthetic decision (Novotný 2024, INT1), while Prostějovský does not always deem such an observance necessary (Prostějovský 2024, INT2). The latter translator has also said to understand the necessity of *prioritization* between individual features of the singable text (ibid), which is in complete agreement with Low (2005, 186) and admittedly admirable, seeing as Prostějovský truly has not had any previous insight into music translation theory. As for the retention of the keywords, Prostějovský assumes the same position as Novotný once again (Novotný 2024, INT1; Prostějovský 2024, INT2).

Further in our discussion, I mentioned the topic of singable translation quality, and Prostějovský's reply was more than surprising. A quality translation requires a compromise between *beauty* and *faithfulness* (Prostějovský 2024, INT2), which are almost the exact words of Jiří Levý's "dual norm of translation" (see Levý 2011, 60). When asked about the layman audience's criteria for a quality translation, Prostějovský suggested the same as Novotný in the previous section, i.e., an undisturbed and smooth-flowing viewing across all possible levels (Novotný 2024, INT1; Prostějovský 2024, INT2).

Thanks to his years of experience, Prostějovský may also comment on how the quality of the translation is evaluated by the SL production team. He recalls librettist Tim Rice praising the Czech translation of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, which raised a wave of questions about how he can assess the quality without knowing Czech (Prostějovský 2024, INT2). The translator reasoned that Rice, as the creator of the work, knows the story by heart, which allows him to recognize the happenings on any stage across language boundaries at any time. In addition, Rice's linguistic talent allows him to recognize when the sung text is pleasing to the ear or contains rough

passages, and lastly, Rice observes the reactions of the TT audience and compares it to the ones of the ST audience. His main indicator of quality therefore becomes the *functionality* of the translation (ibid).

8 The Last Five Years

The first analyzed musical work is Jason Robert Brown's *The Last Five Years*, translated into Czech by Tomáš Novotný. For this musical, I have been provided with sheet music that has a source language vocal line, the target language libretto without sheet music, and the TL official recording. The lyrical content of the TL libretto contains a translation draft that was written before the licensing company's approval and therefore may not reflect the final version of the target text, although I believe it will be worthy of attention regardless.

The main material of focus will therefore be the SL sheet music, the TL libretto, and the official Off-Broadway cast recording available on [Spotify](#) that I will later compare with the official TL recording to explain further changes that may not be reflected in the draft. Firstly, the written TL material will be compared with the SL recording, which will serve as the reference point, and then the analysis will be broadened by changes noticeable in the TL recording. The draft may prove to be especially useful in pinpointing Novotný's unconstrained approaches towards the work prior to the largescale revisions.

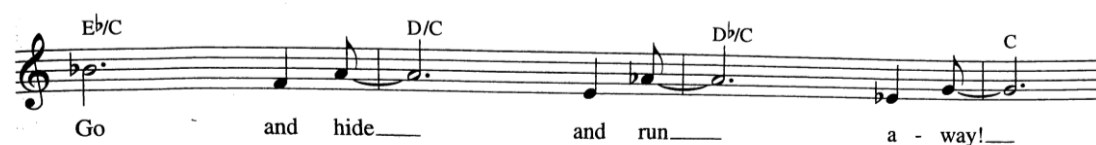
In terms of the song selection, I have decided to include the opening song, *Still Hurting* (*Co ztrácím*), as well as *Moving Too Fast* (*Nechám se vést*), *The Schmuely Song* (*Schmuelyův song*), and *A Summer in Ohio* (*Léto v Ohiu*) due to their rhythmic and melodic complexity that inevitably transfers its high demands even on the vocal performance.

8.1 Still Hurting

In this song, I have intentionally kept my analysis short with the intention of giving space to the translator to further elaborate on the translation of opening songs that essentially create the first and lasting impression of their work throughout the show. A great part of the analysis will therefore rely on Novotný's provided commentary.

Starting with the translator's duty towards the performers, it is more than apparent that Novotný is a performer himself. In this song, the female lead, Cathy, is faced with long high notes, intricate interval jumps, and lastly tempo variation, but Novotný relies on his music skills and navigates the musical complexity with relative ease. This can be noticed at 2:27 of the SL recording in the passage illustrated in the sheet music:

Figure 7: Sheet music, *The Last Five Years*, *Still Hurting*, example 1.

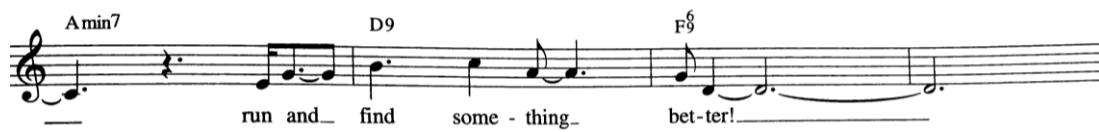


(Brown n.d.)

In the place of this passage, the draft contains the phrase: "*jít a skrýt se hloub a víc*," (Brown 2018) where the long vowels are placed on the longer notes, i.e., *go*, *hide*, *run*, *way*. The vowel quality in the TL allows the singer to belt and sustain the vocal tone with no restrictions while not succumbing to semantic deviation for the sake of easy performance, thus making a more than suitable TT decision. The same melody is later repeated with the phrase: "*chtít ted' jít těm dálkám vstříc*" (ibid), back-translated as *want to go towards the distance*, which once again accommodates the performers while also being easy to understand for the audience.

Regarding the translator's duty towards the audience, Novotný keeps the syntax of the Czech lyrics natural, however, the rhythm of the music takes its toll on the naturalness of the phrasing at times. A potentially problematic part may be found in the following passage at 2:39:

Figure 8: Sheet music, *The Last Five Years, Still Hurting*, example 2.



(Brown n.d.)

The proposed TL draft has the phrase: “*běž a potkej tu lepší*” (Brown 2018), which upon closer examination unfortunately places the naturally short vowels in *potkej* on *find* and *some* and therefore makes the performer go against the expected Czech phrasing by lengthening the vowels.

Turning to the composer and the author, the key words and personal names remain in the same position in the SL and the TL, and the same can be said for the rhymes, which usually fall on the end of a line and follow the SL structure with no problems. As for the possible semantic shifts, Novotný slightly changes the meaning of the SL question: “*What about you, Jamie?*” at 1:51 to: “*vždyť jsi mě chtěl, Jamie*” (Brown 2018), the literal translation being *but you wanted me, Jamie*, however, the author’s aim undoubtedly was to showcase emotion on the female lead’s behalf, and the TL version noticeably aims for the same effect despite the adjustment.

A greater shift comes in the preceding passage at 1:43 of the TL recording where the final translation strays quite far from the original wording:

Figure 9: Text comparison, *The Last Five Years, Still Hurting*, example 1.

| SL | TL draft | TL final product |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>What about lies, Jamie?</i> | <i>Přestaň mi lhát, Jamie.</i> | <i>Přestaň mi lhát, Jamie,</i> |
| <i>What about things</i> | <i>Vždyť to snad víš,</i> | <i>Pojď věci brát,</i> |
| <i>That you swore to be true?</i> | <i>Pravdou jsi začít měl.</i> | <i>Tak, jak kdysi jsi chtěl.</i> |

(Brown n.d.; 2018; 2021)

The TL draft can be translated as *stop lying to me, Jamie, you know it well, you should have begun with the truth*, which is considerably close to the original message, however, it was reworked in the final version quite significantly. The final translation therefore reads *stop lying to me, Jamie* the same as the draft, although the following segment can be interpreted two ways. The first being *come get your things*, which is logical because we are seeing their breakup through Cathy's eyes, nevertheless, it can also be understood as *come approach things*, which is then followed by *as you'd always wanted*. I, personally, would lean towards the draft, however, I believe this decision should be discussed in more depth with Novotný in the following section.

8.1.1 The Translator's Input

During the interview, Novotný stressed the importance of selecting the correct phrase that would also later become the name of the song. In his eyes, the key phrase *I'm still hurting*, i.e., *já se ztrácím / dál jen ztrácím / já ted' ztrácím* with the ruling verb *ztrácím*, literally *losing*, must capture the intended meaning and be functional at the same time (Novotný 2024, INT1).

He also admits having entertained the verb *trápím*, which can be translated as *worrying* or *hurting mentally*, and in the end, it seemed to be a better alternative than just the plain verb *bolí*, i.e., *causing pain* or literally *hurting* that was also considered. He justifies his decision with reference to Cathy's characterization and position within the story that is being told (ibid); while this song indeed is the very opening of the musical, Cathy finds herself at the end of her story, having been hurt and having learnt her lesson, and this is precisely what Novotný based his decision on (ibid).

I have also inquired about the semantic deviation shown in my analysis and notified Novotný of the draft being semantically closer to the source text than the final version of the target text. He admitted that the deviation most likely happened as a result of him letting his creative spirit loose, then subsequent fitting of the text to the music, and lastly accommodation of the performers (ibid).

As for the discussion of singability, we focused on the line: "*Jamie se určitě cítí ted' líp*" (Brown 2018), later adjusted as: "*Jamie se zajisté cítí ted' líp*" (Brown 2021) for the performance, which corresponds to the original: "*Jamie is probably feeling just fine*" (Brown n.d.) at 1:24 of the SL recording. I have argued that *zajisté*, lit. *certainly*, stands out from the text in terms of naturalness and Cathy's selected

register, and proposed an alternative that draws on the draft, i.e., *Jamie se určitě už cití líp*, with *už* being my main addition. After some consideration, we have both concluded that the near-high near-back vowel sound would put unwanted emphasis on the lowest note of the melody and therefore make it even heavier. While *zajisté* may stand out stylistically, it performs much better as a sung word (Novotný 2024, INT1).

8.2 Moving Too Fast

This song is another testament of Novotný’s ability to expertly accommodate the performers’ vocal needs. The tempo of this song changes rapidly all while still giving the male lead, Jamie, enough space to showcase his vocal capabilities on typical showtune belting and rhythms. A great example can be seen in the following excerpt at 2:08 of the official recording:

Figure 10: Sheet music, *The Last Five Years*, *Moving Too Fast*, example 1.

