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## Smetana's Libuše: Political Statement and National Symbol

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Oral Presentation O13.3

**SMETANA'S LIBUŠE: POLITICAL STATEMENT AND NATIONAL SYMBOL**

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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 starošlechtici) and radical Young Czechs (the mladošlechtici), 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.