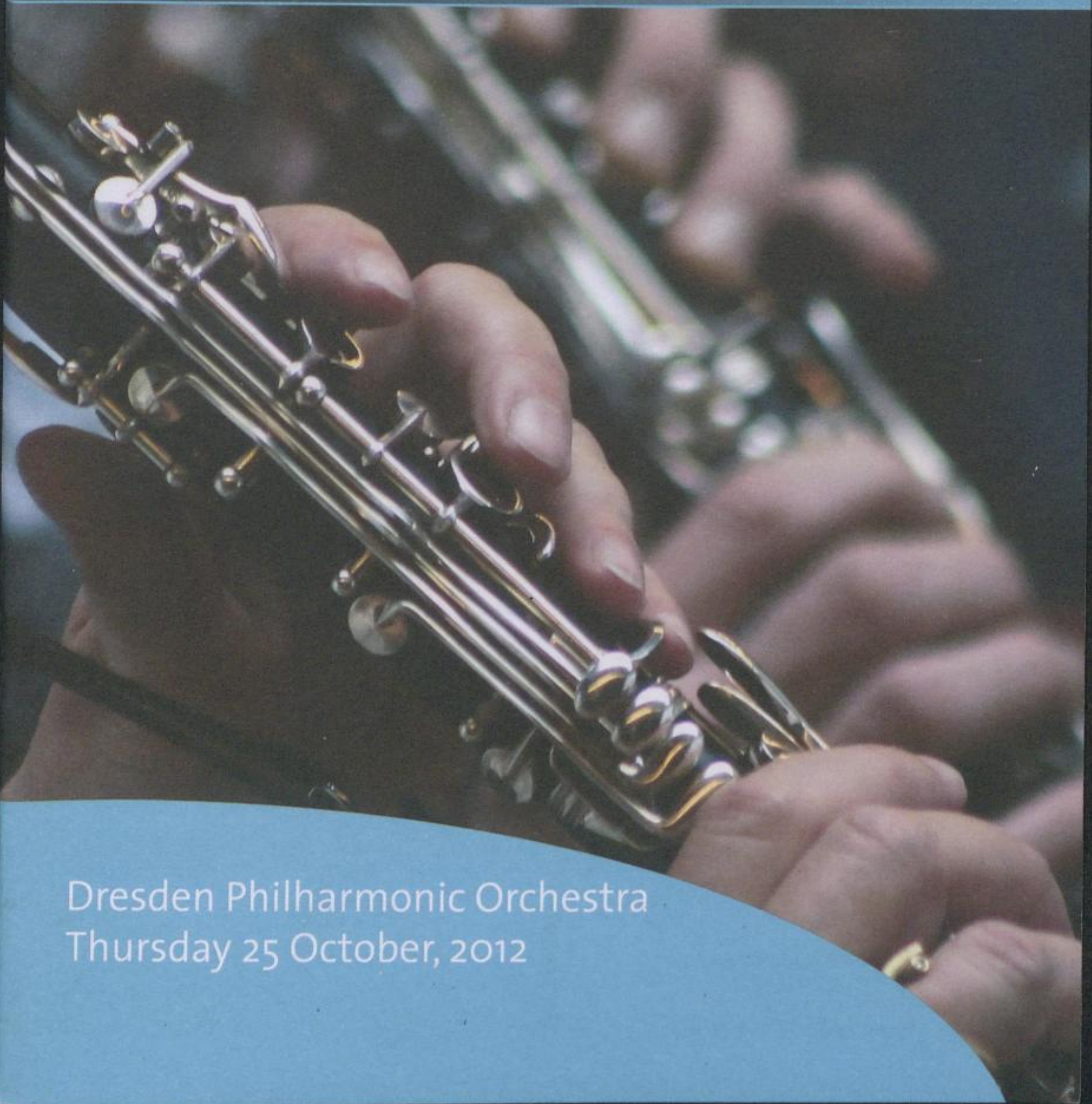


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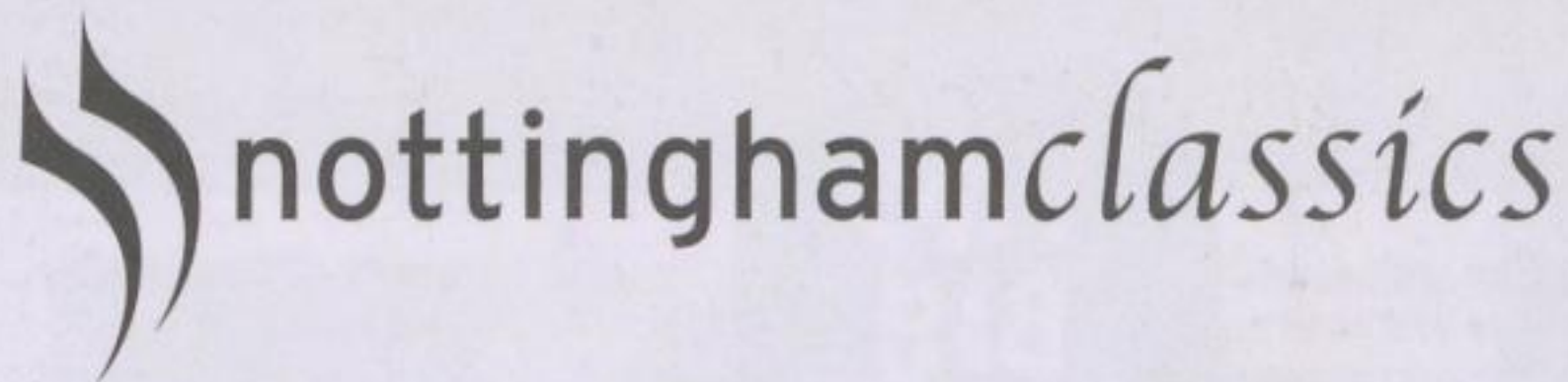
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INTERNATIONAL CONCERT SEASON 2012-2013

Thursday 25 October, 2012

Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra

Michael Sanderling conductor

Mikhail Simonyan violin

Prokofiev Five pieces from Cinderella

Khachaturian Violin Concerto

Interval of 20 minutes

Dvořák Symphony No. 9 'From the New World'

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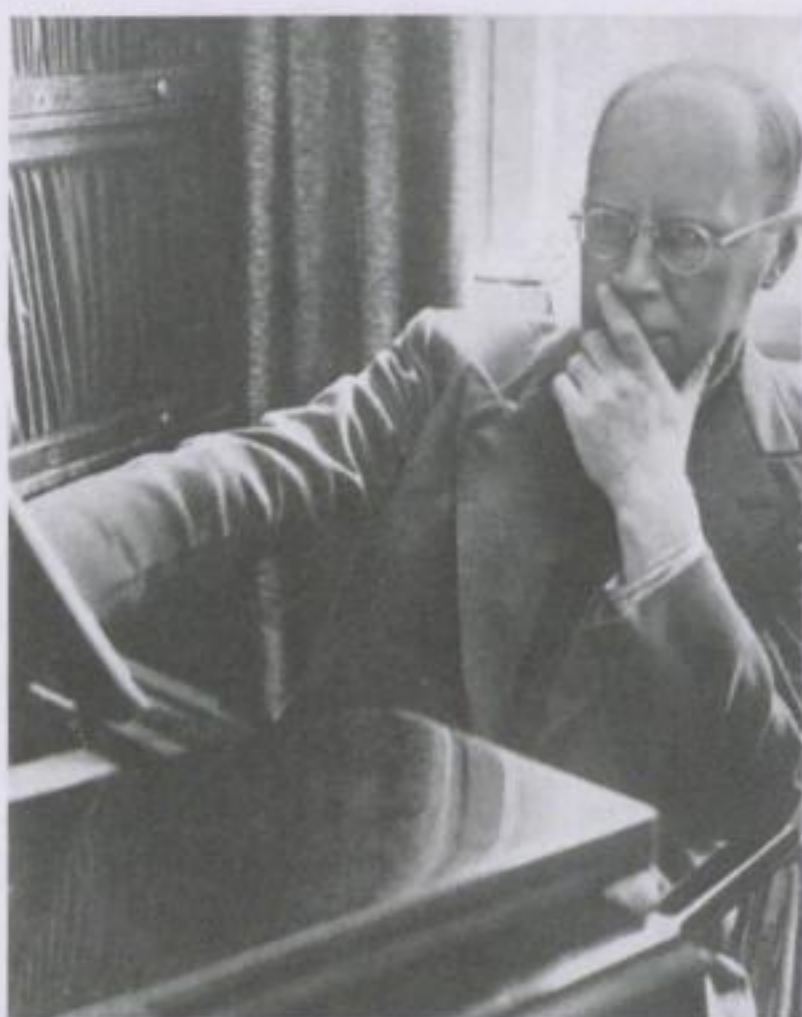
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Sergey Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Five pieces from Cinderella, Op. 87

Cinderella was commissioned by the Kirov Theatre in Leningrad (St Petersburg) following its hugely successful production of Prokofiev's previous full-length ballet, *Romeo and Juliet*, in January 1940. He began it in 1941, and had completed sketching the first two acts by June, when work was interrupted by the Nazi invasion of Russia. He put the score to one side in order to concentrate on more topically urgent projects, including his long-held ambition to make an operatic version of Tolstoy's novel *War and Peace*. He eventually returned to *Cinderella* in 1943, and finished orchestrating it the following spring. In the end it was the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, not the Kirov, that staged the first production in 1945.