The image shows a musical score for a vocal line. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody starts with a high note on 'Oh,' followed by another high note on 'oh'. The notes for 'may - be I can't fol - low through' are lower and more rhythmic. Chords Eb/F and Bb/F are written above the staff. The lyrics are written below the staff.

(Brown n.d.)

Novotný keeps the English “*Oh, oh*” (ibid) on the high notes, and the rest of the phrase is translated as: “*možná, že zas přijde pád*” (Brown 2018), literally *maybe I will fail again*, which is both semantically close to do the original idea justice while providing the performers with comfortable vowels, the latter of which coincides with Apter’s recommendation of using low back vowels on low notes (Apter 1989, 27), i.e., in the word *pád*. Aside from that, one can notice only scarce unnatural vowel lengthening and no disruptive consonant clusters.

In terms of the naturalness for the audience’s ear, the only divergence, albeit minor, can be observed in the phrase: “*jásot siren*” (Brown 2018), which coincides with the SL: “*sirens flying past*” (Brown n.d.). The Czech *jásot* can be interpreted as a positive *cheer* or even *exultation*, however, when one considers the actual sound of the sirens the Czech audience may be used to, it would be best described as a *shrill* with no positive connotation at all. I would suggest selecting a more neutral alternative, *hluk od sirén*, for example, with *hluk* meaning literal *noise*, to respect the

number of syllables. Nevertheless, my proposed alternative may not be as singable as Novotný’s choice, which will be discussed in the second analysis.

What makes this song worthy of attention, however, are the semantic shifts presumably done as a part of acculturation. In the SL, Jamie mentions an *apartment on 73rd* at 3:30, which is translated as: “*apartmá snů*” (Brown 2018), i.e., *the apartment of dreams*. The Czech audience may not understand the street layout in Manhattan and therefore cannot be expected to make a connection to the street being next to Central Park, which is a highly desired homeowners’ location with corresponding rent prices. Nevertheless, the idea of an exclusive living situation is still maintained and arguably more understandable for a broader Czech audience. A similar example can be found in the SL mention of American editor Sonny Mehta at 3:46, which was substituted by the more well-known Random House in the Czech version (Brown 2018).

Novotný is not a linguistically trained translator, and that carries the risk of accidental register variation in a character’s speech. In this song, this happens at the very climax at 4:17 when Jamie puts everything into his: “*out of control*” (Brown n.d.), which is translated as: “*vždycky tak přál*” (Brown 2018) with *vždycky* being a very vernacular expression in Czech. This would not be a problem if it was not almost immediately followed by the relatively formal *nelze slézt*, literally *cannot get off (a horse)*, and the standard *šťastný*, which could have easily been replaced with a vernacular *šťastnej* to keep the selected register.

In terms of the rhythm, I have noticed a minor disagreement at 0:24, but it appears to be a divergence on the SL performer’s behalf, seeing as he adds another beat after *rocket* in the phrase: “*I’m riding hot as a rocket blast*” (Brown n.d.) transforming the word into *rocket-uh*. The passage has been translated as: “*co stojí v cestě, to zvládnou smést*” (Brown 2018), which is in agreement both in terms of beats and the number of syllables with the SL sheet music, as can be seen here:

Figure 11: Sheet music, *The Last Five Years, Moving Too Fast*, example 2.

The image shows a snippet of sheet music on a five-line staff. Above the staff, chord symbols are written: A7, D, D/E, C/G, G6, B \flat /F, and D/E. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. Below the staff, the lyrics are written: "I'm rid-ing hot as a roc - ket blast...". The word "rocket" is split across two lines of lyrics, with "roc -" on the first line and "ket" on the second line. The word "blast" is followed by an ellipsis. The music is in a key with two sharps (F# and C#).

(Brown n.d.)

An additional rhythmic adjustment can however be noticed in the TL recording at 0:48 when Jamie sings: “o tomhle jsem snil” (Brown 2021), *this is what I’d dreamt of*, where the original rhythm at *o tomhle jsem* is changed to four sixteenth notes instead of the English *whatever I* split between one eighth note, two sixteenth notes, and one eighth note:

Figure 12: Sheet music, *The Last Five Years*, *Moving Too Fast*, example 3.

The musical notation for Figure 12 shows a single staff with three measures. The first measure contains the lyrics "What - ev - er I" and is marked with the chord A2/C#. The second measure contains "do, I" and is marked with E7/B. The third measure contains "bar - rel" and is marked with A9. The rhythm in the first measure is a quarter note followed by two eighth notes. In the second measure, the first eighth note is replaced by four sixteenth notes, and the second eighth note remains. The third measure contains a quarter note.

(Brown n.d.)

There also appears to be an overlooked instance of intertextuality between *Still Hurting* and *Moving too Fast* where the musical cadence almost fully copies Cathy’s “and I’m still hurting” (Brown n.d.) at 1:01 of the first song on Jamie’s: “but I keep rollin’ on” at 1:43 of this song (ibid). The similarity is illustrated in the following excerpts:

Figure 13: Sheet music, *The Last Five Years*, *Moving Too Fast*, example 4.

The musical notation for Figure 13 consists of two staves. The first staff shows the lyrics "But I keep roll - in' on." with chords Dm9, Db+9, BbMaj7/C, Bb/C, and Fsus above it. The second staff shows the lyrics "And I'm still hurt - ing." with chords F2/A, Bb2, G7/B, Csus, and C above it. The melody in both staves is nearly identical, with the first staff ending on a half note and the second on a quarter note.

(Brown n.d.)

However, seeing as the author did not allude to Cathy’s despair further and rather opted for semantic contrast between the two messages, one negative and the other positive, and the same can be said about Novotný’s translation, I can therefore approach it as a mere interesting point of discussion and inquire about Novotný’s decision process with this intertextual relation in mind.

In terms of verbal changes between the draft and the TL recording, there appear to have been done adjustments mostly via padding to better fit the syncopated rhythm. Right in the opening line, the initial: “*zdá se, že můj budík právě zvoní*” (Brown 2018) was transformed into: “*zdá se, že budík mi právě teď zvoní*” (Brown 2021), i.e., *sounds like my alarm clock is ringing*, without any semantic change, however, the recorded version suits the snappy rhythm better with the shorter words and vowels.

8.2.1 The Translator’s Input

When I asked Novotný about the song he found the most difficult to translate, he immediately mentioned this song and justified his claims by describing the upbeat music that noticeably draws on jazz (Novotný 2024, INT1) and early rock and roll, I would add, and is therefore very demanding in terms of the tempo and rhythm (ibid), which supports my description of this song in the introduction of the analysis.

Novotný’s commentary on this song can be overall considered in agreement with my own exploration, especially in the discussion of the transformation some culturally specific items in the text had undergone, as well as the commentary on the opening line. Novotný admitted having spontaneously sung the final version during rehearsals even though he was supposed to follow the draft, and further recalled that he was later approached by the conductor who originally had the intention of suggesting the final version as a more fitting alternative even before Novotný had sung it himself (ibid).

When discussing the unnaturalness of the phrase *jásot sirén*, Novotný clarified that he set the word *sirén* as the key word that should remain in its place across the language versions (ibid), which is in agreement with Franzon’s (2008) suggested approach in section 5.1.4, so that some familiarity can be felt even if an English-speaking member of the audience were to listen to the translation. Staying true to his strategy, Novotný needed to find a two-syllable solution to precede the key word, and *jásot* appeared to be the most singable choice, albeit admittedly not the most natural (Novotný 2024, INT1).

I have also mentioned that the rhythm of the Czech translation in the passage that corresponds to the one from 1:29 onwards in the SL recording appears to be kept with less precision than in the SL material, to which Novotný added that upon his analysis of all recordings he could find, every performer had in fact put their own

spin on the rhythm of this passage, and that no performance could be considered faulty or correct in this regard (ibid).

As a mere discussion point, I have mentioned the musical intertextuality between this song and *Still Hurting*, and Novotný confessed that he had not noticed it when creating the translation. During the interview, we have concluded that the parallel is only melodic and there is no direct verbal connection between the two phrases, and not focusing on it during the translation would therefore be acceptable (ibid). However, upon further analysis, I believe the verbal contents also carry significant information especially in the characterization of both characters, Cathy singing the melody during her lowest point, and Jamie singing it in a more positive light, happy with where his life is headed, which is a complete, and presumably intentional, juxtaposition.

8.3 The Schmucl Song

The official SL recording of this song includes even a part of the spoken word that is usually omitted elsewhere, but the TL libretto contains both spoken and sung word. In terms of the accommodation of the performers, the very opening of the song starts with a phrase that can be best described as “a mouthful.” Every syllable of: “*Schmucl would work ‘til half past ten*” (Brown n.d.), with the exception of *Schmucl* on two sixteenth notes, is set on an eighth note, which leaves little room for proper articulation, especially in *would* and *work* after the demanding voiced labial velar approximant [w] that requires great mouth movement by itself.

To accommodate the performers, I would expect the following vowel in *work* to be raised to a high-mid central one from its original low-mid central position to ease the mouth movement, i.e., to make the jump from the initial back vowel followed by a voiced alveolar stop back to *would*, which once again starts with the [w] sound, less taxing. Additionally, in some cases, the repeated [w] sound could potentially come off as a highly undesired quacking sound and could even discredit the performer in the audience’s eyes without being the one at fault. In the Czech TT, Novotný opts for: “*Schmucl se den co den jen dřel*” (Brown 2018) where the *den* syllable contains a voiced alveolar stop followed by a front vowel, which subsequently jumps to a voiceless alveolar affricate followed a back vowel that allows the performer to bounce more easily between the syllables than the ST does.

This can also be explained in the terms of Apter’s (1989, 27) recommendations. The front vowel in *den* noticeably falls on a higher note than the back vowel in *co*, which is once again in line with Apter’s observation of years of practice.

