

Love and War in Bohemia

Background: History of the Czechs

14th century:
Independent Kingdom of Bohemia;
Charles IV (ruled 1346-1378);
Centre of the Holy Roman Empire



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Background: History of the Czechs



15th century: Jan Hus
(burned at the stake 1415):
Protestant Revolution:
The Czech „Hussites“
Defeated crusades from
Catholic Europe

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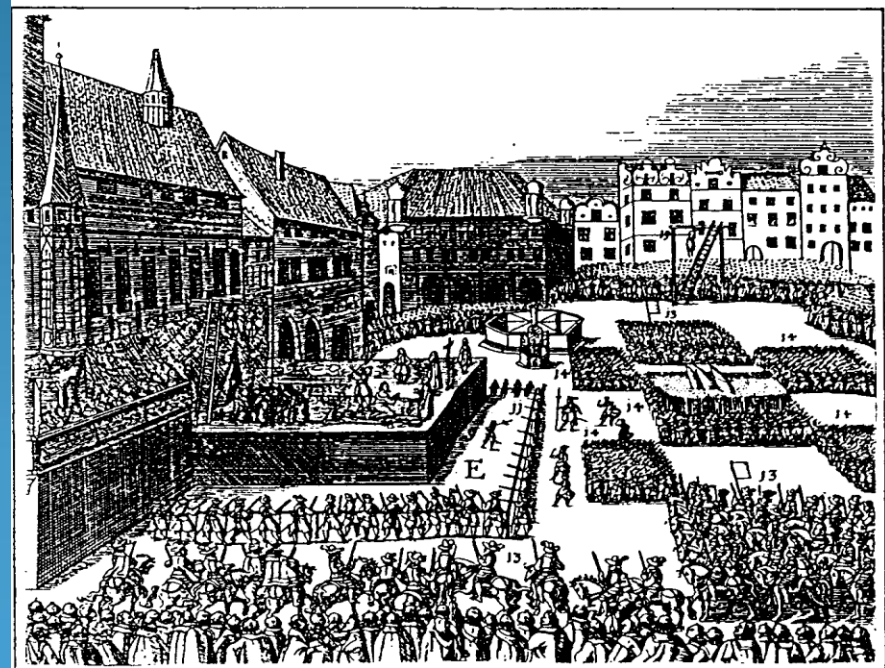


Czech „Cullodden“:
Battle at the White Mountain (1620):
Protestants beaten by Catholics,
„national catastrophe for 300 years“ -
„Age of Darkness“

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1621: 27 Czech protestant noblemen executed
1618-1648: Thirty Years' War
Subjugation under
Austrian Habsburgs
Until 1780s-1790s



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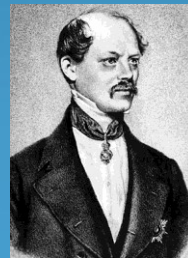


Austrian Enlightenment ruler
Joseph II (1780-1790)
gave impetus to
the Czech National Revival
which then developed under
the impulse of Romanticism

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- But, police oppression before 1848
(Metternich's Absolutism)
- (short lived „democratic revolution in 1848)
as well as in 1849-1860
(Bach's Absolutism)
- Only cultural, literary effort was possible



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- After Austria defeated by French-Sardinian forces at Magenta and Solferino (1859), Bach's absolutism fell
- Constitution published in February 1861
- First elections in March 1861, high voting preferences to aristocracy, monied classes
- General franchise not introduced in Austria-Hungary until 1907

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December 1867: a more democratic constitution:

- citizen's equality before law
- sanctity of property
- freedom of movement
- freedom of assembly
- freedom of speech
- independent judiciary

