



# Janacek: Years of a Life: (1854-1914) The Lonely Blackbird v. 1

*John Tyrrell*

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## **Janacek: Years of a Life: (1854-1914) The Lonely Blackbird v. 1** John Tyrrell

John Tyrrell's biography of the Leos Janacek is the culmination of a life's work in the field. It stands upon his existing documentary studies of Janacek's operas and translations of other key sources and his examination of thousands of still unpublished letters and other documents in the Janacek archive in Brno. Altogether it provides the most detailed account of Janacek's life in any language and offers new views of Janacek as composer, writer, thinker and human being. Volume 1, which goes up to the outbreak of the First World War and Janacek's sixtieth birthday in the summer of 1914, consists of chronological chapters providing a straightforward account of Janacek's life year by year and another forty contextual chapters. Topics include on-going sequences ('Music as autobiography I', etc.; 'Janacek's knowledge of opera I', etc.) and individual chapters on Janacek as a teacher, as a theorist, as an music ethnographer, on his speech-melody theory, his relationship to particularly influential operas (Tchaikovsky's Queen of Spades, Charpentier's Louise), on his mentors (such as Antonin Dvorak) and his betes noires (such as Karel Kovarovic). This is a particular feature are the specially commissioned chapters on Janacek's health by Dr Stephen Lock (one of the editors of the Oxford Illustrated Companion to Medicine, OUP 1994 and 2001, editor of the British Medical Journal, 1975-91, and a Janacek enthusiast since the early postwar broadcasts on the Third Programme), and on Janacek's earnings and finances by Dr Jiri Zahradka (curator of the Janacek archive in Brno, and editor of authentic editions of Sarka and The Excursions of Mr Broucek).

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