

**Dvořák: Symphony no. 9 in E minor**

**"From the New World"**

**Mendelssohn: Symphony no. 3 in A minor**

**"Scottish"**

**[première recording]**

**composers' original piano duet versions**



**Goldstone & Clemmow**

## **ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841-1904)**

Symphony no. 9 “From the New World” in E minor, Op.95 (1893) 37:18  
Piano Duet version by the composer

①	<i>Adagio – Allegro molto</i>	8:46
②	<i>Largo</i>	10:10
③	<i>Scherzo (Molto vivace)</i>	7:52
④	<i>Allegro con fuoco</i>	10:30

## **FELIX MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY (1809-1847)**

Symphony no. 3 “Scottish” in A minor, Op.56 (1842) 34:09  
Piano Duet version by the composer

⑤	<i>Andante con moto – Allegro un poco agitato – Andante come prima -</i>	12:37
⑥	<i>Vivace non troppo -</i>	4:19
⑦	<i>Adagio -</i>	7:54
⑧	<i>Allegro vivacissimo – allegro maestoso assai</i>	9:19

Total CD duration 71:38

**GOLDSTONE & CLEMMOW (four hands at one piano)**

## **SYMPHONIES FOR 4 HANDS**

The medium of four hands at one piano was a significant one for both Dvořák and Mendelssohn, both of whom wrote superbly for it. It was of course the earlier (Op. 46) of the Czech master's two sets of eight *Slavonic Dances* for piano duet (which he later orchestrated) that made his international reputation in 1878. As well as composing other wonderful original four-hand works, namely the *Legends*, Op. 59, and *From the Bohemian Forest*, Op. 68, he created piano duet versions of many of his orchestral and chamber works, including the "*New World*" *Symphony*.

In November 1826 the seventeen-year-old Felix Mendelssohn and his older sister Fanny played his early masterpiece, the "*Midsummer Night's Dream*" *Overture*, in piano duet form for his mentor Ignaz Moscheles, to his great approbation, and it is even likely that the composition of this version preceded the orchestration. (The much later incidental music also exists in

Mendelssohn's own four-hand version.) Though he wrote little music solely for piano duet, the *Allegro brillante*, Op. 92, dating from 1841, is a sizzling concert piece. The four-hand version that he made of his "*Scottish*" *Symphony* appears to have been completely overlooked for a century and a half. The edition we have, published by J.J. Ewer and Co., 69, Newgate Street, London (Breitkopf and Härtel, Leipzig, is credited as well), is importantly titled:

**Symphony, No. 3. Composed and Dedicated (by Permission) to Her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Arranged as a Piano Forte Duett, By the Author. Op 56.**

Over half a century separates the two symphonies in this recording, but there are parallels between them. Both works begin with a slow introduction, giving notice of the imposing scale that each will assume; cyclic procedures (i.e. the unification of the four movements in both symphonies by means of

references to the themes of earlier movements) are employed in both works, subtly in Mendelssohn's, overtly in Dvořák's; and both recall the folk music of countries from which their composers had departed (this issue becomes rather complicated with Dvořák, as we shall see), without quoting any examples directly, as far as is known (although it has been written that the first theme of the "*Scottish*" *Symphony's* *Scherzo* is "based on an old Scotch bag-piper's melody").

Another, more general and peripheral, connection is the confusing numbering that has been attached to the symphonies of both composers. Publication dates come into this. The first of Dvořák's symphonies to be published, and therefore misleadingly designated number one, was in fact the sixth to be written, and not very long ago one could still see the "*New World*" *Symphony*, Dvořák's ninth and last, referred to as number five. The precocious Mendelssohn from the age of twelve to that of fourteen produced around a dozen symphonies for strings,

one of which he arranged for full orchestra. When he was only fifteen he wrote the first symphony of his to be published - "number one". The two that followed, the "*Reformation*" and the "*Italian*", are now known as numbers five and four according to the order of their first publication, which occurred after his death; meanwhile the last two to be written, the "*Hymn of Praise*" and the "*Scottish*", had been published in the early 1840s soon after their completion as numbers two and three.

In September 1892 Dvořák arrived in New York to take up the directorship of the fairly new National Conservatory set up by the philanthropic Mrs Jeannette Thurber, for entry to which there were no barriers of race or poverty, musical talent being the only criterion. Eight months later the "*New World*" *Symphony* was finished. At its première in New York in December 1893 "the success of the symphony was tremendous" (the composer's words), and so it has been to this day.