The naturalness of the text is comparable with the previous song, with only a minor register variation within a single verse where the clock speaks to Schmucl for the first time at 1:09 of the official SL recording. The translator uses the formal *chceš-li*, which equals to *should you want*, and follows it by the Common Czech demonstrative pronoun *tenhle*, alternatively *tento* if the formal register was followed. This is however balanced out by the rhymes included in the song that elevate its aesthetic properties. An example can be seen as Schmucl’s fictional story unfolds at 3:00, where the **AABB** rhyme in the ST is replaced by an **AAAA** structure in Czech:

Figure 14: Text comparison, *The Last Five Years*, *The Schmucl Song*, example 1.

| SL | TL |
|--|---|
| <i>So Schmucl put the thread through the needle’s eye,</i> | <i>A tak provlékl uchem jehly nít,</i> |
| <i>And the moon stared down from a starless sky,</i> | <i>Nikdo netušil, co se bude dít,</i> |
| <i>And he pushed the thread through the velvet black,</i> | <i>Samet nastříhal a jak počal šít,</i> |
| <i>And he looked, and the clock was turning... back!</i> | <i>Hodiny začaly ted’ zpátky... jit!</i> |

(Brown n.d.; 2018)

The repetition of the **A** rhyme created additional tension in the TT, which is highlighted by the composer employing string instruments and a piano that go back and forth between the Cm and Cm6 chords, separated by an interval that is commonly used to create instrumental suspense and tension.

A similar shift in the rhyme structure can be noticed at 6:50 as is illustrated in the following figure:

Figure 15: Text comparison, *The Last Five Years*, *The Schmucl Song*, example 2.

| SL | TL |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Take a breath,</i> | Zklidni dech , |
| <i>Take a step,</i> | Žádný spěch , |
| <i>Take a chance...</i> | Ten čas máš , |
| <i>Take your time.</i> | Neměj strach . |

(Brown n.d.; 2018)

The ST is not rhymed at all, whereas the TT follows an added **AABA** structure, which brings on the feeling of both verbal and musical resolution that is otherwise not as palpable when one focuses only on the meaning of Jamie’s words.

As for the rhythm, I have noticed a slight disagreement between the phrasing at 1:02 in: “*then the clock upon the wall began to glow*” (Brown n.d.) and the Czech: “*načež z hodin na zdi začal stoupat dým*” (Brown 2018), even though both passages have eleven syllables. The TL wording gives off the impression of one beat missing somewhere between *začal stoupat* which I estimate to appear in the middle of *wall began* in the sheet music:

Figure 16: Sheet music, *The Last Five Years*, *The Schmucl Song*, example 1.

The image shows a snippet of sheet music on a five-line staff. Above the staff, the key signature is F#C#. Chord symbols are placed above the staff: F#C#, Dmin9, C#m7(b5), C#7(b5), C#7sus(b5), and C#7(b5). The lyrics are written below the staff: "sew." Then the clock up-on the wall. be-gan to glow... And the cloc". The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes.

(Brown n.d.)

However, this I believe is best discussed with Novotný himself, because the sung melody appears to be written to lightly copy the cadence of a spoken word, which may have been the reason for the rhythmic change to make the Czech text appear natural. An analogical change, this time with a deliberately added beat at 1:26 that would split the note corresponding to *but* in: “*but Schmucl said,*” can be found here:

Figure 17: Sheet music, *The Last Five Years, The Schmu-el Song*, example 2.



(ibid)

At approximately 3:30 of the SL recording, the original 4/4 tempo changes first to a 3/4 waltz, and immediately after to a 6/8 tempo that puts additional weight on every third beat. This means that the phrase: “*ev’ry cut and stitch was a perfect fit, as if God Himself were controlling it*” (ibid) takes on the musical weight on a few select syllables. The word *ev’ry* is located in a separate measure, however, if we analyzed the rest of the phrase, the emphasis would fall on *cut, stitch, per-, fit, God, -self, -trol-* and lastly *it*. See the tempo changes below:

Figure 18: Sheet music, *The Last Five Years, The Schmu-el Song*, example 3.

(ibid)

At first, Novotný tackles this masterfully and places either monosyllabic words or long vowels on the emphasized beats, i.e., “*každý steh a střih, to byl zázrak sám, sotva tušil, že má být potrestán” (Brown 2018), which feels natural both in performance and in reception, however, the following phrase appears to be at conflict with the rhythmic structure, even though the sheet music does not change. The song continues with: “*křik se rozléhal v noci ledové, šaty konečně byly hotové” (ibid), and naturally short vowels can be spotted in the places of musical emphasis, which may cause undesirable lengthening. A possible solution may be to separate the notes and shorten their duration as a result, and not follow the legato singing in the SL recording. Instead, the entire rhythmic structure appears to be shifted from 4:30 onwards for the performance to sound more natural.**

8.3.1 The Translator's Input

Starting our analysis on the very same line as my preliminary one, Novotný and I have also focused on the phonetics of the opening phrase. He expressed agreement with my understanding of the risks the ST carries (Novotný 2024, INT1) and found himself supporting Apter's (1989, 27) phonetic analysis of more suitable vowels to be sung on high and low notes. Additionally, he stressed that the voiced alveolar stop [d] can help put natural emphasis on a note, which was beneficial for the TT and its placement on the music (Novotný 2024, INT1).

In terms of the changes made for better singability, Novotný recalls having made a syntactic change in the beginning of Schmucl's first monologue (ibid), where he exchanged the original: "*kdyby někdy zbyl čas*" (Brown 2018) for: "*kdyby zbyl někdy čas*" (Brown 2021), corresponding with the meaning of the ST segment, *if I only had time*, in both Czech versions. However, Novotný considers the newer version of the TT to fall better on the musical emphasis, placing the monosyllabic *zbyl* on the heaviest note (Novotný 2024, INT1).

Following the key word strategy mentioned in section 8.2.1, I would have expected the TT to follow the original wording at 0:55 of the SL recording when Schmucl sings: "*(...) of girls from here to Minsk*" (Brown n.d.), with *Minsk* assuming the role of the key word and therefore being transferred to the TL version as well. Novotný however makes an exception in this case and argues that should the audience be confronted with a one-off mention of the city, it would cause confusion and subsequently lower the audience's regard of the translated work (Novotný 2024, INT1), which is indeed undesirable. As a result, he exchanged the Belarusian city of Minsk for: "*celý širý svět*" (Brown 2018), i.e., *the entire world*.

In that case, one would expect the other geographical mention in the song, the Ukrainian city of Odessa, at 5:02 of the SL recording to be also omitted, yet, Novotný has decided to keep it in the TT as a part of a rhyme (Novotný 2024, INT1), i.e.: "*(...) dívky, co žila tam za Oděsou, kdysi slíbila věčnou lásku svou*" (Brown 2018), a feature of the TT Novotný can pride himself on keeping in almost every original location in the ST. However, I have found this tendency to maintain the author's intended rhymes, that is occasionally to the detriment of naturalness and sense, to be over-emphasized during the TT creation, but that is only a matter of personal preference.

The aforementioned changes to the tempo of the song have also been a point of discussion during the interview, especially in terms of the text following the rhythmic structure and musical emphases. I have expressed my concerns regarding the TT phrasing on the melody from 4:30 onwards in the SL recording, and Novotný clarified that the underlined syllables in: “*křik se rozlěhal v noci ledové, šaty konečně byly hotové*” (Brown 2018), that would have otherwise been unnaturally lengthened together with the musical emphasis, had in fact been intentionally shortened by the performers who were additionally told to mainly focus on the musical emphasis, not note length (Novotný 2024, INT1).

Furthermore, I have expressed my positive view of the rhyme structure change mentioned in my analysis, and Novotný has surprisingly expressed his distaste at the way the TT had gone. After further clarification, he understood my opinion on the AABA resolution as a translator, however, as a performer, he said he would have preferred the TL structure to also follow the original AABB one, as that would put the long note and syllable at the end of the song and made for a better melodic climax even in the performer’s voice (ibid).

8.4 A Summer in Ohio

This song is especially suitable for the analysis of acculturation and domestication strategies a translator may employ for the work to be relevant or understandable even in the target culture. Cathy expresses disinterest in spending a summer in the state of Ohio and lists all the possible destinations she would rather be at in a very sarcastic manner. The translator may therefore follow the author’s footsteps and emphasize how much of a boring time a person can have in this state, which is admittedly not among the states a general member of the Czech audience may think of when asked to list a few US states, or the translator can move the text towards the audience and substitute the references with solutions the Czech audience may be more familiar with.

The first substitution can be recorded at 0:17 of the SL recording where Cathy sings: “*I could lease a villa in Seville*” (Brown n.d.), which is shifted to: “*mohla jsem mít Porsche v garáži*” (Brown 2018), i.e., *could have had a Porsche in my garage*. The translator has therefore decided to focus on the high societal status a villa in Seville may bring to Cathy and replaced it with her dreaming of a European luxury

car that the Czech audience may relate to better. Only ten seconds later at 0:27 comes another substitution during the mention of two characters, Tevye and Porgy, from the 1964 musical *Fiddler on the Roof* and 1959 musical *Porgy and Bess* respectively, that are significantly less known in the Czech Republic than in the USA, where one could even consider them cult classics. Instead, Novotný reaches for the description of the character's vocal ability: "*je to nadějný soprán*" (Brown 2018), which translates to *he's an aspiring soprano*.

What I cannot fully support is the shift at 0:38 with Cathy originally singing: "*take a carriage ride through Central Park*" (Brown n.d.), which is changed to: "*sjíždět noční Alpy bez lyží*" (Brown 2018), i.e., *ride down the Alps at night without ski*. The way the phrase is worded signals there may be an underlying joke or reference, however, I am unable to decipher it as of now and will have to ask Novotný for clarification. Additionally, Central Park is a well-known location in New York City even for the Czech audience, and therefore I cannot see a reason to make such a shift without being motivated by something else.

