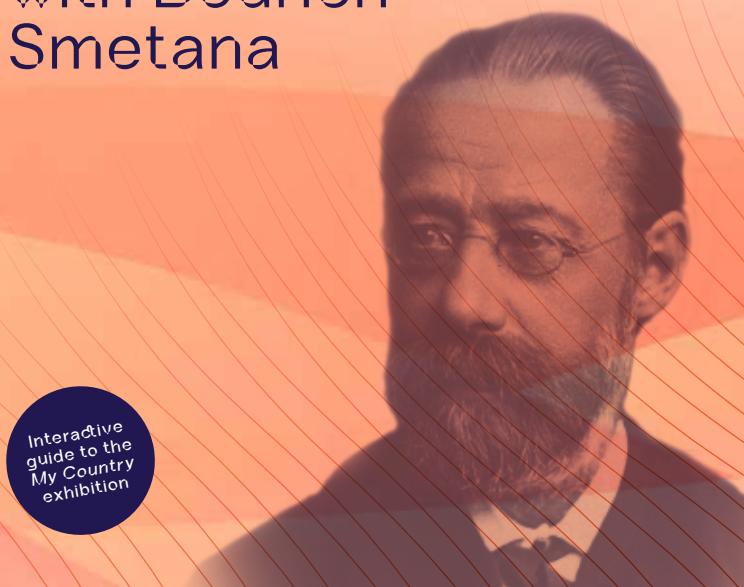


# Flow

## with Bedřich Smetana



Interactive  
guide to the  
My Country  
exhibition

## Going with the flow, being absorbed in activities until we forget everything around us.

Take a moment to stop and immerse yourself in the work of one of the most important Czech composers.

At the age of fifty Bedřich Smetana lost his hearing, which meant he had to give up work and his social life. He closed himself off into composing. It was in this isolation from the outside world that he composed his major works, including the symphonic poem cycle *My country*.

Everyone can find joy and solace in art. Inspiration awaits at every corner, just as when Smetana set off for the Šumava area to see the Vltava River's source and then reflected his impressions from the landscape in the second poem of this cycle.



Time ceases to exist for me when...

---

---

---

---

---

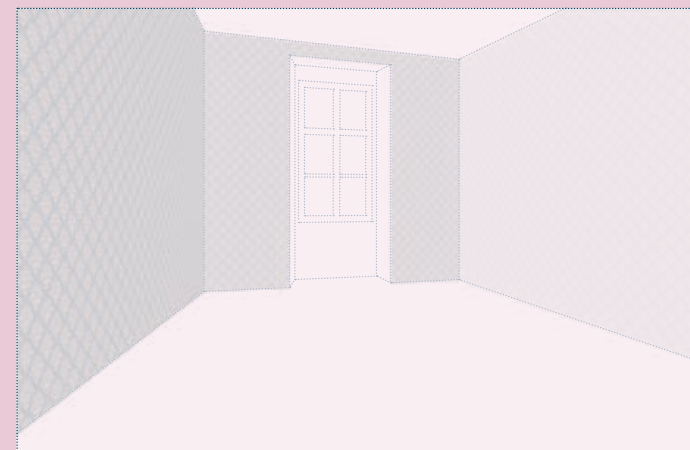
---

## One's own room

In 1876, due to illness, Bedřich Smetana left Prague to live permanently in the countryside with his daughter Žofia. He had a separate room with a work corner in the Jabkenice Lodge. His granddaughter Běla recalls his desk not only had sheet music paper, ink-pots, quills for writing or letters, but also various stones from his travels and trips, which he took as souvenirs.



What caught your eye when you saw the workbench in the exhibition? What would your workspace look like? Draw what has to be there for you to have a good feeling.

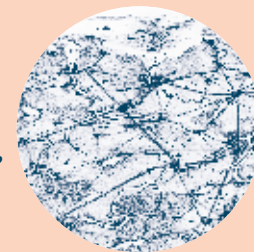


## Mutuality

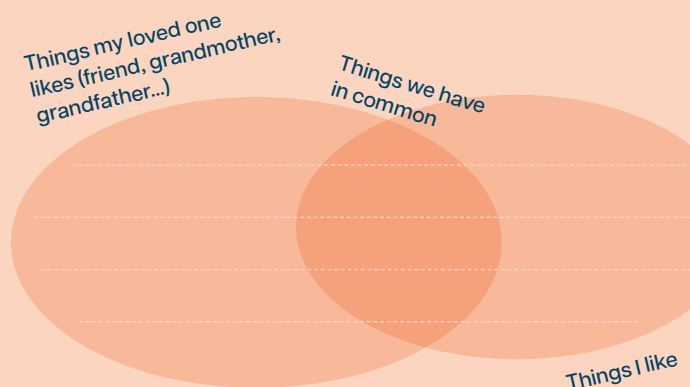
People of different generations living under one roof was challenging, but it also brought mutual care and sharing. The family was united by a love of music, drawing and walks in the country.