There has been much controversy about the extent of “American” music contained in the “*New World*” *Symphony*. It should always be remembered that the work’s title, “*Z nového světa*”, means “*From the New World*”, suggesting a musical “letter” to his Czech countrymen containing his impressions - a very different concept from an “American” symphony. (Fascinatingly, though, it appears to have served as one significant starting point for arguably the first truly American symphony – Charles Ives’s second, begun as early as 1897.) Like the majority of Dvořák’s works, the *New World Symphony* is a celebration of his native land and his Czech heritage. Nevertheless, although he denied making use of Indian and Negro motifs, he admitted to conjuring up their spirit in the symphony, and he extolled Negro melodies as containing “all that is needed for a great and noble [American] school of music”. He took a great interest in black and Native American culture, even beginning sketches for an opera based on Longfellow’s *Hiawatha*, and it is not

surprising to discover tunes in the symphony that echo the folk idioms of peoples whom he admired and with whom he sympathised in their subjugation; these melodies, however, were filtered through his own intensely Slav sensibilities. Here it may be apposite to remark that “Slav” and “slave” have the same origin, the Slavs having been reduced to a servile nation through conquest in the distant past.

Slav melancholy seems to affect the *Adagio* introduction to the first movement [1], but the appearance of the germ of what will be the first subject of the *Allegro molto* urges the music to life, and soon we are propelled into the main sonata-form movement. The confident first subject, with its characteristic rhythm, is balanced by a dual second subject group - a *dolce* polka tune in G minor and an *espressivo* melody in G major whose rhythm comes from the first subject and which is, by accident or design, virtually a condensed version of the spiritual “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”. This and the first subject are

thrown around in the action-packed development, to the exclusion of the polka tune. A quirky feature of the recapitulation is the appearance of both second-subject themes not in their rightful home keys but in G sharp minor and A flat major respectively. There follows a sweeping coda.

The *Largo* second movement [2] continues to hold a special place in the affections of music lovers. I feel it to be cast in the form of a rather understated dumka - a term derived from the Slavonic verb *dumati* meaning "to meditate" or "to brood", which in the nineteenth century developed into a piece of music with alternating moods and tempi, often dominated by melancholy. (Dvořák's "*Dumky*" *Piano Trio*, Op. 90, consists entirely of dumkas.) A chorale leads us from a hushed E major to a rich D flat major, a shift that would have delighted a hero of the composer, another consummate melodist, with parental roots in Moravia and Bohemian Silesia - Franz Schubert. The sweetly sad voice of the cor anglais was that chosen by Dvořák

to sing the glorious first melody, one which has since been subjected to many adaptations, just three of which are the "spiritual", "Goin' Home", recorded by Paul Robeson and others; the song "Cotton Tail", purportedly sung to Dvořák by a black man in *Summer Song* - a 1950s musical very loosely based on his sojourn in America; and, in an arrangement for brass band, a memorable television advertisement for wholemeal bread! Returning to the unresolved debate about the folk inspiration in this symphony, I do think that this theme has a certain kinship with slave songs such as "Deep River".

A change to C sharp minor brings real yearning, eventually assuaged by a return to the major mode as an innocent Slav folk dance - a clever transformation of the opening phrase of the cor anglais melody - starts up over a drone bass, growing steadily until, with a sudden lurch of harmony, both the first subject and the "chariot" theme of the first movement combine with the cor anglais melody in an impassioned

climax, perhaps symbolising the composer's conflicting emotions regarding his two homes. Intriguingly, discounting the four and a half bars of cadenza-like decoration of the tonic chord contained in them, the last fourteen bars of the movement, which recall its opening chorale, bear an uncanny resemblance to the close of Liszt's *Concert Study "Un Sospiro"* for solo piano (c.1848), which also is in D flat major. (Dvořák had in his teens played viola under Liszt's conductorship, had come under his spell and knew his works in detail.)

The *Scherzo* [3], back in E minor, soon reveals the characteristic cross-rhythms of the furiant, a lively Czech dance. After a link reiterating a three-note motif taken from both the first movement's first subject and its "chariot" theme comes a *poco sostenuto* subsidiary section in E major containing a melody (related to the second movement's cor anglais theme) given almost exclusively to woodwind instruments, which to my ears suggests the wailing tones of Native American

dance-song. In this movement the first subject of the opening movement makes a couple of short appearances, once in a smile-inducing modulatory transition to the skipping trio section and again in the coda, where it is followed by the beginning of the "chariot" theme. Finally, the music having seemed to die away, the last chord is *fortissimo*.

