

**MUSIC APPRECIATION SECTION****GREAT COMPOSERS OF MUSIC**

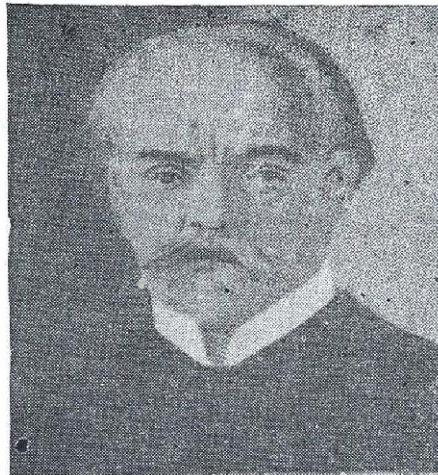
## SECOND SERIES

By BERT PAUL OSBON \*

## VIII. DVORAK

ANTONIN DVORAK was born in a village in the musical land of Bohemia in 1841. He was a Bohemian peasant, with all the peasant's love of color, of stamping rhythms, and bright melody. His father intended to make him a butcher, but the village schoolmaster saw the boy's musical ability, and taught him to sing and play the violin. He was twelve years old when he learned to play the organ.

A year as innkeeper-butcher at fifteen convinced him that sausage-making was not his vocation, and he persuaded his father, against strong opposition, to allow him to enter the organ school at Prague. Then financial reverses came and young Dvorak (pronounced *dvor-zhak*) became a wandering musician, playing the violin and viola in small orchestras in theatres and restaurants. Handicapped as he was by lack of money, without books, or scores, or music-paper, with only what he could earn by playing at cafes, he still managed to be graduated in 1860 and win the second prize. And he managed to spend the next twelve years studying, in his poor lodgings, from borrowed scores the works of the great masters.



Dvorak, Foremost Bohemian Composer

Finally he secured a regular position as church organist and began to compose. His music met with favor and before long he was Bohemia's best composer. The *Slavonic Dances*, produced in 1878, brought him fame overnight, thanks partly to his friend Liszt. Dvorak went to bed one night, comparatively unknown, and awoke to find himself hailed as a great Bohemian composer.

In 1892 he was called to America to become the director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York. Dvorak believed that a national school of American music would be founded upon the folk music of the southern negro of the United States and the American Indian.

Americans love him especially, because, while he was director of the New York conservatory from 1892 to 1895, he became so much interested in the negro tunes sung for him by one of his students that he embodied them in the *New World Symphony*. In the *largo* (slow) movement of this symphony he introduced a theme played by the English horn, which suggests the old negro melody *Massa Dear*, although some say this is an original Indian melody which Dvorak collected from American Indians.

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DVORAK

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Out on the plains of the midwestern part of the United States Dvorak went to visit a colony of Bohemian immigrants. Some people say that the loneliness of these country-men, living in a foreign land, inspired the composer to write the haunting melody of this *Largo* in his *The New World Symphony*. By all means hear it played by an orchestra or on a phonograph (there are excellent phonograph records of this symphony) whenever you have an opportunity.

Dvorak should have been happy in America, where he was appreciated, but homesickness drove him back to Prague to spend the last years of his life composing and directing the conservatory of music there. He died in 1904.

Dvorak wrote a beautiful sacred composition called *Stabat Mater* which you should hear when possible. You should also hear his short composition *Humoreske*. He wrote in all five symphonies, some symphonic poems, chamber music, and lovely songs, which are popular in the best sense, for they are beloved by the people.

You should remember

ARCHIMEDES

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in addition their greatest inventor. He was first to realize the enormous power that can be exerted by means of a lever. He also invented the compound pulley, and a spiral screw for raising water and other substances which is still called "Archimedes' screw."

Now for the famous story about Archimedes: When Syracuse in Sicily, the native city of Archimedes, was besieged by the Romans, the Romans took the city, after a siege of three years. It is said that what particularly angered the Roman soldiers was that when they burst into his house, Archimedes was absorbed in the study of geometrical figures which he had drawn on the sand. To the soldier who interrupted him, he merely said, "Don't disturb my circles." Archimedes was slain in the massacre which followed.

these things; (1) the proper spelling and pronunciation of the name Dvorak (*dvor-zhak*); (2) that he is considered the greatest Bohemian composer; (3) that he wrote the famous *New World Symphony*.

THE WOODEN HORSE

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two sons, crushed them to death.

"Surely this is a punishment for the priest's sacrilege against the sacred gift," cried the Trojans.

Since the gates were not wide enough, a breach was made in the wall, and the Horse was brought into the city. Then there was rejoicing. All men went to sleep, secure in the belief that the gods were kind.

But while they slept, the Greek who had been captured—for so it had been planned—drew the bolts from the door of this "gift to Athena," and out came the hidden Greeks. Then a fire was lighted as a signal to the ships, which had turned back to sight of land. Soon thousands of Greek warriors swarmed in the streets of Troy.

All night the slaughter continued, and by morning only a mass of smouldering ruins marked the place where once had stood the proud city. The Trojan king's headless body lay on the seashore. So perished the Trojans except the few who escaped.

A REVIEW

1. What do you know of ancient Greece? (See the encyclopedia.)