

Dvořák in America

UNLV Symphony Orchestra

Taras Krysa, Music Director and Conductor

PROGRAM

Suite in A Major, Opus 98, B. 184 ("American")

Allegretto

Andante

Allegro

Antonín Dvořák
(1841–1904)

Maria Kolesnyk, piano

Commentary by Joseph Horowitz

Suite in A Major, Opus 98, B. 190 ("American")

I. Andante con moto

II. Allegro

III. Moderato (alla polacca)

IV. Andante

V. Allegro

Antonín Dvořák
(1841–1904)

Visual presentation by Peter Bogdanoff

INTERMISSION

Porgy and Bess Concert Suite

Summertime

A Woman is a Sometime Thing

My Man's Gone Now

I Got Plenty o' Nuttin'

Bess, You is My Woman Now

It Ain't Necessarily So

O Lawd, I'm on My Way

George Gershwin arr. Robert Russell Bennett
(1898–1937)

Karin Hochman, soprano
Kevin Deas, bass-baritone

You are invited to stay for a post-concert discussion with the artists and Dean Nancy J. Uscher.

Sunday, April 7, 2019

3:00 p.m.

**Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall
Performing Arts Center
University of Nevada, Las Vegas**

PROGRAM NOTES

Of the two works on today's program, Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* is famous. Dvořák's *American Suite* remains virtually unknown. And yet both are products of Dvorak's 1892 prophecy that "Negro melodies" would foster a great "school of American music."

In nineteenth century classical music, the composer as tourist is a familiar phenomenon. Italy was a favorite destination. Mendelssohn, Berlioz, Liszt, and Tchaikovsky, among others, composed famous keyboard and symphonic works keying on gondolas and the Italian Alps, Giotto and Michelangelo. But Tchaikovsky's *Capriccio Italien*, with its Roman carnival, still sounds like Tchaikovsky. The *Italian Symphony*, with its tarantella finale, is vintage Mendelssohn.

One of the strangest and most intriguing chapters in Western musical history features a composer whose adaptations to the New World were more than touristic – who "became American." I am certainly not thinking of Arnold Schoenberg or Igor Stravinsky, both of whom became American citizens without relinquishing their prior artistic identities. Rather, I have in mind are Antonin Dvořák, whose American dates are 1892 to 1895.

It's popularly understood that Dvořák composed his *New World Symphony* (1893) in New York, and that the Largo's English horn tune was inspired by African-American spirituals. Much less well-known is that a central source of inspiration was Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha* – or that the Scherzo of Dvořák's symphony sets "Hiawatha's Wedding Feast" as a virtual tone poem. If "From the New World" is Dvořák's most popular symphony, his most popular chamber work is the *American String Quartet*, redolent of the Iowa prairie he made his home during the summer of 1893.

But to fully grasp the American Dvořák, the piece to know is not known. It is the *American Suite*, Op. 98, composed in New York in 1894 for solo piano and orchestrated by the composer the same year. As it postdates both "From the New World" and the *American Quartet*, it comprises a more comprehensive snapshot of Dvořák's vivid New World impressions.

The main reason we are not aware of this music is that for decades Czech and British Dvořák scholars denigrated it as inscrutable and insipid – and so it is, unless its Americanisms are recognized. That they were not was illustrated to me when I met a Czech pianist who had long played the *American Suite* in complete innocence that Dvořák very obviously imitates a banjo. I can also remember reading an album note for a Nonesuch recording in which an American music critic, influenced by extant scholarship, off-handedly acknowledged that Dvořák's Op. 98 was not identifiably "American."

What does the *American Suite* sound like? Well, the finale begins with an American Indian dance punctuated – like the *New World Symphony* Scherzo -- by ankle bracelets (a triangle) and tom-toms (timpani). When this A minor dance modulates to A major, it becomes a minstrel song (and Dvořák in Iowa saw Native American and African-American entertainers singing and dancing together). The slow movement portrays the desolate Iowa prairie, which Dvořák called "sad to despair." There is also a movement that features in sequence a jaunty cakewalk, an aching plantation song, and an elegiac "American Indian" refrain redolent of the vanishing Noble Savage. The suite's five movements are framed by big skies and wide horizons.

In other words, you can hear something like Stephen Foster, Scott Joplin, and Jerome Kern's *Show Boat* in the *American Suite*. It also connects with the lyric sweep of Mark Twain's Mississippi River, animated with piquant waterfront detail. And it aligns with American genre painters like Asher Durand and George Caleb Bingham.

Even if Dvořák had not been hired to direct New York's National Conservatory with a mandate to help American composers find an American voice, he was at all times predisposed (as he told New York reporters) to "prick his ear" to the daily sounds of his environs. No sooner did he return to Prague than he reverted to a "Bohemian" style mated to Bohemian folklore.

