



NATIONAL  
MUSEUM



# FAMOUS CZECH COMPOSERS

BEDŘICH SMETANA 1824—1884

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK 1841—1904

LEOŠ JANÁČEK 1854—1928

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ 1890—1959

Authors  
SANDRA BERGMANNOVÁ  
VERONIKA VEJVODOVÁ

Co-authors  
ALEŠ BŘEZINA  
JIŘÍ ZAHŘÁDKA

Production  
MARTIN MUSIL

Graphic design and layout  
PETR ŠTĚPÁN –  
SUPERLATIVEWORKS

Institutions  
MORAVIAN MUSEUM (JANÁČEK ARCHIVE – JA MZM, DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE HISTORY – ODD MZM)  
TOWN MUSEUM AND GALLERY POLIČKA / BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ CENTRE (MMG POLIČKA)  
NATIONAL MUSEUM – ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK MUSEUM (NM-MAD)  
NATIONAL MUSEUM – BEDŘICH SMETANA MUSEUM (NM-MBS)  
NATIONAL MUSEUM – CZECH MUSEUM OF MUSIC (NM-ČMH)  
NATIONAL THEATRE (ND PRAGUE)  
NATIONAL MORAVIAN-SILESIA THEATRE (NDM)  
PAUL SACHER STIFTUNG, BASEL (PSS)  
REGIONAL MUSEUM IN LITOMYŠL (RML)

Graphic production  
PINK

Illustrations  
ALEXEY KLYUYKOV

English translation  
HT INTERNATIONAL s. r. o.

Proofreading  
ADAM PRENTIS

Marketing  
EVA RUFEROVÁ

Public relations  
LENKA BOUČKOVÁ  
KRISTÝNA ZIKMUNDOVÁ

Video  
JAKUB ŠEDÝ  
PAVEL ŠEVČÍK – STUDIO PURPURE



## BEDŘICH SMETANA

“I still want to give the nation what I owe to it and what I carry in my heart – works of great volume – to do so, in my sad state, I must keep all my strength!”

Bedřich Smetana is rightly considered the founder of Czech national music. Born as the son of a brewer of the castle brewery in Litomyšl in 1824, despite his considerable talent, he had to work hard to persuade his father to let him start his musical career. After graduating, he began to make a living as a pianist and a tutor with aristocratic families, and from 1848 he worked at his own musical institute in Prague.

He gained his reputation in Gothenburg, Sweden, from where he returned after five years in 1861 to endeavour to professionalise musical life in Bohemia. He co-founded associations, was elected mayor of the Music Department of *Umělecká beseda* (Artists' Association), worked as a chief conductor of the Provisional Theatre since 1866 and played an important role in the birth of the National Theatre.

His opera *Dalibor* was premièred on 16 May 1868, the day of the foundationstone laying ceremony of the National Theatre, and at the opening event of the National Theatre on 11 June 1881, and at the reopening ceremony on 18 November 1883, *Libuše*, ceremonial opera, was performed.

He created music as an expression of a new conception of art and artistic progress. After losing his hearing in 1874, he could no longer be culturally or pedagogically active. He lived in Jabkenice since 1876, where he composed his most important works, among which was a cycle of symphonic poems *My Country*.

Bedřich Smetana married twice and had six daughters. Three of them, Žofie, Zdenka and Božena lived to their adult age.

The première of the opera took place on 16 March 1938 in Prague at the National Theatre under the direction of Václav Talich.

1924

Première of the opera  
*The Cunning Little Vixen*  
at *Na hradbách* Theatre in Brno

1938

The *Martinůs* at the première  
of *Juliette* in Prague



## OPERA

### LEOŠ JANÁČEK / *THE CUNNING LITTLE VIXEN*

Leoš Janáček is one of the twenty most played opera composers in the world. *The Cunning Little Vixen* belongs to the five regularly performed Janáček's operas.

The stories of *The Cunning Little Vixen* were originally published in 1920 as an episodic novel in *Lidové noviny*. Their author, writer and editor Rudolf Těsnohlídek, wrote them based on cheerful drawings by the painter Stanislav Lolek. Janáček did not get to work on the opera until 1922, he first had to adapt Těsnohlídek's model into an opera libretto.

