

# PROGRAM

I. KONCERT  
11. SEZÓNY  
2003/2004

29. 10. 2003, 19.30 h  
DVOŘÁKOVA SÍŇ  
RUDOLFINA

## DVOŘÁK SOWERBY ČAJKOVSKIJ

GREGORY FULKERSON, HOUSLE  
MARILYN MASON, VARHANY  
PAUL FREEMAN, DIRIGENT

ČESKÝ NÁRODNÍ SYMFONICKÝ ORCHESTR  
*CZECH NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA*

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C.S. CARGO

KONCERT JE VĚNOVÁN PAMÁTCE JOHNA D. PETTYHO

*Natáčení tohoto koncertu pro WFMT (Chicago), bylo umožněno díky podpoře paní Judy Petty, jejíž zesnulý milující manžel byl nadšeným příznivcem umění ve Spojených státech amerických.*

ČESKÝ NÁRODNÍ  
SYMFONICKÝ ORCHESTR

dirigent

**Paul Freeman**

program

**Antonín Dvořák**

Koncert pro housle a orchestr, a moll, op. 53

*I. Allegro ma non troppo*

*II. Adagio ma non troppo*

*III. Allegro giocoso ma non troppo*

**Gregory Fulkerson, housle**

**Leo Sowerby**

Koncert „Classic“ pro varhany a smyčce

*I. Vesele, s lusknutím*

*II. Snivě a rapsodicky*

*III. V cizím stylu*

**Marilyn Mason, varhany**

přestávka

**Petr Iljič Čajkovskij**

Symfonie č. 6, h moll, op. 74, „Patetická“

*I. Adagio. Allegro non troppo*

*II. Allegro con grazia*

*III. Allegro molto vivace*

*IV. Finale. Adagio lamentoso*

Fulkerson rose to prominence, taking First Prize in the International American Music Competition sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation and Washington's Kennedy Center (and now sponsored by New York's Carnegie Hall). As a result of that victory, Fulkerson began a very active performing career that included debuts in New York, London, Paris, Rome, and Brussels. He has performed more than 30 concertos with orchestras, including the world premieres of the John Becker Concerto with the Chattanooga Symphony in Tennessee, the Richard Wernick Concerto with the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Roy Harris Concerto with the North Carolina Symphony (later performing and recording it with the Louisville Orchestra in Kentucky).

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The English-language version of the program is sponsored by

THE PRAGUE POST

# Czech National Symphony Orchestra

## Conductor

Paul Freeman

## Soloists

Gregory Fulkerson - violin

Marilyn Mason - organ

## Program

Antonín Dvořák

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in A Minor,

*Op. 53*

*I. Allegro ma non troppo - Quasi moderato*

*II. Adagio, ma non troppo - Piu mosso  
un poco tranquillo, quasi Tempo I*

*III. Finale: Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo*

Leo Sowerby

Classic Concerto for Organ and Strings

*I. Merrily, with snap*

*II. Dreamily and rhapsodically*

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CZECH PREMIERE

## INTERMISSION

Peter Ilyitch Tchaikovsky

Symphony No. 6 in B Minor, Op. 54

"*Pathétique*"

*I. Adagio. Allegro non troppo*

*II. Allegro con grazia*

*III. Allegro molto vivace*

*IV. Finale. Adagio lamentoso*

Dvořák Hall, Rudolfinum

Wednesday, October 29, 2003

at 7:30 p.m.

THE PRAGUE POST



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This concert is dedicated to the memory of John D. Petty. Recording of this concert for radio station WFMT (Chicago) was possible thanks to the support of Mrs. Judy Petty, whose late, loving husband was an enthusiastic patron of the arts in the U.S.A.

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Compared with his earlier piano concerto, the violin concerto of Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904) shows considerable technical advance. There is less reliance on thematic repetition and more in the way of real development of material, even if there is not quite the degree of professional finish as in the cello concerto of a few years later.

After its writing, the violin concerto underwent a whole series of revisions and, as its dedicatee, the famous soloist Josef Joachim, respectfully pointed out, "even though the whole proves that you know the violin very well, it is clear from one or two details that you have not played yourself for some time."

In that letter, Joachim goes on to say that he did not think the work was ready yet and recommended further changes. Joachim later rehearsed the piece but oddly enough never performed it in public; that honor fell to František Ondříček in Prague in 1883.

Needless to say, Dvořák's violin concerto doesn't conform to strictly classical ideas. The first movement's main theme, for instance, is introduced with the briefest of flourishes and is a typically Dvořákián melody stated in unisons and octaves.

The principal idea of the second group is a simple, endearing melody whose folk character soon asserts itself as the soloist decorates it. However, in the drastically shortened recapitulation it never occurs and, sooner than expected, the music leads with neither a break nor a cadenza into the lengthy central *Adagio*.

Roughly in A-B-A form the slow movement is decidedly improvisatory in style, beginning with a long-breathed melody (solo violin accompanied by woodwind) but having a darker, more turbulent middle section to follow.

In the finale a *furiant* reminds us that the composer had recently brought out his first set of Slavonic Dances, so it swings back and forth between steady and rapid triple meter. When this is repeated later on in the movement, the scoring suggests the sound of Czech bagpipes. Two other ideas vie for our attention: one a sober-sounding *dumka*; the other in waltz time with each of its phrases ending with what sounds like a Bohemian dancer's foot stomp.

