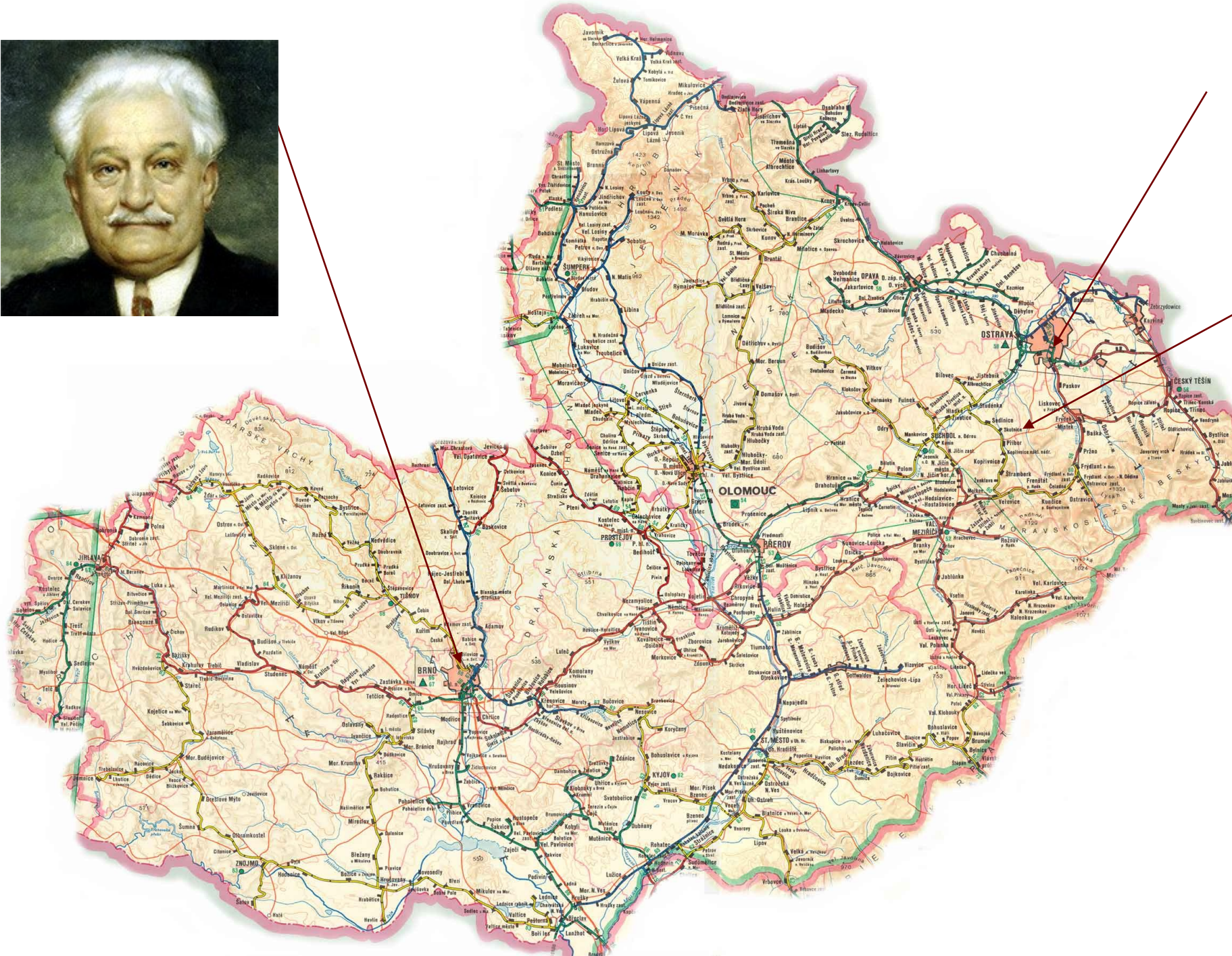


## Leoš Janáček

(born in Hukvaldy 1854,  
died in Moravská Ostrava 1928)

