

OUR DEBT TO DVORAK

The Centenary of "A Good Czech"

IT is Antonin Dvorak's glory that his music is accepted already as a world's classic. He stands in Czech music where Shakespeare stands in English literature, rash though it may sound to make such a claim of a man who died less than forty years ago. Therefore the centenary of his birth is to musicians an event of some importance. Dvorak grew up in a hard school. His parents meant to make him a butcher but his inclination towards music was stronger than any accident of birth or circumstances. No composer endured more abject poverty in his early years. A piano was for a long time out of the question. Music paper

school. He took jobs as violin player in cheap orchestras. He played the drum, taught music for small fees, managed to get a beggarly pension, and struggled on.

Eventually he gained a humble place in the orchestra of the Czech National Theatre (where he remained till 1873).

Developing National Spirit

That was about 1859, when Bohemia, which had for so long been under the foreign yoke, was developing a strong national spirit and the music of Smetana was expressing feeling and desire for independence. Dvorak's first music had been written under the influence of the classic composers and later that of Wagner, but in 1873 he attracted attention with a work of patriotic character, a hymn called "The Heirs of the White Mountain." In the same year he married Anna Cermakov, a singer, and gave up the theatre for teaching and composition. But as he married on the financial basis of earnings far from sufficient for one, still less for two, he undertook every possible kind of musical work—teaching, playing the organ, conducting when the opportunity permitted.

Gradually his fame spread throughout Europe and preceded him to America. In 1874 had come the opera, *The Pig-headed Peasants*, which was based on Czech folk music. His *Symphony in D Minor* (familiar to radio listeners) also belongs to that year. In 1878 appeared the first series of the famous *Slavonic Dances*. About the same time he earned great popularity in England as a result of his *Stabat Mater*, which took him to England. Then came the invitation to go to America where he stayed three years, and spent much of his time among his compatriots in the Bohemian Colony of Spillville, Iowa. The famous *New World Symphony* was a product of this period, as was also the superb *Cello Concerto*, Op. 104.

When Dvorak returned to Prague in 1895, a very homesick and rather bewildered man, he resumed his duties as Professor at the Conservatoire,

where he remained until his death in 1904. The influence of his American visit is traceable in his famous *Nigger Quartet* which he composed in three days.

Following a short Centenary Tribute at 3.0 p.m. on Sunday, September 7, 2YA will feature a number of Dvorak's works during the month, as follows: Monday, September 8: "Nigger" Quartet and Gipsy Songs. Tuesday, September 9: The "New World" Symphony. Tuesday, September 16: Serenade for Strings, Symphony in D Minor. Tuesday, September 23: Symphony in G Major. Monday, September 29, Trio in E Minor.



ANTONIN DVORAK
Grew up in a hard school

to write on was a luxury. The peasants of Bohemia, poor enough in any case, were taxed to the breaking point by the Austro-Hungarian government.

There is a legend that Dvorak learned to play the violin by stealth and then ran away to Prague to enter the organ

CBS ACCOUNTANT WINS D.F.C.

PILOT-OFFICER R. J. BOLLARD who was recently awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross following a notable series of bombing raids over Germany, is well known in the Commercial Broadcasting Service, where he was a member of the accounting staff. Born in Auckland and educated at the Mount Albert Grammar School, he was originally on the staff of Station 12B, but joined 22B at the opening of that station. Later he was transferred to 42B, and then to 22A Palmerston North as accountant.

He was at 22A when he joined the R.N.Z.A.F., and after training at Levin and Woodburne, where he was granted a commission, he left for England last September.

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