

# ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

Born September 8, 1841 in Nelahozeves, Czechoslovakia; died May 1, 1904 in Prague

Concerto in A minor for Violin and Orchestra, Opus 53 (1879; revised 1880 and 1882)

PREMIERE OF WORK: Prague, October 14, 1883

Czech National Theater Orchestra

Mořic Anger, conductor

František Ondříček, soloist

APPROXIMATE DURATION: 31 minutes

INSTRUMENTATION: woodwinds in pairs, four horns, two trumpets, timpani and strings

Dvořák composed his Violin Concerto during the first flowering of his representative Czech style. His biographer Otakar Šourek wrote, "The national character of Dvořák's music became strongly marked when he began to make his appeal outside his own country, and felt impelled to emphasize his national origins and characteristics. This was about the beginning of 1878." In this Concerto, Dvořák was influenced by several facets of the Czech personality — the blending of sadness and determination in the first movement, the tenderness of the second, and the boisterous peasant joy of the finale. The main theme group of the Concerto's first movement comprises a bold, almost tragic, opening statement, a lamenting phrase with a prominent triplet rhythm presented by the soloist and (after a repetition of the first two motives) a lyrical woodwind strain above a simple string accompaniment. These three motives are treated at some length before the smoothly flowing second theme is introduced as a duet for oboe and solo violin. The development section is a challenging exercise in broken chords for the soloist. The recapitulation is greatly truncated, and brings back only the lamenting theme from the exposition. A delicate woodwind chorale leads without pause to the second movement, a song of sweet nostalgia sung by the soloist. The bucolic mood is twice interrupted by stern proclamations from the orchestra. The finale is a scintillating rondo whose main theme is reminiscent of the fiery Czech dance, the *furiant*.