Wagner is dead, long live Dvorak' proclaimed the critic of Melbourne’s *Daily Telegraph* upon hearing the first Australian performance of Antonín Dvořák’s *Stabat mater*. In 1885, the year of this premiere, Melbourne was a city yet to hear an orchestral performance of a symphony by Brahms, and a metropolis without tertiary musical institutions whose directors might be prone to the promulgation of the superiority of German music. And yet in England, surprisingly, it was the combined efforts of two German musicians, Johannes Brahms and violinist Joseph Joachim, that paved the way for the outstanding reception of Dvořák’s music, a reception to be brilliantly repeated in the mid-1880s in colonial Melbourne.

This article investigates performances of Dvořák’s music in Melbourne given in the years 1885 and 1886 (and beyond), and provides evidence of the warmth with which the press greeted the arrival of certain large-scale works by Dvořák in Australia. It also explores various issues associated with music-making in the city during the latter half of the nineteenth century, including factors influencing choice of repertoire, most notably the profound influence of the British journal *the Musical Times*. It also examines how colonial concert-giving organisations built their music libraries, and explores standards of performance, which, for orchestral playing in particular, were not always high.

Up to the time of the Centennial International Exhibition which opened in Melbourne in 1888, three musical organizations came to be responsible for the major, non-staged musical events in the city: the Melbourne Philharmonic Society, the Metropolitan Liedertafel and the Melbourne Liedertafel. These societies enjoyed the patronage of the rich and powerful of Melbourne; their public concerts were usually given in the newly erected and magnificent Town Hall; vice-regal attendance was the norm.

Press reviews appearing in Melbourne during the mid 1880s hailed Dvořák as ‘a musician who has now taken front rank amongst living composers’, as ‘one of the greatest among living geniuses’ and even as ‘the foremost living composer’.

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1 *Daily Telegraph*, 30 September 1885, p. 5.
3 In 1905, the Royal Victorian Liedertafel was established with the merger of the Melbourne Liedertafel (formerly the Melburner Deutsche Liedertafel) and the Royal Metropolitan Liedertafel. See Noel Wilmott’s article *Liedertafel*, in: *Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, ed. W. Bebbington, OUP, Melbourne 1997, pp. 341–343.
4 *Argus*, 30 September 1885, p. 6.
5 *Daily Telegraph*, 30 September 1885, p. 5.
6 *Daily Telegraph*, 1 November 1886, p. 7.
But what was the musical context in which these ecstatic pronouncements were made? Who were the contemporary giants against whom Dvořák and his music were being measured? It is known, for example, that Melbourne’s introduction to the orchestral performance of a symphony by Brahms did not take place until December 1888. Such gaps in Melbourne’s experience of musical repertoire emerging in Europe give rise to the question: how were decisions reached concerning the music collected and presented to the public? In the early years it seems that local musicians and music lovers contributed to the expanding libraries of music societies. From the early 1880s, however, opinions expressed in the *Musical Times* undoubtedly influenced decisions reached in Melbourne regarding the repertoire to be procured by musical societies. Conveniently, the publishers of this English periodical – Novello, Ewer & Co – also published music, including full scores and associated performance parts of works. These were discussed, analysed, reviewed and advertised in the *Musical Times*. Accounts of major musical performances at home and abroad could be read in this publication, and many of the reports pertained to performances of music supplied by Novello.

Concerning the uneven quality of performances in Melbourne during these years, it is noted that whilst the press frequently praised the performances of singers and instrumentalists alike, weaknesses in the orchestral playing and choral singing were also reported. Harold Love’s discussion of orchestral musicians (at least, those who played for the Lyster opera seasons) reveals a high level of professionalism amongst the instrumentalists of Melbourne in the mid- to

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7 A report *Music at the Exhibition. Special Orchestral Concert*, published in the Argus 12 December 1888, p. 8, provides this information: ‘The musical entertainment […] commenced with the performance, for the first time here, of Brahms’s Symphony in F, No. 3 […] We are unable to compare the value of this symphony with those which preceded it.’ By 23 October 1893, when the Melbourne Philharmonic presented Brahms’ *Song of Destiny*, the program advised ‘Brahms is perhaps the greatest living composer.’ Program kept in the collection of the Melbourne Philharmonic Society, Guard Book, v. 2, 1888–1924, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria (hereafter SLV).

8 The Minutes of the Melbourne Liedertafel give examples of the manner in which these societies of Melbourne acquired their repertoire. Committee members often purchased music for the Society when overseas, and then presented the materials upon their return to Australia. Some generous patrons donated money, or personally ordered works to be sent from major European publishers. The Minute Books of the Melbourne Liedertafel are kept with the Liedertafel Collection, property of the Grainger Museum, University of Melbourne, and housed at the Centre for Studies in Australian Music, University of Melbourne.

9 Although it is likely that a number of interested Victorians were already subscribing to the *Musical Times and Singing-Class Circular* (founded in 1844), the earliest issue held in the Public Library of Victoria (now the State Library of Victoria) is February 1878, followed by presentation copies from the publisher of issues for 1879 and 1880. In 1881 the library began to subscribe to the *Musical Times* (hereafter MT) on a regular basis. I acknowledge with gratitude the advice of Dermot McCaul, SLV.

