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CLASSICS



Antonin Dvořák
SYMPHONY NO.9,
'FROM THE NEW WORLD'

Jean Sibelius
FINLANDIA



CHINEKE! ORCHESTRA
Kevin John Edusei *conductor*

Jean Sibelius
Finlandia

Antonin Dvořák
Symphony No. 9, 'From the New World'

1. Finlandia Jean Sibelius.....[7.50]

Symphony No. 9 in E Minor, Op. 95, 'From the New World' Antonin Dvořák

2. I. Adagio - Allegro molto.....[11.42]

3. II. Largo.....[11.06]

4. III. Scherzo: Molto vivace.....[8.02]

5. IV. Allegro con fuoco.....[10.49]

Total timings:[49.31]

CHINEKE! ORCHESTRA
KEVIN JOHN EDUSEI *Conductor*

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)
Finlandia, Op 26 9'

A brief trip to Finland is all that is required to grasp the legendary status that Jean Sibelius has acquired in his home nation. From his long-time home, Ainola, which has become a national museum, it is a mere 30 minute drive to Sibelius park in Helsinki, where sits the Sibelius Monument. Budding Finnish musicians attend the Sibelius Academy, partake in the International Jean Sibelius Violin Competition and perform his symphonies in Sibelius Hall. Until the introduction of the euro, his portrait was on the Finnish 100 mark bill and Finland's national Flag Day is now held on his birthday. But how did a musician and composer become a national hero, a position usually reserved for generals, freedom fighters and politicians?

The answer lies with *Finlandia*, Sibelius' love letter to the Finnish nation. At the time of *Finlandia's* composition, Finland was still a semi-autonomous state within the Russian Empire, a fact that sat uneasily with both native Finns, who saw themselves as a sovereign people, and the Russian Tzar Nicholas II, who, as an absolute monarch, was attempting to crack down on the powers and freedoms traditionally held by the region.

Finlandia began its life as a reaction to this crackdown. After tiring of a free, hostile Finnish Press, Nicholas began to shut down his critics by closing one newspaper after another. In reaction to this, Finnish journalists organised a variety show in aid of the Press Pension Fund as a show of solidarity for their out of work colleagues. Sibelius, already a composer of national renown, was approached to provide accompanying music for one of the performances: a series of six tableaux depicting important moments in Finnish history. These short re-enactments were a pop at Nicholas and the Russian establishment, who sought to downplay Finland's claims to sovereignty by ignoring its distinct national story.

The final tableau, 'Finland Awakes!', depicted the rising tide of Finnish nationalism and the emergence of an independent Finnish state. Unsurprisingly given the political climate, 'Finland Awakes!' was by far the most popular act of the evening, leading Sibelius to reimagine the piece as a tone poem a year later, what we now know as *Finlandia*.

Finlandia was an immediate success across Europe, though Sibelius, in fear of Russian reprisal, insisted it be performed under various alternate names for a number of years. The piece spoke to the emerging nationalist sentiment in small nations who had spent most of the past two centuries under the control of larger powers, and who now saw a future for themselves living in co-operation with, rather than subjugated to, their neighbours. As such, *Finlandia* became not only the de-facto national anthem of Finland, but became the national anthem of Biafra during the civil war of 1967-1970, and turned Sibelius into a national hero in his homeland.

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Symphony No.9 Op 95 (From the New World)

Adagio - Allegro molto

Largo

Scherzo: Molto vivace

Allegro con fuoco

Antonín Dvořák first came to America at the behest of Jeannette Thurber, an ex-student of the Paris Conservatoire and one of the first serious patrons of classical music in the United States. Thurber's background as the daughter of an immigrant Danish violinist predisposed her towards the promotion of classical music, while her marriage to the millionaire grocer, Frances Thurber, gave her the financial clout to make her goal a reality. That goal, which became nothing less than a lifelong passion, and one which she convinced many other wealthy patrons to buy into, was the creation of a distinct school of American classical music and composition.

By 1885, with the backing of several wealthy philanthropists including Andrew Carnegie, she established the National Conservatory of Music in America. Based in New York, she envisioned the Conservatory as the first branch of a network of educational institutions which would spread out across the country, initially run by private interests but with the eventual goal of securing funding from the federal government. Thurber knew that if such an

ambitious plan was to succeed, she would need not only money, but expertise and fame on her side, and as such she assiduously courted several high-profile European composers and musicians, including Dvořák, with a view to getting them to work at the Conservatory.