Cinderella is deliberately modelled on Tchaikovsky's fairy-tale ballets. With its clearer division into formal dances and set pieces it follows 19th-century conventions to a greater extent than *Romeo and Juliet*. Prokofiev intended to make the score 'as danceable as possible'. He intended to focus on '...the poetic love of Cinderella and the Prince, the birth and flowering of that love, the obstacles in its path, and finally the dream fulfilled'. That was balanced by his relish for the challenge posed by the fairy-tale trappings, which provided some of the score's most enchanting and colourful moments: the dances for the fairies of the four seasons in Act 1; the striking of the clock at

midnight and the dance for the twelve dwarves who emerge from it to warn Cinderella to return home; the travels which take the Prince far and wide looking for Cinderella in Act 3. All this was second nature to the composer of the farcical and magical goings-on in his opera *The Love for Three Oranges*, as was the comic-grotesque characterisation of Cinderella's step-sisters and her timidly ineffectual father.

In 1946 Prokofiev made three concert suites from the ballet, of which the first is the best-known. The selection of movements heard tonight is taken from the first and third suites:

Introduction. This presents the two themes associated with Cinderella herself: the first portrays the down-trodden girl treated like a servant; the second, over shimmering harp and viola accompaniment, is a radiant vision of her eventual happiness.

The Three Oranges. From Act 2. As the dancing at the ball pauses for the guests to take refreshment, Prokofiev quotes the March from *The Love for Three Oranges*.

Cinderella goes to the ball. At the end of Act 1, the final preparations have been made and Cinderella is ready to leave.

Cinderella's Waltz. Prokofiev splices together two versions of the waltz – one, as Cinderella leaves for the ball at the end of Act 1, the other from the culmination of the ball scene itself, ending with the music that leads up to (but without including) the clock striking midnight.

Quarrel. When we first meet Cinderella's two step-sisters, they are quarrelling over a shawl, which they manage to tear in half. The music also includes part of their Dance with the Oranges in the Act 2 ball scene and 'The Morning after the Ball' in Act 3.



Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978)

Violin Concerto in D minor

1. Allegro con fermezza (*briskly and firmly*)
2. Andante sostenuto (*moderately slow and sustained*)
3. Allegro vivace (*briskly and vivaciously*)

Born and brought up in Armenia, Khachaturian was surrounded from a very early age by the region's folk music. Its melodic and rhythmic character, and the sounds of its traditional instruments, were to be decisive influences on his own music.

The Violin Concerto is the second of his three full-scale concertos (the others are for piano (1936) and cello, (1946)). It was composed in the summer of 1940 for David Oistrakh¹, who gave the first performance in November that year at a festival of Soviet music in Moscow. It was awarded the Stalin Prize for arts in 1941.

After a forceful orchestral opening, the soloist sets off with an energetic theme marked by driving dance rhythms, and which forms the basis of the entire opening section. The music eventually slows down, and a brief high-lying oboe solo introduces the soloist's new theme, an extended lyrical idea that becomes increasingly florid. When the tempo picks up again, the dance rhythms return. The pace relaxes once more, and the lyrical second theme returns on the cellos and a solo horn. It is this that leads into the soloist's cadenza.

Khachaturian's original cadenza is the one included in the published score, but David Oistrakh composed and recorded his own. Our soloist tonight, whose father is Armenian, has commissioned a new cadenza from the Armenian composer Artur Avanesov: 'I wanted one which sounds more authentically Armenian. This new cadenza has a strong feeling of Armenian church music. Armenia was the first Christian country and has been persecuted for religion all through its history. Part of what it means to be an Armenian today is rooted in our deep, ancient and unique church-music tradition. This element in Avanesov's cadenza brings a whole new colour to the concerto.'

A shortened version of the orchestral introduction brings back the two main themes, the second one now played by the principal clarinet against decorative figures for the soloist. Khachaturian artfully combines snatches of both the introduction and the first theme to bring the movement to its brusque conclusion.

