

Logan Freeman, A02302894, CCA 3330, Music Assignment, 3/21/2025

Symphony No 9 E Minor (From the New World)

3/20/2025

Online

Munich Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Wilhelm Furtwangler

The concert was performed on stage in a large concert hall. The acoustics are difficult to describe purely from a stereo audio feed. However, the recorded sound quality is very good. Different instruments are easy to distinguish. In the concert hall, sound-absorbing panels are installed on the walls. These effectively limit any reverberations in the concert hall. None are audible on the soundtrack. The hall appears full of people in the brief moments the audience is shown on camera. The background light was dim, but the faces of the performers and composer is clearly visible on camera. The soft light level and damped reverberations contribute to what I consider an ideal environment for an orchestral piece.

The first piece I will review is the second movement from *Symphony No 9 in E Minor*, originally composed by Antonín Dvořák. The movement is entitled “Largo”. Of all four movements in the symphony, the second is likely most recognizable to the listener. The melody is conjunct and invokes a melancholy and contemplative feel in the listener. The changes are slow enough to give the listener time to contemplate. The overall rhythm is steady and slow. Dvořák slightly alters the rhythm throughout the movement, but never in large pieces at once. The texture is distinctly homophonic, though the melody evolves. The woodwinds and especially the strings play the largest role in this movement.

The second piece is the third movement of *Symphony No 9 in E Minor*, “Scherzo (Molto Vivace)”. Again, this work was composed by Dvořák. As soon as the third movement begins, the disjunct melody is immediately audible. The tempo of the music changes all throughout the movement, beginning with an up-tempo segment and then a contemplative, slightly slower section where the violins are clearly heard. The third movement has major harmony. The chords are happy and simple. This choice by Dvořák is smart, because the happy tones do not require significant time for the audience to contemplate. In addition, the timbre of this movement is characterized by woodwinds and strings. Although the brass section is involved, their role is to accompany, and their influence is only felt in the background during the third movement. Similarly to the disjunct melody, the register changes between high and medium, though at the end of the movement it tends lower.

These two movements, though they abut each other, are distinctly different. The melody in the second movement, “Largo” is very slow, which contrasts with the faster, jerky third movement of “Scherzo”. The melody in the second movement is smoother and calmer, which is perhaps why it was altered and immortalized for popular listening in the song, “Going Home”. The harmonies are also different. “Largo” features minor harmony, though not to excess. The use of strings and woodwinds over the brass instruments emphasizes this. The major harmony in the third movement aligns well with its faster tempo. Both the second and third movements feature a rhythm that evolves. The rhythm in the second movement remains slow, except near the end of the movement when it accelerates, only to close the movement with the familiar themes heard in the beginning. The rhythm is more regular in the second movement. In contrast, the rhythm in

the third movement is quite jumpy and invokes excitement, which pairs well with a larger use of brass instruments in the movement.

This performance of Dvořák's famous *Symphony No. 9* was phenomenal. I feel a special fondness for Antonín Dvořák, as I used to live in his homeland, the Czech Republic. When I hear the music, I think of memories from my time there, including standing over the Charles Bridge at dawn, and walking around a foggy countryside. Dvořák captured these feelings, which are to me the essence of the Czech Republic, in this symphony. The orchestra and conductor did a fantastic job of giving a feeling to the notes, for a very worthy rendition of a beautiful symphony. The strings were impeccable, and they played in clear unison. The movements were distinct, but they flowed into each other. This gives the feeling that by the end, one has moved through a journey and arrived at a destination. Although the *Symphony* is more than 40 minutes in length, I felt like it went by in a flash. I would recommend this symphony to any classical enthusiast.

### **Works Cited**

Lewis, Susan. "The Story Behind the Nostalgic Melody by Dvořák That Became the Song 'Goin' Home.'" WRTI Your Classical and Jazz Source, 16 Nov. 2020, <https://www.wrti.org/arts-desk/2020-11-16/the-story-behind-the-nostalgic-melody-by-dvorak-that-became-the-song-goin-home>.

Swed, Mark. "Mahler's Storied Ninth Symphony Reaches Revelatory New Depth in Two Major L.A. Performances." Los Angeles Times, 19 Jan. 2023, <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2023-01-19/review-mahler-ninth-la-phil-pacific-symphony>.

*Note: I am attending Jazz Jams in person on 3/26/25, after this assignment is due. The online concert was reviewed since the concert I am attending in person is after the assignment date. This was approved by a TA.*