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*James R. Cassidy, Music Director*

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## “CZECH IT OUT”

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James R. Cassidy, *Music Director*

7:30 P.M. Saturday, March 6, 2021  
Verst Group Logistics,  
Hebron, Ky.

James Cassidy, *conductor*  
Miriam K. Smith, *'cello*

## “CZECH IT OUT”

Symphony No. 7 in D Minor

Antonín Dvořák

Allegro maestoso

Poco adagio

Scherzo: Vivace

Finale: Allegro

## INTERMISSION

Concerto in B Minor

for Violoncello and Orchestra

Dvořák

Allegro; allegro, un poco sostenuto

Adagio, ma non troppo

Finale: Allegro moderato

*Miriam K. Smith*

*The KSO is supported by the generosity of the Louise Dieterle Nippert Musical  
Arts Fund of the Greenacres Foundation and the Louise Taft Semple Foundation.*

*The KSO is supported by the generosity of tens of thousands of contributors to the ArtsWave Community Campaign.*



Greetings, folks,

I'd like to thank Verst Group Logistics for allowing us to perform this fourth program of the KSO's 29th Subscription Series in their Hebron warehouse. Finding venues to perform indoors has been a considerable and continuing struggle this season. We are looking forward to the summer series in the parks with new and expanded opportunities for Northern Kentucky communities.

Nationalism in 19th century music served as a musical philosophy as opposed to a political identity. Composer Antonín Dvořák wove Bohemian folk dances, songs and scales into his music, taking Czech music to a new level. The National Conservatory in New York City in 1892 hired Dvořák to lead the school, and inspire young composers to find America's national voice. Dvořák wrote his Symphony No. 9 (*From the New World*) and the Cello Concerto during his time here. That American spirit and identity eventually took root in the music of Aaron Copland, George Gershwin and Leonard Bernstein, among others.

Appreciate that connection tonight as we bring Bohemia to the Bluegrass. We hope the acoustics work. Enjoy.

James R. Cassidy  
*Music and Executive Director*



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## 'CZECH IT OUT'

## THE KENTUCKY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

James R. Cassidy,  
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Thomas Consolo,  
*Associate Conductor*

**First Violins**

Manami White,  
*concertmistress*  
*The Gloria Goering*  
*Memorial Chair*  
Sujean Kim,  
*assistant concertmistress*  
Jacqueline Kitzmiller  
Jacquie Fennell  
Maggie Niekamp  
Johann Bast

**Second Violins**

Thomas Consolo, *principal*  
*The Katie & Stephen*  
*Wolnitzek Chair*  
Jonathan Hwang  
Austin Budiono  
Evan Hurley  
Lesley Cissell  
Jude Jones

**Violas**

Leslie Dragand,  
*acting principal*  
Peter Gorak  
Julius Adams  
Rebecca Flank

**'Cellos**

Tom Guth, *principal*  
*The Fred Espenscheid*  
*Plumbing Chair*  
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Elizabeth Lee  
Joe Kovac

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Brenton Carter,  
*acting principal*  
Nicholas Blackburn

**Flutes**

Jennifer King, *principal*  
*The Paul & Geneva*  
*Houston Chair*  
Betty Douglas

**Oboes**

Liza Saracina, *principal*  
Jennifer Kirby

**Oboes**

Christine Today, *principal*  
Rachael Hendricks

**Bassoons**

Eric Louie, *acting principal*  
Jordan Moreno

**French Horns**

Frank Carrubba,  
*acting principal*  
*The Don & Sue*  
*Corken Chair*  
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Mason Stewart  
Charlotte O'Connor

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Brian Buerkle,  
*acting principal*  
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Austin Motley,  
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## *James R. Cassidy*

The Kentucky Symphony Orchestra's founder, music director, and executive director brings more than four decades of professional experience as an educator, arts administrator, and conductor to the organization. Under his leadership, the KSO in 28 years has grown 35-fold in budget, launched free summer and education concert series, and expanded the orchestra's range of musical offerings by developing several subsidiary groups specializing in various musical genres, including jazz, pop, rock, country, and R&B. Cassidy and the KSO are now recognized around the globe for crafting unique and engaging thematic programs, premieres, and collaborations.

A Florida native, Cassidy was previously music director of the Florida Ballet Theatre, Tampa Chamber Symphony, and Tampa Bay Youth Orchestra. He has conducted for the Florida and St. Petersburg opera companies, and he led the world premiere production of *Rise for Freedom: The John P. Parker Story* for Cincinnati Opera.