The soulful, brooding second movement, with its sinuous melodic style, has an Asiatic colouring recalling similar characteristics in music by Rimsky-Korsakov and Borodin². The music accelerates towards the orchestra's strident central climax, after which the lower strings restore the dark, contemplative mood. A second orchestral outburst swiftly arises and just as swiftly falls away again, leaving a short coda³ for the soloist, with a final descending gesture on flute, bassoon and harp.

The atmosphere is shattered by the incisive orchestral opening of the last movement, after which the soloist launches the dance-like main theme. In a contrasting central episode the soloist brings back the lyrical second theme from the first movement, and the two themes are eventually combined, played by the soloist and the cellos respectively. The writing for the soloist becomes increasingly showy as the finale's orchestral introduction returns to close the work.

¹ David Oistrakh (1908-1974) was one of the most celebrated violinists of his generation. As well as Khachaturian, Prokofiev and Shostakovich were among the composers who wrote works for him.

² The fascination of many Russian composers with the cultures of central Asia emerges in such works as Rimsky-Korsakov's *Schéhérazade* and the Polovtsian Dances from Borodin's opera *Prince Igor*.

³ Coda (Italian = 'tail'): the final, rounding-off section of a piece of music.



Antonín Dvořák

(1841-1904)

Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95, 'From the New World'

1. Adagio – allegro molto (*slowly – very briskly*)
2. Largo (*slow and stately*)
3. Scherzo: Molto vivace (*very lively*)
4. Allegro con fuoco (*fast and fiery*)

'Impressions and greetings from the New World' was Dvořák's sub-title for his Ninth Symphony. But might he just as easily have called it 'Home thoughts from abroad'? The extent of the American influence on the work has been widely debated ever since its first performance in December 1893.

In September of the previous year Dvořák began his three-year term as Director of the National Conservatory of Music, New York. This had been founded in 1885 by Jeanette Thurber, the wife of a wealthy New York business man, to provide a national centre for training American musicians, modelled on the Paris Conservatoire, where she herself had studied for a period. Dvořák arrived in the midst of the celebrations marking the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus's voyage to the New World, with all the discussion of America's past and future that produced. His appearance provoked a good deal of excited press comment, looking forward especially to his encouragement of young American composers.

Naturally, the first performance of the Ninth Symphony was the occasion of considerable public interest, fuelled by articles in the *New York Herald* the previous May. Anonymously attributed, but probably written at Jeanette Thurber's instigation, these quoted remarks by Dvořák concerning 'negro melodies':

'These beautiful and varied themes are the product of the soil...In the negro melodies of America I discover all that is needed for a great and noble school of music.'

During work on the symphony, Dvořák heard some of these melodies sung by one of the Conservatory's black students, Harry T Burleigh. But although the first movement's solo flute melody bears an unmistakable resemblance to 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot' both Burleigh and Dvořák insisted that the symphony did not actually quote any of the tunes, but simply absorbed their spirit. Reviewing the first performance, the critic of the New-York-based *Musical Courier* seems to have agreed, noting 'the utter absence of striving after local flavour'.

But some of Dvořák's other comments rather confuse the issue. The *Chicago Tribune* quoted his description of the Ninth Symphony as 'an endeavour to portray characteristics, such as are distinctly American.' Even more puzzling was an article, published on the day of the first performance, in which Dvořák was quoted as saying that the symphony 'was written under the direct influence of a serious study of the national music of the North American Indian.' Why he should have said this (if he did) is not clear, but the fact remains that he did not begin this 'serious study' until after the symphony was completed.

The impression remains of Dvořák handling the publicity surrounding the symphony very carefully, giving away just enough to suggest that the music somehow reflects his experience of America but avoiding allowing himself to be pinned down to anything too precise. His secretary at the time even went so far as to suggest that the symphony's sub-title, which Dvořák hastily scribbled on the manuscript at the last minute, was 'one of the Master's innocent jokes'.

The symphony opens with brooding lower strings, building to an imposing slow introduction with a foretaste of the horn theme that launches the main *allegro* section. Other new ideas follow, including the solo flute theme with a passing resemblance to 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot'. The *allegro's* opening theme gradually becomes more prominent, eventually driving the movement to its powerful conclusion.