Staying on the topic of humor, another joke is set up at 0:46 where the original: "*with a former stripper and her snake Wayne*" (Brown n.d.) is replaced by: "*starý striptér a toulavej pes Rex*" (Brown 2018). In the Czech version, the gender of the stripper is changed, however, it can be deduced that it is not of utmost importance within the musical as a whole. The Czech translation can be back-translated as *an old male stripper and a stray dog Rex*. The seemingly unsubstantiated change of the snake Wayne to the dog Rex becomes more than clear at 3:36 in Cathy's list of acquaintances from Ohio: "*love, the midget, the stripper, Wayne the snake, and Mrs. Jamie Wellerstein*" (Brown n.d.), which becomes: "*gay Carl a striptér a pes Rex... a jedna paní, co chce sex*" (Brown 2018), i.e., *gay Carl, the stripper, and Rex the dog... and one lady who wants sex* in the Czech translation. The name Rex rhymes with the last word in the Czech phrase and therefore finishes the anticipated joke, however, some may consider this alternative decision as too much of a deviation from the original work. After all, Cathy was expressing interest in marrying Jamie, not just in being physical.

An additional significant shift can be noticed at 2:58 in the middle of Cathy's definitive resignation at staying in Ohio: "*I can state in my next bio, I'm never gonna go back to Ohio!*" (Brown n.d.). This is translated as: "*budu třeba Včelka Mája, jen když už se nevrátím do Ohia*" (Brown 2018), and while I can recognize Novotný's

nod to the mention of *West Side Story's* Anita in the preceding line of the ST in the use of another female character's name, however, I have my reservations with the choice of *Včelka Mája* (Maya the Honey Bee) from the 1975 animated TV series intended for children that was and still is incredibly popular among the Czech youth. Comparing the contemporary-Shakespearean-Juliet-type Anita, an immensely complex character an aspiring young actress such as Cathy may strive to play one day, with Maya the Honey Bee would not be my first choice as a translator, however, the Czech TT performs well in highlighting Cathy's desperation to land any role that would take her away from Ohio, which in fact is the intended message.

Lastly, another successful accommodation of the Czech audience can be found at 1:18 where Cathy explicitly complains about staying in Ohio: "(...) *to be going slightly bratty forty miles east of Cincinnati*" (Brown n.d.), which is outright transported into another state in the Czech translation by: "*můžu sbalit své saky paky a jít s tím třeba do Kentucky*" (Brown 2018), the location change being more than apparent. Her discontent is additionally supported by the music, which essentially disintegrates at the mention of the place name.

8.4.1 The Translator's Input

When asked about this song, Novotný confirmed my assessment of it being the most challenging in terms of cultural adjustments, i.e., acculturation, and admitted having considered the audience's supposed general knowledge when choosing the right translation (Novotný 2024, INT1).

I have brought up the phrase at 0:38 of the SL recording, which is translated as: "*sjíždět noční Alpy bez lyží*" (Brown 2018) and inquired about the intended meaning of Novotný's translation. It can be interpreted literally, as in being intoxicated somewhere in the middle of the Alps and rolling down the hill under the influence of various drinks one may have consumed, or one can fixate on the word *sjíždět*, which also means to use drugs in Czech, and connect the Alps reference to *snow* (Novotný 2024, INT1), which is a slang term for a specific drug type both in Czech and English, however, Novotný stressed that the latter was not the intended interpretation (ibid).

Furthermore, I have asked for clarification of a few semantic discrepancies I have noticed in the translation. The first was the addition of the aforementioned TL joke set up at the end of the first verse with the change from Wayne the snake to Rex the dog, and the punchline that arrives at 3:36 of the SL recording, which additionally required Cathy's original tame expression of desire to see her husband to a rather raunchy one mentioning the activities she wishes they would do together. Novotný said that this change was motivated by the 2014 movie adaptation of the musical, where the film-Cathy was not afraid to voice her needs and wishes (ibid).

Another deviation can be spotted at 2:01 of the SL recording when Cathy mentions her friend Richard who “*got uncharacteristically quiet*” (Brown n.d.) upon encountering Jamie's book in a store with her, with no further clues on what Richard's personality could be like. Novotný took it upon himself to ascribe some additional character to Richard and transformed Cathy's line into: “*Richard tam byl taky a už po ránu se stihl opít*” (Brown 2018), back-translated as *Richard was there too and had already managed to get drunk in the morning*. When asked for Novotný's rationale, he said he merely wanted to add some character to this episodic appearance (Novotný 2024, INT1), which I understand, especially since the point of this song is to convey how much of a bad time Cathy is having in Ohio, however, I personally would not go such lengths to ascribe unmistakably negative traits to a one-off character.

Lastly, we discussed the insertion of Maya the Honey Bee into what otherwise would have been, in Novotný's words, a well-painted story set in the US, which was inevitably disrupted by the Czech-specific reference (ibid). I have explained my understanding of why the translator could have used this specific character, as can be seen in my analysis, however, we both have agreed that an alternative would have been a more suitable choice, had Novotný had reserved more time to make this decision. We considered including West Side Story's Anita, however, we concluded that it would be difficult for the Czech audience to make that connection in such a limited time (ibid), and I further mentioned Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice's *Evita*, which is a name that coincidentally corresponds even with the number of required syllables, however, we both once again expressed concerns over the audience recognizing this nod towards another great work (ibid).

9 Wicked

The second analyzed work is the musical *Wicked* written by Stephen Schwartz, in its Czech version by Michael Prostějovský and Adam Novák. The two translators had divided their work into sung and non-sung parts, with Prostějovský in charge of the sung translations that will be my sole focus in this thesis. As for the materials provided, I was given the target language libretto in version 5. The additional material used for the analysis was the original Broadway cast recording available on [Spotify](#) and SL sheet music arranged by Alex Lacamoire or Ben Cohn (Schwartz & Lacamoire 2003; Schwartz & Cohn 2011).

The approach towards this work will differ from the one employed for *The Last Five Years*. It will not be as holistic, seeing as such an analysis would give to an entire separate thesis, instead, I will focus on select passages from four songs of the nineteen in total. The passages will be chosen according to the specific parameters of singability they display, namely the rhythm and phrasing, naturalness and register, rhymes, as well as the acculturation strategy in one special case.

The analyzed songs will therefore be the duets *Something Bad* (*Je to zlé*), *One Short Day* (*Pouhý den*), the aria *No Good Deed* (*Žádný dobrý čin*), and lastly *March of the Witch Hunters* (*Hon na čarodějku*).

9.1 Something Bad

In this rather short song of only one minute and thirty-nine seconds, I have decided to focus on the characterization of Dr. Dillamond, a fable-like university professor, across both language versions, and what implications the possible characterization changes may have in the context of respecting the author's intended message contrasted with the tendency to accommodate the target audience for the sake of a positive reception of the work, i.e., acculturation.

Dr. Dillamond's character was originally written as an anthropomorphized Goat, however, in the Czech version of the musical, Dr. Dillamond is a Sheep, and the aim of this analysis is to focus on the translator's motivation behind this change. While he is capable of speaking exactly like a human across both languages, he is occasionally interrupted by a more animal-like sound, which can be heard between

0:42 and 0:48 of the SL recording in the passage: “*under the surface, behind the scenes, something baaaad (...)*” (Schwartz 2003), when the final vowel sound is lengthened to mimic a goat’s bleat.

Prostějovský’s translation appears to play into this animal-like slip-up, and we can notice semantic adjustment of the phrase to: “(...) *a nám všem hrozí nebezpečí meznámééééé*” (Schwartz 2019), literally translated as *and we are in unknown danger*. Upon a closer look, Prostějovský also seems to have changed the grammatically correct form of the word *neznámé* to *meznámééééé*, which highlights the Czech equivalent of a goat’s or sheep’s bleat, i.e., the sound *mé*, and therefore achieves an additional humorous effect on another linguistic layer. In its written form, the translation can be considered more than functional, however, I have some reservations regarding its successful execution and recognition by the audience. The phonetic change between the two nasals may not be as easily noticeable during the vocal performance unless the singer deliberately adds a bleat to the first syllable to highlight it. Seeing as there is no audio recording available to verify whether this strategy was employed during the actual performance, I will address it directly with Prostějovský.

Thus far, there appears to be no reason for the Czech translation to change Dr. Dillamond’s character to a Sheep. However, a clue may be hidden in the stories Schwartz’s *Wicked* was based on, L. Frank Baum’s *Oz Books* and Gregory Maguire’s *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*. The stories appear to cover the themes of racial oppression towards the Animal race within the fictional world where Goats can enjoy a seemingly exclusive status among the fellow Animals, which is explored in more detail by Carol de Giere, Schwartz’s biographer (see de Giere n.d. for further discussion).

These themes may resonate especially well among the audience in the United States; however, they may lose some of their impact before the Czech audience, which may find them too foreign to fully empathize with. The translator, faced with accommodating the audience’s needs and expectations, may decide to background them for the sake of proper acculturation of the work. Dr. Dillamond can therefore be transformed into a Sheep, keeping his animal traits with no political undertones, and be fully accepted by the layman Czech audience without any repercussions. Nevertheless, this deduction is purely hypothetical, and whether the logic behind this

creative decision was driven by acculturation will be uncovered in the discussion with the translator.

9.1.1 The Translator's Input

Upon asking Prostějovský about the change of Dr. Dillamond's characterization, I have shared my original hypothesis of acculturative measures being taken for the sake of the Czech audience's proper enjoyment, and while he admitted he was aware of the original allusions, the decision inevitably came down to the director, Martin Novotný, and his creative vision. Additionally, the production team felt the animal sounds that can be made in the Czech version resemble a sheep more than they would a goat's bleat (Prostějovský 2024, INT2).

Nevertheless, this still meant that the underlying political message encoded in the ST was not transferred into the TT, and one might wonder how such a grave change had been implemented under all the constraints imposed by the license and rights. Ultimately, the TL production team was given permission by Stephen Schwartz himself (ibid), who had undoubtedly understood the cultural specificity of his work and the problems it may cause during intercultural transfer.