The première on 6 November 1924 at the *Na hradbách* Theatre in Brno was a great success, with an excellent musical production by conductor František Neumann, a humorous direction by Ota Zitek and an imaginative design by the painter Eduard Milén.

### BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ / *JULIETTE (THE KEY TO DREAMS)*

Musical theatre was one of Bohuslav Martinů's greatest passions. His central idea was to supplement the development of Czech musical theatre with those components which, in his opinion, the Czech national revival neglected.

The stage work reflects Martinů's ability to express any situation, from grotesque to surrealist dreaminess to strong social drama. For the lyrical opera *Juliette* from 1937, the composer chose a surrealistic sujet based on a text by George Neveux, in which people lack memory. According to Martinů, Michel's desire for Juliette, the search for her lost song, the love for the girl constantly escaping somewhere, expresses:

“a very old human problem: What is a person, who am I, what are you, what is true?”

1830

Little Bedřich performs for the first time in Litomyšl

1844

Smetana as a teacher of the children of Leopold, Count of Thun

1848

The composer in front of his first music institute in Prague

1849

Married for the first time to Kateřina Kolářová

1860

Smetana with his second wife Bettina Ferdinandi

1868

Regatta to celebrate the laying of the foundation stone of the National Theatre

1874

The composer went completely deaf in the autumn, but kept composing very actively until 1883



## ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

“...and despite the fact that I was involved in the big music world quite substantially, I will remain just what I have always been – a simple Czech musician.”

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904), son of a butcher and innkeeper from a village called Nelahozeves, became one of the most famous Czech composers. He went to England a total of nine times, to conduct his own works. He became famous mainly for his three-year stay in the United States, where he worked as the director of the National conservatory of music of America in New York.

His marriage with Anna Čermáková brought nine children, six of whom lived to their adult age. A happy family background, a solid working regime and contractual obligations with important European publishers enabled the composer to produce more than 200 pieces during his lifetime. Dvořák's music is rooted in Czech musicality and is extremely rich in terms of musical motifs.

His major works, such as *Stabat Mater*, *Requiem* or *Symphony No. 9 in E minor "From the New World"* are in the permanent repertoire of world orchestras. As for his operas, *Rusalka*, based on Hans Christian Andersen's story about the little mermaid, conquered the world.

The core theme of Dvořák's compositions is faith and hope through which the author could overcome initial deep sorrow, as is reflected in his gravest work – *Stabat Mater* where he revisits the deaths of his three young children.

During his life, the composer received great recognition at home and abroad. He received honorary doctorates in Prague and Cambridge and orders from Emperor Francis Joseph I: 3rd Class Order of the Iron Crown as well as the honorary badge Litteris et Artibus. His funeral in May 1904 was a society-wide event.

1866

The première of *The Bartered Bride*

1901

Růžena Maturová during the première of *Rusalka* at the National Theatre



## OPERA

### BEDŘICH SMETANA / *THE BARTERED BRIDE*

Bedřich Smetana's musical drama oeuvre comprises eight operas. Through the thematic and genre diversity and choice of the Czech language, the composer contributed to the ideology of the national revival.

*The Bartered Bride* was composed as his second opera. The première, directed by the composer himself, took place on 30 May 1866 at the Provisional Theatre. The opera was finalised in 1870. Thanks to Smetana's music, a simple country story about a deceived matchmaker and the victory of faithful love has been a generally accepted model of the Czech National Opera.

After its performance in Vienna in 1892, *The Bartered Bride* was introduced, among other places, in New York with Emmy Destinn in the role of Mařenka in 1909. The opera is still performed on leading stages abroad.

### ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK / *RUSALKA*

Although Dvořák composed a total of eleven operas during his lifetime, only *Rusalka* prevailed on world stages.

*Rusalka* was written at the end of Dvořák's life, the period when the composer focused on opera (other operas *The Devil and Kate* and *Armida*). *Rusalka*'s uniqueness lies in the congenial combination of Jaroslav Kvapil's libretto and matured Dvořák's musical style. The plot of the opera is based on the *Little Mermaid* by H. Ch. Andersen, Fouquet's *Undine* and Hauptmann's *Sunken Bell*.

