



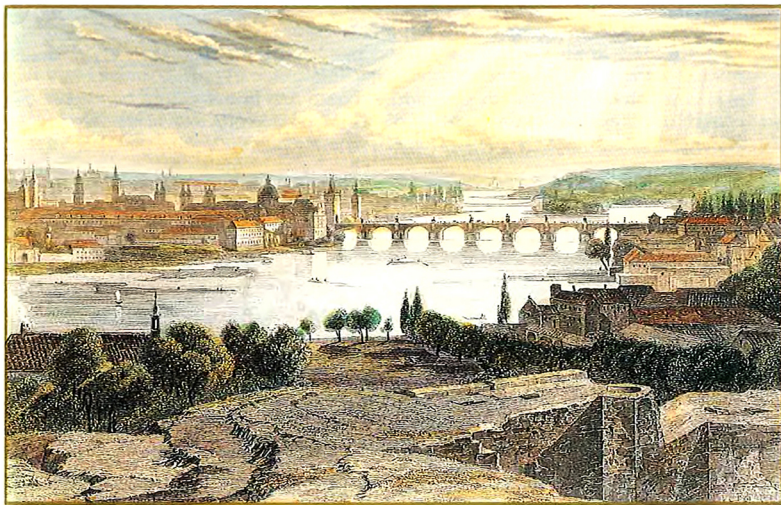
DVOŘÁK

DDD  
8.550268

Symphonies

No. 3, Op. 10 • No. 6, Op. 60

Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra  
Stephen Gunzenhauser



1990 Recording | Playing Time : 78'00"

## **Antonín Dvořák (1841 - 1904)**

**Symphony No. 3 in E Flat Major, Op. 10**

**Symphony No. 6 in D Major, Op. 60**

Antonín Dvořák was born in 1841, the son of a village butcher and innkeeper in the village of Nelahozeves, near Kralupy, in Bohemia, and some forty miles north of Prague. It was natural that he should follow the example of his father and grandfather by learning the family trade, and to this end he left school at the age of eleven. There is no reliable record of his competence in butchery, but his musical abilities were early apparent, and in 1853 he was sent to lodge with an uncle in Zlonice, where he continued an apprenticeship started at home, learning German and improving his knowledge of music, rudimentary skill in which he had already acquired at home and in the village band and 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, from which he graduated two years later.

In the years that followed, Dvořák earned his living as a viola-player in a band under the direction of Karel Komzák which was to form the nucleus of the Provisional Theatre Orchestra, established in 1862. Four years later Smetana was appointed conductor of the opera-house, where his Czech operas *The Brandenburgers in Bohemia* and *The Bartered Bride* had already been performed. It was not until 1871 that Dvořák resigned from the theatre orchestra, to devote more time to composition, as his music began to draw some favourable local attention. Two years later he married and early 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.

Further recognition came in 1875 with the award of a Ministry of Education stipendium by a committee in Vienna that included the critic Eduard Hanslick

and Brahms. The following year Dvořák failed to win the award, but was successful in 1877. His fourth application brought the personal interest of Hanslick and Brahms and a connection with Simrock, the latter's publisher, who expressed a wish to publish the Moravian Duets and commissioned a set of Slavonic Dances for piano duet. These compositions won particular popularity. There were visits to Germany and to England, where he was always received with greater enthusiasm than a Czech composer would ever at that time have won in Vienna. The series of compositions that followed secured him an unassailable position in Czech music and a place of honour in the larger world.

Early in 1891 Dvořák became professor of composition at Prague Conservatory. In the summer of the same year he was invited to become director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York, a venture which, it was hoped, would lay the foundations for American national music. The very Bohemian musical results of Dvořák's time in America are well known. Here he wrote his Ninth Symphony, *From the New World*, its themes influenced, at least, by what he had heard of indigenous American Indian and Negro music, his American Quartet and a charming sonatina for violin and piano. In 1895 he returned home to his work at the Prague Conservatory, writing in the following year a series of symphonic poems and before the end of the century two more operas, to add to the nine he had already composed. He died in Prague in 1904.

Dvořák's nine symphonies span a period of nearly thirty years. The first two were written in 1865, and the last in 1893. Both the numbering of the symphonies and the opus numbers assigned to them have caused some confusion. The first four symphonies were originally omitted from the list, so that the last five were numbered, although not in order of composition, the basis of the more usual numbering today. Opus numbers were also manipulated to some extent, a simple subterfuge to outwit Simrock by allocating earlier opus

numbers to new compositions, on which he would otherwise have had an option.

