

Antonín Dvořák

(b Nelahozeves, nr Kralupy, 8 Sept 1841; d Prague, 1 May 1904). Czech composer. With Smetana, Fibich and Janáček he is regarded as one of the great nationalist Czech composers of the 19th century. Long neglected and dismissed by the German-speaking musical world as a naive Czech musician, he is now considered by both Czech and international musicologists Smetana's true heir. He earned worldwide admiration and prestige for 19th-century Czech music with his symphonies, chamber music, oratorios, songs and, to a lesser extent, his operas. (GROVE)

Brahms recommends Dvořák's compositions to music publisher Simrock (1877)

- As for the (austrian) state stipendium, for several years I have enjoyed works sent in by Antonín Dvořák (pronounced Dvorschak) of Prague. This year he has sent works including a volume of 10 duets for two sopranos and piano, which seem to me very pretty, and a practical proposition for publishing. ... Play them through and you will like them as much as I do. As a publisher, you will be particularly pleased with their piquancy. ... Dvořák has written all manner of things: operas (Czech), symphonies, quartets, piano pieces. In any case, he is a very talented man. Moreover, he is poor! I ask you to think about it! The duets will show you what I mean, and could be a 'good article'.

- 1878 Simrock commissioned *Slovanské tance* ('Slavonic Dances', for piano four hands, b78, later orchestrated, b83).
- review in the Berlin *National-Zeitung* led to 'a positive assault on the sheet music shops', and made the previously unknown Czech composer's name 'in the course of a day'.
- Slavonic Dances, series I.(piano four hands/orchestral version) No. 1, 8 (dance „furiant)

- This success abroad (Slavonic dances were performed throughout Europe, first works by Dvořák in US were performed in 1879!) led to his positive acknowledgement in Bohemia.
- International fame increased since 1883, he was invited to England to conduct his orchestral works (some, as Slavonic Dances, were performed there earlier).
- 13 March 1884: London, Albert Hall: Dvořák conducts his oratorio Stabat Mater (written 1877, premiered in Prague 1880, printed by Simrock 1881, given in London 1883).

- The musical world of London regarded his first visit as an ‘event of “red letter” significance’, and fêted him as the ‘musical hero of the hour’.
- Dvořák's success can be compared only with the triumphs of Händel (+1759) and Haydn (+1809).
- Dvořák was expected to write choral works for both the forthcoming Birmingham Festival and the Leeds Festival of 1886 (Oratorio Svatá Ludmila, written on a Czech poem by J. Vrchlický).
- 1890: Requiem

- 1892-1895 Dvořák accepted the post of artistic director and professor of composition at the National Conservatory of Music in America (in New York)
- 1892: Te Deum laudamus (for the celebration of the 400th anniversary of Columbus's discovery of America).

- 1892 from a letter to his friend in Prague:
The Americans expect great things of me. I am to show them the way into the Promised Land, the realm of a new, independent art, in short a national style of music! ... This will certainly be a great and lofty task, and I hope that with God's help I shall succeed in it. I have plenty of encouragement to do so.
- 1893: Symphony No.9, "From the New World"
- 1895: Cello Concerto in B minor.
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Stuyvesant_Square_Dvorak_statue.jpg

- Among his operas only *Rusalka* (1900) is often performed.
- *Rusalka*: Opera ('lyric fairy tale') in three acts by Dvořák to a libretto by the Czech writer Jaroslav Kvapil (i) after Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué's *Undine* (1811) (Prague, 1901).
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvUZWt5PJeA&feature=related>
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-eKENgg_DHM
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCmTMBU1MgY&feature=related>
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSadU_oM_Y4&feature=related