That Dvořák, who was already well respected and not short of work in Europe, as well as positively daunted by the lengthy voyage to the USA, departed for New York in 1891 despite his reservations, says as much for the deep pockets of Thurber and her backers as for their persuasive rhetoric: Dvořák's salary as the director of Thurber's new Conservatory was \$15,000 per annum (a figure of nearly \$400,000 today when adjusted for inflation), for which he was expected to teach three hours per day with four months of annual leave.

The fit turned out not to be an easy one: Dvořák initially found the role left him little time for composition, and his forward-looking attitude to race brought him into conflict with many of New York's elite. Although Thurber had been insistent that her new Conservatory admit both black and female students, her opinions on race and gender were far removed from those of many of her fellow New Yorkers. Indeed, there were many who actively wished for Thurber's attempt at founding a federally funded, egalitarian music school to fail.

Dvořák, either oblivious to such intrigues, or wilfully set against them, caused a storm when he pronounced to the New York Herald in May of 1893 that he had come across the foundation upon which the new school of American composition would be built:

"I am now satisfied that the future of music in this country must be founded upon what are called Negro melodies. This must be the real foundation of any serious and original school of composition to be developed in the United States. When I came here last year I was impressed with this idea and it has developed into a settled conviction. These beautiful and varied themes are the product of the soil...There is nothing in the whole range of composition that cannot be supplied with themes from this source."

The response of the press and much of the public was to dismiss this as an impossibility. When, in a later interview, he expressed a similar view of Native American music, he received the same response.

When his *Symphony No.9* debuted six months later, audiences were keen to see how the composer had absorbed Native American and African-American music into the European classical tradition. What they heard was a piece that rang with melodies influenced by the folk music and spirituals sung to him by his African-American student and assistant, Harry Burleigh, and with rhythms and pentatonic sections inspired by the music of the Sioux Indians, all wrapped up in the format of a Western Classical symphony.

Many were quick to dismiss the links, drawing attention to the widespread use of the pentatonic scale in European folk music, or of the composer's own conflicting statements on the influences behind his work, taken from newspaper 'interviews' obtained by buttonholing him on his walk to work. Amazingly, it is still common to see such arguments put forth in American musical scholarship today, used to discredit Dvořák's own statements about his musical influences.

In the end, the financial shockwaves of the Panic of 1893 caused Dvořák's salary payments to become ever more irregular, and he departed New York to return to his homeland of Bohemia in 1895. Thurber's Conservatory prospered for a few years before her failing health and the rise of other schools of music, such as the Juillard School, sent it into decline. But though Dvořák lasted only a few years in New York and the National Conservatory of Music in America closed for the final time in 1930, Dvořák and Thurber's legacy, in the form of the *Symphony No.9* and American musical philanthropy, endured.

Programme notes by **Fin Conway**

First Violins

Ann-Estelle Médouze (leader)
Robert Olisa Nzekwu
Elena Urioste
Brammah Kanneh-Mason
Anyango Yarbo-Davenport
Enrico Alvares
Simmy Singh
Miles Brett
Blaize Henry
Sarah Daramy-Williams
Radhika de Saram
Robert Miller
Ravi Veriah-Jacques
Nandita Bhatia

Second Violins

Samson Diamond
Melissa White
Fra Rustumji
Didier Osindero
Steven Crichlow
Charlotte Barbour-Condini
Davinder Singh
Vincent Ademola-Haaststrup
Teddy Truneh
Yannick Hiwat
Angela Antwi-Agyei
Jamal Hope

Violas

Juan Miguel Hernandez
Lena Fankhauser
Clifton Harrison
Nicola Hicks

Laurice Campell-Buckton

Audrey Monfils
Natalie Taylor
Natalia Senior-Brown
Zami Jalil
Isata Kanneh-Mason

Cellos

Desmond Neysmith
Ashok Klouda
Tony Rymer
Sheku Kanneh-Mason
Seth Parker Woods
Zara Hudson-Kozdoi
Kwesi Edman
David Kadumukasa

Double Basses

Chi-chi Nwanoku
Adam Wynter
Nathan Knight
Joseph Straker
Adam Storey
Ayesha D'Oyley

Flutes

Eric Lamb
Matthew Lynch

Oboes

Titus Underwood
Khem Shabazz

Cor Anglais

Titus Underwood

Clarinets

Mariam Adam
Berginald Rash

Bassoons

Andrew Brady
Linton Stephens

Horns

Pierre Buizer
Derryck Nasib
Adedeji Ogunfolu
Dwight Pile-Gray

Trumpets

Billy Hunter
Aaron Akugbo
Kevin Robinson

Trombones

Harry Brown
Chris Augustine

Bass Trombone

Richard Henry

Tuba

Andy Grappy

Timpani

Pedro Segundo

Percussion

Sacha Johnson



CHINEKE! ORCHESTRA

The Chineke! Foundation is a non-profit organisation which has been established to provide career opportunities to young Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) classical musicians in the UK and Europe. Chineke!'s motto is: 'Championing change and celebrating diversity in classical music'. The organisation aims to be a catalyst for change, realising existing diversity targets within the industry by increasing the representation of BME musicians in British and European orchestras.