Dvořák's Third Symphony was written in 1872 and probably scored the following year. It was first performed at a Philharmonic concert in Prague in 1874, the first of the symphonies that the composer had heard played. The symphony is scored for an orchestra that includes piccolo and cor anglais, in addition to pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons and trumpets, four horns, three trombones, timpani, triangle and strings. A harp is used in the slow movement and a tuba added in the finale. The work is in only three movements and shows the continuing influence of Wagner in its instrumental writing.

The choice of the key of E flat has led some to seek comparisons with Beethoven's Eroica Symphony, in the same key. There is a broad parallel in the suggestions of a funeral march in the C sharp minor second movement, interrupted by a D flat major section with its harp accompaniment and busy accompanying figuration for divided violas and cellos. The finale, announced by the timpani, might suggest in mood, if not in structure, the work of Beethoven, dominated by the jaunty rhythm of its principal theme, with suggestions of Wagner at moments of dramatic climax.

Dvořák wrote his Sixth Symphony 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 Cech, 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 Richter added a further London performance of the work he had commissioned three weeks later. 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, four horns, a pair of trumpets, three trombones and tuba, timpani and strings.

Attention has been drawn to similarities between the D major Symphony and the symphony by Brahms in the same key, although Dvořák's work bears the indelible 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 Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra**

The Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra has benefited considerably from the work of its distinguished conductors. These include Vaclav Talich (1949 - 1952), Ludovit Rajter, Ladislav Slovák and Libor Pešek. Zdeněk Košler has also had a long and distinguished association with the orchestra and has conducted many of its most successful recordings, among them the complete symphonies of Dvořák.

During the years of its professional existence the Slovak Philharmonic has worked under the direction of many of the most distinguished conductors from abroad, from Eugene Goossens and Malcolm Sargent to Claudio Abbado, Antal Dorati and Riccardo Muti. The orchestra has undertaken many tours abroad, including visits to Germany and Japan, and has made a large number of recordings for the Czech Opus label, for Supraphon, for Hungaroton and, in recent years, for the Marco Polo and Naxos labels. These recordings include works by Glière, Spohr, Respighi, Rubinstein, Bax, Suchon and Miaszkovsky and have brought the orchestra a growing international reputation and praise from the critics of leading international publications.

## **Stephen Gunzenhauser**

Conductor and Music Director of the Delaware Symphony Orchestra, Stephen Gunzenhauser is one of the few conductors active in both the U.S. and Eastern Europe. Over the past ten years, he has helped build the Delaware Symphony into a major regional orchestra, while at the same time conducting and recording with Eastern European orchestras including Poland's Silesian State Philharmonic and Czechoslovakia's Slovak Philharmonic.

Stephen Gunzenhauser, a graduate of Oberlin College and the New England Conservatory, served Igor Markevich and Leopold Stokowski as assistant conductor before becoming executive and artistic director of the Wilmington Music School in 1974. In 1979, he became conductor and music director of the Delaware Symphony Orchestra.

Stephen Gunzenhauser records exclusively for Naxos and Marco Polo. His recordings include works of Schumann, Tchaikovsky, Dvořák, Vivaldi, Mozart, Glière, and Liadov. In 1989/90 he recorded all nine Dvořák symphonies with the Slovak Philharmonic, as well as the three Borodin symphonies with the Czecho-Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra.

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DVOŘÁK: Symphonies Nos. 3 and 6

NAXOS



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STEREO

**DVOŘÁK**  
Symphonies Nos. 3 & 6

Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra  
Stephen Gunzenhauser

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NAXOS

DVOŘÁK: Symphonies Nos. 3 and 6

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**Symphony No. 3 in E Flat Major, Op. 10**

- |          |                               |         |
|----------|-------------------------------|---------|
| <b>1</b> | Allegro moderato              | (10:03) |
| <b>2</b> | Adagio molto, tempo di marcia | (14:58) |
| <b>3</b> | Allegro vivace                | (8:34)  |

**Symphony No. 6 in D Major, Op. 60**

- |          |                             |         |
|----------|-----------------------------|---------|
| <b>4</b> | Allegro non tanto           | (12:32) |
| <b>5</b> | Adagio                      | (12:41) |
| <b>6</b> | Scherzo: Furiant: Presto    | (8:02)  |
| <b>7</b> | Finale: Allegro con spirito | (10:39) |

Recorded at the Concert Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic  
in Bratislava from 4th to 9th May, 1990.

Producer: Martin Sauer  
Music Notes: Keith Anderson

Cover: Prague in 1840 (Topographikon)



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