



DVOŘÁK

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in A minor, Op. 53

Antonín Dvořák (September 8, 1841 – May 1, 1904) was a Czech composer. As a nationalistic musician, Dvořák frequently employed features of the folk music of Moravia and his native Bohemia (then parts of the Austrian Empire and now constituting the Czech Republic). Displaying his musical gifts at an early age, Dvořák graduated from the organ school in Prague. His compositional career began with the support of fellow composer Johannes Brahms and influential critics Eduard Hanslick and Louis Ehlert. Although well-received in England, Dvořák's music was under-appreciated in continental Europe. This was largely due to anti-Czech sentiments at the time: although some of his works borrowed from Richard Wagner's style, Dvořák was passionate about his homeland, and many of his compositions were directly inspired by Czech, Moravian and other Slavic traditional music. His major works reflect his heritage and the love he had for his native land. Dvořák followed in the footsteps of Bedřich Smetana, the composer who created the modern Czech musical style. Additionally, Dvořák found increasing inspiration from the works of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert. Dvořák's own style has been described as "the fullest re-creation of a national idiom with that of the symphonic tradition, absorbing folk influences and finding effective ways of using them". He has also been described as "the only contemporary whom [Brahms] considered really worthy".

The **Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in A minor, Op. 53** was composed in 1879, the second of three concerti written (he also wrote a piano and a cello concerto). It is a work within his "Slavic" period, which also saw his Slavonic Dances, Czech Suite for orchestra, and Sixth Symphony. Dvořák was initially inspired to write the concerto after having met Joseph Joachim in 1878, and composed the work with the intention of dedicating it him. However, when he finished the concerto, Joachim became skeptical about it. Joachim was a strict classicist and objected to Dvořák's *inter alia*, or his abrupt truncation of the first movement's orchestral tutti. Joachim also objected to the recapitulation being cut short and leading directly to the slow second movement – although Dvořák was certainly not the first to have employed this gesture. Although not outright stated, he may have been upset with the persistent repetition found in the third movement. However, Joachim never said anything outright and instead claimed to be editing the solo part. He never actually performed the piece. The concerto was eventually premiered in 1883 by František Ondříček in Prague, who also gave the premieres in Vienna and London. Initially championed exclusively by Czech violinists, today it remains an important work in the violin repertoire.