In truth, Dvořák deserves to be ranked with de Tocqueville as a unique outside observer of the American experience. His precise findings tell us a lot about what most distinguished the United States from Europe at the turn of the twentieth century.

Equally revealing is the manner in which Americans reacted to Dvořák's findings, and to his accurate prophecy that "Negro melodies" would found a "great school" of American music. In New York City, then as now a city of immigrants, Dvořák's compassion for the Indian and the former slave was taken to heart; the discourse on race and culture was remarkably egalitarian. In Boston, the same discourse insisted upon racial hierarchies. In the Boston press, Dvořák was classified as a "barbarian" Slav. His influence on American composers was denounced as that of a "negrophile."

Program note by Joseph Horowitz

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Today's concert is part of a week-long Dvořák festival collaboratively produced by the Las Vegas Philharmonic and the University of Nevada Las Vegas as part of the "Music Unwound" national consortium supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The final event in this series, this Tuesday night, April 9, 2019, will be A Dvořák in America Celebration at 7:30pm in The Dr. Arturo Rando-Grillot Recital Hall, Lee and Thomas Beam Music Center.



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BIOGRAPHIES

Taras Krysa

The Ukrainian-born, American conductor Taras Krysa is establishing a reputation for innovative and thoughtful music-making throughout the United States and Europe. In addition to serving as the Director of Orchestras at UNLV, Mr. Krysa serves as the Music Director of the Lviv (Ukraine) Philharmonic Orchestra.

Krysa has appeared internationally with orchestras including the New World Symphony, Netherlands Symphony Orchestra, St. Petersburg Symphony, Moscow Soloists, Slovak Sinfonietta, Spoleto Festival Orchestra, Kiev Chamber Orchestra, Lublin Philharmonic Orchestra, Las Vegas Philharmonic Orchestra, Odessa Philharmonic Orchestra, and many others. In addition, Krysa led several European orchestras on tours in China, Germany and Netherlands, including appearances there at Concertgebouw Hall.

An accomplished violinist, he was a member of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and the New World Symphony Orchestra, and continues to maintain an active career performing chamber music.

Krysa recently concluded his ninth season as the Artistic and Music Director of the Henderson Symphony Orchestra in Nevada. Under his leadership, the ensemble saw its audience expand ten-fold, and its concerts recognized as a treasured part of the cultural life of the community.

Mr. Krysa actively promotes new music and has made three critically acclaimed recordings for the Brilliant Classics label; two of which featured works by Mozart, and one a live recording of Freddie Mercury's rock opera, *Barcelona*.

Krysa attended the Gnessin in Moscow before moving with his family to the United States in 1989, where he continued his studies in violin and conducting at Indiana University and Northwestern University. His conducting teachers were Victor Yampolsky, Jorma Panula and David Zinman. Mr. Krysa attended The Pierre Monteux School and the American Academy of Conducting at Aspen Music Festival.

Joseph Horowitz

Joseph Horowitz has long been a pioneer in classical music programming. He currently directs the NEH-funded symphonic consortium, "Music Unwound." He is also the award-winning author of ten books mainly dealing with the institutional history of classical music in the United States. Both his *Classical Music in America: A History* (2005) and *Artists in Exile* (2008) were named best books of the year by *The Economist*. He is currently a Visiting Professor at the State University of New York/Purchase. His blog is artsjournal.com/uq.

Peter Bogdanoff

Media artist Peter Bogdanoff has worked extensively with Joseph Horowitz, co-creating visual presentations for Dvorak's *New World Symphony* (premiered by the Brooklyn Philharmonic and subsequently shown by the Pacific Symphony, the Nashville Symphony, the Berlin Komische Oper Orchestra, and others) and Stravinsky's *Symphony in Three Movements* (commissioned by the Pacific Symphony and shown by the New York Philharmonic, among other orchestras). He partners Horowitz's NEH-funded Music Unwound consortium.

Maria Kolesnyk

Maria Kolesnyk, Ukrainian pianist who was born in Chernihiv, Ukraine, began her music studies in piano at the age of 5. While studying piano at middle school and high school in Ukraine, she won numerous local, regional and national competitions. During her years in Ukraine, Maria collaborated with various orchestras to perform concertos, including Liszt's Piano Concerto no.1, Mozart's Piano Concerto no.21, *Rapsodia Sinfonica* for Piano and Orchestra by Joaquin Turina.

