

We are excited for you and your students to attend the Houston Symphony at Jones Hall in October! This concert concludes our Bohemian Rhapsody Festival, celebrating the generations of Czech composers who worked before, during, and after Czechoslovakia won independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918. Headlining this performance is violin virtuoso James Ehnes performing Antonín Dvořák's *Violin Concerto in A minor*. You will also hear Vítězslava Kaprálová's *Military Sinfonietta* and Leoš Janáček's *Sinfonietta*, both pieces that celebrate Czechoslovakian nationalism.

Consider utilizing the resources below to enhance your students' concert experience and complement your current classroom objectives.

## [Houston Symphony Video Program Notes](#)

### I. VÍTĚZSLAVA KAPRÁLOVÁ'S *MILITARY SINFONIETTA*

[Audio Recording with Score](#)

[Mini documentary about Vítězslava Kaprálová](#)

*(This piece expresses my) "emotional relationship to questions of national existence, a subject permeating the consciousness of the nation at the time. The composition does not represent a battle cry, but it depicts the psychological need to defend that which is most sacred to the nation."*

Vítězslava Kaprálová

Things to Consider:

- What instruments does Kaprálová utilize to create sharp "militaristic" contrast throughout the piece?
- What role does your instrument play in this piece?

### II. ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK'S *VIOLIN CONCERTO IN A MINOR*

*"I myself have gone to the simple, half-forgotten tunes of the Bohemian peasants for hints in my most serious works. Only in this way can a musician express the true sentiment of his people."*

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

**Videos to Learn More:**

[What is a Concerto?](#)

[Hilary Hahn - Dvořák's Violin Concerto in a nutshell](#)

[Dvořák - Violin Concerto - Mov.1 Analysis](#)

Things to Listen for and Consider:

- This piece contains multiple deviations from the traditional concerto form, including the absence of a full orchestral exposition in movement 1 and the lack of a pause between the first and second movements. What other deviations from traditional form do you recognize?

- Movement 3 is said to be based on Slavic folk dances, specifically the [furiant](#) (opening and closing sections) and [dumka](#) (middle section). The linked videos are performances of Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances*, a series of 16 orchestral pieces inspired by the rhythms and styles of Slavic folk music. What elements of Slavic dance music do you hear in movement 3 of Dvořák's violin concerto?

### III. LEOŠ JANÁČEK'S *SINFONIETTA*

#### Sinfonietta

- I. Allegretto (Fanfare)
- II. Andante--Allegretto (The Castle, Brno)
- III. Moderato (The Queen's Monastery, Brno)
- IV. Allegretto (The Street Leading to the Castle)
- V. Andante con moto (The Town Hall, Brno)

Each of the movements in *Sinfonietta* was inspired by a different building in Brno, a city in the South Moravian Region of the Czech Republic.

Click [here](#) to find a video that visits many of the sites that inspired this piece.

Throughout this piece, Janacek uses ostinato. One of the most famous examples of ostinato in *Sinfonietta* is found at the beginning of [Movement 4](#). We've included the score on the next page. Try to play the ostinato on your instrument!

You can also:

- Experiment as a group. How does this ostinato sound different with different instruments/combinations of instruments?
- Listen and identify. Listen to the movement and count how many times you hear this ostinato played. How many different variations do you hear?

# IV. Allegretto

Ostinato Excerpt

LEOŠ JANÁČEK

C instruments



Bb instruments



F instruments



Eb instruments



We are looking forward to seeing you all at Jones Hall soon!