10 Solo singing was usually noted as being of a high quality. However, according to George Peake, conductor of the Melbourne Philharmonic Society from 1889 to 1911, critical reviews should be read with caution. In his *Melbourne Philharmonic Society: Diamond Jubilee, 1853–1913*, in: *Historical Souvenir, Melbourne 1913*, he pointed to the necessity for the reviewers of former times to have literary, rather than specialist skills: ‘For average newspaper purposes, literary skill has been the main desideratum, ability to make copy without betraying lack of knowledge.’ Moreover: ‘For many years, criticism consisted mostly of literary production, with just an occasional dash of musical terminology to give it the necessary flavour.’ Cited (without publisher) by W. A. CARNE: *A Century of Harmony: The Centenary History of the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Society*, Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Society, Melbourne 1954, pp. 241–242. A copy of George Peake’s *Melbourne Philharmonic Society: Diamond Jubilee, 1853–1913* is located in the collection of the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Society, Box 1, MS 132266, Australian Manuscripts Collection, SLV.
late-1800s, ‘partly due to the migratory habits of the graduates of German conservatoria’. But press reports reveal that during the 1880s (and beyond) there were significant weaknesses in the orchestras assembled to accompany the choral societies, especially during seasons of opera when the best musicians were employed in the pits of Melbourne theatres. These defects were associated with the type and quality of musicians used to augment the core of professional instrumentalists employed by the societies. David Lee, who conducted the Melbourne Philharmonic during 1866–1874 and 1876–1888, wrote that for many years his first duty before any concert was to search the city slums for additional players. George Peake, a later conductor of the Melbourne Philharmonic, added: ‘... the orchestra always included a percentage of those who moved their hands or inflated their cheeks exactly at the right moment, but produced no sound’. An article published in 1891, after the establishment of a permanent professional orchestra in Melbourne (the Victorian Orchestra, which survived for two years only), recalled the bad old days when choral societies had been obliged to use hastily collected ‘scratch’ bands.

Table 1
Premieres of works of Dvořák given in Melbourne: 1885–1886

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Performance Details</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29. 9. 1885</td>
<td><em>Stabat mater</em>, op. 58 (originally op. 28)</td>
<td>Royal Philharmonic Society. Conducted by David Lee. Melbourne Town Hall</td>
<td>First performance in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 12. 1885</td>
<td>‘Grand Symphony in D’, op. 60 (originally op. 58)</td>
<td>Royal Philharmonic Society. Conducted by David Lee. Melbourne Town Hall</td>
<td>First performance in Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. 10. 1886</td>
<td><em>The Spectre’s Bride</em>, op. 69</td>
<td>Melbourne Liedertafel. Conducted by Julius Siede. Melbourne Town Hall</td>
<td>First performance in Australia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To turn to performances of large-scale choral and instrumental compositions by Dvořák first heard in Melbourne in 1885 and 1886, these are set out in Table 1 and comprise the *Stabat mater*, op. 58 (originally op. 28), the ‘Grand Symphony in D’, op. 60 (originally op. 58), and the dramatic cantata *The Spectre’s Bride*, op. 69. Both sets of *Slavonic Dances* for orchestra (op. 46 and op. 72) followed. The first performances in Melbourne drew excited press response to the composer and his music. And it was upon this significant albeit slender repertoire which Dvořák's

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12 W. A. CARNE: op. cit., p. 242, citing Peake’s *Historical Souvenir*. Peake added: ‘Dependence had still to be placed upon the amateur element. Some of them were excellent players, but others belonged to the Ripieno class, who were scarcely safe, even under the cover of a full orchestra.’ Ibid., pp. 246–247.
13 *Australasian Critic*, 1 March 1891, p. 145.
reputation rested in this city during his life, although the original four-hand version of the *Slavonic Dances* (op. 46, 1878) had made Dvořák’s name familiar to Australian players of the pianoforte.\(^\text{14}\) It is noteworthy that these works – together with the *String Sextet* (op. 48, 1878) and the E flat *String Quartet* (op. 49, 1878–1879) – were precisely the compositions which had played a major role in establishing Dvořák’s reputation in England.\(^\text{15}\)

The first major concert performance in Melbourne of a large-scale work by Dvořák took place in 1885 when the Melbourne Philharmonic Society presented the Australian premiere of *Stabat mater*. This work was first performed in Prague (December 1880), followed by performances in Brno, Budapest and Mladá Boleslav. The *Musical Times* advertised the publication of scores of this work in February. In March of the same year a long review and analysis of Dvořák’s setting of the Latin hymn appeared in that same publication.\(^\text{16}\) Advertisements for the score followed in the April and May issues, and by August 1883 the full score, orchestral parts and vocal parts were advertised, all published by Novello, Ewer and Co.\(^\text{17}\) The Annual Report of the Melbourne Philharmonic Society for 1883 noted that the committee had received a generous offer from Nicholson and Co., the Melbourne music emporium, to present the Society with a work to be selected by the conductor and secretary of the society.\(^\text{18}\) *Stabat mater* was the chosen item.\(^\text{19}\) Just weeks before the first Australian performance in Melbourne, the German premiere of the work was given in Mannheim (12 February 1885); the Australian premiere preceded the earliest Viennese performance (19 April 1886).\(^\text{20}\)