The first representative of *Rusalka* at the successful première at the National Theatre in 1901 was the soprano Růžena Maturová, the prince was acted by Bohumil Pták, the orchestra of the National Theatre was conducted by Karel Kovařovic.

1853

Antonín Dvořák as a boy in his home village of Nelahozeves

1862–1871

Dvořák is employed as a violist in the orchestra of the Provisional Theatre in Prague under the baton of Bedřich Smetana

1864

Dvořák begins working for the Čermák family in Prague-Florenc as a piano teacher

1873

Dvořák getting married to Anna Čermáková in the Church of St Peter at Poříčí

1884

Dvořák visits London for the first time with the publisher Alfred Littleton

1892

Dvořák's arrival in New York to take up the office of headmaster of the National Conservatory of Music of America



# LEOŠ JANÁČEK

“Is it one’s purpose, a Czech person’s purpose, to just sit around and do nothing? Shouldn’t we have such a lustre of culture, artistic wealth that would render us being first, albeit small?”

Leoš Janáček, one of the most remarkable composers of the 20th century. Although he was born deep in the nineteenth century, his work is one of the most progressive musical phenomena of the twentieth century.

The son of a Hukvaldy teacher has a life-long connection with Brno. Throughout his life he was met with an unfavourable fate. His work was ridiculed and despised. He faced many attacks both from his city, Brno, and Prague; his personal life was marked by the deaths of his children and lack of understanding from his loved ones. He waited for recognition until his 62 years of age, which is probably why his masterpieces were created in the last years of his life.

This “great old age” of Janáček’s brought operas such as *Káťa Kabanová*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *The Makropulos Affair* and *From the House of the Dead*, but also the *Sinfonietta* and the *Glagolitic Mass*. Janáček’s sudden death in 1928 interrupted the unprecedented influx of creative energy.

With his unique musical language, he became one of the most played opera composers in the world. Janáček’s literary oeuvre as much as his theoretical treatises are also exceptional. In 1925 he graduated with the first honorary doctorate of Masaryk University, in 1927 he was appointed a member of the Prussian Academy of Arts together with Arnold Schönberg and Paul Hindemith, and a year later King Albert of Belgium awarded him the Knighthood of King Leopold.

1903

Death of his daughter Olga and the composition of the opera *Jenůfa*

1912

Martinů’s student life in Prague

1928

Martinů’s social life in Paris

1942

America – a new world

1957

The Martinůs living in harmony in southern Europe

1959

The Martinůs at the Sachers in Schönenberg



## DAILY LIFE

### LEOŠ JANÁČEK

Leoš Janáček came from a poor family.

Already at the age of eleven, he left home for the Old Brno Monastery, where his stay was financially covered by the monastery foundation and partly by his uncle Jan Janáček.

After his studies and until his retirement in 1903, most of his income came from teaching. His financial situation improved significantly after the Prague première of *Jenůfa* in 1916 by increasing revenues from performing and publication of his works.

In his personal life, however, the composer was not very happy. The marriage with Zdenka Schulzová, which had been accompanied by frequent conflicts from the very beginning, was marked first by the death of their two-and-a-half-year-old son Vladimír (1890) and later of their almost 21-year-old daughter Olga (1903).

### BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ

The life of Bohuslav Martinů was very unusual.

Having spent his childhood in considerable social isolation led to the author's enjoyment of voluntary isolation, which he was able to defend at all costs. It was also one of the reasons why his life was filled exclusively with composing.

Martinů was a typical introvert, but his contemporaries appreciated his gentle sense of humour. He also enjoyed meeting friends, especially musicians, theatre performers and artists. Martinů perceived the world as shape and sound. His approach to creation is characterized by a huge sense of responsibility towards talent and towards performers and commissioners of his works.

Instead of wasting time waiting for inspiration, he kept his mind on constant alert by composing daily, as others go to work daily. He kept his daily routine more or less the same, even though he stayed in so many places in his life.

1865

Janáček leaves his home town of Hukvaldy to live in the Old Brno Abbey; he is 11 years old

1881

Janáček getting married to Zdenka Schulzová

1888

Dvořák and Janáček engrossed in friendly conversations in Brno at the time of the performance of Dvořák's cantata *The Spectre's Bride*, conducted by Janáček

1903

Illness and death of his daughter Olga

1905

Janáček at a demonstration in Brno demanding a Czech-language university

1916

The Prague première of the opera *Jenůfa*



## BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ

“As we have learned from history, events and circumstances may be different, they may pass, but sublime art is eternal and is based on eternal conditions.”

