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The University of Richmond Orchestra

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
RICHMOND
ORCHESTRA

FRED COHEN *conductor*

NOVEMBER 17, 1993

8:15 PM

CANNON MEMORIAL CHAPEL

THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
ORCHESTRA
FRED COHEN *conductor*

PROGRAM

PICCOLA MUSICA DI CONCERTO
for string orchestra

Ferenc Farcas
(b. 1905)

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante
- III. Scherzo-Trio
- IV. Allegro

SYMPHONY NO. 9 in E Minor, op. 95
"From the New World"

Antonin Dvorak
(1841-1904)

- I. Adagio. Allegro molto
- II. Largo
- III. Molto vivace
- IV. Allegro con fuoco

The University of Richmond Orchestra is comprised of avocational musicians who perform between two and four concerts per year. The string sections of the ensemble are led by members of the Shanghai String Quartet, Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Richmond. The ensemble rehearses Tuesday evenings and offers additional string sectionals on alternate Thursday afternoons. Membership in the ensemble is open to students, faculty, and members of the larger University of Richmond community. For more information, call Ms. Mary White at 289-8277.

American and Native American musical styles. However, Dvorak did not go so far with these general reflections as to include actual quotations from folk songs in his music. As Dvorak wrote to the *New York Herald* shortly before the premiere of this symphony, "I did not make use of one of these melodies. I wrote my own themes embodying in them the qualities of Indian music using these themes as subjects. I developed them with all the resources of modern rhythm, harmonisation, counterpoint and orchestral colouring."

In terms of formal structure, the Symphony No. 9 conforms in the first three movements to traditional symphonic form. The melodic material is mostly in four or eight bar phrases, giving the work a classical simplicity and clarity. The final movement is quite complex and unschematic, more forward-looking in many ways than the other movements of the work. An important and very audible feature of the formal design throughout is the systematic repetition of the principal themes at important moments in each of the four movements.

As for content, it is known that Dvorak has long been acquainted with Longfellow's "Song of Hiawatha," which Dvorak had read in a Czech translation. According to his own statement, the two middle movements were written under the impression evoked by Longfellow's poem.

Although in this centennial year we tend to paint a rosy picture of Dvorak's American adventure--filled with happy dispatches from Dvorak celebrations across the country, most memorably in Spillville, Iowa and New York City--we should be aware of the full meaning of Dvorak's prescription for American music. The symphony "From the New World" was meant very much as an object lesson for Dvorak's American students at the National Conservatory on how they might achieve an authentic American school of composition. As quoted by critic Henry Krehbiel, Dvorak urged that they submit the indigenous musics of their country, namely Indian melodies and Negro spirituals, "to beautiful treatment in the higher forms of art." This was his nationalist creed--very much the same practiced by Bartók and Farkas.

Of course, we all recognise today the hidden colonial intentions of this sort of "beautification." Dvorak simply claimed that he (and his followers in the European style) could develop local resources better than the natives. Like other colonialisms, this one maintained itself by manufacturing and administering ersatz "national" traditions that reinforced dependence on the mother country (in this case Germany by way of Bohemia). Unfortunately for Dvorak, this created a double bind in that his Bohemianisms were at once the vehicle of his international status and the guarantee of his second-rate status in comparison to the natural-born "Universals" (such as Brahms). And if this was true for the mentor, so much truer would it turn out to be for the Americans whose "tradition" Dvorak purported to establish.

Today, "we are all individual music cultures," says ethnomusicologist Mark Slobin. We co-exist in a "fascinating counterpoint of near and far, large and small, neighborhood and national, home and away." notes by Fred Cohen

NEXT CONCERT IN THE DEPT. OF MUSIC CONCERT SERIES:

November 21, 1993

Jennifer Cable *soprano* UR assistant professor of music
and guest ensemble **Affetti Musicali**

North Court Recital Hall

3:00 pm

NEXT UR ORCHESTRA CONCERT

April 7, 1994

featuring music of Mozart and Schubert-Berio

Cannon Memorial Chapel

8:15 pm

PROGRAM NOTES

Hungarian composer Ferenc Farkas was born on December 15, 1905 in Nagykasizsa. He studied composition at the Budapest Academy of Music, graduating in 1927. After spending some years in Rome and Vienna, in 1941 he was appointed professor of composition at the Kolozsvar (Cluj) Conservatory and became its director in 1943. From 1948 until his retirement in 1975, Farkas was professor of composition at the Budapest Academy of Music, where his students included György Ligeti and György Kurtág (two of my favorite contemporary composers).