The Chineke! Orchestra is comprised of exceptional musicians from across the continent, drawn together multiple times per year. The Foundation is planning on scaling up its orchestra's commitments over time, with the eventual goal of running a full season of performances each year, and has recently teamed up with Askonas Holt to plan the orchestra's future overseas touring schedule. The orchestra takes an inclusive, non-hierarchical approach to its performances, placing the emphasis firmly on the players rather than on conductors or soloists, and aims to perform a mixture of standard orchestral repertoire along with the works of BME composers both past and present.

The Chineke! Orchestra works closely with its sister ensemble, the Chineke! Junior Orchestra, a youth orchestra of BME players aged 11-18 who are already benefitting from a number of existing youth schemes, junior music colleges and specialist music schools across the UK. The Chineke! Orchestra plays an important role in this project, with senior players acting as mentors, teachers and role models to the young musicians. In this way, the Chineke! Junior Orchestra acts as a bridge between such schemes and higher education, giving its players experience, encouragement and confidence during their formative years, with the hope of increasing the numbers of BME candidates currently studying music at third level. This process has already begun, with one of our junior musicians having been offered a full scholarship to the RAM.

The Chineke! Orchestra is the brainchild of Chi-chi Nwanoku MBE, FRAM, who has this say about the project: 'My aim is to create a space where BME musicians can walk on stage and know that they belong, in every sense of the word. If even one BME child feels that their colour is getting in the way of their musical ambitions, then I hope to inspire them, give them a platform, and show them that music, of whatever kind, is for all people.'

Thankfully, cultural organisations such as Arts Council England, British Council, Conservatoires UK and Help Musicians UK agree with this sentiment, and have backed the project. Indeed, after its debut performance at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in September of 2015, the Chineke! Orchestra has been appointed as an Associate Orchestra of the Southbank Centre, and by popular demand returned there to perform in September of 2016, this time at the Royal Festival Hall. Chineke! has also been featured prominently in the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's White Paper on Culture published in March 2016, and was shortlisted for a 2016 RPS Award in the Ensemble Category.

The aims of the Chineke! Foundation and Orchestra are certainly ambitious, but, in words of Sir Simon Rattle: 'Chineke! is not only an exciting idea but a profoundly necessary one. The kind of idea which is so obvious that you wonder why it is not already in place. The kind of idea which could deepen and enrich classical music in the UK for generations. What a thrilling prospect!'

KEVIN JOHN EDUSEI

Kevin John Edusei is one of today's most promising young conductors. With an exceptionally wide ranging repertoire from baroque to contemporary music. Edusei is known for his delicate, clear conducting, which creates space for new nuances.

He first attracted international attention in 2008 when he won the first prize of the prestigious "International Dimitris Mitropoulos Competition" in Athens. Since the season 2014/2015 he brings exceptional new vision to the Münchner Symphoniker as their chief conductor. Starting in the season 2015/16 he also acts as chief conductor at the Konzert Theater Bern where he successfully continues his artistic collaboration.



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As a guest conductor he has been invited by European orchestras such as the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, the Konzerthaus-Orchester Berlin, the Residence Orchestra The Hague, the Düsseldorfer Symphoniker, the Mozarteumorchester Salzburg, the Tonkünstler-Orchester Wien, the Wiener Kammerorchester and the Ensemble Modern Frankfurt among others.

In the year 2009 he gave his successful debut with the Staatskapelle Dresden leading a series of performances of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at the Semperoper Dresden. In March 2010 he stepped in for maestro Fabio Luisi on short notice to take over Paul Hindemith's *Cardillac* which was highly praised by the press. In 2013 he presented himself to the Viennese audience with Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* at the Volksoper Wien. Further engagements in the season 2012/13 included the Landestheater Innsbruck and the Konzert Theater Bern where he subsequently held the position of 1st guest-conductor.

In Bern he conducted the acclaimed productions of Richard Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Salome* and Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes*.

During the seasons 2004 until 2011 he held the position of 1. Kapellmeister and associate General music director at the opera houses of Augsburg and Bielefeld, Germany. Highlights of his work in the field of opera were his acclaimed renderings of *Fidelio*, *Don Carlos*, *Aida*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La Bohème*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Der ferne Klang* and *Tristan und Isolde*.

