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LOUISVILLE
ORCHESTRA



Poetry (1898)
Alphonse Mucha (1860-1939)



Holy Mount Athos (1926)
Alphonse Mucha (1860-1939)

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

OCTOBER 21, 2016 AT 11 AM

DONATO CABRERA, GUEST CONDUCTOR

Cello Concerto in B minor
Amit Peled, cellist

Symphony No. 7 in D minor
(select movements)

All-Dvořák program

In 1892, Dvořák was offered a teaching position at the National Conservatory of Music in New York City with a starting salary of \$15,000 (quite large for the time). His goal was to discover and embrace American folk music (as he had done with Czech folk music).

The following year, he was given an article from the journal *Music* that was written by “Johann Tonsor” of Louisville. The article discussed African-American street music and as Dvořák had an interest in American music, he was intrigued. “Johann Tonsor” was actually Mildred Hill, the composer of *Happy birthday*.

The Composer Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)



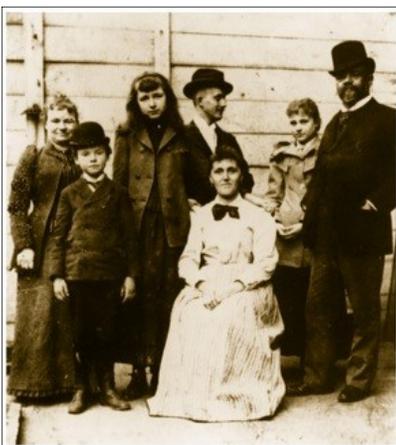
Antonín Dvořák was born on September 8, 1841 near Prague in central Bohemia (now the Czech Republic). Dvořák's father was a butcher and innkeeper (professions that had been in his family for generations) but many in his family were also amateur musicians. As

the first born (of nine surviving children), it was expected that Dvořák would carry on the family business, but early on it became apparent that music was Dvořák's true calling. Dvořák studied violin with a local music teacher but when the family moved to a larger town, he began studying with Antonin Liehmann who taught him harmony as well as the organ. At 16, Dvořák moved to Prague to study at the organ school and earned a little money playing viola in local orchestras including many for the opera. This gave him access to some of the great operatic repertoire as well as an opportunity play under the direction of Richard Wagner. He also gave piano lessons on the side and ended up meeting his future wife Anna while teaching her older sister Josefína (he actually was in love with Josefína but the affections were not returned). Dvořák began composing in the early 1860s but his first success came in 1873 with a hymn [The Heirs of the White Mountain](#). He married Anna in 1873 and in 1875; he received a state scholarship for promising impoverished young artists. Included on the jury was Johannes Brahms who saw much promise in the young composer and not only did they become friends, but Brahms also got his publisher interested and Dvořák's music became available outside of Czechoslovakia. His next works would cement his national and international reputation; these included the [Slavonic Dances](#) (1878 and 1886), [String Sextet](#) (1879), the [Violin Concerto](#) (1879), his setting of [Stabat Mater](#) (1880), [Symphony No. 6 in D Major](#) (1880) and [Symphony No. 7 in D minor](#) (1885). By 1889, Dvořák was teaching at the Prague Conservatory as well as conducting throughout Europe and Russia. Dvořák then received an offer from an American woman, Jeannette Thurber, that he couldn't refuse and it would inspire his best known work.



Dvořák and his wife
Anna

Mrs. Thurber had offered Dvořák a teaching position in the new National Conservatory of Music in New York City. So in 1892, Dvořák



Dvořák and his family in New York (1893)

moved his family to New York. During the summer of 1893, Dvořák and his family spent time in Spillville, Iowa that had a large Czech-speaking population and is likely where he heard music from the local Kickapoo tribe. That same year, he was commissioned by the New York Philharmonic to compose [Symphony No. 9 in E Minor](#) "From the New World". This work was greatly informed by his friendship with student Harry Burleigh, an African-American musician and singer who attended the National Conservatory. Burleigh said "I sang our songs for him very often, and before he wrote his own themes, he filled himself with the spirit of the old Spirituals." Dvořák himself commented that "in these melodies of America I discover all that is needed for a great and noble school of music."