Bohuslav Martinů is a 20th century composer of world importance, whose work was defined by four significant places in which he lived his life. Born in 1890 in Polička in the Vysočina region, he spent twelve years of his childhood at the tower of St. Jacob's church where his father, Ferdinand Martinů, worked as a fire watchman. Separated from life down in the city, he overlooked the world below, observed the region, nature, people, and from these impressions his world of thought was formed, which was later reflected in his compositions.

After completing his studies in Prague, he began another chapter of his life in 1923, marked by the search for artistic identity in Paris, in a cultural community with high competition, but also in a place of personal happiness, love and liberation. But the war changed everything. Starting a new life in the United States was difficult for Martinů. His new home was an existential necessity, the reality of which he had been coming to terms with for a long time, even though he had many friends in the United States.

In the end, the situation was not as bad as it had originally seemed. He soon discovered that he was already a reputable composer there. Despite great success in the American music world, however, he longed for European culture. Immediately after the war, he sought the position of professor at the newly established Academy of Performing Arts, which was formed from the former master school of the Prague Conservatory. However, this never happened, after 1948 he never returned to Czechoslovakia for political reasons. From 1954, he therefore alternately lived between France, Italy and Switzerland, where he died.

The rest of his life abroad allowed him, as an American citizen, to live a free life, which compensated for his desire to return home.

As the breadwinner of a large family, he received income from orders from the German publisher Fritz Simrock from Berlin, later from the Novello, Fewer and Co. publishing house, but also from royalties for opera performances. Probably the highest income for the composer was during his tenure as the director of the New York conservatory from the autumn of 1892 to the spring of 1895.

### 1849–1855

Family life of the composer  
in his first marriage

### 1855

Death of his firstborn  
daughter Bedřiška

### 1872

Smetana at home  
composing *Libuše*

### 1875

Dvořák as an organist at  
the Church of St Adalbert

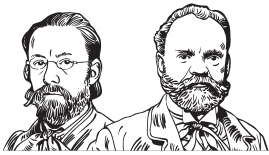
### 1877

Death of three children and the  
composition of *Stabat Mater*

### 1892

Dvořák's family before  
arriving in New York





## DAILY LIFE

### BEDŘICH SMETANA

Bedřich Smetana worked as a pianist, teacher and conductor.

He did not make a living composing, he did not have patrons or art scholarships. The position of chief conductor in the Provisional Theatre (1866–1874) was significant for him.

He often reflected the most important moments of his personal life in chamber music. *Trio g minor* (1855) represents:

“a reminder of my first child, Bedřiška, who had an extraordinary talent for music, but soon with an unpredictable death, being 4.5 years old, was torn away from us.”

The desire to make a confession of life is reflected in the *String Quartet No. 1 “From My Life”* (1876), in which the author also describes the fateful hearing loss. The work is considered one of the highlights of 19th century chamber music.

### ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

Antonín Dvořák first made a living as a practical musician.

He played the viola in Komzák's orchestra and later in the orchestra of the Provisional Theatre, in addition to giving private piano lessons.

He began to establish himself as a composer after his marriage to Anna Čermáková in 1873, with whom he had nine children, six of whom lived to adulthood. The composer held a strict routine and had high standards for solid life and work regime, thanks to which he was able to compose undisturbed.

1890

A view of his home town of Polička from the tower of the Church of St James

1905

Martinů in Prague as a violinist at the conservatoire

1910

Student life in Prague full of culture and friends

1924

Martinů's life in Paris full of freedom and surrounded by modern art

1940

During the Nazi occupation, the Martinůs fled Paris to the south of France

1941

A new life in New York

1946

In the summer, Martinů fell from a terrace in Great Barrington and injured his head

1959

Martinů spent his last months in Switzerland



## OEUVRE

### BEDŘICH SMETANA / *VLTAVA*, FROM THE CYCLE OF SYMPHONIC POEMS *MY COUNTRY*

“At the time of the greatest disease that separated me from the rest of the world and where I was absorbed in my heart, I tried to get relief by composing music, I wrote a composition large for the orchestra, and I called it ‘Homeland.’”