The sense of anticipation preceding Melbourne’s first hearing of the setting was described by one commentator thus: ‘The first performance of a new work by a composer who has risen to fame is always a matter of interest to music lovers of this city.’ The reviewer continued: ‘Great curiosity about the production of Dvořák’s setting of the thirteenth century hymn, “Stabat Mater Dolorosa” has been excited, from accounts previously heard concerning the work, and last night the Town Hall was crowded by an expectant audience, amongst whom were His Excellency the Governor and suite.’\(^\text{21}\) The handbill advertising the performance stated that the work was ‘by the wonderful Bohemian Maestro and Genius’

\(^{14}\) Observed by the music critic for the *Daily Telegraph*, 26 October 1886, p. 5, following the Australian premiere of *The Spectre’s Bride*, who noted that ‘*[Dvořák’s] “Sclavish Dances” have [...] made his name familiar to pianoforte players, and his symphony in D, performed about three years ago in London, and recently in this City, has stamped him as an unusually versatile and characteristic musician of true genius.*’

\(^{15}\) CLAPHAM, John: *Dvořák’s Australian Success*, p. 5.

\(^{16}\) *MT* 24, February 1883, p. 100; *MT*, March 1883, pp. 153–156.

\(^{17}\) It is noted, however, that Dvořák’s *Stabat mater* was first published in 1881 by Simrock (Berlin).

\(^{18}\) Nicholson and Co. was a Melbourne-based music retailer. The firm maintained a close association with the Melbourne Philharmonic Society, sometimes donating services to the Society gratuitously (Melbourne Philharmonic Annual Reports, especially 1891). J. C. W. Nicholson became a Vice-President of the organisation (1892–1906/7). The gift of the performance materials for Dvořák’s *Stabat mater* in 1883 (noted in the Annual report of the Melbourne Philharmonic Society, 1894) was one of many made to the Society by Nicholson.

\(^{19}\) Information from the collection of the Melbourne Philharmonic Society, Guard Book, v. 1, 1853–1887, Australian Manuscripts Collection, SLV. Although many Annual Reports of the Society (including those for 1884–1885) are missing, the benefactor of the score and parts for *Stabat mater* is acknowledged in the programme of the repeat performance in 1892.

\(^{20}\) CLAPHAM, John: *Dvořák’s Australian Success*, p. 6.

\(^{21}\) *Argus*, 30 September 1885, p. 6.
Dvořák. *Table Talk* claimed this performance to be the event of the week, and the occasion was reported in the *Musical Times*. Amongst the reviews of Melbourne’s first hearing of the setting were those appearing in the *Age*, *Argus*, *Daily Telegraph* and *Australasian*. Two reviewers preceded their critiques with a biography of the composer, noting Dvořák’s humble beginnings, and his recent rise to fame. One discussed Dvořák’s nationalistic stance and his originality, stating:

‘Dvořák did not hate Wagner, but he hated Germans, say his best biographers. He may not have hated German music, but the chances are that owing to his patriotism – for he is a pure-born Bohemian – he did not live in its stream. Possessing within himself Heaven’s greatest of all gifts, genius, he took his own way, and has built out of the national songs of his native land – simplified, elaborated, or emotionalised as his moods inspire him – a tone school of his own that will leave its distinctive features on the music of the future as surely as Wagner’s has done.’

This must be among the earliest references in the Melbourne press to an argument that came to plague musical aesthetics: the dominance of German music in the establishment of the musical canon. But how could this claim be formed by an antipodean writer? It most probably reflects the influence of Joseph Bennett’s article ‘Anton Dvořák’, which appeared in the *Musical Times* in 1884 and includes the passage:

‘At all points along the line where Sclov [sic] and Teuton meet there is friction, but who can wonder if the Bohemians, in the very capital of their country, chafe under the supremacy of the rival race. Even Austrian Germans, with the politeness to which their northern confréres are strangers, cannot conciliate the offended Czechs. To be a good Czech is to be a good hater of the Germans. This explains much which would otherwise be obscure.’

And how did the Englishman Bennett form this opinion, a view that reverberated in the Australian press? Might it be based upon personal contact with the composer, who first visited England in March 1884, during which time he became acquainted with the Littleton brothers of Novello, Ewer and Co., his English publisher? This is almost certainly the case, since Bennett wrote: [Dvořák] ‘was almost persuaded to adopt the faith and practice of Wagnerism. There can be no question about this curious fact. I have it out of his own mouth’.

The press reviews of the first Australian performance, which begin with a description of Dvořák’s shaping of the text of into a structure of ten movements, have remarkable points of similarity. Dvořák’s treatment of the hymn is compared...
with Rossini’s setting (a work well known to Melbournians), and the greater liturgical appropriateness (at least, to Anglo-Australian ears) of Dvořák’s musical style is noted. The *Daily Telegraph* claimed:

[Dvořák’s] ‘treatment of the “Stabat Mater” cannot be in any way compared with Rossini’s. The latter, light, elegant, and full of charming melody, deals with the Catholic hymn from an Italian point of view. Dvorak approaches it touched with its nobleness. He is sometimes sombre, but always reverential and impassioned, and thus he regards from a loftier standpoint that which Rossini took in hand with an unacknowledged feeling of cynicism mingled with an unbelieving light heartedness. From whatever way it is regarded, Dvorak’s work must be regarded as majestic, while he shows that it is practicable within the old forms to create entirely new compositions.’