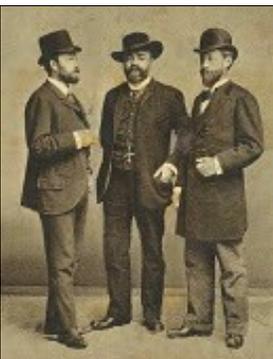
Influenced and inspired by Native American music and African-America spirituals, *Symphony No. 9* was premiered at Carnegie Hall on December 16, 1893 and each movement was greeted with thunderous applause.

Through early 1895, he stayed in America composing several string works including his [Cello Concerto in B minor](#). He and his family returned to Europe in April 1895 and by October, he had resumed his teaching at the Prague Conservatory. Brahms tried to convince Dvořák and his family to move to Vienna but Dvořák could not leave his beloved country. His final years were spent receiving much acclaim. Dvořák's death on May 1, 1904 remains a mystery as there was no autopsy and no official cause of death (although he had been ill for a few weeks prior to his death). But his compositional legacy in America was profound and spurred other composers to explore new directions in the creation of uniquely American classical music.



Title page of *Symphony No. 9 in E minor* "From the New World"

Cello Concerto in B minor



Dvořák (middle) with Wihan (left)

Dvořák began work on the [Cello Concerto in B minor](#) for renowned Czech cellist Hanuš Wihan (Ha-noosh vee-Hawn) while he was still in America in the autumn of 1894 (it was completed in February 1895). Dvořák was inspired after hearing his colleague Victor Herbert perform his own cello concerto (Herbert was also faculty at National Conservatory and a well-known composer in his own right – known more for his stage music including [Naughty Marietta](#) and [Babes in Toyland](#) as well as numerous works for the Ziegfeld Follies). By the time of this composition, Dvořák was homesick so his final work in America speaks more of his beloved Bohemia than of American tunes. It is one of his most personal works.



Victor Herbert

The concerto was written in a tradition three movement format. The first **movement** opens with a lengthy orchestral introduction that highlights the themes before the cello enters (this movement has perhaps one of the best known themes for the cello that is repeated through other instruments and the remainder of the movement).

The **second movement** – Adagio – includes a Dvořák song “Leave me alone” that was favored by his sister-in-law (Josefina Kaunitzová) who was very ill at the time. In fact, it was Josefina who Dvořák courted first before eventually marrying her sister Anna.

The **third movement** caused some consternation from the composer as Dvořák was at odds with Wihan over cadenzas. Dvořák was emphatic with his publisher about his position on this subject: “I shall only give you my work if you promise not to allow anybody to make any changes —my friend Wihan not excepted — without my knowledge and consent, and this includes the cadenza which Wihan has added to the last movement. ... I told Wihan straight away when he showed it to me that it was impossible to stick bits on like that. The finale closes gradually diminuendo, like a sigh — with reminiscences of the first and second movements — the solo dies down to pianissimo — then swells again and the last bars are taken up by the orchestra and the whole concludes in stormy mood. That was my idea and I cannot depart from it.”

The work premiered in Queen's Hall in London on March 19, 1896 with English cellist Leo Stern, not Wihan due to the cadenza issue. Stern found the work extremely challenging and went to Prague to study with Dvořák. For the next two weeks, Stern practiced seven hours a day to master the piece. Reviews for the premiere were positive: ““In wealth and beauty of thematic material, as well as in the unusual interest of the development of the first movement, the new concerto yields to none of the composer's recent works; all three movements are richly melodious, the just balance is maintained between the orchestra and the solo instruments, and the passages written for display are admirably devised. The slow movement, though of rather excessive length, is very beautiful, and the finale brilliant yet by no means trivial. Except for a certain diffusiveness arising from the composer's prodigality in themes, the concerto is completely successful. Mr. Leo Stern played the solo part with good taste, musicianly expression, and faultless technical skill, and the work was received with much enthusiasm.”

Amit Peled, cellist



From the United States to Europe to the Middle East and Asia, Israeli cellist Amit Peled, voted by Musical America as one of the most Influential Music Professionals of 2015, is acclaimed as one of the most exciting instrumentalists on the concert stage today. At 6'5" tall, Peled started life as a basketball player and was called "larger than life" when he enveloped his cello and "Jacqueline du Pré in a farmer's body." Peled often surprises audiences with the ways he breaks down barriers between performers and the public, making classical music more accessible to wider audiences. Tim Smith of the Baltimore Sun reflected on a recent performance: “Peled did a lot of joking in remarks to the audience. His amiable and inviting personality is exactly the type everyone says we'll need more of if classical music is to survive.”

