



NAXOS

DVOŘÁK

SYMPHONY NO. 6

NOCTURNE • SCHERZO CAPRICCIOSO



BALTIMORE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA • MARIN ALSOP

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Symphony No. 6 • Nocturne • Scherzo capriccioso

Antonín Dvořák was born in 1841, the son of a butcher and innkeeper in the village of Nelahozeves, some forty miles north of Prague. It was natural that he should at first have been expected to follow the family trade, as the eldest son. His musical abilities, however, soon became apparent and were encouraged by his father, who in later years abandoned his original trade, to earn something of a living as a zither player. After primary schooling he was sent to lodge with an uncle in Zlonice and was there able to acquire the necessary knowledge of German and improve his abilities as a musician, hitherto acquired at home in the village band and in church. Further study of German and of music at Kamenice, a town in northern Bohemia, led to his admission in 1857 to the Prague Organ School, where he studied for the following two years.

On leaving the Organ School, Dvořák earned his living as a viola player in a band under the direction of Karel Komzák, an ensemble that was to form the nucleus of the Czech Provisional Theatre Orchestra, established in 1862. Four years later Smetana was appointed conductor at the theatre, where his operas *The Brandenburgers in Bohemia* and *The Bartered Bride* had already been performed. It was not until 1871 that Dvořák resigned from the orchestra, devoting himself more fully to composition, as his music began to attract favourable local attention. In 1873 he married a singer from the chorus of the theatre and in 1874 became organist of the church of St Adalbert. During this period he continued to support himself by private teaching, while busy on a series of compositions that gradually became known to a wider circle, particularly with the success of his *Hymnus: Dádcové bílé hory* (The Heirs of the White Mountain) for the Prague Hlahol Vocal Society.

Further recognition came to Dvořák in 1874, when his application for an Austrian government award brought his music to the attention of Brahms and the critic Eduard Hanslick in Vienna. The granting of this

award for five consecutive years was of material assistance. It was through this contact that, impressed by Dvořák's *Moravian Duets* entered for the award of 1877, Brahms was able to arrange for their publication by Simrock, who commissioned the *Slavonic Dances*, for piano duet. The success of these publications introduced Dvořák's music to a much wider public, for which it held some exotic appeal. As his reputation grew, there were visits to Germany and to England, where he was always received with greater enthusiasm than might initially have been accorded a Czech composer in Vienna.

In 1883 Dvořák had rejected a tempting proposal that he should write a German opera for Vienna. At home he continued to contribute to Czech operatic repertoire, an important element in re-establishing national musical identity. The invitation to take up a position in New York was another matter. In 1891 he had become professor of composition at Prague Conservatory and in the summer of the same year he was invited to become director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York, an institution that was intended to foster American music, hitherto dominated by musicians from Europe or largely trained there. Whatever the ultimate success or failure of the venture, Dvořák's contribution was seen as that of providing a blueprint for American national music, following the example of Czech national music, which owed so much to him. There were musical results in his own work, notably in his *Symphony 'From the New World,'* and chamber music of the period, works that rely strongly on the European tradition that he had inherited, while making use of melodies and rhythms that might be associated in one way or another with America. By 1895 Dvořák was home for good, resuming work at the Prague Conservatory, of which he became director in 1901. His final works included a series of symphonic poems and two more operas, to add to the nine he had already composed. He died in Prague in 1904.

Dvořák wrote his *Symphony No. 6 in D major, Op. 60*, for the conductor Hans Richter and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra in 1880, but the prejudices of certain members of the orchestra towards the Czechs and their unwillingness to allow the inclusion of a new work by a new Czech composer so soon after the successful performance in 1879 of the *Third Slavonic Rhapsody* allowed Adolf Čech, once the composer's colleague in the St Cecilia Orchestra during student days, to give the first performance in Prague early in 1881. The following year August Manns conducted the symphony at a Crystal Palace concert in London, and three weeks later Richter, to whom the work was finally dedicated, added a further London performance of the work he had commissioned. The first Vienna performance was given in 1883 by Wilhelm Gericke for the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. The symphony is scored for the usual pairs of woodwind instruments, with piccolo, four horns, a pair of trumpets, three trombones and tuba, timpani and strings.

The similarities between the symphony and Brahms's work in the same key have been pointed out, although Dvořák's symphony bears the stamp of his own genius at its height and may be heard as a tribute to the man who had earlier given him timely help in his career. The symphony opens with repeated accompanying chords played by horns and divided violas, above which the principal theme gradually

appears. There is a superb slow movement in the key of B flat, followed by a *Scherzo* bearing the subtitle *Furiant*, a Czech peasant dance, with a contrasting trio, pierced by the piccolo in pastoral mood. The strings open the *Finale* with a long-drawn Brahmsian theme, joined by the wind and swelling soon to triumphant dimensions in a thoroughly satisfying conclusion.

The *Nocturne in B major, Op. 40*, was arranged first for violin and piano from the *Andante religioso* slow movement of Dvořák's *String Quartet No. 4 in E minor*, and forms the basis of the string orchestra version, apparently completed in 1875. It was published in 1883 and heard the following year in London, when it was included in a programme conducted by Dvořák at the Crystal Palace, where Elgar was soon to have his first work played in London.