He was one of the three winners of the 2007 Lucerne Festival's conducting competition under the artistic direction of Pierre Boulez and Peter Eötvös to conduct Karlheinz Stockhausen's opus magnum *Gruppen für drei Orchester*. Furthermore Kevin was awarded the "Dirigentenforum" stipend of the German Music Council, the fellowship of the International Ensemble Modern Academy and the stipend of the Deutsche Bank affiliated organization "Akademie Musiktheater heute".

Kevin John Edusei received important artistic guidance from maestros Kurt Masur, Jorma Panula, Sylvain Cambreling and Peter Eötvös. During the Aspen Music Festival 2004 maestro David Zinman awarded him the fellowship for the American Academy of Conducting which gave him the possibility to work with distinguished artists as Leon Fleisher, Julius Rudel, David Robertson and Michael Stern.

CHI-CHI NWANOKU

An ex-sprinter and half the size of her double bass, Chi-chi Nwanoku has gained a reputation as one of the finest exponents of her instrument today. The eldest of 5 children from Nigerian and Irish parents, she was 7 years old when she discovered the piano at a neighbour's, who taught her to play a 12-bar blues. She returned to their house daily until the neighbour got so fed up they wheeled the piano up the road and gave it to her as a gift!

Meanwhile, she was spotted (aged 8) by an athletics coach and trained as a 100-metre sprinter, eventually competing at National level. This career ended abruptly due to a knee injury aged 18, which is when (and why) she took up the double bass and actively pursued a career in music.

She studied at the Royal Academy of Music and with Franco Petracchi in Rome, and soon found herself in demand internationally.

Chi-chi is a founder member of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and was principal double bass there for over thirty years. She is the Founder, Artistic Director & Principal double bass of Chineke!. She is also professor of Double Bass Historical Studies at the Royal Academy of music, and was made a Fellow there 1998.

Her range of musical interests has resulted in a broad career performing and recording in a diversity of styles from authentic baroque through to 21st century and new commissions, with many of Europe's leading chamber orchestras and ensembles. Some of her notable chamber recordings include Schubert's 'Trout' Quintet (recorded three times), and Octet, Beethoven Septet, Hummel Piano quintet and Boccherini Sonatas. Her solo recording of Dittersdorf and Vanhal Concertos with the Swedish Chamber Orchestra; Hyperion CD 67179 received critical acclaim.



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As a broadcaster, Chi-chi presented BBC Radio 3 Requests for four years, she guests for the TV Proms and was Jury member of BBC 2 TV Classical Star. She will be presented a two part series for BBC Radio 4 in 2015 which brought to life the stories and music of black composers and musicians from the eighteenth century, whose vivid presence on the classical music scene have slipped through the net! Chi-chi was the 'mentor' in 2016's BBC 4 TV series 'All Together Now, the Great Orchestra Challenge', showcasing the amazing talent of British amateur orchestras.

As well as being a trustee of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and the Mayor's Music Funds, she served on the board of the Association of British Orchestras (ABO) from 2008 to 2013 and as a Council Member of the Royal Philharmonic Society since 2009, and in 2011 Chi-chi created the ABO/RPS 'Salomon Prize' which celebrates the "unsung heroes" working in the ranks of British Orchestras.

In 2012 Barrie Gavin directed a documentary film about Chi-chi's career, called 'Tales from the Bass Line'. Chi-chi was awarded an MBE for services to Music in the 2001 Queen's Birthday honours. She was one of the 100 - Happy List in the Independent on Sunday 2011, and in July 2016 was appointed as an Honorary Fellow of Trinity Laban Conservatoire in recognition of her "pioneering contribution to music, in particular the inspiration she provides, the commitment she has shown, and the contribution she has made to addressing inequalities within classical music in the UK, most recently through the Chineke! Foundation." As well as being named Black British Business Awards, Person of the Year 2016, Chi-chi also won the Association of British Orchestras Award 2017, for "making the most significant contribution to orchestral life in the UK".

Chi-chi is a dedicated advocate of the importance of music in everyone's lives and is committed to teaching and sharing her love of music.

**CHINEKE! would like to thank the following sponsors
for their support of this project:**

Candace Allen
Sophie Fuller
Prof. Denis McCaldin
Martin McDonald
Dr. Dele Olajide
Luke Price
Noel Rands
Louise Sheridan

*Recorded at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall,
London, on 4th September 2016
Producer – Tim Oldham
Recording Engineer & Editor – Andrew Mellor*

*Cover and Central Image - © Eric Richmond
Design & artwork - Darren Rumney*

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