The reviewer from the *Argus* wrote:

‘Of the general characteristics of the composer’s style [...] we may trace many in the various numbers of which this “Stabat Mater” consists – notably the abundant flow of fresh and characteristic time, the remarkable facility in varying and developing motives, and in picturesque orchestration. This composer is one who writes sacred music in serious mood, and therefore we find that his fancy is restrained by the nature of the subject to simplicity, if not severity, of form. His utterances are direct, heartfelt, and fervent, reverent, spontaneous, and, in the musical sense, wholly unconventional.’

The *Australasian* (which instructed readers ‘on the very best authority’ that the composer’s name was pronounced ‘Vorash’) stated:

‘No doubt the fascinating – if, as some think, inappropriate – results of Rossini’s treatment of the hymn have so familiarised the average ear to the Rossini method, that the graver measure of Dvorak is, if not exactly disappointing, at least surprising. It has long been admitted, however, that, exquisite as the Rossinian “Stabat Mater” music may be, it is not in the severe sense sacred music, and it will be equally obvious to those who were present at the Philharmonic performance on Tuesday night, that Dvorak’s “Stabat Mater” has been composed in the reverent spirit believed to be necessary to comply with the assumed conditions of lyrico-devotional exercises. As part of a religious ceremonial, it would be in harmony with the circumstances of worship, and now that it has been introduced to the musical public of Australia by the society, it will probably find its way into the churches, if it has not already been performed there.’

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29 Rossini’s *Stabat mater* was a staple of the Melbourne Philharmonic Society’s repertoire. It had been performed on 11 July 1856 (‘the greater part’); 1 June 1858; 22 March 1864; 23 March 1869; 26 March 1869; 13 August 1870; 29 March 1872 (‘Inflammatus’); 11 April 1873 (vocal solos, duets and quartettes); 8 April 1887. Carne’s *Century of Harmony* passim.

30 *Daily Telegraph*, 30 September 1885, p. 5.

31 *Argus*, 30 September 1885, p. 6.

32 A report in the *MT* of a concert at the Royal Albert Hall when Dvořák conducted his *Stabat mater* (13 March 1884) included a similar comment: ‘It [*Stabat mater*] will secure a permanent place in the repertory of sacred music in England ...’, *MT* 24, April 1884, p. 203.
The performance of *Stabat mater* drew mostly praise for the soloists and chorus. The *Argus* reported that ‘the chorus mustered in great force and in nearly each number showed the finish attained by perfect drill’. The comments upon the orchestral playing, however, were mixed: ‘We believe that our orchestral players have found the practice of this new work somewhat difficult, and it is therefore to be recorded to their credit that the general result last night was acceptably smooth and well finished’, advised the *Argus*, whilst the *Daily Telegraph* stated: ‘The orchestra was overpoweringly loud at times, a mistake which must be rectified when the work is next performed.’

The writer from the *Australasian* used this occasion to express a faint hope that a permanent orchestra might be established in Melbourne.

On the same programme as the Australian premiere of Dvořák's *Stabat mater*, another newly composed liturgical work made its Australian debut. It is ironic that it was composed by Joseph Barnby (1838–1896), the English organist and choral conductor who had introduced Dvořák’s *Stabat mater* setting to the English public on 10 March 1883, a performance which then led to the first of Dvořák’s several invitations to visit England. The Melbourne critics found Barnby's new offering suffered in comparison with the composition of Dvořák, the work so recently championed by Barnby. The *Daily Telegraph* dismissed Barnby's composition with: ‘It was with something of a shock that a psalm of Joseph Barnby’s, “The Lord is King”, was heard […] A longer notice cannot be given to it.’ The *Argus* was also dismissive: ‘Barnby’s setting of the psalm “Dominus Regnavit” is an acceptable work from a worthy English composer. Coming as it did immediately after a composition exhibiting such original power as that of Dvorak, it suggested a return to conventionality. If it could have been judged by itself, or in company with works of similar magnitude, no comparison unfavourable to it could possibly have been made.’

In an imaginative piece of programming by the Melbourne Philharmonic Society, the settings of the *Stabat mater* text by Dvořák’s and Rossini were heard side by side at a concert given on 8 April 1887. The audience had a unique opportunity of hearing and comparing the distinctive treatments of the text by two very different composers, ‘the only occasion in the Society’s history that such an event occurred’. The opinion expressed in the *Daily Telegraph* was that:

‘It was a good idea on the part of the committee of management to afford the public an opportunity of comparing the styles of the two great composers – the melodious beauty and strange invention of Dvořák, and the lighter and more florid music of Rossini […] Dvořák’s [setting] touches every chord of human
feeling – fear, despair, tender hope, pleading, forgiveness, joy, love, devotion, determination, self-sacrifice, faith, and harmonises the union of belief and practice.⁴⁰

