

## Music 320

### Nationalism: Bohemia

Bohemia was a region of Austro-Hungarian empire until 1860, then granted independence.

Prior to independence, promising young musicians went to Germany or Paris to study music. After independence, young musicians started staying at home

#### Bedrich Smetana (1824-84)

- He was child prodigy on vln, but mostly self-taught. Went to Prague to study at age 20.
- He aggressively promoted Bohemian music: organized subscription concerts (Became Czech Philharmonic Society), experimental National Theater, Society of Bohemian Artists.
- Nationalist works: wrote 8 operas on patriotic or national themes, e.g. ***The Bartered Bride***; six symphonic poems (some contained in a set called ***Ma Vlast***; one of the symphonic poems in the set is ***the Moldau***), other pieces using Czech dance rhythms prominently.

#### Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904)

- The other main Bohemian Nationalist. Unlike Smetana, he wrote in every genre, esp. symphonies and chamber music.
- Attended Prague Conservatory; he was slow to find his characteristic style, imitating other styles for a while, esp. German styles, which weren't popular in Czechoslovakia. More nationalistic works (Slavonic Dances) gave him publicity and success.
- He visited America, was director of National Conservatory in NYC (1892-5), then returned to Prague to direct Prague Cons. until his death.
- His symphonies were influenced by Germans esp. Beethoven, Schubert and Brahms.
  - The last 3 are best; the 8th (1889) is most folk-like/nationalistic.
  - In America he is best known for the 9th symphony ("New World"), inspired by what he heard in America. The folk songs in this symphony are not authentic, but newly created based on what he understood of American Negro Spirituals