

The Works of Antonín Leopold Dvořák

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Seed
Learning



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Text Audio

Who was Antonín Leopold Dvořák?

Antonín Leopold Dvořák was a Czech composer, born in 1841. He was born in Bohemia, now part of the Czech Republic. He started to have music lessons when he was just six years old and was soon playing the violin in local churches and in the village band.

A portrait of
Antonín Dvořák



A map showing the location
of the Czech Republic

When he was around twelve, Dvořák moved in with his aunt and uncle in Zlonice so that he could study music. He started composing music during this time. One of Dvořák's teachers was so impressed by his talent that he told Dvořák's parents to send him to study music at the Organ School in Prague. Dvořák studied hard and became a talented viola player. In 1859, he graduated from the school and joined an orchestra which played music at restaurants in the city.

The viola is like a violin, but bigger. ➡



Prague is the capital city of the Czech Republic.





Dvořák worked as a church organist.

In 1862, Dvořák became the main viola player in an orchestra where composer Bedřich Smetana was the conductor. Dvořák also earned extra money by teaching music, and he found a job as a church organist. However, what he really wanted to do was compose. He entered his compositions in a government contest and won! The prize money allowed him to quit his church job and spend more time writing music.

Dvořák played the organ at St. Adalbert in Prague.





Statue of Dvořák
in Prague



Dvořák eventually left the orchestra as well so that he could focus on composing.

There was a problem, though; he was very self-critical. Dvořák destroyed a lot of his pieces which he thought were not acceptable. He concluded that he had to find his own style, and over time he did! Although he based his style on traditional classical forms, his works clearly show the influence of Czech folk music.



Dvořák's music spread to many countries during his life.

His music started to be printed by a well-known German music publisher and was performed in many countries, even as far away as the United States!



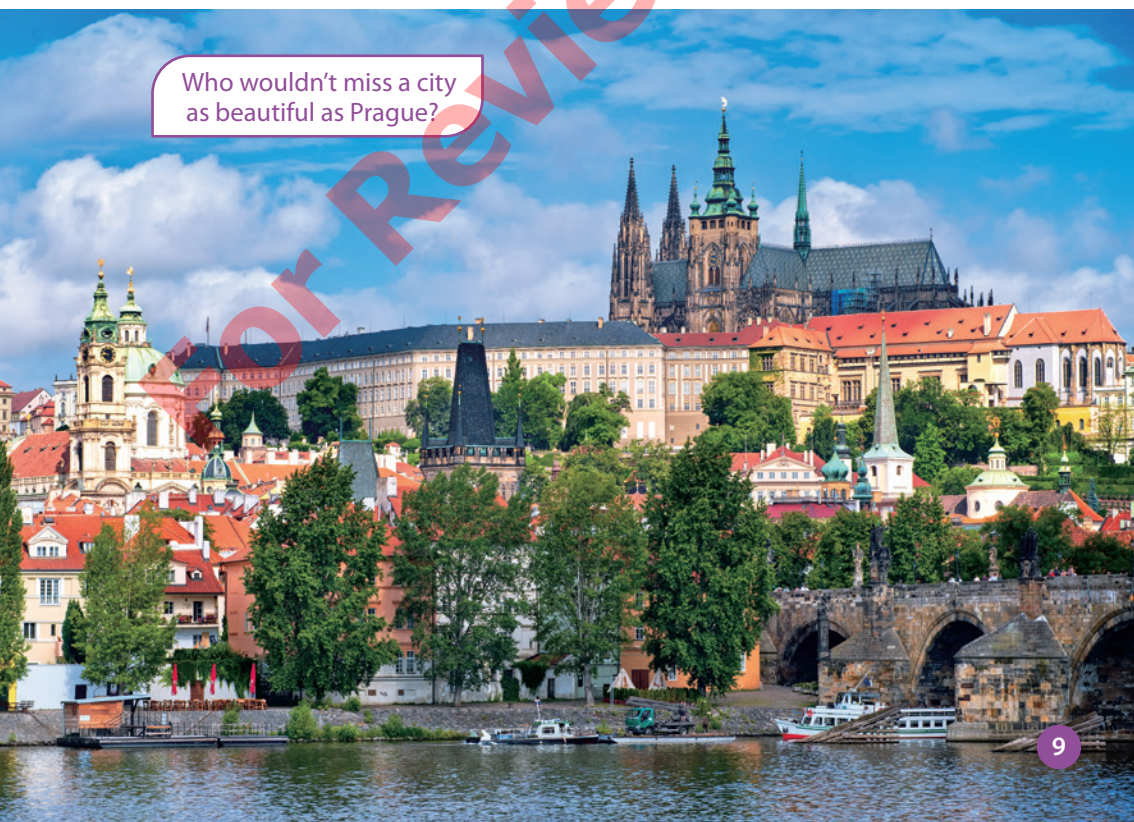
Once Dvořák's music was published, his success began to grow.

From 1892 to 1895, Dvořák was the director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York City. However, he missed home and returned to his job as professor of composition at the Prague Conservatory.

New York City in
Dvořák's time



Who wouldn't miss a city
as beautiful as Prague?



In March 1904, Dvořák suffered ill health, causing him to miss rehearsals and performances. He died just a few months later in May of that year and was buried on the grounds of Vyšehrad Castle in Prague.

Dvořák's funeral procession in 1904 in Prague was attended by thousands.



Grave of Dvořák in Prague