Cassidy holds degrees from the University of South Florida and the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music. He lives in Newport with his wife, Angela, son, Devlin, and dog, Seamus.

## *Miriam K. Smith*



Miriam K. Smith began playing 'cello at age 4 and made her orchestral debut at age 8 as soloist in Haydn's Cello Concerto No. 1 with the Seven Hills Sinfonietta. Recent engagements have included her debut with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and Louisville Orchestra, Blue Ash Montgomery Symphony Orchestra, the Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra and the Wright State Chamber Orchestra. Miriam opened the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra's 2019 Masterworks Series performing Saint-Saëns's Cello Concerto No. 1.

Miriam has twice performed in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York City as the first-place winner of American Protégé International and American Fine Arts Festival competitions, as well as the Cleveland Orchestra's Rainbow concerts. In 2018, she performed solo recitals in Cincinnati and Chicago, and for an outdoor crowd of more than 40,000 with the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra's Concerts on the Square. That year she also received a Global Music Award as an emerging artist for her recording, *Ignite!*

Miriam has studied with Sarah Kim and Alan Rafferty since she began playing. Her website is [miriamksmith.com](http://miriamksmith.com). ■

## Antonín Dvořák

*Antonín Dvořák was born in Nelahozeves, Bohemia (now part of the Czech Republic), on September 8, 1841. He died May 1, 1904, in Prague.*

Perhaps the most telling thing about Antonín Dvořák and his music is that, more than a century after his death, he remains one of classical music's most popular composers for both audiences and performers. Of his contemporaries, only Johannes Brahms — himself a great supporter of Dvořák's — rivals his reputation.

Key to Dvořák's enduring popularity are the sheer beauty and vitality of his music. His parade of melody never ends, his orchestration is rich and glowing, and his creativity spread across almost every musical genre. These all reflect a deeper trait of the man: his utter lack of pretense.

Born the son and grandson of small-town butchers, Dvořák had a practical attitude toward work. He had already begun to learn the family business when, at 13, he left for the nearby town of Zlonice to further his musical ambitions. (Ten years later, Zlonice provided the inspiration for Dvořák's first symphony.) There he had lessons in violin, viola, organ, harmony, and, crucially, German. Why crucial? Until the end of World War I, the Czech-speaking provinces of Bohemia and Moravia that now constitute the Czech Republic were part of the Austrian Empire; its rulers and its political and social elite were based in Vienna and spoke German. As part of maintaining its cultural dominance, Austria marginalized Czech culture.

Dvořák's concurrent training in music and German continued even after he became

a student in 1857 at the Prague Organ School. As a talented violist, he was soon part of the city's new music scene. In 1862, when the Provisional Theater (the temporary building which housed what would become the National Theater) opened, Dvořák became principal violist of the theater orchestra, including playing for several years under Bedřich Smetana. The first-hand experience in the workings of the orchestra was invaluable to his development as a composer.



*Antonín Dvořák would have become a butcher had his talent for music not been encouraged.*

In his personal life, he fell in love with one of his private students, Josefina Čermáková, but she did not return his affection. Josefina's younger sister, Anna, eventually did, though, and they were married in 1873. Thanks to his wife, then, Dvořák remained close to that first love until her death.

Dvořák in 1871 quit the theater orchestra to concentrate on composing. He had had a string of local successes by 1874, when he submitted a portfolio of music for the Austrian State Stipendium, created to assist struggling, young artists in the empire's provinces. Dvořák won the highest-level grant, but, more important, one of the judges took an interest in his career — Johannes Brahms. By 1877, when Dvořák had won his third stipend in four years, Brahms took the extraordinary step of writing to his publisher to encourage him to print Dvořák's music.

As one might expect, the publisher, Simrock, took Brahms's advice. The first handful of releases sold well and were well reviewed. Simrock asked Dvořák to write some short, Czech-themed pieces along the lines of Brahms's very successful *Hungarian Dances*. Dvořák responded with the first cycle of *Slavonic Dances*, which were released simultaneously in orchestral and four-

hand piano versions. They were a huge hit across Europe, and Dvořák, after 20 years of hard work, was an overnight success.

## *Symphony No. 7*

Nationalism was hardly a uniquely Czech phenomenon. Across eastern Europe in particular, cultures which had been discouraged and denigrated as a tool of maintaining government — especially Austrian — authority were straining for recognition. That simmering brew created a generation of intellectuals and artists who sought to reassert at least their cultural identities. Bohemians (like Dvořák) in particular had a proud history to look back on: Bohemia boasted central Europe's oldest university (founded in 1347). Its capital, Prague, had served as capital of the Holy Roman Empire.