— Jiří Pilka

**Leo Sowerby** (1895-1968) remains one of America's most distinguished composers. Born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, he studied at the American Conservatory in Chicago. He was one of the first American composers to receive a Prix de Rome. His compositions include seven symphonies, three Concertos for Organ and Orchestra, solo organ works, and many works for choral ensemble. It was my pleasure to play the first European performance, in 1957, of his Classic Concerto at the First International Congress of Organists in

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Westminster Abbey, with Leo Sowerby himself conducting. Tonight marks its first performance in Prague.

The first movement opens with a three-note leitmotif in the strings. During this *Allegro*, a sprightly organ theme comments on the leitmotif, which is tossed back and forth between ensemble and solo instrument. Dialogue continues in this fashion with development on various harmonic levels. The key of C Major prevails.

The second movement includes the composer's added indication: "with poignant expression." The orchestra opens the movement with a rich harmonic theme of eight measures. The organ responds with a second idea. The interplay continues in the key of A Minor and later in the parallel key of A Major. Both themes are eventually combined in a glorious harmonic texture.

Sowerby told me he wanted the final movement played "like a march." However, this march has two time signatures, 2/4 and 3/4, which alternate throughout the movement. Although the movement is written in the key of C Major, the tonal center is, in fact, G Major. In stark contrast to the preceding mood of the second movement, the bravura writing of the finale brings the work to a brilliant close.

— Marilyn Mason

**Peter Ilyitch Tchaikovsky** (1840-1893), one of the world's most frequently performed composers, made his mark in our hearts with beautiful ballets, *Swan Lake* and *The Nutcracker*; operas that include *Eugene Onegin*; beloved piano and violin concertos, and six major symphonies, of which tonight's "*Pathétique*" was his last.

Tchaikovsky thrills us with his Russian melodiousness and spontaneity, romantic emotion and monumentality. Something mysterious in his music provokes great response everywhere in the world; apparently, it resonates with the soul of modern man.

The Sixth Symphony was composed in the last year of his abbreviated life. In one of his last letters, he wrote: "I suffer not only from immense nostalgia which I cannot put into words, but also from some kind of unspeakable fear and God knows what else."

He wrote quickly, finishing the first movement in four days, the outline on July 19, 1893, and the complete score on August 19. When it was done, he exulted: "I have never written anything better than this symphony and I never will. Without exaggeration, I have injected my whole soul in this symphony."

We feel sadness and defiance in the first movement, which opens with its famous bassoon solo, *Adagio* and very quiet in ascending notes. The violas pull the melody into the depths and then, after a suspenseful pause, the music becomes very agitated and rhythmic in an *Allegro non troppo*. When this has run its course, there is another powerful pause and then a tranquil, lyrical melody in D Major is introduced; it has found its way onto the pop music charts as "This Is the Story of a Starry Night." The balance of the movement is concerned mainly with developing these two themes. A most remarkable moment occurs when the whole orchestra explodes with the agitated

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*Allegro* theme after the D-Major melody has been whispered by the clarinet in its lowest register. The movement ends calmly and quietly.

The second movement is filled with gracefulness in which we can also feel the elegance of a waltz dance pastiche and the spirit of a Russian city salon. It is a world of dreams and desire for distant happiness. A flowing *Allegro con grazia* in 5-4 meter, its steady, even assurance is clouded only by the Trio section with its constant descending motion and repeated drumbeats.

The third movement manages to suppress sorrow with a jubilant march, *Allegro molto vivace*, that begins in a whirlwind of alternating strings and woodwinds. Music flies energetically with great gradations and unique instrumentation, gathering momentum gradually until the clarinet announces a distinctly martial theme. This is then taken up by the strings. There is constant building with climaxes of hair-raising excitement, until at the end the frenzy is hammered home with four notes belched out in unison by the full orchestra.

The last movement, *Adagio lamentoso*, begins with a threnody in the strings. Again, as in the first movement, the melodic pattern is a descending one, but now the cry is one of utter despair. Consolation comes in D Major once more, as it did in the first movement, in a theme specified by Tchaikovsky to be played "with gentleness and devotion." The lament of the opening returns, however, and builds to another shattering climax. Silence follows, then an ominous stroke on the tam-tam gong ushers in a chain of soft trombone clouds. The symphony ends in a mood of resignation, calm and at peace.

This was not to be Tchaikovsky's state of mind or body in the ensuing days. The premiere in St. Petersburg on October 28, 1893, with the composer conducting, was marred by the musicians' coldness toward him and his work. The next day, before sending the Sixth Symphony score to his publisher, Tchaikovsky decided it needed a title. His brother Modest offered *Tragic*, which was rejected. "I left the room before he had come to a decision," Modest Tchaikovsky later recalled. "Suddenly I thought *Pathetic*. I went back to his room ... and I said the word to Peter. 'Splendid, Modi, bravo, *Pathetic*,' and he wrote in my presence the title that will forever remain."

Cholera was raging through the city. On the first of November, Tchaikovsky joined his brother and his favorite nephew, Vladimir Davidov, for lunch. Complaining of stomach upset, the composer ate no food, but took a long drink of unboiled water, to the dismay of his companions. By nightfall, his condition had deteriorated and Modest sent for a doctor, but it was too late. Peter Ilyitch Tchaikovsky died November 6, 1893, at the age of 53.

— Jiří Pilka/Martin Bookspan

Violinist **Gregory Fulkerson** is "a master both virtuosic and emotional," wrote London's Daily Telegraph. Internationally acclaimed, Fulkerson has enjoyed a flourishing career in both classical and contemporary music.

It was as a major exponent of American contemporary music that

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