The finale [4] is cast in a curious variety of sonata form, modified by Dvořák's determination to "tie up" the whole symphony by various means. The rather march-like first subject (actually derived from the yearning C sharp minor theme of the *Largo*), which comes after an introductory build-up, is never again heard in full, and one is not even certain that one has reached the recapitulation until the long-breathed second subject reappears in its rightful tonic key. Meanwhile, in the development, snatches of the *Largo*'s cor anglais theme and the main themes of the third and first movements have joined in the musical discourse. A subsidiary theme in the second subject

group includes the three falling notes that we associate with “Three Blind Mice”, and Dvořák makes much of this little motif. Towards the end of the movement the first two bars of the *Largo*’s cor anglais theme are again quoted (in the minor, accompanied by the *Scherzo* motif), and its second bar, consisting of these same three falling notes, is purposefully repeated several times; these notes indeed feature also in the finale’s first subject, quoted directly afterwards. And prior to this Dvořák has managed to bring back the first subject of the first movement and also the chorale that rounded off the *Largo*, now in the minor key and *ff* - *fff*! An astonishing chromatic mutation in the last reference to the finale’s first subject is followed by one last surprise - a long dying pause on the final major chord.

While we were deeply involved in preparing the music for this recording I was also practising Grieg’s *Piano Concerto*. After emerging from a session of the latter I mentioned to Caroline that I wondered if Grieg had

been listening to Mendelssohn’s “Scottish” Symphony when he wrote the *Concerto*. I was struck by various links: both works are in A minor and boast a heroic peroration in A major at the end of their respective finales, and the sprightly *animato* solo passages in the first movement of the concerto reminded me of the opening theme of the finale of the symphony, this similarity of course being emphasised when the latter is heard on the piano. So I was pleased to discover that Grieg actually programmed the “Scottish” Symphony in the third concert of the subscription series that he had inaugurated in Christiania (now Oslo), and that he himself conducted this concert on 4 April 1868, two months before starting work on the *Concerto*. My intuition was probably subconsciously fuelled by the knowledge that Grieg was one-eighth Scottish (Grieg being the ancestral form of his name) and that he had studied at the Leipzig Conservatory, which Mendelssohn founded two months before Grieg was born, on 2 April 1843.



This might be considered an irrelevance but for the fact that it helps to demonstrate the incredibly wide-ranging influence wielded by the music and the outlook of Mendelssohn for many years in both the Old and the New Worlds - in the stylistic adherence to his music shown by countless composers, gifted and not so gifted, for a good half century, and also through both the Leipzig Conservatory and his enlightened directorship of the city's Gewandhaus Orchestra.

In 1829, encouraged by his father, the twenty-year-old composer set off on extensive European travels to broaden his horizons. First he visited Britain for several months, where he established a formidable reputation, conducting his own works and playing the solo part in the first English performance of Beethoven's "*Emperor*" *Concerto*. He began a four-week Scottish tour in late July, when he wrote of a visit to Edinburgh's Holyrood Palace: "We went to the Palace where Queen Mary lived and loved; there is a little room to

be seen there with a staircase at its door; they went up that and found Rizzio in the little room, dragged him out, and three chambers away there is a dark corner where they murdered him. The chapel beside it has now lost its roof, it is overgrown with grass and ivy, and at the broken altar Mary was crowned Queen of Scotland. Everything is ruined, decayed, and open to the sky. I believe I have found there today the beginning of my Scottish symphony".

Nearly thirteen years would elapse before the symphony was completed - in January 1842. In the intervening period Mendelssohn visited Britain several times and was adopted almost as a national hero. After the symphony's première in Leipzig in March 1842 he conducted it to great acclaim at the Philharmonic Society in London on 13 June. He was invited by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, who were keen amateur musicians and admired his works, to visit them in Buckingham Palace a few days later, when they exhausted him with requests

at the piano. "We were all filled with the greatest admiration", wrote the Queen in her diary. On 9 July he returned for further convivial music making, this time also accompanying them both in his songs, and on this occasion he was granted permission by the Queen to dedicate the "*Scottish Symphony*" to her.

Mendelssohn wrote "*attacca*" between all the movements of the symphony, the lack of breaks making the complete work a concentrated listening experience. Several of the themes feature the same rising interval of a perfect fourth from dominant to tonic (sometimes intersected or preceded by the submediant); this also serves to connect the movements in the mind of the listener.