Dvořák wrote his *Scherzo capriccioso* in the spring of 1883. It is among his most successful works, fully characteristic of the composer at his best, with a winning principal waltz theme. The work was composed at a time when Dvořák's reputation had resulted in an invitation to London and an offer from Vienna for a German opera. The first he accepted in the following year, but he decided against Vienna, preferring to remain loyal to Bohemia and the cause of opera in the Czech language.

Keith Anderson

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra



The GRAMMY® Award-winning Baltimore Symphony Orchestra has achieved a preeminent place among the world's most important orchestras. Acclaimed for its uncompromising pursuit of artistic excellence, the BSO has attracted a devoted national and international following. The orchestra made musical history in 2005 when it announced the appointment of Marin Alsop as its twelfth music director, making her the first woman to lead a major American orchestra. This marked the dawn of a new era for the BSO, with the addition of her highly praised artistic vision, her dynamic musicianship and her commitment to accessibility in classical music. For more than 80 years, the BSO has maintained a vibrant educational presence

throughout the State of Maryland through its commitment to actively giving back with its education, outreach and mentorship programs. Recent initiatives include OrchKids, a year-round after-school program designed to create social change and nurture promising futures for youth in Baltimore City's neighborhoods; "Rusty Musicians with the BSO," concerts welcoming local amateur musicians to perform with the BSO; and BSO Academy, a week-long program of master classes, lectures and public performances with BSO members and Music Director Marin Alsop. The orchestra is actively involved in recording, broadcasting and podcasting projects which make its music available to audiences around the globe. It has received critical acclaim for its prolific discography, which features renowned artists such as cellist Yo-Yo Ma and violinists Joshua Bell and Hilary Hahn.

Marin Alsop

Photo: Dean Alexander



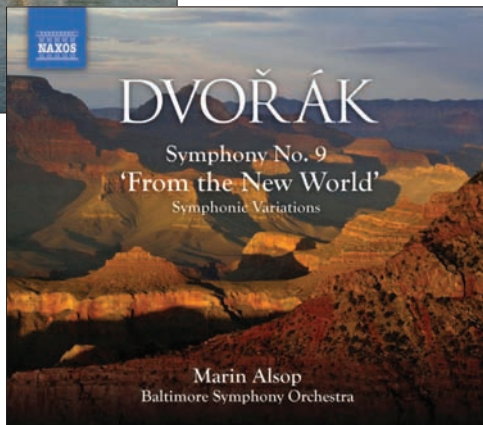
Marin Alsop has been Music Director of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra since 2007, a relationship now extended to 2015. Currently Conductor Emeritus of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Music Director Laureate of the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, since 1992 she has also been Music Director of California's prize-winning Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music. She appears regularly with the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra and Los Angeles Philharmonic. In addition to engagements with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Zürich Tonhalle, Orchestre de Paris, Munich Philharmonic and La

Scala Milan, she performs each season with both the London Symphony Orchestra and the London Philharmonic and in 2009-2010 was Artistic Director of The Bernstein Project, at London's Southbank Centre. Marin Alsop is *Musical America's* 2009 Conductor of the Year, a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the recipient of numerous awards in the United States and Europe. Her extensive discography on Naxos includes Brahms with the London Philharmonic, Bartók, Takemitsu, Weill and Orff with the Bournemouth Symphony, and a series of American music. A Dvořák symphony cycle with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra launched in 2008 with the 'New World,' immediately an international bestseller. Born in New York City, Marin Alsop attended Yale and the Juilliard School. After winning the Koussevitsky Conducting Prize from the Tanglewood Music Center she became a protégée of Leonard Bernstein.

Also available from Marin Alsop and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra:



8.572112



8.570714

8.570995

ANTONÍN
DVOŘÁK
 (1841-1904)

Playing Time:
68:19

Widely acclaimed for their Naxos recordings of Dvořák's *Symphonies Nos. 7 and 8* (8.572112) and *No. 9 'From the New World'* with the *Symphonic Variations* (8.570714), Marin Alsop and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra here present his *Symphony No. 6*, which pays tribute both to Dvořák's mentor Brahms and to the rich folk music of his Bohemian homeland. The *Nocturne* is an arrangement for string orchestra of the beautiful slow movement from his *Fourth String Quartet*. Suggestive of a celebration of Nature, the *Scherzo capriccioso* is one of Dvořák's most masterful and colourful works, with a winning principal waltz theme.

Symphony No. 6 in D major, Op. 60

- 1** I. Allegro non tanto
- 2** II. Adagio
- 3** III. Scherzo: Presto
- 4** IV. Finale: Allegro con spirito

45:35

16:12

11:20

8:02

10:01

5 **Nocturne in B major, Op. 40**

7:38

6 **Scherzo capriccioso, Op. 66**

15:04

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra • Marin Alsop

Recorded live at Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall, Baltimore, Maryland, USA,
 on 27th, 28th and 30th March, 2008 (tracks 1-5), and on 19th, 20th and 22nd March, 2009 (track 6)
 Producer: Steve Epstein • Engineer: Richard King • Booklet notes: Keith Anderson
 Cover photograph by Joy Lim (Dreamstime.com)

Booklet Notes in English • Disc made in Canada • Printed and assembled in USA.

© & © 2010 Naxos Rights International Ltd. • www.naxos.com

8.570995