During the 2015/16 season, Mr. Peled continued sharing with audiences around the world the sound of the [historic cello of Pablo Casals](#). Mrs. Marta Casals Istomin, the widow of Maestro Casals, personally handed him the instrument, a Goffriller ca. 1733. Some of the highlights of this historic cello included the culmination of a 20 city U.S. recital tour at the Kennedy Center of Performing Arts in Washington D.C., a recording of the Schumann Cello Concerto with the Washington Chamber Orchestra, an extensive tour with his two chamber music groups, The Tempest Trio and the Goldstein-Peled-Fiterstein Trio, and return engagements with the Tucson Symphony and Phoenix Symphony. As a continuing advocate for new music this season, Mr.

4 Peled will be premiering a work written especially for him by composer, Lera Auerbach, enti-

played *La suite dels ocells*. He will also be collaborating with the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts with a new music recital series created by composer, Mason Bates, titled *KC Jukebox*.

Mr. Peled has performed as a soloist with many orchestras and in the world's major concert halls such as: Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall, New York; Salle Gaveau, Paris; Wigmore Hall, London; Konzerthaus, Berlin; and Tel Aviv's Mann Auditorium. Following his enthusiastically received Alice Tully Hall concerto debut playing the Hindemith cello concerto, the New York Times stated: "Glowing tone, a seductive timbre and an emotionally pointed approach to phrasing that made you want to hear him again."

As a recording artist, Amit recently released his fourth Centaur Records CD, "Collage" which will be closely followed by his recording of the Schumann Cello Concerto with the Washington Chamber Orchestra. These records follow three immensely successful installments, "The Jewish Soul," "Cellobration," and "Reflections." As an active chamber musician, Peled is a founding member of the famed Tempest Trio with pianist, Alon Goldstein and violinist, Ilya Kaler. Their Dvorak CD on Naxos has been described as "The best 'Dumky' on disk ever!"

Mr. Peled is also a frequent guest artist, performing and giving master classes at prestigious summer music festivals such as the Marlboro Music Festival, Newport Music Festival, Seattle Chamber Music Festival, Heifetz International Music Institute, Schleswig Holstein and Euro Arts Festivals in Germany, Gotland Festival in Sweden, Prussia Cove Festival in England, The Violoncello Forum in Spain, and the Mizra International Academy and Festival in Israel.

Amit Peled has been featured on television and radio stations throughout the world, including NPR's "Performance Today," WGBH Boston, WQXR New York, WFMT Chicago, Deutschland Radio Berlin, Radio France, Swedish National Radio & TV, and Israeli National Radio & TV.

One of the most sought after cello pedagogues, Mr. Peled is a Professor at the Peabody Conservatory of Music of the Johns Hopkins University.

The Cello and the Casals Journey



From Mr. Peled: "I met Mrs Marta Casals Istomin and the historic 1733 Matteo Goffriller cello of her late husband, Pablo Casals in 2012. The idea of seeing that instrument up close was hard for me to grasp. How could I, a simple man, son of farmers from a tiny kibbutz in Israel,

hold now the instrument that helped Casals redefine cello history?

This cello made the journey with the maestro from Spain into world fame. All the major recordings of Casals were created with this instrument, and so many musicians have grown up, and been shaped musically, listening to that sound. There were simply no words!

I was shaking when the door was opened and Marta handed the case to me. Should I open it myself? What if it breaks when I touch it? The cello was calmly asleep when I took it over, as if an old man was peacefully enjoying a deep rest. Moreover, I couldn't resist the strong smell of Casals's famous pipe emerging from the cello as I settled down to play the first notes.

My dream had come true; I was playing the most famous instrument in the world right here, right now and all I could think about was my mother being so far away in Israel, not able to see, hear and appreciate it with me. Imagining her eyes and warm touch, I dove into Dvořák's *Cello Concerto* and woke up playing the last notes of Bloch's *Prayer From Jewish Life*, hearing Marta's approving, 'Now that was something!'

I had to find a way not to disturb the cello's own voice, and to allow its natural tone to blossom. The instrument started suggesting to me different colors and I was amazed by the palette of possibilities. This was like stepping into a museum, where one observes beauty by acknowledging rather than creating it. A magical voice is planted into that magnificent Goffriller and I was so blessed to have a personal conversation with it.

