

A DOCUMENTARY FILM ABOUT THE FAMOUS CONDUCTOR, GREAT WORLD FIGURE
AND ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCE CONDUCTING THE SYMPHONIC CYCLE MÁ VLAST
(MY COUNTRY) BY CZECH COMPOSER BEDŘICH SMETANA FOR THE FIRST TIME



||| BARENBOIM
SMETANA
MÁ VLAST

NOTE OF INTENT

The film is focused on the footage from rehearsals of the Vienna Philharmonic. We follow the process of the new production of this world-renowned work. We focus almost exclusively on the conductor, on his face, in which we see strength that transmits his vision of the music to the orchestra. The concentrated emotion is recasting into tones before our eyes. This process of creation will run through the entire film from beginning to end. The fledgling music will accentuate spoken thoughts or act as a counterpoint, taking over the unfinished sentence or speaking for itself.

BARENBOIM SMETANA MÁ VLAST

DIRECTORIAL METHOD AND VISUALS

The film contains three basic visual axes, which mutually permeate each other: Bedřich Smetana, Daniel Barenboim, the rehearsal and performance of *Má Vlast* by the Vienna Philharmonic during the concerts in Vienna, Paris and the Prague Spring 2017.



Bedřich Smetana (1824–1884)

A genius. He had his human weaknesses and anxieties, but he could laugh and dance. More than anyone he could rejoice and also fall into despair. He burned with love and passion more than others and also, more than anyone else, was able to work hard, concentrate his inner strength, courage and the will to accomplish whatever he sets out to do. Smetana felt Czech in body and spirit, and saw himself as a creator of national music.

On 20 October 1874 the brilliant Czech composer and passionate dancer completely lost his hearing. He never heard *Má Vlast*. Smetana composed most of *Má Vlast* at the twilight of his life in Jabkenice. The deaf composer spent many long hours wandering through the nearby forests, where he formulated the ideas for *Má Vlast*.

In his deafness he was plagued by unbearable noises in his head. The natural environment around Jabkenice gradually transforms during the film from a summer landscape into a colourful autumn one, which merges into the misty sad atmosphere of bare trees and then to a landscape covered in snow. The last part of *Má Vlast* was completed in the winter months.

In Smetana's house in Jabkenice, a room is preserved containing items that belonged to the composer. We see his desk with his glasses, pen, manuscripts, journal notes. Lying on the piano are his scores. Smetana's inner voice quotes excerpts from diaries, thoughts from his correspondence and notes from the score of various parts of *Má Vlast*.



Daniel Barenboim

The camera follows Daniel Barenboim during the rehearsals of *Má Vlast* with the Vienna Philharmonic. From afar we watch the composer at work. We follow his journey through famous European cities like Vienna, Linz, Paris and Munich, a counterpoint to the environment in Jabkenice. From behind the scenes we watch his arrival on stage in the concert hall.

The rehearsals and footage from Jabkenice will be combined with interviews with Barenboim, his thoughts about the works of Smetana and the themes of country, home, etc.

The film culminates with the finale *Blaník* performed at a concert in Prague. It is an intercut with the conductor's arrival on stage at all the concert halls where this production was presented. With dates and subtitles Vienna, Linz, Paris, Munich...

Running time **45 min**

HD 1080i/25

TV Director **Martin Suchánek**

Camera **Richard Špůr**

Coproduction **Czech television,**

ORF, Prague Spring Festival

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