



## KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER: KEY COMPOSER 5

**BEDRICH  
SMETANA**  
1824—1884



### Parallel Universe...

\*Smetana went completely deaf like Beethoven (See Key Composer 1)

\*Smetana was in mental turmoil and ended up in an asylum like Mussorgsky (see Key Composer 2)

\*Smetana met Berlioz and was inspired by him (see Key Composer 3)

\*Dvorak, another Czech composer, also a child genius, also wrote music about his home country (see The Wall of Fame)

\*Smetana was really good friends with Liszt (see The Wall of Fame)

- Smetana was born in the Czech Republic when it was known as Bohemia
- Smetana was a Nationalist composer
- Smetana's music closely identifies with his country
- He was a child genius and performed his first concert at the age of 6
- Smetana has been given the nickname, the Father of Czech Music



Smetana's most **SIGNIFICANT WORK** is the **THE MOLDAU from MA VLAST**

Ma Vlast (which means My Homeland) is a set of 6 Symphonic Poems composed between 1874 and 1879. By this time, Smetana would have been completely deaf! The music describes the history, legends and landscape of the Czech Republic.

One of the Symphonic poems is called Vltava. This is about the river that runs through Prague, the capital city. In English, this river is called The Moldau.

Nationalist composer

A composer that uses the history, legends, landscape and folk songs of their country to inspire their music. They are very proud of their country!

Symphonic poem

A piece of orchestral music that describes a story, painting or poem, usually in one movement.

### THE MOLDAU

The music starts high up in the mountains as a little stream. It is a thin melody which grows in texture and strength. The stream meets another stream and then forms a river running through a forest. We hear the melody clearly for the first time. Suddenly, huntsman can be heard in the brass section as they chase deer. The deer escape and the music fades. Next, we hear a dance as some villagers celebrate. The music is in 3/4 time and is lively. As the moon shines brightly in the sky, the music slows and becomes quieter and sadder. Mermaids swim. The music is legato and calm. Now, the music describes the ruins of castles on the hills. The melody returns enthusiastically as day breaks. Soon, the music becomes thick and fast. Cymbals crash giving the impression of rapids as the water thunders against rocks. Finally, we arrive in Prague. The melody is strong and proud. It feels like a musical salute as the river passes under the famous bridges in the middle of the city.