A soft chord sequence on brass and lower woodwind leads into a new key for the second movement with its well-known cor anglais theme. Dvořák said that the music was inspired by the episode of Hiawatha's⁴ wooing of Minnehaha⁵ (Minnehaha's funeral has also been suggested). But it also has an air of homesickness, which puts an interesting slant on the words which were later added to the cor anglais tune, turning it into the pseudo-spiritual 'Goin' Home'. A slight increase of speed and a change from major to minor brings a new theme on flute and oboe. A livelier woodwind idea leads to a climax and a reminder of first movement's opening *allegro* theme. The cor anglais tune brings the music to its gentle conclusion.

Dvořák also referred to Hiawatha in connection with the scherzo, which 'was suggested by the scene at the feast...where the Indians dance' although the dance rhythms are decidedly Czech. There are two contrasting sections - the first based on a song-like theme played first by flute and oboe, the second a more rustic-sounding dance. The final section again reminds us of the first movement *allegro* theme.

The finale's stormy opening features a vigorous theme for horns and trumpets. Dvořák keeps this idea constantly in view amid a wealth of new themes, including a quieter extended theme for solo clarinet. Reminders of the second movement cor anglais theme start to appear, and as the music races towards its climax the first movement's *allegro* theme also returns, culminating in the opening chords of the second movement, now darkly imposing. The music appears to die down, but Dvořák swiftly whips up the energy again, ingeniously combining the opening themes of both the first movement *allegro* and the finale in the final bars.


By the time of the symphony's première Dvořák had been in America just over a year. His imagination was undoubtedly fired by the wealth of new experiences which he encountered, but the American influence remains just one strand in the musical fabric. To the critic of the *Musical Courier* it sounded 'Irish, Slavic, Scandinavian, Scotch, Negro and German'. Above all, perhaps, Slavic. Dvořák remained, as he said on another occasion, 'what I have always been - a simple Czech musician.'

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⁴ - Hiawatha. A legendary Native American leader of the Onondaga and the Mohawk of the 16th Century.

⁵ - Minnehaha. A fictional Native American woman who is subject of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 1855 epic poem, *The Song of Hiawatha*.

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Michael Sanderling

Conductor

Throughout the past decade, Michael Sanderling has become known as one of the most sought-after conductors of his generation. He has appeared with many renowned orchestras, among them the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Staatskapelle Dresden, the Konzerthausorchester Berlin, the Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Bern Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg and the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra. He has held the post of chief conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic since the 2011-12 season.

As artistic director and chief conductor of the Kammerakademie Potsdam between 2006 and 2010, Sanderling made many international guest appearances and recorded several CDs with the ensemble, including a recording of the chamber symphonies of Dmitri Shostakovich for SONY Classical.

He began his musical education with cello studies. Following success at numerous competitions (ARD-Musikwettbewerb München, Bach-Wettbewerb Leipzig, Maria-Canals-Wettbewerb Barcelona), Kurt Masur brought the 19-year-old solo cellist to the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig. Sanderling later served in the same position with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra. He has given guest appearances as a soloist with top-tier orchestras across Europe and the US, from the Sinfonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks and the Orchestre de Paris to the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Sanderling is the youngest son of conductor Kurt Sanderling and bassist Barbara Sanderling. His two older brothers, Thomas and Stefan, are also conductors. As cello professor at the Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts and artistic director of the Deutsche Streicherphilharmonie, Michael Sanderling is also highly active in nurturing young talent.



Mikhail Simonyan

Violin

Mikhail Simonyan, from Novosibirsk, began to study the violin at age five. In 1999, at age 13, he made his New York debut performing Szymanowski's Violin Concerto No. 1 with the American Russian Young Artists Orchestra at Lincoln Center. In October 2009, he opened the New World Symphony's concert season, performing Glazunov's Violin Concerto, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas. Other recent and upcoming highlights include his debut at the Vienna Musikverein and debuts with the New York Philharmonic with Bramwell Tovey, NHK Symphony Orchestra with Neville Marriner, the Dresden Philharmonic with Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and the Vancouver, Aarhus (Denmark), Iceland, and West Australian symphony orchestras.

In 2009, Mikhail Simonyan released his debut recording of the Prokofiev Sonatas for Violin and Piano and he made his Lincoln Center recital debut. In March 2010, he made his Paris recital debut at the Louvre museum and in February he was the featured soloist with the Philharmonia Orchestra in a private concert at Windsor Castle, with HRH Prince Charles in attendance. Mr. Simonyan was subsequently invited for a return performance in June with the Philharmonia at Buckingham Palace. Highlights of his summer appearances include performances at the Verbier Festival and the Dresden Musikfestspiele.

