

The history of Czech music culture dates back to the 10th century. The oldest spiritual song was the Old Slavonic „Hospodine, pomiluj ny”. By the end of 15th century literary fraternities and music groups at religious institutions were established, which influenced the development of music and music education in Bohemia. This is probably when the proverb: „Every Czech, a musician“ (“Co Čech to muzikant”) came to life. Rorate caeli and liturgical music has been typical in the Czech lands in 16th and 17th century.

Modern era of the national music started with Bedřich Smetana, who put Czech music on the world map. Following his steps, a strong generation of bold Czech composers took the stage – Antonín Dvořák. Leoš Janáček and Bohuslav Martinů are the best-known and widely interpreted and played until today.

BEDŘICH SMETANA

(March 2, 1824 in Litomyšl – May 12, 1884 in Prague)



A Romantic composer, the founder of the Czech national school of music, followed by many, including Antonín Dvořák and Leoš Janáček. He has earned living as a concert pianist and music teacher in his 20s. Unsatisfied with financial and

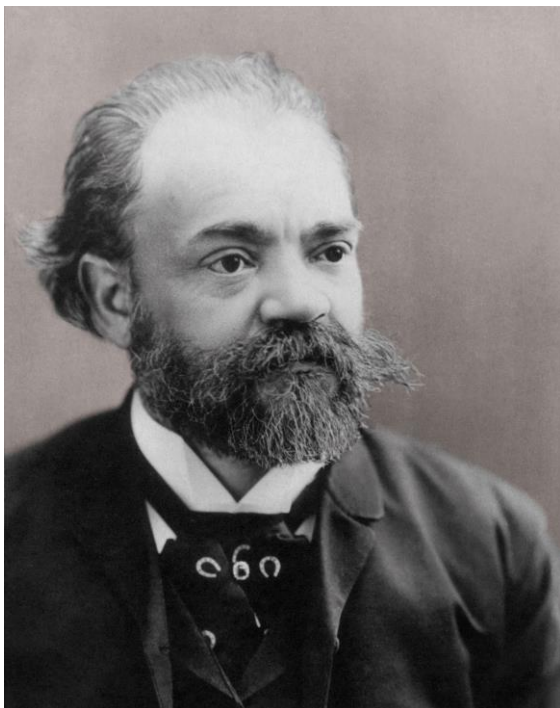
political situation, Smetana moved to Göteborg, Sweden in 1856 where he became part of the local cultural society, worked as a music teacher and earning experience as a conductor of the Harmoniska sällskapet. After his return to Prague, he became a prolific opera composer and one of the major figures of the Czech National Revival. In later years he became deaf, but continued to compose 6 symphonic poems.

Best works:

- My Fatherland (Má Vlast),
- The Moldau (Vltava),
- The Bartered Bride (Prodaná nevěsta),
- Dalibor,
- Libuše,
- The Devil's Wall (Čertova stěna)

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

(September 8, 1841 in Nelahozeves – May 1, 1904 in Prague)



A Romantic versatile composer, one of the first Czech composers to achieve worldwide recognition. Following the steps of Bedřich Smetana, Dvořák used folk traditions and rhythms to create Romantic-era nationalist compositions. He was a

music prodigy, being apt in violin play at age 6, composing symphonies before he reached 30, later winning Austrian State Prize in 1874, 1876 and 1877. He toured extensively with his programme to London, St. Petersburg and Moscow, and in 1892 moved to New York to become the director of National Conservatory of Music in New York, but continued to compose. His work includes nearly 120 compositions, most of which are major orchestral, vocal, and instrumental music, or dramatic works.

Best known works:

- 9th Symphony – The New World (Nový svět)
- Rusalka (opera)
- Čert a Káča (The Devil and the Bride) (opera)
- Slavonic Dances

LEOŠ JANÁČEK

(July 3, 1854 in Hukvaldy – August 12, 1928 in Moravská Ostrava)



While showing early musical talent in choral singing, Janáček began his career as a musicologist, researching folklore music in his native Moravian region and other Slavic folk music. In 1879 he began studies at Leipzig Conservatory, after that returned

to Brno and was appointed director of the organ school. He began consistently composing in his 30s, inspired by previous Slavic folk research and his operas and other compositions often use stark dynamic changes for dramatic effect. Janáček spent his whole life in pursuit of truth, which he wished to translate as faithfully as possible into his music.

Best works:

- Her Stepdaughter – Jenůfa (Její pastorkyňa)
- The Cunning Little Vixen (Příhody lišky Bystroušky)
- Glagolitic Mass (Mše glagolskaja)

KAREL SVOBODA

(December 19, 1938 in Prague – January 28, 2007 in Jevany)



A prolific Czech contemporary composer of film scores and musicals, Karel began his music career in a beat band in 1973 after abandoning medicine studies. Earning a contract in Rokoko theater, he began wiring pop music for then-popular acts. Later, he was sought after as a film and TV music – worked for German public-service

TV ZDF for 30 years, he also created scores for children's TV series, such as "The Wonderful Adventures of Nils" and "Vicky the Viking". His unique position of working for then-Western media allowed him to acquire early music synthesizers and use them in many of his compositions, such as sci-fi series Visitors (Návštěvníci).

Best works:

- A Night at Karlstejn (Noc na Karlštejně)
- Three Wishes for Cinderella (3 oříšky pro Popelku)
- Maja the Bee (Včelka Maja)