Bedřich Smetana composed a cycle of symphonic poems entitled *My Country* already at the time of his deafness. In accordance with the period ideas of the national revival, he conceived it as a celebration of his homeland through symphonic images.

In the autumn of 1874, the composer wrote *Vyšehrad* and *Vltava*. In 1875, he originally closed the cycle with symphonic poems *Šárka* and *From Bohemia's Woods and Fields* as a tetralogy under the name *Homeland*. The last two parts, *Tábor* and *Blaník*, which represent a celebration of the Hussites, then considered a pivotal period in national history, he added in 1878–1879. The author drew inspiration from history of the Czech nation, myths and paid tribute to the beautiful landscape. He dedicated the whole cycle to the city of Prague. In the second part of the cycle, he portrayed the stream of the Vltava River and thus created a unique work of art which has won the world's acclaim as the icon of Czech music.

### ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK / SYMPHONY NO. 9 IN E MINOR, OP. 95 “FROM THE NEW WORLD”

“I have an impression that American soil will have a beneficial effect on my mind, and I would almost say that you shall hear something like this in the new symphony.”

Since 1948, he and his wife travelled to Europe, where they returned permanently in 1954, knowing that the composer would never see his homeland.

1902

Janáček's journey to St Petersburg and the beginning of the fatal illness of his daughter Olga

1941

Weeks of waiting in Lisbon, Portugal for a liner to the USA

1941

Finally in America

1954

Martinů's return to Europe

1955

In southern France, towards the end of his life



## TRAVELLING

### LEOŠ JANÁČEK

Leoš Janáček was connected with Brno throughout his life.

During the year he rested in his native Hukvaldy or in the spa Luhačovice, where he would go to meet his friends. He visited his brother František several times in St. Petersburg. In 1896 he took a longer trip to Nizhny Novgorod for the All-Russian Exhibition.

He made other trips abroad towards the end of his life, when he became a world-famous composer. During this time he visited Venice in 1925 on the occasion of the International Society for Contemporary Music Festival (ISCM) and the performance of his *String Quartet No. 1 after Tolstoy's 'Kreutzer sonata'* with his wife Zdenka. A year later, at the invitation of Rosa Newmarch, he left for London, where a number of his compositions were performed on this occasion.

He took part in another ISCM Festival, this time in Frankfurt am Main, in 1927.

### BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ

The life of Bohuslav Martinů can be likened to one big journey.

He moved from his native Polička to Prague at the age of sixteen, where he studied at the conservatory.

The main turning point, however, was the year 1923, when he went to Paris for three months on a scholarship trip from the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts. The stay in France lasted for eighteen years.

In March 1941, he went into forced exile to the United States for political reasons, where he and his wife managed to get, after encountering many hardships, onboard the last steamer Exeter. America thus became his new home, even though he never wanted to stay there. But it brought him freedom during the war and he could live without the fear experienced by his relatives and friends in war-torn Europe.

Dvořák began composing his last symphony "*From the New World*" during his first months in the United States.

The composition reflects powerful experiences from the new environment and some elements of African-American music which he was actively interested in. The composer's notes reveal that the famous *Largo* (second movement) was inspired by the story of the Native American chieftain, Hiawatha, from H. W. Longfellow's epic poem *Song of Hiawatha*.

The composer also described another Native American theme to the New York Herald, this time in the *Scherzo* (third movement), which "was suggested by the scene at the feast in Hiawatha where the Indians dance."

The uniqueness of the work lies in the number of musical themes used and in the system of their interconnection and reminiscences.

#### 1874

Bedřich Smetana at the time of the creation of the first two parts of the cycle *My Country – Vyšehrad* and *Vltava (The Moldau)*

#### 1892

Dvořák with his family on the way to New York

#### 1893

Première of *Symphony No. 9 in E minor "From the New World"* at New York's Carnegie Hall



## OEUVRE

### LEOŠ JANÁČEK / *SINFONIETTA*

“...And the vision of a certain expansion and greatness of the city was born in my *Sinfonietta* from that knowledge, from my city, Brno.”