During the actual analysis of the translation, I have redirected Prostějovský's attention to the seemingly multilayered humor of the word *meznámééééé* with what appeared to be an intentional phonetic change between the nasals, Prostějovský amusedly admitted that the nasal change was a typo that was corrected further in the process, and confirmed my previously raised theory about this phonetic change being too miniscule to be properly executed on the stage as opposed to its written form (ibid).

9.2 One Short Day

This song is specific in terms of its rhythm and rhythmic changes. Similarly to *Moving Too Fast* in section 8.2, its syncopated melody can once again be described as *snappy*. The main focus of this analysis will therefore be the phrasing of the Czech translation and the length of words or syllables on short and syncopated notes, as well as the counterpoint singing between the female and male vocalists when Elphaba and Glinda go see the *Wizomania* show.

The best strategy regarding the syncopated melody appears to be focusing on the chorus of the song starting at 1:17 of the SL recording, since it illustrates the rhythm the best without any recitative interjections. See the sheet music arranged by Ben Cohn (Schwartz & Cohn 2011, 6-7):

Figure 19: Sheet music, *Wicked*, *One Short Day*, example 1.

The image displays three systems of sheet music for the Tenor (T) and Bass (B) parts of the song "One Short Day" from the musical *Wicked*. Each system consists of a vocal line and a bass line. The lyrics are: "One short day in the Emerald city, one short day to have a life-time of fun. One short day, and we're warn-ing the cit - ty. Now that we're in here, you'll know we've been here before we are done!" The music is in a 4/4 time signature with a key signature of one flat (B-flat).

(Schwartz & Cohn 2011, 6-7)

I am aware that the sheet music includes excerpts only from the Tenor and Bass parts, however, the Soprano and Alto parts do not follow the main melody and therefore lack significance for this illustration. Upon closer analysis, one can see that Schwartz himself mostly opted for monosyllabic words with an occasional multisyllabic one, which gives the performers more ease in their singing and is not as taxing for the audience's processing effort, that would have otherwise been preoccupied with decoding the lengthy and spread multisyllabic words in the already complicated rhythm.

Prostějovský's translation of the chorus reads: "*Pouhý den, tam kde smaragdy září! Pouhý den, na roky vzpomínky mám. Pouhý den, jeden den v kalendáři. Zázitky hýří. Zástupy míří přímo až k nám*" (Schwartz 2019). If we were to analyze the number of syllables in each word, we would clearly see that most of the translation predominantly consists of multisyllabic words. Despite all that, the phrasing is still very natural, seeing as the length of the vowels corresponds to the length of the notes. The semantic correspondence between the Czech and English version is

debatable, especially in the original: “(...) *now that were in here, you’ll know we’ve been here before we are done*” (Schwartz 2003), compared to: “*Zážitky hýří. Zástupy míří přímo až k nám*” (Schwartz 2019), literally translated as *plenty of experience, masses are coming right up to us*, and I believe a clarification from the translator is due.

At 1:44 of the SL recording, the music genre suddenly switches to a classical showtune feel and builds an additional chorus. It is repeated multiple times and from 2:10 onwards, Elphaba and Glinda join in with their own counterpoint melody that accompanies the chorus that the audience has already grown familiar with:

Figure 20: Text comparison, *Wicked, One Short Day*, example 1.

| SL chorus | Elphaba and Glinda |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <i>Who's the mage</i> | <i>One short day</i> |
| <i>Whose major itinerary</i> | <i>In the Emerald City</i> |
| <i>Is making all Oz merrier?</i> | <i>One short day</i> |
| <i>Who's the sage</i> | <i>To have a lifetime of fun</i> |
| <i>Who sagely sailed in to save our posteriors?</i> | |
| <i>Whose enthuse for hot air ballooning</i> | |
| <i>Has all of Oz honeymooning?</i> | |
| <i>Woo</i> | |
| <i>Wiz-n't he wonderful?</i> | |
| <i>Our wonderful wizard!</i> | |

(Schwartz 2003)

Seeing as this is a deliberately chosen technique on the composer’s behalf, the translator should take it into consideration, and may even perform a small-scale phonetic analysis of the coinciding sounds across both vocal parts. Unfortunately, there is no available recording of the TL performance to verify this on without asking

the translator, and the libretto without the sheet music also inevitably falls short due to the complexity of the rhythm that is virtually impossible to pinpoint by ear.

Therefore, the best solution is to conduct an in-person analysis with Prostějovský himself, which will be covered in greater detail in the following section. A similar case of counterpoint can also be found in the song *For Good*, starting at 3:52 onwards, that might require the same consideration, and I will allude to it in the discussion with the translator as well.

9.2.1 *The Translator's Input*

Focusing on the rhythm and corresponding phrasing, I directed Prostějovský's attention to the phrase *pouhý den* and asked for his commentary on the Czech solution. To aid his thinking, he opened his additional notes of translations that were not used in the final product, however, he soon found that he had not noted down any alternatives to consider. He concluded that his final solution must have been governed by the rhythm of the music and the search for a natural sounding equivalent (Prostějovský 2024, INT2), and when I mentioned the phonetic details, i.e., the jump from the diphthong *ou* [ɔʊ] to the word-final high front vowel on the higher note, Prostějovský admitted to not having conducted any such detailed analyses, nevertheless, his further commentary revealed that facilitating the performers had also been one of his decision-making priorities (ibid).

Furthermore, I have addressed the semantic shift and what appeared to be some type of padding in the chorus mentioned in my analysis, and Prostějovský confirmed having simplified the meaning of the section, especially for two reasons. The first was the ease of singing for the performers, with him explicitly naming the choreography as one of the motivations, and the second was the audience's processing effort, claiming that he did not wish to overwhelm it with too much information in an already dense passage (ibid).

While there was no additional in-depth phonetic analysis of the counterpoint singing in Prostějovský's commentary, since he had once again stressed that he does not feel the need to do them during his translation process (ibid), I was still provided with some general recommendations on how to proceed in these specific cases.

If a translator is tasked with translating a counterpoint melody, their main point of focus should be the coordination of the expressed idea with the limitations coming from the notes. This might admittedly require a great deal of experimentation or trial

and error, as there is no given universal formula the translator may use, however, they should not be afraid of any creative idea, since the translation is sure to undergo further fine-tuning upon its performance during the rehearsals (ibid).

Lastly, we focused on the specific verbal content of the previously mentioned part, namely the choir's "*náš čaroděj dobroděj*" (Schwartz 2019) that falls on "*making all Oz merrier*" (Schwartz 2003). At first glance, it is clear that the two lines are no direct equivalents, and I admit having serious doubts about the translatability of *dobroděj* back into English due to its Czech specificity, however, the word can be understood as *well-meaning* despite being a noun. This way, we can see a semantic correlation between the two phrases. Additionally, *čaroděj dobroděj* can be understood as a nod towards a popular Czech cover song of the same name by Václav Neckář, which further brings the foreign work towards the Czech audience.

9.3 No Good Deed

As a fan of this musical, I have always felt that this ambitious song had mostly been overlooked because of the infamous duet between Elphaba and Glinda, *Defying Gravity*, at the end of Act 1. While I understand the overall significance of the song for Elphaba, who has finally accepted her supernatural form, I still believe we should not overlook *No Good Deed* for a myriad of reasons, especially because of the almost opera-like vocal performance that requires expert work from both the translator and the performers.

Based on my understanding of the *Pentathlon Principle*, the translator may be inclined to emphasize the singability of the work and therefore focus more on the ease of singing, which may have a negative effect on the sense and naturalness of the verbal message. Moreover, while the actual execution of the singing falls on the performers, it is the translator's responsibility to provide them with lyrical material that allows them to perform without any obstructions. Let us now take a closer look at the translation itself.

Starting at 0:13 of the SL recording, Elphaba begins reciting a magical spell in a fictional language: "*Eleka nahmen nahmen, ah tum ah tum eleka nahmen*" (Schwartz 2003), which I suppose immediately puts the translator at a decision point. They may follow the SL chanting, or search for a Czech equivalent of a spell to strengthen the fairytale-like aspect of the musical. Prostějovský's translation follows

the source text, and whether this decision was intentional or enforced by the licensing company shall be addressed in the following section.

The first verse consists of Elphaba's desperate pleas for Fiyero's safety, and I have some reservations regarding the naturalness, namely the register and syntax, of the Czech translation. Corresponding to 0:21 and onwards of the SL recording, the target text reads: "*At' je zdráv, at' je živ, nezraněn jako dřív. Bolest žádnou at' nepocítí. Nedej zlu dosti sil, aby v něm našlo cíl. Věky věků i dýl nech jej žít. Jo, dýl nech jej žít!*" (Schwartz 2019). To transfer the meaning of the Czech passage, it can be back-translated as *Let him be healthy, let him live, let him be unharmed like before. Let him feel no pain. Do not give the evil the power to find him. Forever and more, let him live. Yeah, let him live even longer!*

The passive verbal forms of the adjectives *zdráv*, *živ*, and *nezraněn*, together with the archaic adverb *dosti*, signal a more formal register that is not exactly typical of a young witch dealing with strong emotions. Yet, such words are subsequently paired with the vernacular adverb *dýl* that can be most often heard in a young speaker from Prague or Central Bohemia. I understand the reason behind this lexical choice, since it is apparent Prostějovský needed monosyllabic words to fit the rhythm of the original music, however, it was done to the detriment of the TT language form, as I warned against in the second paragraph of this analysis.

Another example, albeit from the domain of syntax, can be found in the passage starting at 0:50: "*Tak k čemu jsou čáry, když nevím, co čtu tady právě*" (Schwartz 2019), which corresponds to the SL: "*Ugh! What good is this chanting? I don't even know what I'm reading.*" (Schwartz 2003). A Czech receiver may find the sentence-final position of the adverb *právě* surprising, seeing as they would have naturally put it before the pronoun *tady*. This could potentially cause confusion among the audience, questioning what the final word was and whether they had decoded it correctly. Nevertheless, I intend on discussing these target text strategies with Prostějovský in person.