His many works include operas, symphonies, chamber music, choral music, and music for special occasions. *Piccola Musica di Concerto* was written in 1961 and published by Edition Musica Budapest, the Hungarian state-operated publishing house. While the work has been recorded twice on Eastern European labels, this performance appears to be its American premiere. The score and parts to this work were given to me by the director of Editio Musica Budapest while I was on a visit to Budapest in 1989.

Farkas writes in a Hungarian style that owes much to the music of Béla Bartók's vision of folk-inspired art music. The first movement is a study of contrasting pentatonic themes with a gentle middle section in which the principal theme is presented upside down and backwards (a gesture Bartók employs with gusto). The second movement is a lovely and simple melody, while in the third movement the melodic material from the first movement is treated to a lively and synchopated scherzo. The finale uses simplified harmonic material but capitalizes on 5/8 and 7/8 rhythms for a driving and spirited finish.

The symphony in E minor, known as "From the New World," is the ninth and last of Antonin Dvorak's symphonies. As is well known, Dvorak wrote this symphony while on American soil. He began the work in October 1892 and completed it in the spring of 1893. The triumphant premiere of Symphony No. 9 took place in Carnegie Hall in December, 1893. The audience, well prepared by detailed preliminary articles and analyses that had been published along with musical quotations in the leading New York dailies, overwhelmed Dvorak with seemingly unending ovations. These expressions of general acclamation were shared by the National Conservatory of Music, which awarded Dvorak the prize of \$300 for the "most original symphony" in a nationwide contest. We celebrate the continued success of this work, as well as its centennial, in this concert.

Dvorak had come to America in 1892 at the invitation of Jeannette Thurber to become director of the National Conservatory of Music. During the composition of the work Dvorak wrote a letter home to Bohemia in which he said "I should never have written the symphony like I have, if I hadn't seen America." The melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic qualities of this work (as well as other works written by Dvorak while residing here) reflect his acquaintance with African-

PERSONNEL

Violin I

Mary Rogevich *concert mistress*
Lucia Donatelli
Bill Duke
Emi Estrada
John Gauntlett
Christopher Johnston
Julie Hayes
Sallie Hirsch
Lorie Liptak
Corey McLellan
Steven Pershing
Weigang Li•

Violin II

Kathy Thomas *principal*
Melissa Langhan
Alex Park
Iris Redmond
Wayne Smith
Bernice Strommer
Sarah Weinzeil
Jessica Wolpert
Elissa Zadrozny
Honggang Li•

Viola

Frank Albert
David Berry
Caroline Browder
John Frain
John Jordan
Kelli Murphy
Dick Stone
Shannon Taylor
Zheng Wang•

Cello

Linda Swanson *principal*
Willis Gee
Doug Kellner

Mignon McClain
Jim Wilson•

Bass

Leslie Rose *principal*
Damian Muller
Delbert Williams

Flute

Susanne Rublein *principal*
Vicky Paul

Oboe

Sarah Toraason *principal*
Erin Collins Hood

Clarinet

Cari Borgna *principal*
Kym Berman

Bassoon

Charles Taylor *principal*
Fred Geissler

French Horn

Jon Gibson *principal*
John LaFratta
Kristie Welsh
Sarah Holbrook

Trumpet

David Brenton *principal*
Julie Ogle

Trombone

Donnie Crafton
Robert Wagenknecht
Glen Neely

Tuba

Christopher Hite

Timpani

John Hubbard

Percussion

Jill Emanuel

• = member, Shanghai String Quartet