

## Abstract

Smetana's *Má vlast* (My Country) has long held a unique place in Czech national culture and is considered one of the constitutive elements of the Smetana myth in popular consciousness. Over forty years ago, in musicological discourse, Vladimír Lébíl and Jitka Ludvová (1981) advocated for “removing the layers” of the Smetana myth, challenging the prevailing notion of Smetana as the sole genius by mapping the contemporary roots of *Má vlast*. Only recently, however, have musicologists begun to uncover the layers of the myth to a more serious degree, among them Brian S. Locke (2006), Christopher Campo-Bowen (2016), and Kelly St. Pierre (2017).

This thesis contributes to this discussion by exploring the meanings of *Má vlast* and the Smetana myth in the context of the 1924 Smetana centenary celebrations. It reveals how the myth was repurposed by various stakeholders to justify diverse cultural policies and demonstrates that the different, overtly political interpretations were primarily a product of the ideologies and interests of these protagonists. The study also highlights the crucial role of the Czechoslovak government in enabling the celebrations and its use of them to achieve particular political objectives. Drawing on period sources, including archival materials, journal, and newspaper articles, as well as monographs, this study uncovers the dynamics of negotiation between various interest groups and the state in shaping the celebrations.

In broader terms, the study contributes to understanding how the identities of Czechs and Germans in the First Czechoslovak Republic were negotiated, and the role played by the consumption of Smetana's music in this process.

## Key Words

Symphonic poem, Bedřich Smetana, *Má vlast*, My Country, Reception, Cultural politics, Nationalism, Czech, German, First Czechoslovak Republic