At 1:15 of the SL recording, the chorus containing the name of the song is heard for the first time. Prostějovský translates the main motif: "*No good deed goes unpunished*" (Schwartz 2003), as "*přísný trest po zásluhách*" (Schwartz 2019), i.e., *strict punishment after good deeds*. I see no problem with this TT solution, as there is no semantically corresponding monosyllabic alternative to go on the first two notes. On the contrary, the long vowel in the first syllable of *přísný* allows the

performer to fully belt the line in the second chorus at 2:30, which is considerably louder than this first tame encounter with the phrase.

My last observation in this song is the rhyme at 2:56, “(...) *I’m wicked through and through, since I cannot succeed, Fiyero, saving you” (Schwartz 2003) that verges on an assonance between *through and through* and *saving you*. What makes this poetic device so special is the distance that separates it, and the almost unnoticeable marking in the composition of the music, however, a semi-trained ear can be sure to notice it. Prostějovský translates it as: “(...) *do morku kostí zlem jsem celá prolezlá! Fiyero, není, dnes není v silách mých tvou spásou být a záchranou*” (Schwartz 2019), and I admit I find the correct phrasing difficult to pinpoint without the visual representation of the sheet music, nevertheless, a possible link can be felt between the word-final vowels in *kostí* and *není*, although I am convinced that the original position of the assonance would fall on *prolezlá* and *záchranou*, which bear no phonetic link. Alas, a definitive clarification will be provided in the following commentary.*

9.3.1 The Translator’s Input

Continuing with the last strategy mentioned in the translator’s commentary on the previous song in section 9.2.1, bringing the work towards the reader, Prostějovský and I have focused on Elphaba’s magic spell. I assumed the stance of rigid consistency and inquired why the strategy was not used despite Czech having plenty of canonized witch spells to choose from. Originally, I presumed the main reason would be licensing constraints, however, Prostějovský uncovered that aside from palpable time pressure, he felt that using one of the Czech spells, which admittedly are most often used as nursery rhymes, would infantilize the work (Prostějovský 2024, INT2). He compared it to the Medek brothers’ Czech translation of the *Harry Potter* series where the spells have, in fact, retained their English form or have taken on an English-like one.

Another inconsistency that has been addressed is the register variation in Elphaba’s singing. I have explained why her using a youthful and mostly informal register and suddenly switching to an archaic speech may be problematic in terms of stylistics, and Prostějovský’s answer appears to have confirmed my original hypothesis of translators placing too much emphasis on the musical features to the detriment of the naturalness of the text in the previous section. He stated that he is

not opposed to such skips within a character's register, as long as the text falls correctly on the given number of syllables, and that he would even consider the archaic features to be his author style (ibid). Continuing with the naturalness of the TT, I have also mentioned the syntax of the phrase that can be heard at 0:50 of the SL recording, and Prostějovský had once again attributed it to fitting the text to the given number of notes (ibid) with what appeared to be no regard of the audience's processing effort.

In contrast to Low's (2005, 198) hypothesis about translators specifically assigning excessive importance to *rhyme* of all the features of a singable text in section 5.1.3.5, Prostějovský admitted to allowing himself more freedom in the rhyme structure at 2:56 (Prostějovský 2024, INT2), having recognized the rhymes are too far apart to be fully comprehended by the audience. As for the accommodation of the performers, I have brought forward the phonetic details of the key phrase *přísný trest* and expressed my warm regards of his translation as a singer, and Prostějovský confirmed that the phrase had indeed been easy for the performers, although it was not due to a conscious decision of his, instead, it was driven by years of experience (ibid).

9.4 March of The Witch Hunters

Aside from complex musical numbers, *Wicked* also contains shorter intermission songs that connect the overall story together. Oftentimes, this leads to a great degree of intertextuality between the songs that the translator should also be mindful of. Therefore, this analysis will cover the interconnectedness of the songs. When selecting a sample from these in-between musical numbers, I needed to consider the songs I had previously chosen to analyze to properly illustrate the intertextuality. The previously analyzed *No Good Deed* served as a worthy starting point, with *March of the Witch Hunters* directly following it even in terms of musical leitmotifs, while also setting the scene for the following grand number, *For Good*.

Literally being a march, the tempo and melody of the song in the choir parts between 0:04 and 0:14 require the vocal performance to be accentuated on almost every note. This is further emphasized by a fifth interval jump on the phrases *hunt her*, *find her*, and *kill her* (Schwartz 2003), all expressing ill-intent towards Elphaba,

which can be seen in the sheet music arranged by Alex Lacamoire (Schwartz & Lacamoire 2003):

Figure 21: Sheet music, *Wicked, March of The Witch Hunters*, example 1.

(Schwartz & Lacamoire 2003)

This musically strengthens the tension encoded in the verbal message, however, upon a closer analysis, one may notice that the initial *hunt*, *find*, and *kill* fall only on a very short sixteenth note, followed by a longer dotted eighth note on the higher pitch, which may pose a potential risk in the non-English phrasing due to the specificity of the rhythm and melody. However, Prostějovský tackles this with ease by placing almost direct translations *nutné*, *najít*, *zabít* (Schwartz 2019), i.e., *necessary*, *find*, *kill*, on the problematic passages. For once, Czech makes the translator’s job less demanding, and not only that, the vowels in the last two words go from a low to a high position, which also makes the performance easier.

From 0:15 until 0:28, the first instance of intertextuality appears. The melody directly calls back to the chorus of *No Good Deed*, and the choir paraphrases Elphaba’s words via their own interpretation: “*Wickedness must be punished. Evil effectively eliminated (...)*” (Schwartz 2003). Prostějovský’s translation displays a clear link to the preceding song as well: “*Trest má být vždycky krutý. Zlo trest si zaslouží. Nám zlo se hnusí (...)*” (Schwartz 2019), namely in referring back to the punishment in the first sentence, which additionally stresses that the *punishment should always be cruel*. The English phrase *evil effectively eliminated* is then broken up into two short sentences in the Czech translation, i.e., *evil deserves punishment* and *we are disgusted by evil*.

Subsequently at 0:29, the Tin Man is given a recitative part, which we can consider logocentric, since the music is notably diminished and only holds suspense via continuous alternating between two chords. I presume the translator therefore need not limit their work by observing the number of syllables, however, the SL recording switches from chord to chord precisely sixteen times in this part, which does in fact build a musical boundary that influences the text even in this case.

After the Tin Man's solo, the choir repeats the intertextual chorus, and at 1:18, the ensemble explicitly sings the name of the following musical number, *For Good*, where the song's intro contains another case of intertextuality and repeats a section of the Act 1 finale, *Defying Gravity*. Seeing as the connection between *March of the Witch Hunters* and *For Good* is not as smooth, Prostějovský translated the phrase *for good* as: “*Pryč s ním*” (Schwartz 2019), literally meaning *away with it*. I have looked at the finale of the song *For Good*, and at the very end of Elphaba and Glinda's duet, which is once again concluded by the phrase *for good*, the same as *March of the Witch Hunters*, no lexical nor semantic connection has been retained in the Czech translation.

9.4.1 The Translator's Input

Following the structure of my analysis, I have expressed praise at Prostějovský's translation of the fifth interval words, i.e., *hunt her, find her, kill her*, and asked whether the TT solution facilitated an ease of singing in this passage, as I had previously hypothesized. Prostějovský confirmed my theory and said there were zero complaints from the performers (Prostějovský 2024, INT2). The SL verse continues: “*kill the witch*” (Schwartz 2003), and during the commentary, I have noticed an instance of semantically empty padding in the exact position in the TT, “*trest je trest*” (Schwartz 2019), i.e., *punishment is punishment*.

Immediately, Prostějovský and I realized that while the phrase is in fact empty, it mimics the sound of marching drums, and therefore serves an additional aesthetic function, onomatopoeia (Prostějovský 2024, INT2). In a search for a semantically loaded alternative, I suggested *tak kde jde*, which can be translated as *where is she*, however, upon further consideration, Prostějovský said that the two consecutive velar stops in *tak kde* would likely cause trouble for the performers (ibid).

Consequently, I asked about the specifics of Prostějovský's decision process behind using padding and recognizing when it should be used. I suppose the translator should use it for the benefit of the audience when a segment would otherwise be too semantically loaded with little space for the audience to fully process it, as was previously insinuated in section 9.2.1. However, in this case, Prostějovský considered it more of an aid for the translator and said to have noticed the author of the SL work to be doing the same, further adding that a translator should not be criticized for using the same technique as the author, albeit all in reasonable amounts (ibid).

Focusing on the aforementioned intertextuality between the individual songs, Prostějovský and I mapped the precise locations in the ST and then in the TT. The first intertextual connection between *No Good Deed* and *March of the Witch Hunters* was easily understandable across both languages and did not need any additional commentary outside my analysis, with this song being considered a lyrical “call back” to the previous one (ibid). Our attention therefore shifted to the second intertextuality, and we found that Prostějovský had decided to follow the rhyme structure in both songs, *March of the Witch Hunters* and *For Good*, instead of creating an intertextual phrase to be used. The translator stated he was unable to find an adequate intertextual solution, reasoning that the Czech audience would not have had the capacity to appreciate it anyway (ibid), presumably due to it appearing only in these two songs in the form of mere two words.

For some, this could be considered not respecting the author's artistic intention, lowering the value of the translated work in their eyes, however, if we were to analyze the entirety of *Wicked* in terms of its intertextuality and how it is translated, we could see that the work is indeed cohesive across both language versions. Additionally, Prostějovský's one-time diversion was personally approved by the author (ibid), which serves as another sign of the work's quality.