For this performance the Czech-born, Melbourne-based soprano Madame Boema (Gabriela Roubalová) sang the solo soprano role with ‘fine dramatic power and expression’,⁴¹ hers being the one voice which stood out ‘in conspicuous force, sweetness, and expression’ among the solo singers.⁴² This was Madame Boema’s first public performance in Melbourne of a work by Dvořák. Following the Melbourne success of *The Spectre’s Bride* in 1886, Boema was happy to claim association with her compatriot, but it is interesting that two years earlier, her disdain for Dvořák’s vocal writing was expressed in her correspondence with the Italian-trained František Pivoda, Boema’s former singing teacher in Prague.⁴³ In a letter dated 17 June 1884 Boema wrote that her sister had sent copies of Dvořák’s *Evening Songs* (op. 31), which she, Boema, found to be melodically impoverished.⁴⁴ Another letter, dated 14 September, was even more scathing about Dvořák’s melodic writing.⁴⁵

On 15 April 1892, the Melbourne Philharmonic again programmed Dvořák’s setting of *Stabat mater*. Reviews of the performance in the press reminded readers of the role of the London Musical Society in 1883 in bringing attention to the genius of the composer.⁴⁶ Three reviews again drew comparisons with Rossini’s more operatic setting of the text; preference for Dvořák’s treatment remained.⁴⁷

Melbourne’s premiere of Dvořák’s Symphony in D (no. 6) was foreshadowed three months earlier in the review of *Stabat mater* in the *Argus*:

“We believe that the Philharmonic Society will shortly perform a symphony composed by Dvorak. The introduction of his music into Melbourne has been of a kind to insure for its composer profound admiration and a sincere desire for further acquaintance.”⁴⁸

This symphony, which had its premiere in Prague on 25 March 1881, was first heard in England with moderate success during a concert at the Crystal Palace in April 1882,⁴⁹ and again in the following month. The *Musical Times* judged that the work ‘cannot fail to interest every musician’.⁵⁰ In June of that year the performance materials were advertised in the *Musical Times*.⁵¹ When Dvořák

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40 *Daily Telegraph*, 11 April 1887, p. 6.
41 *Age*, 9 April 1887, p. 10.
42 *Australasian*, 16 April 1887, p. 747.
43 During 1884, Madame Gabriella Boema (Gabriela Roubalová) was in London with her husband, Raffaele Steffani. During that time they were invited by Ladislav Zavrtal and his wife to meet Dvořák, but because of illness the Steffanis were unable to accept the invitation. Three letters written in London by Boema to Pivoda are kept at the National Museum, Czech Museum of Music, Bedřich Smetana Museum.
44 MBS 8336/13 – W 23/75.
45 MBS 8336/18 – W 23/80.
46 *Argus*, 16 April 1892, p. 9; *Australasian*, 23 April 1892, p. 787.
47 *Age*, 16 April 1892, p. 8; *Australasian*, 23 April 1892, p. 787; *Leader*, 23 April 1892, pp. 22–23.
48 *Argus*, 30 September 1885, p. 6.
49 ‘The Symphony in D is not a work of original genius, but it shows the experienced and gifted musician in every bar.’ *MT* 23, May 1882, p. 263.
50 *MT* 23, June 1882, p. 352, under ‘New Foreign Publications’ (for which Novello, Ewer & Co. were agents).
51 *MT* 23, June 1882, p. 326.
conducted the work at the Worcester festival in 1884, the Musical Times reported that the interpretation of the final ‘Allegro con brio’ produced an ‘electrical effect upon the audience’.\footnote{MT 25, October 1884, p. 584.}

The score and parts of Dvořák’s Symphony in D were presented to the Melbourne Philharmonic by its honorary organist, George Peake, who had been in Europe during 1884.\footnote{In 1889 George Peake became the conductor of the Melbourne Philharmonic Society.} The Argus viewed this gift as ‘an act which deserves public recognition’.\footnote{Argus, 3 December 1885, p. 8.} But would the orchestra assembled by the Melbourne Philharmonic Society cope with the technical demands of the work? In the Melbourne Town Hall on 1 December 1885 David Lee conducted the Melbourne Philharmonic Orchestra in the Australian premiere of the symphony before a large audience which included the vice-regal party. Dvořák’s Symphony in D opened the program. The reviewer from the Argus felt constrained to provide a lengthy description of the work, a detailed score study dealing with keys, harmony and modulations, time signatures, tempi and orchestration. Attention was drawn to the unfamiliar, exotic characteristics of the music coming from Middle Europe. These distinctive features the reviewer found difficult to explain and describe, as exemplified in his report of the third movement:

\begin{quote}
[it] ‘is a surprising contrast to that which precedes it. This is a scherzo-furioso, D minor in \(3\frac{\frac{1}{2}}{4}\) tempo. It is here that one of the characteristics of the composer’s style becomes obviously prominent. He comes from that part of Europe where the influence of Oriental music is most nearly felt by the Occidental. The strange rhythms and unusual groups of notes which we associate with Hungarian music are in this movement to be heard in rushing succession, but measured and regulated so as to impart an irresistible impetus to the well-marked divisions which make up the this great scherzo.’\footnote{Ibid.}
\end{quote}

