

The Life and Work of Bedřich Smetana

1824

- Born in Litomyšl, 2 March.

1829

- Begins attending school, shows extraordinary musical talent.

1830

- In a public concert plays the overture to Auber's *La Muette de Portici*.

1831

- Writes his first preserved composition: a fragment of a Galop (Kvapík) in D major.
- (Until 1835) in Jindřichův Hradec; finishes elementary school and completes the first year of gymnasium studies (academic secondary school).

1835

- The family moves to Růžkovy Lhotice, where they will live until 1844.
- (Until 1836) attends the gymnasium in Jihlava.

1836

- (Until 1839) at the gymnasium in Německý Brod.

1839

- (Until 1840) at the Academic Gymnasium in Prague.

1840

- (Until 1843) at the gymnasium in Plzeň; finishes his general education.
- Writes his first preserved complete composition, the *Louisen-Polka*.

1842

- Composes his first orchestral piece, the *Bajaderen Galopp*.

1843

- Performs in a concert of the violinist Arnošt Nesvadba in Plzeň.
- Definitive decision to pursue a career in music; moves to Prague.

1844

- (Until 1847) teaches music to members of the family of Count Leopold Thun and studies composition with the important musical pedagogue Joseph Proksch.
- Composes his first set of piano pieces, *Bagatelles et Impromptus*.

1847

- Concert trip to Plzeň and Cheb.

1848

- Beginning of friendship with Franz Liszt.
- Composes the *Six Character Pieces (Six morceaux caractéristiques)* for piano, Op. 1.
- Opens his own music institute in Prague.

1849

- Completion and performance of the orchestral *Jubel-Ouverture* in D major.
- Marriage with Kateřina Kolářová.

1851

- Birth of first child – daughter Bedřiška (died 1855).
- Published in Leipzig: *Six morceaux caractéristiques*, Op. 1 and *Album Leaves (Stammbuch-Blätter)*, Op. 2.

1852

- Birth of second child – daughter Gabriela (died 1854).

1853

- Birth of third child – daughter Žofie (died 1902).
- Composes the *Triumph-Sinfonie*, completed 1854.

1855

- In his first independent concert conducts the premiere of the Triumph-Sinfonie.
 - Birth of fourth child – daughter Kateřina (died 1856).
 - Composition and premiere of the Trio in G minor for piano, violin, and violoncello.
- 1856
- Meets with Franz Liszt in Prague.
 - Leaves for Göteborg, Sweden, where he serves as music teacher, director of the local music society, pianist, and conductor.
- 1857
- Visits Liszt in Weimar.
- 1858
- Composes his first symphonic poem, Richard III.
- 1859
- Death of wife Kateřina.
 - Composes the symphonic poem Wallenstein's Camp (Wallensteins Lager).
 - Second visit to Weimar.
 - Makes the acquaintance of Bettina Ferdinandi (1840-1908).
 - Composes the piano pieces Souvenir de Bohême en forme de Polkas, Op. 12 and Op. 13.
- 1860
- Marriage with Bettina Ferdinandi.
- 1861
- Composes the symphonic poem Hakon Jarl.
 - Concert trip to Stockholm and Norrköping.
 - Returns from Göteborg to Prague.
 - Birth of daughter Zdenka (died 1936).
 - Composes the concert etude On the Seashore (Na břehu mořském).
 - Concert trip to Germany and The Netherlands.
- 1862
- Two independent concerts in Prague, premiere of the symphonic poems Richard III and Wallenstein's Camp.
 - Begins composing his first opera, The Brandenburgers in Bohemia (Braniboři v Čechách), completed 1863.
 - Concert trip to Göteborg.
 - Concerts in Czech towns to benefit the National Theatre.
 - Composes his first important male chorus, The Three Riders (Tři jezdci).
- 1863
- Birth of daughter Božena (died 1941).
 - Elected chairman of the music section of the newly-founded Artists' Society (Umělecká beseda).
 - Again opens a music institute, which he will operate until 1867.
 - Begins composing the opera The Bartered Bride (Prodaná nevěsta), completed 1866.
 - Becomes choirmaster of the Prague singing society Hlahol, in which capacity he will continue until 1865.
 - Composes the double chorus The Renegade (Odrodilec).
- 1864
- In celebrations of the three hundredth anniversary of the birth of Shakespeare conducts Roméo et Juliette by Berlioz and his own Shakespeare Festival March (Pochod ke slavnosti Shakespearově).
 - Becomes music critic for the most important Czech daily newspaper, National News (Národní listy), in which function he will continue until 1865.