A couple of weeks later, while on tour in Germany, I received an email from Mrs Casals Istomin, announcing that she would lend me the Casals cello. Dreams can come true and our life is re-energized by them. I have always fantasized about simply seeing the Casals cello and here I am able to play it."

Symphony No. 7 in D minor



Dvořák was at a personal and compositional crossroads in the early 1880s. First, his mother passed away in 1882 followed by Bedřich Smetana (the "father" of Czech music) in 1884. Second, while he was well off financially and professionally, Dvořák wondered if he needed to continue in the nationalist tradition as in his earlier successful works (in other words stay provincial/local) or tackle something completely different and attain a more international position. The answer would come to him after hearing Brahms' *Third Symphony*. Dvořák was inspired to take a "darker" tone with his next symphony; more dramatic and somber, a definite departure from his upbeat Slavic tunes as well as his *Symphony No. 6 in D Major*.

So in 1885 (ten years earlier than the *Cello Concerto*), Dvořák composed the *Symphony No 7 in D minor*. Dvořák had quite a following in England thanks to his choral work *Stabat Mater* and this new symphony was commissioned for the Royal Philharmonic Society of London.

The **first movement** is in sonata-allegro form and according to his own notes, inspired while he was watching trains; a personal passion for Dvořák ("This main theme occurred to me upon the arrival at the station of the ceremonial train from Pest in 1884."). The opening is definitely dark before the first theme is introduced. And rather than ending this movement in triumph, it gradually fades.

Though the **second movement** of *Symphony No. 9* is the more famous of Dvořák's second movements, this symphony's second movement is equally rich in texture and sweeping lyricism. The movement was revised by the composer (he removed 40 bars) and in a note to his publisher Simrock, Dvořák noted that "the Adagio is currently much shorter and more compact and now I am convinced that there is not a single superfluous note in the work."

The **third movement** is a spritely scherzo and perhaps the most traditional Dvořák sounding of the movements with its infectious dance nature. Although by keeping it in D minor, Dvořák doesn't allow too many allusions to previous music including his Slavonic Dances.

The **fourth movement** opens with the sound that tragedy has returned before the chorale in A major featuring the cellos. Dvořák brings the symphony to a close, not in the original key of D minor but in D Major. Although Dvořák had much tragedy in his life, he didn't seem to have the fatalistic compositional view as other composers like Gustav Mahler.



London journal *Athenaeum* wrote about the premiere: "Let it be said at once and decidedly that the new work fully satisfied the highest expectations that had been formed regarding it; and that his symphony in D minor is not only entirely worthy of his reputation, but is one of the greatest works of its class produced in the present generation. Dvorak's music is equally interesting, and we may add satisfying, to adherents of the conservative and the progressive schools of art – to the former because it illustrates the fact that it is possible to create something entirely new and original without departing from the formal outlines or the canons of art laid down by the greatest masters of the past; to the more modern school because of the boldness of his harmonic progressions and the freedom of his rhythmic combinations. [...] The finale of the symphony is fully equal to any of the preceding movements; in its sustained power and masculine energy it may be placed by the side of the magnificent final movement of Schubert's great Symphony in C, which, though widely different in its themes, it resembles in its exhaustless flow of melody, and even more, perhaps, in the resistless impulse with which it carries everything before it. We are inclined on a first hearing to place this new symphony even above those of Brahms, which it equals in masterly treatment and exquisite instrumentation while it surpasses them in spontaneity of invention."

In his 1935 book *Essays in Musical Analysis*, British musicologist Sir Donald Tovey stated "I have no hesitation in setting Dvořák's [Seventh] Symphony along with the C major Symphony of Schubert and the four symphonies of Brahms, as among the greatest and purest examples of this art-form since Beethoven."