Mr. Simonyan's 2011-12 season highlights include an extensive tour with the Baltic Youth Symphony under Kristjan Järvi, a debut recital at the Kennedy Center, and a performance with the Cincinnati Symphony, also under Kristjan Järvi.

Mr. Simonyan has recently signed a multi-CD exclusive recording contract with Deutsche Grammophon. His first recording features Khachaturian's Violin Concerto, along with Barber's Violin Concerto and Adagio, with the London Symphony Orchestra and Kristjan Järvi conducting.

Mr. Simonyan plays a 2010 Christophe Landon copy of a 1734 Stradivarius. He is managed worldwide by Tanja Dorn at IMG Artists.



Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra

In 2010 the Dresden Philharmonic marked the 140th anniversary of its founding. The Dresden Philharmonic has worked with the most eminent conductors in each historical period since its founding.

The orchestra gained worldwide fame in the 1930s, with much credit going to the leadership of Paul van Kempen. This in turn attracted the great conductors of the time to appear in concert with Philharmonic, including Arthur Nikisch, Hermann Abendroth, Hans Knappertsbusch, Fritz Busch, Erich Kleiber and Joseph Keilberth. The work of Heinz Bongartz as Principal Conductor was essential in rebuilding the orchestra in the years following World War II. Among other conductors, Kurt Masur served as Principal Conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic. From the 1994/95 concert season the internationally acclaimed Michel Plasson led the Philharmonic as Principal Conductor, a collaboration which resulted in a strong focus on key French composers on the orchestra's concert programs. In 1999 Michel Plasson's tenure came to an end.

In 2001 an equally renowned conductor, Marek Janowski, became Plasson's successor. Deeply rooted in German tradition and familiar with the performance practice of leading orchestras in all the world's major music centres, his coming to the Philharmonic was particularly welcome. For the 2003/04 season Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos was named Principal Guest Conductor and a year later became Principal Conductor. His experience conducting the best orchestras in the world and his charisma led to a highly successful partnership with the orchestra, whether in live performances in Dresden and on tour, or in the recording studio.

Since the beginning of the 2011/12 Season, Michael Sanderling has been the Principal Conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic.

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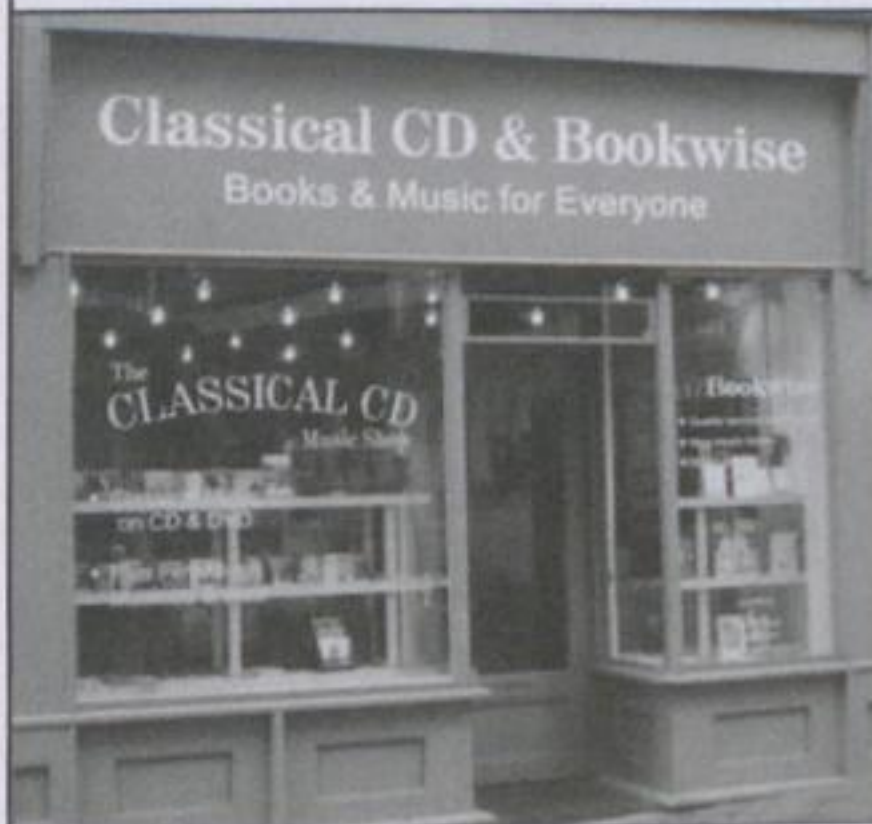


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