- Organizes and conducts the first three subscription concerts of the Arts Society (during the 1864-65 season).
- 1865
- Unsuccessful application for the position of director of the conservatory in Prague.
 - Unsuccessful application for an artist's stipend from the Austrian government.
 - Begins composing the opera Dalibor, completed 1867.
- 1866
- Conducts the premiere of The Brandenburgers in Bohemia.
 - With Liszt's approval conducts the Prague premiere of that composer's oratorio The Legend of Saint Elisabeth (Die Legende von der heiligen Elisabeth).
 - The Brandenburgers in Bohemia wins the prize of Count Harrach as the best Czech opera.
 - Conducts the premiere of The Bartered Bride.
 - Named chief conductor of the Czech opera of the Provisional Theatre.
- 1868
- Premiere of Dalibor on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone for the National Theatre.
- 1869
- Beginning of regular subscription philharmonic concerts conducted by Smetana.
 - Begins composing the opera Libuše, completed 1872.
- 1870
- Completes the definitive version of The Bartered Bride.
- 1871
- The Bartered Bride performed in St. Petersburg.
- 1872
- Becomes artistic director of the Czech opera.
- 1873
- The Bartered Bride performed in Zagreb.
 - Begins composing the opera The Two Widows (Dvě vdovy), completed 1874.
- 1874
- Premiere of The Two Widows.
 - Loss of hearing.
 - Composes the symphonic poems Vyšehrad and Vltava (The Moldau).
- 1875
- Travels to visit foreign ear doctors.
 - For an annual stipend, grants the theatre performance rights to his operas without royalties.
 - Composes the symphonic poems Šárka and From Bohemia's Meadows and Forests (Z českých luhů a hájů).
 - Composes the piano pieces Dreams (Rêves).
 - Begins composing the operas The Kiss (Hubička), completed 1876, and Viola (based on Shakespeare's Twelfth Night), left unfinished at his death.
- 1876
- Definitive move from Prague to Jabkenice.
 - Premiere of The Kiss.
 - Composes his First String Quartet, in E minor, From My Life (Z mého života).
- 1877
- Composes the male chorus Song on the Sea (Píseň na moři).
 - Composes the Czech Dances (České tance) for piano, Series I (Polkas).
 - Begins composing the opera The Secret (Tajemství), completed 1878.

1878

- Premiere of the definitive version of The Two Widows.
- Premiere of The Secret.
- Composes the symphonic poem Tábor.
- Completion and premiere of the definitive version of the cantata Czech Song (Česká píseň) for mixed chorus and orchestra.

1879

- Premiere of the String Quartet in E minor, From My Life.
- Composes the symphonic poem Blaník.
- Czech Dances for piano, Series II.
- Composes his only song cycle, Evening Songs (Večerní písně).
- Begins composing the opera The Devil's Wall (Čertova stěna), completed 1882.

1880

- Gala concert for the fiftieth anniversary of his first concert performance.
- Unveiling of a memorial plaque devoted to Smetana in his native Litomyšl.
- Performances of the quartet From My Life in Weimar, Hamburg, and Vienna.

1881

- Opening of the National Theatre – premiere of Libuše.
- Last public appearances, in Prague and Písek, in concerts to benefit the National Theatre.
- The Two Widows performed in Hamburg.

1882

- One hundredth performance of The Bartered Bride.
- Premiere of The Devil's Wall.
- First complete performance of the set of symphonic poems My Homeland (Má vlast).

1883

- Reopening of the National Theatre with Libuše.
- Composes his Second String Quartet, in D minor.
- Composes two parts of an intended set of orchestral pieces titled Prague Carnival (Pražský karneval).
- Last work on the opera Viola.

1884

- Gala concert for Smetana's sixtieth birthday.
- On 12 May dies in the institute for the mentally ill in Prague.
- On 15 May his magnificent national funeral, organized by Prague arts societies.