

Edition Eulenburg
No. 1905

DVOŘÁK

ROMANCE
for Violin and Orchestra
F minor/f-Moll/Fa mineur
Op. 11



Eulenburg

PREFACE

“Dvořák has written all sorts of things... He is in any case a very talented person,”¹ Johannes Brahms wrote Fritz Simrock at the start of December 1877, opening the door to the publisher with this recommendation of the talented young composer Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904) – and thus the opportunity for him to become known beyond his Bohemian homeland. In March 1873 Dvořák had catapulted into the Prague music scene with the performance of his hymn *Die Erben des Weißen Berges* [The Heirs of the White Mountain]. Yet despite all the enthusiasm for his works, the composer had to cope with a bitter setback. His opera *Der König und der Köhler* [The King and the Charcoal Burner] failed miserably in performance – the practical performing difficulties seemed insurmountable. He entered a state of artistic crisis, sifted through his previous oeuvre, destroyed a great deal and stylistically reoriented himself, turning away from Richard Wagner and the New German School. Dvořák’s first Slavic creative period in 1876–1881 opened with a return to the music of his own homeland, including its folkloric elements. The String Quartet in F minor, op. 9, of 1873 was to be the first fruit of this stylistic reorientation, though this work was also denied recognition: Its premiere was rejected by the designated ensemble, the Prague Bennewitz Quartet – owing to its “lack of quartet style”.² What happened to the quartet thereafter is not clear. The composer continued to be preoccupied with its slow movement (Andante con moto quasi allegretto): On 9 December 1879 Josef Markus, concertmaster of the interim theatre orchestra, played the *Romanze* in F minor for violin and orchestra, op. 11 (B 39), with this ensemble under the direction of Adolf

Čech in a benefit concert to support the association’s pension fund. The Prague composer used the slow movement of his 1873 string quartet in F minor, op. 9, taking over the theme, together with other passages. The actual occasion for this composition is not clear. On 8 January 1879 his publisher Simrock asked him in a letter: ‘Write me, however, a smaller piece for violin with orchestra, *Romanze* or some other good title, *Phantasie*, etc., etc.’³ Since Dvořák already wrote back on 11 January, ‘You also want something from me for violin; I have something, namely, a “*Romanze*” with a small orchestral accompaniment’,⁴ the work must already have been ready at this point in time (or at least nearly finished). This hypothesis is supported by the opus number 11 on the autograph score, continuing on from the two *opera*, String Quartet in F minor, op. 9, and Symphony in E flat major, op. 10, and followed by the String Quartet in A minor, op. 12, all also composed in 1873.

The composer submitted the *Romanze* in another version for violin and piano (B 38) and dedicated it to ‘his dear friend František Ondříček’, who frequently played the gem and also premièred the violin concerto in 1883. Both versions, accompanied by orchestra and by piano, were published in 1879 – though the piano arrangement was not done by Dvořák, but appeared in a version by his friend Josef Zubatý. Whether in fact the composer’s version is to be considered as the valid version or as only a preliminary stage for the orchestral version is a matter of controversy. Assumed in the meantime⁵ is that the composer’s piano arrangement should be viewed rather as a preliminary stage in the composition’s history.

The melancholically coloured, cantabile *Romanze* has gained a permanent place in the

¹ Quoted from Klaus Döge, article, ‘Antonín Dvořák’, in: *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd newly revised edition, ed. by Ludwig Finscher, *Personenteil* 5 (Kassel, Basel, etc., 2001), col. 1740.

² Quoted from: Antonín Dvořák: *Romanze op. 11 für Violine und Klavier*. Ed. by Klaus Döge (Stuttgart, 1992), 2.

³ Quoted from Döge (1992), 3.

⁴ Quoted from Antonín Dvořák: *Romanze f-moll opus 11 für Violine und Klavier*, piano arrangement. Ed. by Till Kordt-Dauner (Munich, 2016), III.

⁵ See Kordt-Dauner, III.

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violin repertoire as a little sister work of the Violin Concerto in A minor, op. 53 (B 108), created in its immediate vicinity.

The Edition:

Made available for the edition were copies of the autograph score (siglum: S 76/1529) and piano arrangement (8521) (Prague, Nationalmuseum, Czech Museum of Music, Museum Antonín Dvořák / Praha, Národní muzeum – České muzeum hudby, Muzeum Antonína Dvořáka) – for which the museum is warmly thanked. Further available were also the first print of the score (Simrock, Berlin, 1879, engraving number 8141) and the critical edition by Jarmil Burghauser (Prague, 1962, H 3504); in addition, there were the Urtext editions of the version for violin and piano edited by Klaus Döge (Stuttgart, 1992), Jonáš Hájek (Prague, 2015) and Till Kordt-Dauner (Munich, 2016). The first edition of the score of 1879 was used as the basis for the edition, with the rest of the editions consulted in doubtful cases where additions were identified.

Editorial Notes:

- 1) Bar 78, beat 6+ (last semiquaver): in the autograph score and in the 1962 Prague edition the note in flute 2 and violin 1 reads ‘a flat’ and is tied – in the flute – to the first note of the following bar (also corresponding to that in the autograph piano arrangement), resulting in a dissonance with the ‘g’ of the viola and bassoon 1, whereas ‘g’ is present in the first edition of the score and in the first print of the piano version (as per Edition Döge, 1992).
- 2) In bar 91 the 3rd (lower) quaver in the solo part of the autograph score – corrected in red – is ‘a’ (= open A string), likewise so in the first edition, whereas in the 1962 score edition as well as in the piano-arrangement autograph the reading is ‘a’ an octave higher.

Wolfgang Birtel

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