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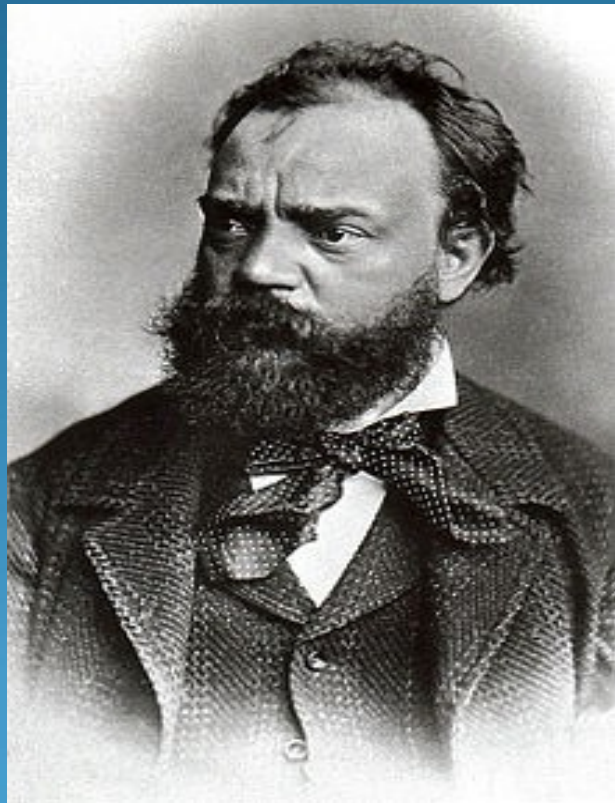
Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)



- Antonín Dvořák was born in Nelahozeves in the family of a butcher and an innkeeper

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Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)



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Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

- his father wanted him to become a butcher's apprentice
 - Zlonice teacher and organist Antonín Liehmann taught Dvořák to play the piano, the violin and the organ
 - At the age of 16 (1857) Dvořák went to Prague to study at an organ school, he graduated in 1859, when Austria liberalised itself.

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Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

- Dvořák supported himself by piano teaching. He fell in love with his pupil Josefína Čermáková in 1865 (she was 16) and wrote a cycle of songs *Cypresses* (later reworked as *Love Songs*)
- But Josefína would not have him and he later married her younger sister Anna, with whom he had eight children. The first, Otakar, died at 3 of smallpox and the second, Růžena, died at 11 months from drinking phosphorus.
- Otilka married Dvořák's pupil Josef Suk in 1898.

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Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

- From 1862 until 1871 Dvořák played the viola in the Provisional Theatre orchestra in Prague, from 1866 under the baton of Smetana
- In 1877 Dvořák won an Austrian government scholarship and attracted the attention of Johannes Brahms, who recommended him to his Berlin publisher Simrock.
- In 1878 Dvořák made it internationally with his Slavonic Dances

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Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

- Success in the UK and in the US followed.
- In 1884 Dvořák conducted his Stabat mater in London
- His Requiem was premiered in Birmingham in 1891
 - In 1892-1895 Dvořák worked as Director of the US National Conservatory in New York . Symphony From the New World premiered in New York in 1893
- He authored 9 symphonies, 10 operas , many other compositions, including cantatas

Love and War in Bohemia History of the Czechs

- An independent Czechoslovak Republic was founded in October 1918 after the disintegration of Austria-Hungary by President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk
- It did not manage to survive the assault of Nazi Germany. After the Munich agreement in September 1938 Czechoslovakia was forced to give up its border regions and fortifications, in March 1939 the rest of the country was occupied by Nazi Germany

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Josef Suk (1874-1935)



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Josef Suk (1874-1935)

- Josef Suk was Dvořák's pupil, a lyricist working in the era of late Romanticism and early Modernism
- Suk was a major representative of the Dvořák school of composition
 - In 1898 Suk married Dvořák's daughter Otilia, in 1901 they had a son Josef, but in 1905 Otilia died of heart disease. This tragedy deeply influenced Suk.
 - In 1892, Suk and his three fellow students from the Prague Conservatory founded the Czech Quartett, this existed until 1933 and achieved international reknown.

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Pavel Haas (1899-1944)



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Pavel Haas (1899-1944)

- Pavel Haas came from a Brno Jewish family. His brother Hugo Haas was a famous comic actor in the interwar Czechoslovak Republic. Pavel Haas composed music for some of his films, such as *Život je pes* (1933)
- Haas's work comprises several dozen pieces and one opera, *Charlatan*. Jazz inspiration, modernism, varying styles.

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Pavel Haas (1899-1944)

- Unlike his brother, he was refused an entry visa by the UK and the US and in 1941 was deported to Teresienstadt.
- His Study for String Orchestra was premiered in September 1944 in connection with the filming of Kurt Gerron film.
- Soon thereafter he was gassed in Auschwitz. The score of his Study for String Orchestra was saved by conductor Karel Ančerl.