In music, the movement meant rejecting many mainstream mannerisms, since they were almost all of Austro-German origin. (The great composers to then — Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms — all were culturally German.) Instead they turned for inspiration to the sounds, melodies, and languages of their native folk songs and dances. Their goal was to create art music that had a unique sound identifiable as belonging to that culture.

In Dvořák's music, that manifested itself in a seemingly bottomless well of beautiful, Czech-sounding melody. His long-term success is due to his ability to meld that sound to the German traditions he learned and admired. That connection carried through to his own time thanks to Brahms, whose music strongly influenced Dvořák. That's particularly true of the sixth through eighth symphonies. Though unmistakably Czech, they owe a lot of their style and form to Brahms's second and third symphonies.

Dvořák's sixth symphony, finished in the fall of 1880, was his first great success in that

form (it was published as his No. 1) and led in part to an invitation from the Philharmonic Society of London in 1884 to write a successor. Dvořák already was thinking of another symphony after having heard Brahms's third performed. The London invitation spurred him to action.

He promised that the new symphony would be "capable of stirring the world," but the underlying goal was the validation of Czech music as the equal of German. He declared his nationalistic inspiration explicitly in the score at the top of the first movement: "This main theme occurred to me upon the arrival at the station of the ceremonial train from Pest in 1884." That train carried Czechs from Hungary to Prague for a performance at the new Czech National Theater, which was followed by a pro-Czech political demonstration.

As confirmation of suspicions of cultural bigotry, the seventh symphony's 1885 London premiere was a triumph. In Vienna, it couldn't get a performance for two years and even then was not well received.

Whatever the motivation, almost everything the sixth and eighth symphonies are, the Symphony No. 7 is not. Where its neighbors are sunny and optimistic, the seventh is a dark, taut, brooding work which showed off Dvořák's skill in traditional forms and compositional technique. Even its key, D minor, has traditionally been reserved for works intended to make a major statement, among them Mozart's *Requiem* and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9.

What really gives it impetus is conciseness: The seventh is slightly shorter than its predecessors, and its motives — particularly in the masterful first movement — are more compact, too. The composer remarked that "there is not one superfluous note" in it.

Despite a fairly bucolic second theme, the first movement, in sonata form, is nerv-

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*"I am now busy with this symphony for London, and wherever I go I can think of nothing else. God grant that this Czech music will move the world!"*

— ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

---

ous and tightly wound. Unlike the other late symphonies, there is no real emotional resolution: Its tumultuous climax disintegrates like a caged animal lashing out before retreating sullenly to a back corner as the coda dies out in the low strings.

The slow movement invokes the Czech countryside, but it, too, must weather an agitated, stormy spell. The outline of the scherzo's themes harken back to the *Slavonic Dances*, but, again, under a dark shadow.

The finale is another sonata-form movement, this time with a theme that struggles through the movement, only in the last bars achieving its goal — and a major key.

### 'Cello Concerto

*"The 'cello is a beautiful instrument, but its place is in the orchestra and in chamber music. As a solo instrument, it isn't much good."*

— DVOŘÁK

By the age of 50, Dvořák was one of Europe's best-known composers, approaching Brahms in stature. He had completed eight symphonies, several operas, piano and violin concerti, and many shorter works. Despite the wide recognition, however, sales of his published works were making his publisher rich, not him. Even with the additional income from teaching at the Prague Conservatory, his financial circumstances remained quite modest.

So when Jeannette Thurber, the wife of a millionaire New York grocery wholesaler, invited him in the spring of 1892 to head a new conservatory in New York — at 25 times his salary in Prague — it was an offer he couldn't easily refuse. For teaching composition and conducting eight concerts a season, he was to be paid a staggering \$15,000 a year (multiply that by nearly 100 to adjust for inflation) and given four months vacation. After some cautious negotiations, Thurber agreed to deposit half his first year's salary in advance in a Prague bank, and the composer agreed to begin in September.

Dvořák was recruited in part for the obvious prestige he would bring the fledgling

National Conservatory, but Thurber also hoped that, since he had been instrumental in developing and popularizing a Bohemian national style of music, he could help American composers discover a national style of their own. Dvořák firmly believed his American students could find their own voice only by turning to folk music, just as he had in his homeland.