The newsroom at Lidové Noviny publishing house simply requested “some nice tune” for the occasion of the 8th All-Sokol Rally in mid-February 1926.

Janáček recalls a promenade concert of military music, which he heard with his muse, Kamila Stösslová, during his visit to Písek in 1924, and at first he composed only Fanfares, which soon grew into a five-part composition, which he named, for the presence of a military band, *Military Symfonieta*. He composed the piece in March 1926 and once accepted by the Ceremonial Committee of the 8th All-Sokol Rally in Prague, it was performed at the official ceremony’s concert on 26 June with the participation of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Václav Talich.

The ingeniously composed *Fanfares*, which are to be played by military orchestras, form the counterpart of the orchestral part. There are thus two layers representing two different worlds: the folk (military brass band somewhere at the colonnade) and the highly artistic (symphonic orchestra).

From the very beginning, the *Sinfonietta* was described as a work of optimism, full of “patriotic enthusiasm” of the first years of independent Czechoslovakia.

### BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ / *DOUBLE CONCERTO FOR TWO STRING ORCHESTRAS, PIANO AND TIMPANI*

“I think the suspicion of an impending tragedy anticipated the character of the whole work as a warning against the unleashed destructive elements, as if it were in my power to contain them.”

1856

Bedřich Smetana’s journey to Sweden

1856–1861

Smetana in Gothenburg, Sweden

1857

Dvořák’s journey from Zlonice to Prague to the organ school

1877

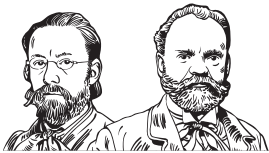
Journey to Vienna to obtain a state scholarship

1892

Journey to America

1893

Journey from New York for a vacation in Spillville



## TRAVELLING

### BEDŘICH SMETANA

An important milestone in Smetana's life was his stay in Gothenburg, Sweden (1856–1861).

A commercial and industrial city with a large port provided much better living conditions. He won his reputation and met many supporters and friends as a conductor, teacher, pianist and composer, and was held in high regard.

As the most important local artistic personality, he enriched Swedish cultural life with a new repertoire, different types of concerts and put music education to a higher level. This period was also very important for Smetana, as he matured both as a man and as an artist.

After returning to Prague, he travelled around Europe for opera performances and to meet his friends, such as Franz Liszt.

### ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

Antonín Dvořák travelled a lot during his life, but haven't stayed for a longer period. The only exception was his two-and-a-half-year stay in America associated with working at the National Conservatory of Music of America in New York.

Other important milestones included his nine artistic trips to England, trips around Europe and visit to Russia.

However, the composer was most satisfied during the summer, which he regularly spent with his family at his summer residence in Vysoká near Příbram. These were also the times when he mostly composed.

In America, he escaped from the city and rested in the Czech village of Spillville in Iowa, where he spent the holidays in 1893.

In the peaceful atmosphere of a remote rural settlement in neutral Switzerland, one of Bohuslav Martinů's strongest and later most famous works was created in 1938 – a *Double Concerto for Two String Orchestras, Piano and Timpani*. Martinů dedicated it to the famous Swiss conductor and patron of the arts, who commissioned the work from him: "To my dear friend Paul Sacher, a reminder of the days of peace and fear in Schönenberg surrounded with deer and the danger of war."

The last movement was completed in a sketch on the day of the signing of the Munich Agreement. The première took place in February 1940 in rendition by Paul Sacher and his Basel Chamber Orchestra.

Despite the very complicated international situation, Martinů was present at the event, and was able to accept the applause of the audience and the personal recognition of the composer Arthur Honegger.

#### 1926

Members of Sokol at the 8th All-Sokol Rally in Prague

#### 1927

Janáček and his wife Zdenka in their garden in Brno

#### 1938

Martinů at Schönenberg near Basel composing *Double Concerto*



## INSPIRATIONS

### PATRIOTISM AND PERIOD EVENTS

Patriotism, the political situation and the time in which the composers lived had a major influence on their work.

Bedřich Smetana played a significant role in the birth of Czech civil society at a time when one of the important national goals was the erection of the Czech National Theatre, at the ceremonial opening of which his opera *Libuše* was premièred.