„Czech composer. His reputation outside Czechoslovakia and German-speaking countries was first made as an instrumental composer, with a small number of chamber and orchestral pieces written between his operas, which he considered his main work. The balance has now been largely redressed and he is regarded not only as a Czech composer worthy to be ranked with Smetana and Dvořák, but also as one of the most substantial, original and immediately appealing opera composers of the 20th century.“ (GROVE)



- 1865: Augustinian 'Queen's' Monastery in Old Brno; chorister (so called Modráčci)  
Choirmaster of the monastery: Pavel Křížkovský (Janáček's teacher)
- 1874-5: Study at the Prague organ school (Skuherský)
- Since 1877: choirmaster of the Beseda brněnská (turned into mixed choir)  
Mozart's Requiem (1878); Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* (1879)
- Introduced works by Dvořák (Dvojzpěvy, Serenade for strings in late 70.)

- 1879-1880: studies at Leipzig Conservatory
- Since 1880: teaching, ethnological (collecting folk music in various regions of Moravia) and performance activities
- Since 1887: operatic trials (Šárka)

- *Její pastorkyňa* (3rd operatic work)
- „*Jenůfa* was a very different work from its predecessor. The success of its première in Brno (21 January 1904) was however probably due more to its Moravian setting than to the provincial audience’s awareness of its stature. The performances suffered from a tiny and inadequate orchestra and Janáček, moreover, made substantial alterations before the work was published (1908). He had submitted both *The Beginning of a Romance* and *Jenůfa* to the Prague National Opera before settling for Brno premières. Karel Kovařovic, chief conductor at Prague, eventually went to see *Jenůfa* at Brno but still declined to take it up; possibly he remembered Janáček’s scathing criticism (jw XV/70) of his own opera *The Bridegrooms* many years earlier (1887).“ (GROVE)
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Am7u8n3IYZU>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zeh2GPmbKtc&feature=>



## Late works

- Kát'a Kabanová (1920-21)
- Liška Bystrouška / Cunning little Vixen (1922-23)
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPSiQaujbTY&feature=related>
- First string quartet: 1923
- Glagolitic mass 1926
- Sinfonietta 1926

- „... His fame continued to grow. While *Jenůfa* was performed in dozens of German opera houses, *Kát'a Kabanová* began to penetrate into Germany with performances in Cologne (1922, under Klemperer) and Berlin (1926). His native Hukvaldy unveiled a plaque in July 1926, and on 10 February 1927 he was elected, together with Schoenberg and Hindemith, a member of the Prussian Academy of Arts. The Sinfonietta began to be widely known; Klemperer conducted performances in 1927 in Wiesbaden, New York and Berlin. The *Glagolitic Mass*, which received its première in Brno in December 1927, was performed in Prague in 1928. Meanwhile Janáček began work on his last opera, *Z mrtvého domu* ('From the House of the Dead') jw I/11, and Janáček's friendship with Kamila Stösslová moved on to a more intense level. ...



- The new state of Janáček's relationship with his beloved Kamila Stösslová was celebrated in his String Quartet no.2 *Listy důvěrné* ('Intimate Letters') jw VII/13 which, as he graphically put it, had been written in fire, unlike earlier works 'written only in hot ash' (letter to Stösslová, 18–19 May 1928). The quartet was composed in a few weeks (29 January–19 February 1928) as a break from *From the House of the Dead*, which he was finding increasingly oppressive, though by the time of his regular summer holiday in Luhačovice on 1 July 1928 the opera had been completed in autograph, copied out by his two trusted copyists, and Janáček had checked through the first two acts.

- 1928 Hukvaldy: „During one of their expeditions Janáček caught a chill, which rapidly developed into pneumonia. On 10 August he was taken to the nearest large town, Moravská Ostrava, where he died at 10 a.m. on Sunday 12 August. His funeral, held in Brno on 15 August, was a large public event at which the final scene of *The Cunning Little Vixen* was played. Shortly after his death his Second String Quartet was given publicly (Janáček had been present at private performances); in April 1930 *From the House of the Dead* received its première in a much-revised version prepared by Janáček’s pupils Břetislav Bakala and Osvald Chlubna. Zdenka Janáčková died ten years after her husband, in 1938; Kamila Stösslová died in 1935.“