The orchestra apparently coped with the demands of the work.\footnote{‘The performance by the orchestra was almost unexceptionally good.’ Ibid.} But a problem did occur, although it seems to have been managed without the audience realizing that anything was amiss. The principal oboist (Dr Rudall, a medical practitioner) failed to appear for the concert, and a last minute substitution was necessary. The Argus informed its readers about the matter, and concluded the review of the symphony by referring to the composer as ‘the foremost living composer we have been favoured [with] of late in Melbourne’.\footnote{Ibid.} The Australasian reviewer was equally enthusiastic in his appreciation of this work, stating:

‘Dvůrák’s Symphony is quite as suggestive of his remarkable power in compelling expression by quite original use of harmonic breadth as was his “Stabat Mater”, lately performed by this society. He discards conventional methods, and takes his own course irrespective, and even defiant, of tradition. The effect is, at first, startling, as all new departures in art invariably are, but it soon, in this case,
becomes engrossing, and even fascinating, and it is not too much to say that Dvořák’s admirers will readily grow into enthusiasts.58

The review which appeared in the Daily Telegraph (here, the composer was acknowledged as ‘a king in the realms of sound’) reported that, although the orchestra contained many good instrumentalists, more strings would have improved the effect.59 Each movement of the Symphony was greeted with vigorous applause, the same response given by audiences at English performances, as reported in the Musical Times.60 Yet this work did not become part of the standard repertoire of the Phiharmonic Society, which waited almost twenty years before a second performance was attempted.

A different appraisal of the quality of the orchestral playing, and a fascinating opinion offering a contrary view both to the quality of the work and to Melbourne’s highly favourable reception of Dvořák, was provided by Raffaele Steffani, husband of Madame Boema, in private correspondence. Within days of hearing the performance he wrote to František Pivoda from Melbourne (5 December 1885):

‘A few days ago Dvorak’s Symphony in D was performed and although the performance was far from perfect the audience showed signs of approval. The work is certainly respectable, but in my opinion, I would say that rather than being an expression of art, it seems to me a mechanical effort and a mathematical exhibition. If I must tell the truth, I tend to think that with this new kind of acrobatic music it would be better to return to the old style to restore our poor ears so barbarously maltreated by these dissonances.’61

The third major Dvořák work heard in Melbourne was the dramatic cantata of 1884, Svatební košile (The Spectre’s Bride), commissioned by the Birmingham Festival. This, however, was given its world premiere in Pilsen on 28 March 1885 (conducted by Dvořák), followed by at least five more performances in Bohemia and Moravia during that year. In June, the Musical Times announced a series of oratorio concerts for 1885–1886, with two of the six works being by Dvořák: The Spectre’s Bride and Stabat mater.62 On 27 August 1885, The Spectre’s Bride received its English premiere at the Birmingham Festival conducted by the composer. September 1885 witnessed two further performances, in Birmingham and Manchester. In November 1885 the score and parts of The Spectre’s Bride were advertised in the Musical Times, and in that same month the work crossed the Atlantic and was heard in Providence, Rhode Island, and the following month in Milwaukee. Then, in 1886, came a spate of performances in the British Isles, with at least five performances in February in Edinburgh, London and Glasgow.

58 Australasian, 5 December 1885, pp. 1082–1083.
59 Daily Telegraph, 2 December 1885, p. 6.
60 MT 25, October 1884, p. 584.
61 ‘Pochi giorni sono fu eseguita la Sinfonia di Dvorak in D e benchè la sua esecuzione lasciasse alquanto a desiderare, tuttavia il pubblico mostrò segni di approvazione: – Il lavoro è certamente rispettabile, ma a mio parere direi che invece di essere espressione dell’arte, mi sembra uno sforzo di meccanica ed una mostra di matematica. Se debbo dire la verità, sono inclinato a credere che con questo nuovo genere di musica acrobatica faremmo più presto a ritornare all’antico per ristorare le nostre povere orecchie così barbaramente maltrattate dalle moderne dissonanze.’ MBS i. č. 8345g. Translation kindly provided by David Fairservice.
62 MT 26, June 1885, p. 313.
By the middle of that year *The Spectre’s Bride* had been heard in Brooklyn, Philadelphia and Chicago. On 25 October 1886 it was performed in Melbourne.

This decision of the Melbourne Liedertafel Society to give the Australian premiere of *The Spectre’s Bride* was probably due to enthusiasm aroused in Melbourne by previous performances of Dvořák’s music, together with publicity and the string of reports appearing in the *Musical Times* – articles which gave descriptions of the work, a report of the premiere at the Birmingham festival, and an abundance of reviews. In addition in January 1886 an unnamed writer penned the first of two articles concerning musical taste in the Melbourne journal, *Imperial Review*. In the first article the author established an hierarchy of composers in which: ‘Dvořák has floated to the position of the foremost living and working composer.’ The writer categorised Dvořák as ‘an Hungarian composer’.

A report of 1886 in the Minute Book of the Melbourne Liedertafel noted: ‘The Hon: Treasurer [of the Society] John Law formally presented to the Committee the orchestral and vocal parts of Herr Antonin Dvořák’s Dramatic Cantata “The Spectre’s Bride”, and a cordial vote of thanks was presented to the donor for his handsome gift [...] It was decided [...] that “The Spectre’s Bride” should be performed on the occasion of the following Ladies’ Concert.’ On 26 August 1886 the Minutes noted that the musical committee of the Liedertafel Society recommended ‘the engagement for the forthcoming concert of Madame Boema for a fee of twenty five guineas.’ Such was the excitement caused by the event among Melbourne’s female choristers, that the Melbourne Liedertafel resolved ‘that no fresh names should be added to the list of Sopranos and Altos’.