Following her graduation from Kyiv Lysenko Secondary Specialized Boarding Music School (Ukraine) in 2013, she moved to the United States to study under the guidance of Dr. Mykola Suk at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), until she received her Bachelor's Degree of Music in Piano Performance in 2017 with Outstanding Graduating Senior Award. During her undergraduate years, Maria participated in numerous competitions and performances. In 2013, she received the Gateway Arts Foundation Scholarship Award. In 2014, not only was she again named a recipient of the Gateway scholarship, she also received the first prize award at the Nevada state level of the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) in Las Vegas. In the same year, she received a full scholarship at the International Keyboard Institute and Festival (IKIF) in New York, NY. In 2015, she participated in the MTNA National Conference in Las Vegas, NV, where she was chosen to play for the renowned pianist Lang Lang's masterclass, and also collaborated with a flutist in a masterclass with Sir James Galway. She also performed Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with the Henderson Symphony Orchestra. In 2016, Maria performed Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No. 3 with the Symphony Orchestra "Philharmonia" in Chernihiv. That same summer, she was awarded scholarship to attend Vianden Music Festival and School in Luxembourg to participate in chamber music performances. Then, she returned to the U.S. and competed and won the UNLV Concerto Competition with Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No. 3, performing it this time with the UNLV Symphony Orchestra the following spring semester. While participating in many masterclasses over the years, she worked with internationally renowned musicians such as Emanuel Krasovsky (Israel), Vadim Rudenko (Russia), Nina Tichman (Germany), Jerome Rose (USA), among many others.

Maria is a frequently traveling pianist, having been invited to give solo recitals in numerous venues in Las Vegas, as well as San Juan, Puerto Rico (presented by Steinway Society of Puerto Rico), and Kiev, Ukraine. Maria is also an active participant in the music society in Las Vegas, working not only as a soloist, but also as an accompanist and music teacher. Currently, she is a piano faculty (teacher and accompanist) at the Nevada School of the Arts and a part-time piano faculty at UNLV.

Kevin Deas

Kevin Deas has gained international renown as one of America's leading bass-baritones. He is perhaps most acclaimed for his signature portrayal of the title role in *Porgy and Bess*, having performed it with the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, National Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Pacific Symphony, as well as the most illustrious orchestras on the North American continent, and at the Ravinia, Vail and Saratoga festivals. 2018-19 season highlights include performances of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with Orquesta Sinfonica de Minería and the Buffalo Philharmonic, Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* with the National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico, *Porgy and Bess* with the Florida Orchestra, performances of Handel's *Messiah* with the National Cathedral and Virginia Symphony, Bach's *St. John Passion* with the Louisiana Philharmonic, Joe Horowitz's "Dvorak in America" project with the Las Vegas Philharmonic, and Verdi's *Requiem* with the National Philharmonic.

In the 2017-18 season he was a soloist in Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with VoxAmaDeus, in Mozart's *Requiem* with Boston Baroque, Handel's *Messiah* at the National Cathedral, and Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church (NYC). He also sang the title role in *Porgy and Bess* with Duisberg Philharmoniker; in *Porgy and Bess: A Symphonic Picture* with the Reading Symphony Orchestra, and in a tour of Asia with the Pacific Symphony; sings in Bernstein's *Wonderful Town* with the Seattle Symphony; and was a soloist with the Delaware and El Paso symphony orchestras, and with the PostClassical Ensemble, with which he was Artist in Residence.

Recent successes include *Messiah* with the Houston Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic and National Cathedral; Vaughn Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem* with the Richmond Symphony, Verdi's *Requiem* with the Virginia Symphony, Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* with the Bach Festival Society of Winter Park, Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* with the Buffalo Philharmonic, Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* with the Jacksonville Symphony, Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* with Baltimore Choral Arts Society, Mozart's *Requiem* with VoxAmaDeus, *The Trumpet Shall Sound* with the PostClassical Ensemble, and Rachmaninoff's *The Bells* with JoAnn Falletta at SUNY Potsdam.

He has performed Verdi's *Requiem* with the Richmond and Winnipeg symphonies and the National Philharmonic; *Messiah* with Boston Baroque, the Cleveland Orchestra, Seattle and Kansas City symphonies, the National Philharmonic, and at the Warsaw Easter Festival; Mozart's *Requiem* with the Alabama and Vermont symphonies; Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the Grand Rapids Symphony and the Oratorio Society of New York; *St. John Passion* with the Bach Festival Society of Winter Park and Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Mexico; Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* with the New York Philharmonic; and Copland's *Old American Songs* with the Chicago and Columbus symphonies.

A strong proponent of contemporary music, Kevin Deas was heard at Italy's Spoleto Festival in a new production of Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* in honor of the composer's eighty-fifth birthday, recorded on video for international release. He also performed the world premieres of Derek Bermel's *The Good Life* with the Pittsburgh Symphony and Hannibal Lokumbe's *Dear Mrs. Parks* with the Detroit Symphony. His twenty-year collaboration with the late jazz legend Dave Brubeck has taken him to Salzburg, Vienna and Moscow in performances of *To Hope!* He performed Brubeck's *Gates of Justice* in a gala performance in New York.