The introduction to the first movement [5] is dignified, even solemn, as would befit its genesis at Holyrood, but with a stream of beautiful melody that becomes passionate and then quieters leaving a questioning phrase, which is answered by the *pianissimo* first

subject of the main *Allegro*. There is a pervading restlessness, a mysterious drama, in the whole of this movement - exemplified by the strange falling modulations at the beginning of the development - that speaks of the magical effect that Scotland's legends and scenery had on the composer.

In the coda a ferocious storm gets up. Mendelssohn's 1829 Scottish sojourn was beset by violent weather, and he suffered seasickness very badly in heavy seas en route to Staffa - the inspiration for his "*Hebrides*" (or "*Fingal's Cave*") *Overture* (of which, incidentally, Brahms said "I would gladly give all I have written to have composed something like the "*Hebrides*" *Overture*), so this episode is no doubt a flashback. After a brief foretaste of what will be the main theme of the last movement the fury subsides, finally, into a short reminiscence of the introductory *Andante*.

Unusually the *Scherzo* [6], in F major, comes second, and - again unusually -

it is not in ternary (scherzo/trio/scherzo) form but in sonata form, with a second subject in the dominant, a development that slides into the recapitulation in the manner of Schubert, and a coda that disintegrates into silence. The whole movement is *echt* Mendelssohn, with its wispy fleet *moto perpetuo* on which is superimposed the tang of Scots melody. The obvious affection with which Mendelssohn treated the Scottish idiom here suggests that one should ascribe the comment in a letter to his father from Wales, “Anything but national music! May ten thousand devils take all folklore”, to overconsumption of the type laid on for tourists.

Even before the arrival of the gentle principal theme of the *Adagio* [7] we hear the underlying dotted rhythm of a slow ceremonial march, which will on three occasions emphatically override the serene flow of this predominantly lyrical movement. To his sublime melodies, when they reappear, Mendelssohn adds exquisite, intricately

woven accompaniments. (The piano duet version differs in some minor details from the orchestral score in this movement.)

The last movement [8], which Mendelssohn called *Allegro guerriero* (warlike) in the preface to the first edition, bursts with energy and was perhaps inspired by tales of feuding clans. An insistent martial beat, upward leaps, dynamic rhythms and syncopations (somewhat relieved by a calmer second theme) combine to produce a fiercely motoric finale - a second cousin, one might say, of the finale of Schubert’s “Great” *C major Symphony*, whose first performance Mendelssohn had conducted in Leipzig in 1839. (In the piano duet version there is some “ironing out” of a particular rhythmic motif, which I feel to be for the purpose of pianistic facilitation; as opposed to our decision to retain the few slight differences in the *Adagio*, which are improvements, in the finale we have restored the “kick” in the rhythm to correspond with the orchestral score, which is

more characterful.) The battle having played itself out, silence follows, ushering in a paean of victory whose melody sums up, in the major key, the generic character of earlier themes; beginning like a male chorus it grows in power to a *fortissimo* tutti, which is sustained right through to the muscular final chords.

*Notes* © Anthony Goldstone 2004

## **GOLDSTONE & CLEMMOW**

With CDs approaching thirty in number and a busy concert schedule stretching back over twenty years, the British piano duo Goldstone and Clemmow is firmly established as a leading force. Described by *Gramophone* as “a dazzling husband and wife team”, and by *International Record Review* as “a British institution in the best sense of the word”, internationally known artists Anthony Goldstone and Caroline Clemmow formed their duo in 1984 and married in 1989. Their extremely diverse activities in two-piano and piano-duet

recitals and double concertos, taking in major festivals, have sent them all over the British Isles as well as to Europe, the Middle East and several times to the U.S.A., where they have received standing ovations and such press accolades as “revelations such as this are rare in the concert hall these days” (*Charleston Post and Courier*). In their refreshingly presented concerts they mix famous masterpieces and fascinating rarities, which they frequently unearth themselves, into absorbing and hugely entertaining programmes; their numerous B.B.C. broadcasts have often included first hearings of unjustly neglected works, and their equally enterprising and acclaimed commercial recordings include many world premières. Having presented the complete duets of Mozart for the bicentenary, they decided to accept the much greater challenge of performing the vast quantity of music written by Schubert specifically for four hands at one piano. This they first did in 1993 - and have since repeated several times - in a mammoth cycle of seven concerts,

which in its completeness (including works not found in the collected edition) and original recital format was probably a world first. *The Musical Times* wrote of this venture: “The Goldstone/Clemmow performances invited one superlative after another.” The complete cycle (as a rare bonus including as encores Schumann’s eight Schubert-inspired *Polonaises*) is available on seven CDs. “Haunted with the spirit of Schubert” - *Luister*, The Netherlands.

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