In preparation for the Melbourne premiere, Nicholson and Co. advertised the sale of scores in the *Argus* on 11 September. On 18 September 1886, an advertisement appeared in the *Argus* calling for an orchestral rehearsal at the Town Hall: ‘Every member is expected to attend’. Finally, on Monday 25 October 1886 the Australian premiere of *The Spectre’s Bride* was given to great acclaim in the Melbourne Town Hall. Rapturous reports appeared in the press on both the performance and the composition: ‘One of these days Dvorak will write an opera of the grand sort which will set the world wondering’, prophesied one writer (unaware of existing works). The orchestration, harmony, melodic invention and dramatic intensity of *The Spectre’s Bride* were remarked upon. Most reviewers

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63 Much of this chronology is based upon dates provided by Clapham in ‘Dvořák’s Australian Success’ p. 8, together with information kindly provided by Jan Smaczny.
64 *MT* 26, August 1885, pp. 475–476.
65 *MT* 26, September 1885, pp. 544–555.
66 *MT* vols 27 and 28, where many reports of performances of *The Spectre’s Bride* appear. Advertisements for the performance materials are accompanied by ecstatic extracts from English press reviews. See, for example, *MT* 27, September 1886, p. 540.
67 *Imperial Review* [Melbourne] 17, January 1886, pp. 6–8; *Imperial Review* [Melbourne] 17, October 1886, pp. 29–30. I thank Jennifer Royle for drawing my attention to this article.
68 Minute Book of the Melbourne Liedertafel, 20 July 1886.
69 Minute Book of the Melbourne Liedertafel, 6 September 1886.
70 The advertisement in the *Argus*, 11 September 1886, p. 16 reads: ‘THE SPECTRE’S BRIDE/ This Admirable Work./ Performed with such great success/ At the late/ BIRMINGHAM FESTIVAL/ Will shortly be/ PRODUCED/ By the/ MELBOURNE LIEDERTAFEL/ Copies of the work can now be had at/ / NICHOLSON’S AND CO.’S/ Collins Street.
71 *Argus*, 18 September 1886, p. 16.
72 *Australasian*, 30 October 1886, p. 843.
provided a synopsis of the Gothic tale upon which the text of the cantata is based; Dvořák’s choice of subject tapped a rich and receptive vein in audiences of the late-Victorian era. Comparisons were made with aspects of Wagner’s Der fliegende Holländer, with Weber’s Der Freischütz and with Raff’s ‘Lenore’ Symphony. The solo parts were sung by Madame Boema (the Maiden), Mr Robert Kennedy (the Spectre) and F. H. Morton (Narrator); Julius Siede conducted. The reviewer from the Daily Telegraph found the performance to be good: ‘The chorus and orchestra were wonderfully perfect, considering the difficult nature of the work.’ This reviewer, however, was not alone in finding an unnecessary loudness in the singers and instrumentalists; his colleague from the Age was troubled by a lack of dynamics from the choir.

Such was the success of the concert that it was announced that the work would be given once more on the following Saturday evening, again at the Melbourne Town Hall. The repeat performance, however, did not live up to expectations. The size of the audience was only moderate, attributed to the fact that the performance was given on the evening of the Melbourne Derby, which preceded the Melbourne Cup, a horserace of immense social importance to the city. But the worthiness of the event led one reviewer to publish this opinion:

“The Liedertafel will receive the gracious thanks of a wide circle of country residents for whom the present high standard of music in the metropolis is, from the nature of the case, unattainable. To listen even once a year to such an orchestra as the society provided on Saturday is a valuable musical lesson in itself; to follow the various harmonious combinations of the quartet parts of the great combined chorus of the Liedertafel and the female auxiliary voices, is an example for local provincial choral societies from which they will derive the highest benefit; and to assimilate their taste and judgement to the noble writings of the foremost living composer, Antonín Dvořák, as developed in the “Spectre’s Bride”, is to lay the foundation for a pure and high school of national musical art.”

But whilst the reviewer for the Argus agreed that the singing of the vocal soloists left nothing to be desired, and remarked upon improvement in the choral work, the Age noted that the orchestra exhibited all the defects heard in the previous performance. He commented further that the duet for soprano and tenor, ‘Fair is