Kevin Deas recorded Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* (Decca/London) with the Chicago Symphony under the late Sir Georg Solti, and Varèse's *Ecuatorial* with the ASKO Ensemble under the baton of Riccardo Chailly. Other releases include Bach's *Mass in B Minor* and Handel's *Acis and Galatea* (Vox Classics); Dave Brubeck's *To Hope!* with the Cathedral Choral Society (Telarc); and Haydn's *Die Schöpfung* with the Virginia Symphony and Boston Baroque (Linn Records). *Dvorák in America* (Naxos), features Mr. Deas in the world premiere recording of Dvorák's "Hiawatha Melodrama" and the composer's own arrangement of "Goin' Home" with the PostClassical Ensemble.

Karin Hochman

An Israeli native, Karin Hochman, soprano, is currently pursuing her DMA in applied voice from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas under the direction of Dr. Alfonse Anderson. Recent performances include the roles of Euridice (*Orfeo ed Euridice*), Helena (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*), and Madame Lidoine (*Dialogues of the Carmelites*). Ms. Hochman holds a Bachelor of Music from The Juilliard School and a Master's degree from the Curtis Institute of Music. She has been a member of the Pittsburgh Opera young artist program, singing the roles of Sesto (*La Clamenza di Tito*), Jenny (*Threepenny Opera*) Ottavia (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*) and Carmen (*La Tragedie de Carmen*). She has also appeared with the Pittsburgh Opera as the Page (*Salome*), Alisa (*Lucia di Lammermmor*) and Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*).

Ms. Hochman has sung the role of Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) at the Kiev Opera, Miss Jessel (*The Turn of the Screw*) at the Chautauqua Institute and Hansel with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra production of *Hansel und Gretel*. With the Israeli Opera she sang the roles of Kuchtík (*Rusalka*), Madelena (*Il Viaggio a Reims*), Curra (*La Forza del Destino*), Innkeeper's Wife (*The cunning Little Vixen*), in the world premiere of Gil Shohat's "The Child Dreams and the Third Lady" in the *Magic Flute*.

Karin is a member of the Avant Gard opera group "Opera Camera" with which she sang the roles of Mr. Smith (*The Bald Soprano*) and Etroga (*The Crook*) all directed by Daniel Ehrlich.

Karin Hochman is a recipient of the Baroch Grabov prize for exceptional emerging talent given through the Israeli Opera, numerous scholarships from IVAI (Israel Vocal Arts Institute), as well as other prizes and scholarships throughout her career.

THE UNLV SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The highly-acclaimed UNLV Symphony Orchestra is one of the signature ensembles of the UNLV School of Music. Comprised of undergraduate and graduate music majors, minors, and talented non-music majors, the group provides students with a rigorous professional environment in which to train and perform, and it enriches the cultural life of UNLV and the Las Vegas community.

As many as eight concerts a year are presented, each including a variety of standard orchestral repertoire ranging from Baroque to modern contemporary selections. The orchestra's yearly programming also features one fully-staged opera, one ballet production, and a concert featuring the winner of the annual Solo Concerto Competition.

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UNLV Symphony Orchestra Personnel

Flute/Piccolo

Dmytro Gnativ
Natalie Smith
Zixuan Yan

Trumpet

Matthew Wright

Violin

Oleksiy Hamov
Won Na
Ying Zhang
Andy Merino
Dmytro Nehrych
Nataliya Karachentseva
Laura Garcia
Ricky Dang
Chanelle Salomon
Alyssa Ounphonchareune
Angelica Padilla

Oboe/English Horn

Jairo Andres Pulido
Reyn Isbell

Trombone

Dawid Mżyk
Derian Luna
Alan Farias

Tuba

Shawn Schwerdtfeger

Clarinet/Bass Clarinet

Sarra Hey-Folick
Ethan Blankfeld
Kincaid Rabb

Viola

Nancy J. Uscher
Andrew Vasquez
Miguel Misa
Isabel Guerra
Jason Guzman
Matthew Leiva

Bassoon

Liz Valvano
Nicolas Guevara

Percussion

Ryan Burnett
Rymmel Librodo
Joey Ellison
Connor Thorson
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Cello

Andrew Smith
Adam Stiber
Dana Hurt Jr.
Angel Scotch

Horn

Jonathan Snyder
Casey Davis
Christian Jacobs
Brienne Albertie

Bass

Joshua Riel
Antoinette Wigen
Patrick Davis
Macy Stevens