

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was a noted Afro-English composer whose works thrived mostly around the decades surrounding the turn of the 20th century. Born and raised near London, he received much of his musical training from his mother's side of the family, being taught the violin by her father from an early age. He was educated at the Royal College of Music, switching from violin to composition, and studying the latter with Charles Villiers Stanford. Following the completion of his degree, he became a professional musician, and was eventually appointed to a professorship at the Crystal Palace School of Music. He also conducted the orchestra at the Croydon Conservatoire. His greatest success as a composer was the choral trilogy, *Scenes from the Song of Hiawatha*. Its opening section, "*Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*," still retains a foothold in the repertoire today.

The *Ballade in A Minor, Opus 33*, was commissioned by and composed for the Three Choirs Festival 1898 series of concerts (on the strength of a recommendation by Sir Edward Elgar) while Coleridge-Taylor was still a student at the Royal College of Music. The work is scored for a large orchestra featuring woodwinds in pairs (including piccolo), full brass, timpani, cymbals, and strings; it lasts a little over 11 minutes. Coleridge-Taylor alternates primarily between two thematic ideas, the first being very rhythmic, with the second being much more lyrical and songlike; the second iteration of the A theme becomes gentler before returning to the B theme, giving this work a bit of an archlike form, basically a rondo plus a short coda that brings the work to its conclusion.

Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904): Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in A Minor, Opus 53

Antonin Dvořák was one of the first leading composers of a Czech national style (immediately following Bedřich Smetana), and he incorporated many elements of folk and dance music into his compositions. He was born in the village of Nelahozeves, Bohemia, 15 or so miles north of the capital city of Prague. A butcher's son, he began violin lessons at the age of six, adding organ and piano in his early teens. Dvořák played viola in the Bohemian Provisional Theatre Orchestra, leaving the orchestra in 1871 in order to focus more closely on his composing. His works began to be performed in Prague a year later, and became known to a wider European audience as the result of first place finishes in the Austrian State Prize (composition) in 1874, 1876, and 1877. Dvořák served as Director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York City from 1892 until 1895, and encouraged his students to incorporate the music of African-Americans and Native-Americans into their compositions to strengthen an emerging American nationalistic style.

Dvořák's *Violin Concerto in A Minor, Opus 53*, was composed in 1879. Its premiere took place in Prague in 1883, featuring František Ondříček as soloist (he also gave the Vienna and London premieres.) The work is scored for woodwinds in pairs, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings, and takes approximately 30 minutes to perform. It is crafted in the usual three-movement pattern of fast-slow-fast, and the first two movements are played with no break in the music. The soloist enters very early into the first movement, rather than following an