The Hill sisters of Louisville, Kentucky



In 1865, Louisville had one of the first of ten Kindergarten programs in the country and by 1887, the Louisville Free Kindergarten Association became incorporated. With more teachers and demand, classes sprang up around the city including one at the Home of the Innocents (1888). By 1889, the first class of trained kindergarten teachers continued the expansion of the program; included in this first class was **Patty Smith Hill** and **Finnie Burton**. As

the program flourished, people from around the country came to Louisville to see the success of the experimental kindergarten program. Both Burton and Hill were instrumental in the development of the program with Hill presenting at the 1893 Columbian Exposition (Chicago's World Fair). Hill's sisters **Mary** and **Mildred** were also involved in the program. In 1893 Mildred and Patty published *Song Stories for the Kindergarten* that included the song *Good Morning to All*, a song most of us know as the **Happy Birthday** song. In 1906, Patty left Louisville to join the faculty of Columbia University Teachers College in New York City. Mildred continued to publish as well as document African-American street cries. This became part of a 1892 article in *Music* magazine she submitted as "Johann Tonsor" and ended up in the hands of Antonín Dvořák who utilized some of the melodies in his *Symphony No. 9*, particularly the second movement.

Great Czechs in the world of the arts

Antonín Dvořák was one of many well-known Czech composers of the 19th century and certainly warrants much of the spotlight due to his works' popularity but he was not the only well-known Czech composer. Composition in Czechoslovakia dates back to the late 13th/early 14th century primarily through sacred works although there are some medieval songs of Závěš ze Zap that survived. Throughout the centuries the boundaries of Czechoslovakia changed (including parts of Bohemia) so there are composers whose first language was Czech including Christoph Gluck and Carl Czerny (a student of Beethoven). The mid-19th century brought a Czech nationalist music movement ushered in by [Bedřich Smetana](#). This movement was fueled by the desire for an independent state and Smetana infused his works with native folk melodies and stories ([The Bartered Bride](#), [Ma Vlast](#)). Dvořák continued and expanded this tradition as did many of his contemporaries including [Leoš Janáček](#) ([Jenůfa](#)), [Gustav Mahler](#) ([Des Knaben Wunderhorn](#)), [Julius Fučík](#) ([Entry of the Gladiators](#)) and [Josef Suk](#) (Dvořák's son-in-law; [Serenade in E-flat](#)). Into the 20th century, composers like [Bohuslav Martinů](#) ([The Opening of the Wells](#)) and [Karel Husa](#) ([Music for Prague 1968](#)) continued to be inspired by the homeland but expanded composition beyond the Romanticism of Dvořák.



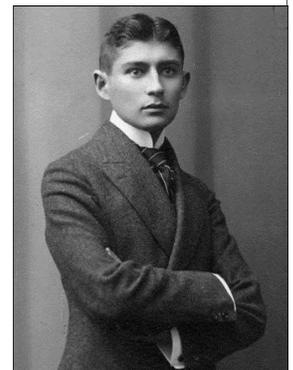
Zodiac (1896)
By Alphonse Mucha

Czech arts dates back to the Paleolithic era with the 1925 discovery of the [Venus of Dolní Věstonice](#), one of the oldest known ceramics in the world. During the [medieval era](#), artists were often employed by the church and/or aristocracy including 14th century painter [Master Theoderic](#) who was the court painter for [Charles IV, Holy Roman Emperor](#). In the 19th century, painter [Alphonse Mucha](#) epitomized the Art Nouveau style with his fin-de-siècle posters but his masterwork was [The Slav Epic](#); a series of 20 paintings he worked on between 1910 and 1928 that Mucha gifted to the city of Prague.

Throughout the 20th century, Czechoslovakia struggled with two World Wars as well as communist rule which strictly limited the arts; many artists, musicians and writers went into exile due to these limitations. In 1905, an exhibition by Norwegian painter [Edvard Munch](#) was shown at the National Gallery in Prague and inspired a number of artists (including [Bohumil Kubišta](#)) to explore more expressionistic styles.

To understand Czech literature, you must understand the history and politics of Bohemia and Moravia. Austrian and German culture held sway over these two areas for many years and greatly influenced the literature (this would hold true in the 20th century during communist rule). Establishing a purely Czech literature base took hold in the 19th century as the wave of nationalism was sweeping the country (supported by composers and artists alike). In this vein, [Josef Jungmann](#) revived the written Czech language as well as translated works of Goethe, Schiller and Milton (among others) into Czech.

One of the most influential writers of the 20th century was [Franz Kafka](#) who was born in Prague in 1883 to a German-speaking Jewish family. His 1915 novella [The Metamorphosis](#) continues to be a seminal work of the 20th century and inspired the word "Kafkaesque" that Merriam-Webster describes as "having a nightmarishly complex, bizarre, or illogical quality".



Franz Kafka