Take a look at Smetana's drawing of a landscape he painted during a crisis. What does it remind you of?



Think about what you can share with someone who is important to you. Imagine sharing without words. What comes to mind?



## A great day

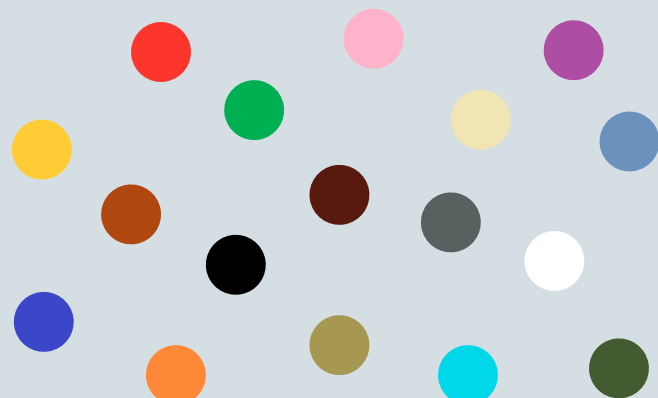
On Sunday, 5 November 1882, the entire cycle of *My country* was performed for the first time at the Žofín concert hall. Bedřich Smetana watched with excitement as the orchestra "performed his dreams" in the form of six symphonic poems inspired by Czech history, mythology and landscape.



Listen to the spoken letter to the conductor Adolf Čech and find out how the composer experienced the premiere.



If this experience could be turned into a color, which would it be? Circle one or find your own colour.

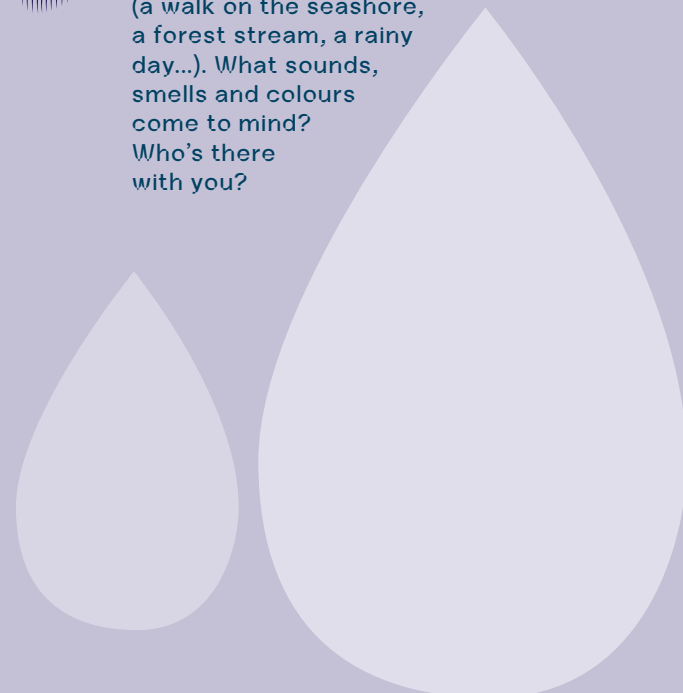


## After the flow

Smetana completed *Vltava* in 19 days. He drew inspiration from his memories of time spent by the river – at its sources, the St. John's rapids, or on the riverbank in Prague.



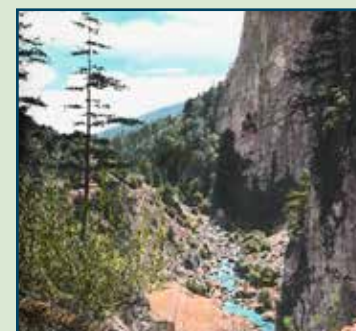
Draw your favourite memory connected with water (a walk on the seashore, a forest stream, a rainy day...). What sounds, smells and colours come to mind? Who's there with you?



## Landscape

The composer describes the poem *From Bohemian Woods and Fields* as "(...) a drawing of emotions at the sight of Bohemia (...). Everyone can draw from the composition as they like (...)."

Even today, the landscape we are part of awakens creativity, sensitivity, but also an increasingly urgent need to care for it.



Vltava River in Šumava,  
historical glass slide,  
ca 1901



Imagine a place you have a strong connection to as part of a work of art. How would you capture it (in a poem, photo, drawing, movement)? Who would you dedicate it to?



Now choose one of the symphonic poems and listen to it undisturbed. What comes to mind when you listen to it? What emotions does it evoke in you? You can come back to listen whenever you want.

## Paths to satisfaction

The interactive guide is inspired by the evidence-based recommendations of the "Five Ways to Wellbeing" report.<sup>★</sup> Incorporating these five activities into your daily life can help increase your mental well-being:



<sup>★</sup> Aked, J., Marks, N., Cordon, C. & Thompson, S. (2008). *Five ways to wellbeing: A report presented to the Foresight project on communicating the evidence base for improving people's well-being*. New Economics Foundation. <https://neweconomics.org/2008/10/five-ways-to-wellbeing>