

An Analysis of Antonín J. Dvořák's
Largo and Finale for Band
(from the *New World Symphony*)

by
Dr. Amy Dunker
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Instrumentation:

Flute
Oboe
Bb Clarinet 1 - 2
Bb Bass Clarinet
Bassoon
Eb Alto Saxophone 1 – 2
Bb Tenor Saxophone
Eb Baritone Saxophone

French Horn
Bb Trumpet 1 – 2
Trombone 1 – 2 (Trombone 2 (Opt.)
Baritone
Tuba

Timpani
Percussion: Finger Cymbal, Triangle, Crash Cymbals, Snare Drum, Bass
Drum

Arranger: Joel Blahnik

Duration: 4 1/2 Minutes

Grade: 2

Harmonic Language: Tonal (Bb Major, G minor)

Meter: 4/4

Texture: Melody and Accompaniment

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Dedication Statement: Dedicated to Thomas L. Dvorak in recognition of his leadership and expertise in many levels of music education.

Antonín Dvořák

1841-1904

Composer **Antonín Dvořák** lived in America for only three years (1892-1895), but left us musical masterpieces with an American flare that have endured the test of time.

Jeannette M. Thurber, a New York society leader and arts patron (who had established the National Conservatory of Music of America) requested Antonín to come to America and serve as Director of the National Conservatory of Music. He accepted and arrived in New York on September 27, 1892. His wife, Anna, daughter Otilie and son Antonín accompanied him while the four youngest children were left home in Prague, Bohemia. Thurber hired Dvořák to teach, conduct, and write music in New York.

During this time period, Dvořák tried to sort out some theories about the possibilities of music in the New World. He wanted to write music that would represent America, the New World. Many of his works from Bohemia were rooted in simple, half forgotten tunes of the peasants. Since America was a melting pot of nationalities and there was not a true folk culture to draw upon, he turned to the Negro spirituals and plantation songs to inspire him.

He missed his friends and younger children and was not happy in Manhattan, however. He complained frequently of poor health and preferred to spend his evenings with his English-tutor, secretary-friend, Josef J. Kovářík whom Dvořák met while Josef was studying music in Prague. His home was Spillville, Iowa. It was Josef who persuaded Dvořák when lonesome for Bohemia, to come to his hometown in Spillville to see the real America instead of taking his family back to Bohemia during the summer months. Dvořák accepted and gladly sent for the remainder of his family to spend the summer of 1893 together in the Czech-speaking village of Spillville.

Dvořák liked Spillville and the surrounding towns as they reminded him of his home. He had come from peasant stock, (the son of a butcher from Nelahozeves), and maintained a rural retreat south of Prague in Vysoká, near Příbram.

His health improved and he became quite content and productive. His day began at 4 a.m. when he would walk through the woods to listen to the sounds around him and watch the sunrise after which he would compose for a couple of hours. By 7:00 a.m., he was on the organ bench in Saint Wenceslaus Church playing for Mass. His first profes-

sional job in Prague was as an organist. The remainder of the morning was spent at his compositional tasks.

In the afternoon he took solitary walks through the woods, fields and along the river banks or ride through the surrounding countryside to nearby towns. Wherever he went, he carried a notebook to jot down notes from the natural music he heard.

While in Spillville, he touched up the orchestrations of the *New World Symphony*, completed a new work, the *String Quartet in F Major* and composed a chamber work in July, the *String Quartet in E-flat*. The second movement of this Quartet contained echoes of a group of Algonquin Indians who performed some of their native dances for Dvořák during his Spillville visit.

While in the Midwest, he also traveled to the Czech communities in Omaha, NE and St. Paul, MN. At Minnehaha Falls in Minneapolis, he was melodically inspired and wrote ideas down on his cuff for lack of paper. Once back in New York, Dvořák composed a violin and piano sonata for his children and used part of the notes he had written on his shirt cuff in the piece. It was later published as *Sonatina in G*, opus 100.

After the summer, Dvořák returned to New York and worked on the *New World Symphony* with Anton Seidl, the New York Philharmonic's German conductor. The piece was first performed December 15, 1893. It was reviewed as one of the great symphonies performed since the death of Beethoven and critics analyzed its "Americanness". Dvořák did not use actual melodies of the Negro or Indian cultures, but adapted them to his own original constructions.

Dvořák spent the next summer in Prague and returned in the fall to complete his contract with Thurber. At the end of the season (April 1895), he went home to Bohemia. He lived nine more years til 1904 and concentrated his works on nationalistic themes.

Dvořák's greatest contribution to American music lay in the demonstration that great music was not restricted to Old World Europe but could be inspired and written in America as well.

—Anita Smisek
February 1994

Notes:

This band edition of **LARGO & FINALE** from Antonín Dvořák's *9th Symphony*, "From The New World", was birthed by a brass quartet arrangement of the same work for the *REMEMBERING DVOŘÁK CENTENNIAL FESTIVAL 1893-1993*, celebrating the composer's 1893 summer residency in Spillville, Iowa. In attendance at the Festival were Antonín Dvořák III, IV and V from the Czech Republic. The brass quartet edition was sketched on a Czech airline flight from Chicago to Prague in June 1993 while this arranger was enroute to conduct a Youth Wind Ensemble Festival which he co-founded in 1991. Later it was expanded for full orchestra receiving its premiere by the Sinsinawa Strings Orchestra for the Moundorama Concert on October 11, 1993, at Sinsinawa, Wisconsin.

This arrangement utilizes the three instrumental choirs in the band. It can be performed entirely with woodwinds, brass or saxophones alone, with or without percussion, or it can be done in any combination of these voices. This flexibility can be an asset to any beginning or amateur band. It allows the band to utilize the strength of a variety of soloists and also permits the three choirs to perform individually in a chamber music context. For example, the woodwinds may wish to perform alone from rehearsal A to B with the rest of the winds entering at B, etc. Use your imagination and enjoy exploring options while the musicians delight in the variety of sounds from different combinations of instruments thereby enhancing their participation.

In spite of its technical efficiency (simplicity), this arrangement is effective and provides the opportunity for young and amateur musicians to become acquainted with and feel the essence of Antonín Dvořák's music. Solo melodic voices are challenged to speak out! This arrangement may also be performed with the woodwind and/or brass editions or with the orchestral arrangement for a combined band/orchestra and unison voices (*Goin' Home* text for the *Largo*) performance. Contact the publisher for details.

—Joel Blahnik

I. *Largo*

Harmonic Language: Tonal (Bb Major)

Meter: 4/4

Texture: Melody and Accompaniment

Form:

Introduction	ms. 1 – 4
A	ms. 5 – 12
B	ms. 13 – 20
A'	ms. 21 - 33

Theme 1 (Horn in F, ms. 5 – 8):



(Theme crossed cued in Flute, Oboe, Tenor Saxophone, Baritone Saxophone and Trombone parts for Solo or Soli performance)

Theme 2 (Horn in F, ms. 13 – 16):



(Theme doubled in Clarinet 1 – 2, Bass Clarinet, Bassoon, Tenor Saxophone, Baritone Saxophone and Trombone parts)

II. Finale

Harmonic Language: Tonal (G minor)

Meter: 4/4

Texture: Melody and Accompaniment

Form:

Introduction	ms. 1 – 6
A	ms. 7 – 14
A'	ms. 15 – 22
A''	ms. 23 – 41
Coda	ms. 42 – 46

Theme (Flute, ms. 7 – 14):



(Theme doubled in Oboe, Alto Saxophone 1 – 2 and Trumpet 1 – 2)

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