Conclusion

This concludes my exploration of singable translations and the processes behind them. While the existing academic coverage of singable texts does allude to the individual influencing actants, no publication paints a clear image of how the final form of the target text is achieved. The aim of this thesis therefore became to provide a systematic overview of the fragmentary mentions, first in the theatre tradition outside musical theatre by Bassnett (1991) and Aaltonen (1997; 2000), who speak about the processes in the United Kingdom and Finland respectively. Then in the opera-centric music theatre tradition by Apter (1985; 1989), Apter & Herman (1995; 2000; 2016), and Desblache (2007), which then led me through the emergence of academic publications on surtitles to musical-centric music theatre tradition, the main focus of this thesis.

The researcher who broke the metaphoric ice and pointed towards non-operatic music theatre works was Low (2002), albeit still in the context of non-singable surtitles. He had later commented on the specifics of performable song translation in the *Pentathlon Principle* (2005), which I will summarize in the discussion of my findings on singable texts themselves further in the conclusion. The most in-depth coverage of the translation of musicals was done by Mateo (2008; 2012) who described the situation in Spanish theatres, which I had found identical to the situation in Czech theatres. Another great contribution was by Franzon (2008), who had returned to the field once again seven years later to reflect on the latest practice (2015). The same was done also by Low (2013) and Apter & Herman (2016), and the following part of this section will provide an answer to RQ 2 and 3 concerning the actual process behind a singable translation and the influence of all involved human and non-human actants.

As a steppingstone, I used Bassnett's sociological exploration of theatre translation without music, however, I soon understood that her publication is rather limiting for the purpose of this thesis when I noticed her describing the translator as a non-involved actant within the whole process, who is only tasked with producing a literal translation of the work and then completely excluded from the process upon passing the text to the director and the editor. According to Bassnett (1991), the director then analyzes the translator's product and bases their interpretation of the

work on it. Later, the text is given to an editor who transforms the text into the singable form no matter their linguistic education, and the final credit for the linguistic work is given to them, not the translator (ibid). At this point, we can pinpoint two additional influencing actants, the director and the editor.

The director, upon creating their interpretation of the work, can decide to implement some changes. They can either be *acculturative* to raise the relevance of the work on the TL theatre stages and to better appeal to the target audience (Mateo 2008), or *creative* to follow the director's artistic vision (Prostějovský 2024, INT2). In theatre without music, I found that creative changes are generally accepted and a part of standard practice, resulting in updated versions of old and well-known works. In operatic works, such changes are also relatively accepted, with Apter and Herman describing the directors patchworking their own versions of a given work from its previous introductions and translations (Apter & Herman 2016, 59). In musicals, however, this comes down to the provided license, which is another influencing actant.

The acquired license can either be for a replica introduction, or a non-replica one. Michael Prostějovský, one of the interviewed translators, described the difference in the respective approaches. The non-replica staging is nowhere near as limiting as the replica one, and concerns the license for the music, partite, and libretto, with the target language production team being allowed some creative freedom. However, there must be no sign of inspiration directly linked to a replica or the original staging of the work. The replica staging additionally includes the costuming, scenography, and all creative directions, which must be the same as the original production (Prostějovský 2024, INT2). Nevertheless, both stagings, no matter the licensing limitations, are supervised by a controlling actant that will also inevitably influence the translation.

The translation process can be divided into multiple stages, the pre-performance part (Bassnett 1991, 106-107), or as I suggested pre-rehearsal part, and the rehearsal part leading up to the actual performance of the translated work. In the pre-rehearsal part, a decision will be made regarding the translator's further involvement. They will either assume the role of a translator–mediator or translator–creator (Aaltonen 1997, 92), with the Czech translators' accounts suggesting that the translator is more likely to be involved in the introduction process (Novotný 2024, INT1; Prostějovský 2024, INT2), and therefore assumes the role of a creator.

At this point, the target text can in fact be edited by actants other than the translator and the director (Novotný 2024, INT1). According to Tomáš Novotný, the second interviewed translator, the translator can expect input from the music director (ibid), which is in agreement with the accounts of Apter and Herman (1995, 28), and also the actors or singers (Novotný 2024, INT1), whom I had originally estimated to have the least influence or authority in my hypothetical translation process in section 4.1.1 and 4.2. It became more than apparent that the translation process was indeed a cooperative effort on the behalf of the TL production team.

To ensure that the process is on track, controlling actants join the TL production team. Right at the end of the pre-rehearsal part or shortly after the rehearsals commence, the text is back-translated by an independent back-translator and submitted for approval by either the copyright holders, license providers, or the original source language production team (Aaltonen 1997, 91; Novotný 2024, INT1; Prostějovský 2024, INT2). This involves further editing of the translation, which breaches the territory of the actual rehearsal part of the process, with Prostějovský stressing that it is the composer and lyricist the translator truly answers to, not the TL team or director (Prostějovský 2024, INT2).

The list of the influencing human actants may therefore include *the director, the editor, the music director or conductor, the actors, i.e., the target language production team*, as well as the *target audience*, and also *the copyright holders, the license providers, and the source language production team* as the controlling actants, and lastly a *back-translator*.

The non-human influencing actants also bring us to RQ1 and the specifics of a singable text. Overall, Low's *Pentathlon Principle* (2005) still remains unconquered. Both the translators' ideas and the academic coverage (Apter 1989; Gorlée 1997; Low 2005; Franzon 2008; Apter & Herman 2016) point towards the parameters of *singability, sense, naturalness, rhythm, and rhyme* as the most encompassing. In the discussion of *singability*, both translators agreed with Apter's (1989) phonetic recommendations, although Novotný described it as superficial (Novotný 2024, INT1). Prostějovský added that such a phonetic analysis is a great starting point for beginner translators, and that it had become subconscious throughout his years of practice (Prostějovský 2024, INT2).

Sense can be connected to the importance of the audio-verbal content within the whole system. The work may either background it, which is most often the case of operas, and the original ideas therefore need not to be conveyed in most detail, or it can be foregrounded. This is more likely in a musical, and special attention should be paid to the transfer of the intended ideas. However, regarding the discussion of the musico- or logocentric nature of a given musical work in section 5.1.1 and 5.1.3, it was concluded that a musical cannot be situated at any pole of the continuum due to its disunited genre and song composition. *Naturalness* was discussed in the context of text-flow, stylization, and its reception based on the audience's processing effort (Low 2005; Levý 2011). A generalization can therefore be made; the higher the processing effort, the lower the impression of the work.

Rhythm, however, posed some issues in theory. Low (2005) proposed that it is not as sacrosanct as was thought, and that it can be adjusted. Other theoreticians (Franzon 2008; Apter & Herman 2016) soon followed in his footsteps, but I thought that this sudden change of thought required a detailed analysis. I found that Low had uncritically based his views on the didactic coverage of song translation as a language learning activity by Andrew Kelly (1992), where such changes are naturally accepted. In contrast, the views on *rhyme* differed among the translators. Novotný interpreted them as the translator's duty towards the original author and placed great importance on their retention (Novotný 2024, INT1), while Prostějovský did not assign them any special importance among the other singable features (Prostějovský 2024, INT2).

Regarding the quality of a singable translation, both translators (Novotný 2024, INT1; Prostějovský 2024, INT2) as well as Low (2005) saw the *functionality* of the work as the key assessment criterion, with *humor* playing an additional role in Novotný's (2024, INT1) view. Prostějovský's (2024, INT2) detailed opinion was aligned with Levý's *dual norm of translation* (Levý 2011, 60), which was admittedly surprising, since he had not received any official training in translation theory. Additionally, Prostějovský mentioned Tim Rice's assessment method of a translation's quality that does not involve the knowledge of the target language, which is described in full in section 7.2.2. If I were the one to evaluate the translations of *The Last Five Years* and *Wicked*, using the knowledge of both languages, I would consider them both as functional and therefore *successful*.

To complete my list of influencing actants, the non-human ones would include *the pre-existing music* and its *rhythm* and *composition*, *the author's intended message*, *the naturalness of the target language*, and lastly the *functionality*. However, the translation process as it is described cannot be taken as an absolute representation of all processes behind singable translations neither in the Czech Republic nor the rest of the world, even though the existing theory appears to support it. Neither should it be understood as a guide for an introduction of a foreign music theatre work, since there might be factors at play that fall beyond the scope of a translation-focused thesis.

Lastly, a comment on what I had learned while working on this thesis. I am now sure that theory can be broadened by including the accounts of professional translators, although it may require the author of the thesis to go great lengths at relating the professionals' findings to the existing theory and terminology, which still has some gaps even to this day. I believe that song translation including music theatre translation will find its rightful place among the more popular modes of audiovisual translation, and that Czech translation scholars and students alike will make the most out of our specific performable world of translation and further enrich the colorful interdisciplinary area that is worthy of more attention.

Summary

Cílem této diplomové práce je přiblížit českou tradici zpívatelných překladů, která se společně se španělskou tradicí zcela vymyká světovým přístupům k překladu písňových i divadelních textů. Hudební divadla v ostatních zemích se nejčastěji spoléhají na divadelní obdobu titulků, tzv. *surtitly*. Česká divadla se k této méně finančně náročné strategii uchylují zejména při překladu operních děl, avšak muzikálové překlady jsou tvořeny tak, aby byly v cílovém jazyce ihned zpívatelné. Proto je hlavním zaměřením této práce muzikálová tvorba.

Navzdory růstu popularity audiovizuálního překladu se této oblasti v translatologii nedostává přílišné pozornosti, a to jak v českém, tak ve světovém prostředí. Abych zaplnila tuto pomyslnou mezeru, rozhodla jsem se spojit již existující a poměrně omezené akademické zdroje s názory a zkušenostmi českých muzikálových překladatelů, v tomto případě Michaela Prostějovského a Tomáše Novotného, za pomoci polostrukturovaných rozhovorů. Tato práce proto slouží i jako osvěta tohoto opomíjeného typu audiovizuálního překladu a jejím výstupem je systematická rešerše překladatelského procesu a jednotlivých aktérů s vlivem na konečnou podobu cílového textu, který je dále z hlediska zpívatelnosti podrobně analyzován. Nejprve vycházím z poznatků britské translatoložky Susan Basnettové (1991) ohledně překladu dramatu, jenž rozšiřuji o práci finské teatroložky Sirkku Aaltonenové (1997; 2000), a sestavuji dle nich prvotní návrh možného průběhu překladatelského procesu. Tyto zdroje používám jako základy, na kterých v práci dále stavím již v kontextu divadla hudebního.