His stay in the United States was productive. Besides attending or conducting numerous performances of his works and being feted by the country's Czech and Moravian communities, Dvořák wrote what have proven to be his best-loved, and by some measures his best, works. During his first school year at the conservatory, 1892–93, he wrote a symphony, his ninth, dubbed *From the New World*. He spent the summer of 1893 in the mostly Czech-speaking town of Spillville, Iowa; there he wrote a string quartet and quintet, both called *American*.

Trouble arrived with the Panic of 1893. Triggered by collapsing wheat prices, a South American coup, and a railroad investment bubble, it was one of America's worst economic crises. Lasting about four years, the panic caused more than 500 banks and some 15,000 businesses to fail. Michigan's unemployment rate spiked to 43%.

Among the financially devastated was Thurber's husband, who nearly went bankrupt. She had no option but to pay Dvořák with an IOU. He nevertheless finished the 1893–94 school year and even renewed his contract. When he returned that fall from a summer in Bohemia, though, Thurber's financial situation had not improved. After a half year, Dvořák returned to Prague early in 1895 and, in late summer, wrote to her that he would not be able to return for a fourth year. Graciously, he blamed family matters rather than her failure to pay him.

Nevertheless, 1894 in New York was fruitful. That spring, Victor Herbert premiered his second 'cello concerto with the New York Philharmonic. (Herbert, best remembered today for his operettas, was a virtuoso 'cellist, principal of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, and a fellow professor



*People lined the streets of Prague in respect as Dvořák's funeral procession passed on May 5, 1904.*

with Dvořák at the National Conservatory. In 1898, he became founding music director of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.)

Dvořák was particularly impressed by Herbert's ability to balance the soloist against the orchestra, and it inspired him to reconsider a request from a friend, 'cellist Hanuš Wihan. Wihan had asked Dvořák to write a 'cello concerto, but Dvořák had refused, based largely on a belief that the violoncello was not well suited to be a solo instrument. Between Brahms's Double Concerto (for violin and 'cello), written in 1887, and Herbert's, he realized he may have been mistaken. He took only three months late in 1894 to write his own concerto.

The result was a titan of a piece. Despite its length — more than 40 minutes — the concerto is pretty tightly structured and is brimming over with the melodious beauty that is Dvořák's hallmark. The first move-

ment is built on a large-scale of the traditional sonata-allegro form, and the finale is an innovative variation on a three-part rondo. When Brahms first saw the score, he commented, "Why on earth didn't I know one could write a 'cello concerto like this? If I had, I would have written one long ago."

Woven into the concerto's slow movement and finale is a quote from one of Dvořák's songs, "Leave Me Alone," a favorite of his early love (and sister-in-law), Josefina Čermáková. Dvořák learned in New York that she was gravely ill; he included the song in the Adagio as a private tribute to her. She died soon after he returned to Prague, and he rewrote the end of the piece to include a poignant reminiscence of the song, bringing a moment of repose to the piece just before its final, jubilant rush. ■

— Thomas Consolo

*Tom Guth ♦ The Fred Espenscheid Plumbing Chair*

The Kentucky Symphony's principal 'cellist has been an active orchestral and chamber musician in the Cincinnati area since graduating from University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music over 20 years ago. Besides his KSO position, he is an associate member with the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, a member of the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, and principal 'cellist of the Blue Ash-Montgomery Symphony Orchestra. He has played with the Cincinnati Symphony and can often be seen in the Dayton Philharmonic 'cello section, too.

Tom is a founding member of the vibrant Collegium Cincinnati Ensemble, and he also serves as an adjunct professor at Xavier University. On Sundays you can find him playing organ at Central Presbyterian Church in Dayton, Ohio. He also maintains a private 'cello studio. Tom lives in West Chester Township with his wife and three kids.

Fred Espenscheid Plumbing supports Tom and the KSO for sharing the gift and spirit of beautiful music and bringing its trademark variety of cultural entertainment to Northern Kentucky. ■

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*The KSO would like to thank the following for their assistance:*

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*\*—ex officio*

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*The Kentucky Arts Council,  
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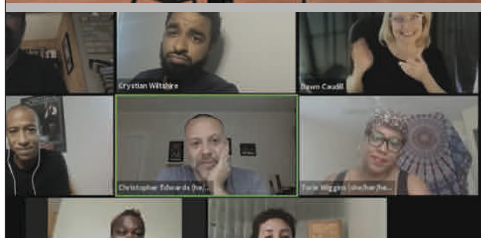
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