

Answer the following questions about the piece. USE COMPLETE SENTENCES. DO NOT COPY FROM THE TEXTBOOK, PUT ANSWERS INTO YOUR OWN WORDS.

Bedrich Smetana - *The Moldau*

Part One (3 pts.)

Give 3 feelings, value judgments, and/or opinions about *The Moldau*. If one of your feelings is not true for ALL the music from beginning to end, then try to describe *where* your fact occurs in the music. (Use Track numbers.) Remember to qualify these statements by referring to yourself (e.g. The music sounded happy *to me*. OR The music *made me* feel happy.) USE COMPLETE SENTENCES and BE SPECIFIC.

FEELING #1

FEELING #2

FEELING #3

Part Two (9 pts.) Short Answer.

Like Vivaldi's *Spring Concerto* and Berlioz's *Fantastic Symphony*, *The Moldau* is a piece of *program music*. *Program music* is instrumental music associated with a story, poem, idea, or scene. When a composer writes *program music*, the "program" is printed in the concert program for the listener to read. Read the "program" that Smetana wrote for *The Moldau*. Then LISTEN to *The Moldau* again and try to listen to the way Smetana "paints" the pictures described in the "program."

The composition depicts the course of the river, beginning from its two small sources, one cold and the other warm, the joining of both streams into one, then the flow of the Moldau through forests and across meadows, through the countryside where merry feasts are celebrated; water nymphs dance in the moonlight; on nearby rocks can be seen the outline of ruined castles, proudly soaring into the sky. The Moldau swirls through the St. John Rapids and flows in a broad stream toward Prague. It passes Vysehrad [where an ancient royal castle once stood], and finally the river disappears in the distance as it flows majestically into the Elbe.

1. When the piece begins, the listener hears the trickling "water" theme - an wavy, gently rippling motive in the flutes accompanied by harp and pizzicato violins. (Track #35) This builds up to the main theme of the Moldau river (Track #36). How does Smetana musically "paint" a picture in the mind of the listener of the Moldau river in Track #36? (List 2 different musical elements heard in this music that create the sound of the river)
2. At Track #37 the sound of the music changes and we get a new theme. This music "paints" the picture of "merry feasts" taking place as the river flows "through the countryside." One common type of country celebration was the forest hunt. How does Smetana musically "paint" a picture of a forest hunt celebration in the mind of the listener? (List 2 different musical elements heard in this music that create the sound of the forest hunt)
3. At Track #38 the sound of the music changes again and we get a new theme. Here the music "paints" the picture of another type of "merry feast" encountered in the countryside - a peasant celebration (perhaps a wedding?) How does Smetana musically "paint" a picture of a peasant feast in the mind of the listener? (List 2 different musical elements heard in this music that create the sound of the peasant wedding)

4. At Track #39 the sound of the music changes again. Here the music "paints" the picture of Smetana's text "*water nymphs dance in the moonlight.*" Up to now in the *program* (i.e. story), all the events in the story have been taken from real life. Nymphs are magical water sprites who are imaginary (i.e. not real). How does Smetana depict the supernatural moonlight dance of the water nymphs in this track? (List 2 different musical elements heard in this music that create the sound of the water nymphs.)

5. What motive (that you hear earlier in the piece) do you hear again during the moonlight dance of the water nymphs (Track #39)? [Hint: Listen to the background accompaniment.]

6. After the moonlight dance of the water nymphs (at 2:40 of Track #39), which theme returns?

7. What happens musically in Track #40 corresponds to Smetana's own account of the trip that inspired *The Moldau* and is not directly stated in the program. He states, " Today I took an excursion to the St. John Rapids where I sailed in a boat through huge waves..." Track #40 musically represents the rapids of the river (very fast moving water rushing around big rocks), which for someone on a boat sailing down the river could be very dangerous. How does Smetana depict this danger and the "rushing" of the river in this track? (List 2 different musical elements heard in this music that create the sound of the river rapids.)

8. What theme returns at the beginning of Track #41?

9. How does Smetana musical "paint" the picture of the ancient castle which stands at this point alongside the river '*...on nearby rocks can be seen the outline of ruined castles, proudly soaring into the sky...*' in Track #41 ? (List 2 different musical elements heard in this music that create the sound of the ancient castle.)

Part Three (3 pts.)

Throughout history, music has been used for many purposes. We have listened to music intended for church services and music written for entertainment. Music has also been used a political tool. Sometimes this was the composer's plan, but other times a piece took on a special meaning long after the composer had passed away.

The Moldau is a piece of music which took on special significance 75 years after Smetana wrote it. To find clues about why this piece came to represent a political idea, we must first look at Smetana's life and his political beliefs.

Smetana grew up in Bohemia (now known as Czechoslovakia). At the time he lived, Bohemia was under the repressive control of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Czechs did not have freedom to govern themselves and were treated unfairly. Smetana did not like this. He wanted the Czechs to be free and govern themselves. He began to write music that included folk songs, legends, and other national material that was associated with his homeland. He wanted to celebrate the Czech culture and national spirit through his music. When Hitler and the Nazis invaded Czechoslovakia in March 1939, Czech symphonies played *The Moldau* as a protest against the German invasion until the Nazis banned all performances of *The Moldau* in the capital city of Prague in an attempt to break the Czech people's independent spirit.

Why do **YOU** think that *The Moldau*, Smetana's piece about Bohemia's mighty river, became a powerful political symbol for the Czech people's national spirit? (Hint: Think about how Smetana describes how the Moldau is formed. Think about what a mighty river does for a country and how a river behaves in floods.) Write at least three COMPLETE sentences to answer this question.