With the oratorio *St. Ludmila* on a topic from the beginnings of the Czech state during the penetration of Christianity into the Czech territory, Antonín Dvořák tried to promote Czech culture abroad, as he composed the work in 1886 for a festival in Leeds, England.

With his piano composition *1. X. 1905 "From the Street"*, Leoš Janáček reacted to a very tense situation between Brno's Czechs and Germans in 1905.

*The Memorial to Lidice* by Bohuslav Martinů is a memento of the tragic events of the Second World War.

### FOLK MUSIC AND DANCE

Czech and Moravian folk music was and still is one of the greatest sources of inspiration for Czech composers.

With two cycles of *Czech Dances*, Bedřich Smetana expressed what specific dances are part of the national tradition. In addition to stylized polkas, the compositions are based on the tunes of folk songs from the collection of K. J. Erben.

Dvořák became acquainted with Moravian folk songs through the collection of František Sušil. In his *Moravian Duets* he used the lyrics of the songs and elaborated their characteristic musical features in a stylized style.

He also wrote short descriptions to the melody of words and expressions that caught his attention during the day in various situations, and often also the psychological mood of the melody's originators – e.g. sad, joyful, etc. He intended to create a sort of database of speech and sound melodies and he even measured the length of each record. To do this, he used the so-called Hipp chronoscope, a device for the most accurate time measurement, which was originally used in ballistics, later in experimental psychology.

### BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ

#### MODERN TRENDS AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS

After coming to Paris, Bohuslav Martinů's compositions included not only jazz motifs, but also "civilizational" themes: sports – such as the orchestral rondo *Half-Time* (1924), and modern technology – such as radio in the composition *Par T. S. F.* (1926), Lindbergh's landing in the symphonic composition *La Bagarre* (1926), or the film in the mechanical ballet *On tourne* (1927).

During his American exile, Martinů became interested in newly designed electronic musical instruments. In cooperation with Ing. Antonín Svoboda, a Czech expatriate and expert in the field of mathematical instruments, Martinů explored new possibilities of mechanical capturing of musical ideas since 1942. However, it was precisely this interest that led the composer to compose *Fantasia for Theremin, Oboe, String Quartet and Piano*, in 1944.

1860

Reading literature was an important source of music for Smetana

1897

Janáček notates human speech melodies and birdsongs

1892

Arrival of Dvořák with his family in New York

1924–1940

The life of Bohuslav Martinů in modern Paris

1892–1895

Meeting with African Americans in New York



## INSPIRATIONS

### BEDŘICH SMETANA / LITERATURE

Impressed by Liszt's symphonic poems, Bedřich Smetana compiled programme works during the Swedish period. *Richard III.* (1858), *Wallenstein's Camp* (1859) and *Hakon Jarl* (1861) form a trinity, which, despite different themes, is united by a unified creative intention: not a descriptive account of the story of literary works, but an emphasis on given imagery. The inspiration of W. Shakespeare's drama accompanied Smetana in other works as well: in the piano composition *Macbeth* (1859), in the orchestral work *The March to the Shakespeare Festival* (1864) and in the unfinished opera *Viola* (1883).

According to Karolina Světlá's novelette, the opera *Hubička* (1876) was created. For the vocal cycle *Evening Songs* (1879), the composer chose poems from the collection of the same name by Vítězslav Hálek.

### ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK / FOREIGN CULTURES

It was mainly the music of African Americans and probably Native Americans that influenced Dvořák's work during his stay in America in 1892–1895. As the director of the National Conservatory of Music of America in New York, he met African-American students, most notably Henry T. Burleigh, who sang to Dvořák songs of his ancestors.

The composer also read an article called *Negro music* with excerpts from African-American songs, one of which was probably paraphrased in the first movement of his *9th symphony* – the song *Swing low, sweet chariot*. He became more closely acquainted with Native Americans during the holidays with his whole family in the village of Spillville, Iowa in 1893.

### LEOŠ JANÁČEK / HUMAN SPEECH

Janáček's "speech melodies" are one of the most original documents of the composer's creative personality. Janáček began to systematically record the melodies of human speech from 1897 in his small notebooks, which he always brought everywhere with him.

