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Smetanaís Libuöe: Political Statement and National Symbol

Kelly Brinker
Illinois Wesleyan University

Stephen Press, Faculty Advisor
Illinois Wesleyan University

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Oral Presentation O13.3

SMETANA'S LIBUŠE: POLITICAL STATEMENT AND NATIONAL SYMBOL

Kelly Brinker and Stephen Press*
School of Music, Illinois Wesleyan University

Czech opera during the 1860s was the nation's primary medium for nationalistic expression and consequently tied inherently to the politics of the era. At the time, the nation was divided into two political parties, the conservative Old Czechs (the staročeši) and radical Young Czechs (the mladočeši), under the shared goal to increase the home-rule of their nation. Czech operatic composer Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884) sided strongly with the younger party. This presentation will examine how Smetana exploits the current political and musical trends to convey his own political views in his most sacred nationalistic opera, Libuše.