



Smithsonian Associates

Bedřich Smetana: 1824-1884 Visions of a Bohemian Homeland

Dr. Rachel Franklin

Thursday, March 7, 2024 - 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. ET

“My home has rooted itself into my heart so much that only there do I find real contentment. It is to this that I will sacrifice myself.” Bedřich Smetana

Bedřich Smetana is celebrated as the Czech Republic’s first Nationalist composer.

Born in Bohemia, at the north-west corner of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Smetana dedicated his life to championing Czech culture and language through his operas, tone poems, chamber music and piano works. His ardent nationalism produced such masterpieces as his joyful comic opera, *The Bartered Bride*, the sweeping six-movement symphonic cycle *My Homeland* and his autobiographical string quartet, *From My Life*.

To honor Smetana’s 200th birthday year, pianist and scholar Dr. Rachel Franklin explores his powerful legacy and spotlights lesser-known piano and operatic gems by this pioneering Czech master.

Works explored, media used

(All works by Bedřich Smetana)

“Prodaná nevěsta”/The Bartered Bride, JB 1:100, overture. 1863-66

- Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Zdenek Kosler

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lFBuIB8POFc>

Má vlast, JB 1:112: No. 2, Die Moldau. 1874

- Rafael Kubelik, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SomQT9P1UAg>

String Quartet No. 1 "Z mého života/From my life" in E minor, JB 1:105. 1876

- Meccore String Quartet

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCxHK_2lNmo

String Quartet No. 1 “From My Life”

- Koeckert Quartet

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubSO7PYg7gs>

Bartered Bride, polka scene, end of act 1

- Garsington Opera, the Philharmonia Orchestra, Jac van Steen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYGXxzBObIU>

Czech Dances, Bk. 1, JB 1:107. 1877

- Rudolf Firkušný

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=euSTjq8hokI>

Bartered Bride, Furiant, beginning of act 2

- Leonard Bernstein, New York Philharmonic

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3Pc-efwYuA>

Czech Dances, Bk. 2, JB 1:114. 1879

- Rudolf Firkušný

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_y7YhRhy6bA

String Quartet No. 1 in E minor "From My Life"

- Festival Mozaic: Abigel Kralik, violin/Rolf Haas, violin/Caitlin Lynch, viola/Sophie Shao, cello

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=depN11BD4HM>

Rêves, JB 1:103. 1874-75

- Ivan Klánský

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KjWmcVPufVk>

Z domoviny/From the Homeland, JB 1:118. 1879-80

- Violin – Josef Suk, Piano – Jan Panenka, 1962

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0kejxuSPtk>

Dalibor, Act 2, scene 4, : "Jak je mi?" "How do I feel?" (Milada), 1865-67

- Lucia Popp, Münchner Rundfunkorchester, Stefan Soltesz

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IvNbMvYIT5k>

Czech hussite choral "Kdož sú boží bojovníci" "Ye who are warriors of God" from Czech film "The Divine Emma" 1979, about Czech soprano Emmy Destinn

- Gabriela Beňačková

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SiYzysQKqGI>

Libuše, finale – Libuše's Prophecy "My beloved Czech people shall never perish"
1869-72

- National Theatre in Prague, 1968. National Theatre Orchestra, Jaroslav Krombholc, Libuše: Milada Šubrtová

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5iTQqu_Gg2s

Má vlast / My Country, 1872-79

1. Vyšehrad

- Prague Conservatoire Symphony Orchestra, Jiří Bělohlávek

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45w7kZL71Qk>

2. Vltava

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tRbZkRH5ps>

3. Šárka

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpoadwBizVM>

4. Z českých luhů a hájů /From Bohemia's Woods and Fields

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ER8CelO9iu8>

5. Tábor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQHtaZLK4Ts>

6. Blaník

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_OxpV1jlhg

Bartered Bride, opening chorus, Act 1, Scene 1: “Let us rejoice, let’s be merry”

- Czech Philharmonic Orchestra & Prague Philharmonic Chorus, cond. Zdeněk Košler, TV film, 1981

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Na6piObEzws>

Complete film of this opera production

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jKM0oPqbcxA>