Zde postupně čerpám nejprve ze zdrojů zaměřených na zpívatelný překlad operního textu, ačkoliv v praxi tato metoda není zcela populární. Postupně se obracím na překladatelskou dvojici Ronnie Apterovou a Marka Hermana (1995; 2000; 2016), jenž tvoří translatologickou literaturu na základě své dlouholeté překladatelské praxe. Dále navazuji na translatoložku Lucile Desblacheovou (2007; 2019), která mě přivádí k problematice důležitosti textové složky v rámci celého systému hudebně-divadelního díla, od níž se odvozuje daný způsob překladu. Tato otázka byla problematická již při prvotním uvádění operních děl (Gallová 2006, citováno v Šulcová 2021) a v teorii je podrobně řešena Dindou Gorléeovou (1997) a Peterem Lowem (2005).

Hudebně-divadelní dílo lze označit jako *muzikocentrické* či *logocentrické* na základě sémiotického kanálu, který má při převodu zamýšleného významu přednost. Operní díla je možné poměrně snadno zařadit jako muzikocentrická, jelikož jsou považována spíše za žánr hudební a ne divadelní (Mateo 2012). Textový obsah v nich nebude hrát tak klíčovou roli, jako v muzikálu, a proto může být přeložen mimo jeviště prostřednictvím surtitlů. Černobílé označení muzikálů jako opak opery, tj. logocentrická díla, však není na místě, jelikož nespádají do jednoho konkrétního hudebního žánru. Jejich textový obsah může hýbat dějem, ale zároveň je možné ho případně upozadit, aby vynikla hudební stránka písně. Překlady muzikálů tak nejčastěji vznikají ve zpívatelné podobě. Dle Desblacheové toto souvisí i s typem překladu, se kterým se diváci nejčastěji setkávají při sledování ostatních audiovizuálních materiálů, např. televizního vysílání. Jejich očekávání se poté přenáší i do divadelního světa (Desblache 2019) a produkční týmy v rámci snahy o dosažení největšího zájmu o uváděný titul v cílové kultuře (Mateo 2008) přizpůsobují i jazykovou prezentaci daného díla.

Pro uvedení díla je však nutné získat licenci a autorská práva. Zde se rozhoduje mezi tzv. *replica* a *non-replica* inscenací. Replica inscenace obnáší koupi licence nejen pro hudbu a libreto, ale také celkovou režii, scénografii a kostýmy, jenž musí být identické s původní inscenací. Non-replica inscenace s licencí pro libreto a hudbu je nejen méně svazující, ale také méně finančně náročná (Prostějovský 2024, INT2), a proto je na českých jevištích užívaná nejběžněji.

To mě přivádí k působení konkrétních aktérů ovlivňujících cílový text. Dle Bassnettové (1991) oslovený překladatel nejprve vypracuje prvotní verzi překladu, která slouží jako interpretační východisko pro režiséra. Ve Spojeném království je velmi pravděpodobné, že tato první verze překladu není ihned zpívatelná, a do požadované podoby je dále přetvořena editorem (ibid). V českém prostředí tuto roli dle Tomáše Novotného (2024, INT1) a Michaela Prostějovského (2024, INT2) nejčastěji dále zaujímá oslovený překladatel, což je v souladu s dichotomií Aaltenové (1997), jež rozlišuje mezi překladatelem–zprostředkovatelem a překladatelem–tvůrcem, přičemž zapojený překladatel je vnímán jako tvůrce. Tento překladatel poté při zkouškách úzce spolupracuje s hudební režii či dirigentem, samotným režisérem či režisérkou a hereckým obsazením.

Avšak během přípravy inscenace je nutné získat souhlas s uváděnou formou překladu, nejčastěji od licenční společnosti, držitelů práv, či přímo od původních autorů. Překlad je proto dalším nezávislým překladatelem přeložen zpět do výchozího jazyka, aby mu kontrolní aktéři porozuměli a mohli ho ohodnotit. Tito aktéři se poté mohou dále zapojit do inscenačního procesu, aby dohlédli, zda převáděné dílo odpovídá autorovu původnímu záměru (Prostějovský 2024, INT2).

Co se týče samotného zpívatelného textu, přistupuji k němu nejprve prostřednictvím poznatků Ronnie Apterové (1985; 1989) a přehledu prvotních translatologických úvah o překladu písňového textu v práci Dindy Gorléeové (1997). Dále se přesouvám k dosavadnímu vrcholu teorie zpívatelného překladu, *Pentathlon Principle* Petera Lowa (2005), který rozšiřuji o poznatky Jiřího Levého (2011), novodobé přehledy Johana Franzona (2008) a knihu Ronnie Apterové ve spolupráci s Markem Hermanem (2016). I samotní překladatelé považovali Lowovu práci za výstižnou (Novotný 2024, INT1; Prostějovský 2024, INT2).

Low (2005) vymezuje parametry hudebního textu na *zpívatelnost*, *smysl* či *význam*, *přirozenost*, *rytmus* a *rýmy*. *Zpívatelnost* jsem rozšířila o fonetická doporučení Ronnie Apterové (1989), s nimiž souhlasili i překladatelé, ačkoliv je v takto podrobné podobě označili v praxi spíše za nadbytečné (Novotný 2024, INT1) a jako vhodnou pomůcku pro začínající překladatele (Prostějovský 2024, INT2). *Smysl* souvisí s důležitostí textu v celém díle a *přirozenost* se váže ke skladbě textu a jeho recepci ze strany publika.

Rytmus byl v teorii problematický, jelikož o něm Low (2005) tvrdil, že je možné ho měnit. K tomuto závěru došel na základě nekritického přebrání teorie Andrewa Kellyho (1992), jenž se překladu písní věnoval v rámci osvojování cizího jazyka, kde jsou takové změny povolené. Lowova (2005) práce i tak měla velký dopad a po její publikaci došlo ke změně smýšlení nad dodržováním rytmu hned u několika klíčových autorů (Franzon 2008; Apter a Herman 2016). U *rýmů* se naopak rozcházel překladatelé. Novotný (2024, INT1) je bral jako autorský záměr, který je záhodno co nejvíce dodržovat, zatímco Prostějovský (2024, INT2) je nevnímal jako podmínku úspěšného překladu.

V rozhovorech s překladateli jsem hovořila i o jejich konkrétních překladech, jež jsem v praktické části práce analyzovala. Díky rozhovorům jsem získala náhled i za konečnou podobu překladů, jelikož jsem se mohla doptat na případné externí vlivy nebo požádat o dovysvětlení užití strategie. Tato práce mě přesvědčila,

že teorii lze rozšířit i pozorováním profesionálů, ačkoliv je posléze nutné jejich zkušenosti nabyté letitou praxí velmi pečlivě vztáhnout k již existující terminologii a teorii, která má jisté mezery. Věřím, že zpívatelný překlad písňových textů i v rámci hudebního divadla si časem v oblasti audiovizuálního překladu získá své zasloužené místo a že čeští translatologové a studenti využijí místní specifické tradice k obohacení této rozmanité interdisciplinární oblasti.

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Attachments

The attachments of this thesis include two signed copies of the translators' explicit consent to participate in this research and two signed copies of the translated interview guides. Additionally, copies of the analyzed texts and sheet music from the musicals can be found in the attached files alongside the recorded and edited⁶ interviews. The attachments are available via the [Univerzita Palackého information system](#).

Annotation

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| Number of Pages: | 139 |
| Number of Words: | 43,191 |
| Number of Characters: | 268,952 |
| Number of Attachments: | One file |

Anotace

| | |
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| Počet stran: | 139 |
| Počet slov: | 43 191 |
| Počet znaků: | 268 952 |
| Počet příloh: | Jedna složka |

⁶ The conversation-like nature of the interviews may have occasionally allowed the interviewer and interviewees to go off-topic, and the information not directly linked to the topics covered in this thesis was edited out.

Abstract

The thesis aims to describe the translation process behind a singable translation of a music theatre work with special focus on musicals. It maps the human and non-human actants involved in the process and their influence over the finished textual product. To pinpoint the precise actants, the thesis first builds on the academic coverage of theatre translation without the musical aspect, then it slowly moves towards the translation of opera, and lastly compares the pre-existing accounts with the translation of musicals. It also delves into the specific parameters of a singable text and how such a constrained audio-medial text can be translated, which is later analyzed in the context of the actual translation practice in the Czech Republic via semi-structured interviews with two professional translators.

Key words: music theatre translation, song translation, singable translation, singability, musical, translation process

Abstrakt

Cílem této diplomové práce je popsat překladatelský proces v kontextu hudebního divadla, kde v případě muzikálů nejčastěji vznikají zpívatelné překlady písňových textů. Práce se zaměřuje na jednotlivé aktéry zapojené do inscenačního procesu, kteří mohou mimo překladatele ovlivnit konečnou podobu cílového textu. Aktéry nejprve pozoruje v teorii divadelního překladu, již poté rozšiřuje o poznatky z oblasti divadla hudebního, kde postupně přechází od opery ke kýženému muzikálu. Dále je v práci analyzován zpívatelný písňový text jako samotný a také je na něj nahlíženo z hlediska možných překladatelských strategií. V neposlední řadě je teorie doplněna o polostrukturované rozhovory se dvěma profesionálními překladateli muzikálů, kteří hovoří o svých zkušenostech z praxe.

Klíčová slova: překlad hudebního divadla, překlad písňového textu, hudební překlad, zpívatelný překlad, zpívatelnost, muzikál, překladatelský proces