As a member of the Working Committee for the Czech National Song in Moravia and Silesia, Janáček had the closest contact with Moravian folklore. He often rode into the field, noting down songs and recording them on phonograph cylinders.

In his songs as well as stage works, Bohuslav Martinů often drew inspiration from the collections of K. J. Erben and B. Němcová. Ballet with songs, *Špalíček* (*The Chap-Book*), based, among other things, on the fair theatre of the European Middle Ages, is a cycle of fairy tales, folk plays and rhymes.

1868

Smetana tapping the foundation stone of the National Theatre; Antonín Dvořák is present as well

1877

Dvořák with his family at the time of the composition of *Moravian Duets*

1881

The newly opened National Theatre burned down in August

1883

Reopening of the National Theatre with a performance of the opera *Libuše*

1897

Janáček with his daughter Olga in his home region of Lašsko, where he collected folk songs

1942

Martinů writes *Memorial to Lidice* in response to the Nazi attack in Czechoslovakia



## INSPIRATIONS

### NATURE

Nature was a source of inspiration and a means to rest and draw strength for compositional work.

Bedřich Smetana was, for the most part, an urban type but he liked nature, took inspiration from the sea as well as the Czech landscape. The love for Czech nature had a patriotic subtext for the nation and the composer, as was the case with Smetana's *My Country*, which became a manifestation of the Czech nation.

Dvořák essentially needed his daily stay in nature for his work – most of his compositions were created during his stay at his summer residence in Vysoká near Příbram, and nature inspired a number of his works, such as the piano cycle *From Šumava*, Op. 68 or cycle of concert overtures *Nature, Life, Love*.

Janáček perceived nature and animals through his invention, the so-called speech melodies. He recorded human voices and the sounds of animals in his notebooks.

Martinů usually moved to nature for summer stays in his native Vysočina, but also on the shores of the sea in the USA or southern France. Nature became his inspiration, for example, for the piano cycle *Butterflies and Birds of Paradise*, inspired by the collection of exotic butterflies of Ela Švabinská, or *Windows to the Garden*, composed in the birthplace of his wife Charlotte in Vieux-Moulin, France.

### WOMEN

Women played an unmistakable role in the lives of all four composers.

Bedřich Smetana, who was very sociable, liked to be surrounded by women. A very happy first marriage was affected by the death of his wife Kateřina. Love affection for Bettina, who became his second wife, never fulfilled their imagination. A lifelong friendship bound Smetana to Fröjda Benecke, his student from Gothenburg.

Dvořák's first love was Josefina Čermáková, the daughter of a Prague goldsmith, whose two daughters were taught by the young Dvořák to play the piano. Surely she was the one he was thinking of when he composed the song cycle of *Cypresses*. However, it was her younger sister Anna who later became the woman of his life.

Leoš Janáček had a more complicated personal life, resolving long-term disagreements with his wife Zdenka with brief love affairs, which he often did not even initiate himself. The most important woman for Janáček was Kamila Stösslová. Their probably only platonic, but very confidential relationship lasted from 1917 until Janáček's death in 1928 and inspired many of his works.

Bohuslav Martinů's relationship to women can be traced very accurately through lyrics to early songs and the dedications of later compositions. His lifelong partner was Charlotte Quennehen, whom he married in 1931. Although he had other strong love interests with Vítězslava Kaprálová and Rosalia Barstow, Charlotte never ceased to support him.

1856

Smetana saw the sea for the first time on his way to Gothenburg, Sweden

1876

The hunting lodge in Jabkenice where Smetana spent the last ten years of his life

1859

Smetana's first wife Kateřina falls seriously ill with tuberculosis

1863

Mr and Mrs Smetana in Prague in an apartment in Lažanský Palace

1864

The Čermák sisters, Josefina on the right – Antonín Dvořák's first love

1900

Dvořák by the lake at Vysoká near Příbram at the time of the composition of *Rusalka*

1928

Janáček in the last year of his life in his home village of Hukvaldy

1928

Bohuslav Martinů's beloved Provence

1917

Janáček and his muse Kamila Stösslová in Luhačovice

1926

Martinů met his future wife Charlotte at a circus performance in Paris

1938

Martinů falls hopelessly in love with Vítězslava Kaprálová