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73 The performance was given in the English translation made by Rev. J. Troutbeck.
74 Julius Siede was born in Dresden (1825), and there became a student of the celebrated flautist Anton Fürstenau. He arrived in Australia in 1856, and in 1879 became the conductor of the Melbourne Liedertafel.
75 Daily Telegraph, 26 October 1886, p. 5.
76 Age, 26 October 1886, p. 6.
77 “The Committee has on several occasions been urged to give a repetition in public of one of the Society’s concerts, and so much pressure was brought to bear on the Officers of the Society after the performance of “The Spectre’s Bride” that they decided to comply with the generally expressed wish, and, in the hope of being largely recouped for the outlay, they repeated the concert on Saturday evening, 30th Oct. (Derby night). The attendance on the occasion was altogether unworthy of the performance, and it is scarcely necessary to report that the funds of the Society were not augmented by the experiment.’ Melbourne Liedertafel: Nineteenth Annual Report, 1886–1887. Royal Victorian Liedertafel Collection.
78 Daily Telegraph, 1 November 1886, p. 7.
79 Argus, 1 November 1886, p. 5.
the Night’ (No. 10), was ‘unintelligible during the first few bars on account of the uncertainty of the wind instruments’. A glance at the opening bars of this movement reveals a woodwind accompaniment to a solo tenor, whose part is marked mezza voce. The tempo given is ‘Allegro moderato’, the opening bars are marked pianissimo and enharmonic changes abound. These elements must have represented a combination of treacherous snares for the amateur members of the woodwind section of the orchestra assembled for the occasion. The set of performance materials for The Spectre’s Bride used for this performance survives. It comprises a conductor’s score (published by Novello, with English, German, Czech texts), short scores, vocal parts, and a set of printed orchestral parts, supplemented by four manuscript parts. Several markings appear throughout all parts, principally notes on fingerings, and corrections to the notation in the manuscript copies. Of particular interest is the part for ‘Fagotti’ which still contains inserts that are compilations of certain passages for the second oboe, and transpositions of solos for the cor anglais. Moreover, the single part for the two oboes and cor anglais has the transposed cor anglais part pencilled onto the second oboe line (No. 1, opening introduction). These amendments suggest that no player of the cor anglais was available for at least two of the three performances given by the Liedertafel Society, and that there was a dearth of oboists in Melbourne capable of playing certain of Dvořák’s notorious passages for the second oboe.

With the 1886 performances of The Spectre’s Bride, Dvořák’s large-scale music reached a peak in Melbourne. Items from the first set of Slavonic Dances were performed during concerts given by a professional orchestra (established under the directorship of the English visiting conductor Frederick H. Cowen for Melbourne’s Centennial International Exhibition of 1888–1889), and the second set of Slavonic Dances became core repertoire of the professional Victorian Orchestra during its brief life, but these notwithstanding, the great momentum generated by Dvořák’s music in the mid-1880s was not maintained in Melbourne. This is demonstrated in Table 2, which traces performances of the Stabat mater, Symphony in D, The Spectre’s Bride and both sets of Slavonic Dances (performed on several occasions during the 1890s, usually conducted by the Orchestra’s director, Hamilton Clarke) in the years following the Great Centennial Exhibition.

80 Age, 1 November 1886, p. 4.
81 Royal Victorian Liedertafel Collection, Box 20.
82 The manuscript parts for 1st violin, 2nd violin, and viola (x 2) were prepared in London. Each bears the inscription ‘London: Joseph Williams, 24 Berners Street W.’.
83 No. 1, opening orchestral introduction; No. 2, at letter B; No. 3, at letter F.
84 The Melbourne Liedertafel Society re-performed The Spectre’s Bride on 23 February 1891. Reviews appeared in the Age, 24 February 1891, p. 6; Argus, 24 February 1891, p. 6; Australasian, 24 February 1891, p. 401; Table Talk, 27 February 1891, p. 13.
86 See ‘News Cuttings’ of the Victorian Orchestra, Royal Victorian Liedertafel Collection, Box 2 (up to the 159th Concert) and RADIC, Thérese: The Victorian Orchestra 1889–1891: In the Wake of the Centennial Exhibition Orchestra, in: Australasian Music Research 1, 1997, pp. 54–101.
### Table 2

**Performances of Dvořák’s music in Melbourne: 1889–1902**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Performance Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. 8. 1889</td>
<td>‘Slavische Tänze’, four extracts</td>
<td>Victorian Orchestra. Melbourne Town Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(C, e, Ab, F) from op. 46</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>24. 8. 1889</td>
<td>‘Slavische Tänze’ [op. 72]</td>
<td>Victorian Orchestra. Exhibition Concert Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. 10. 1889</td>
<td><em>Slavonic Dances</em>, op. 46</td>
<td>Victorian Orchestra. Ballarat Academy of Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. 10. 1889</td>
<td><em>Slavonic Dances</em>, op. 46</td>
<td>Victorian Orchestra. Hibernian Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. 11. 1889</td>
<td><em>Slavonic Dances</em>, op. 72</td>
<td>Victorian Orchestra. Melbourne Town Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[December 1889]</td>
<td><em>Slavonic Dances</em>, op. 46 (performed twice)</td>
<td>Victorian Orchestra. Melbourne Cricket Ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. 3. 1890</td>
<td><em>Slavonic Dances</em>, four extracts</td>
<td>Victorian Orchestra. Melbourne Town Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(C, e, Ab, F) from op. 46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. 5. 1890</td>
<td><em>Slavonic Dances</em>, op. 72</td>
<td>Victorian Orchestra. Melbourne Town Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. 6. 1890</td>
<td><em>Slavonic Dances</em>, op. 46</td>
<td>Victorian Orchestra. Melbourne Town Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. 10. 1890</td>
<td><em>Slavonic Dances</em>, op. 72</td>
<td>Victorian Orchestra. Melbourne Town Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. 10. 1890</td>
<td><em>Slavonic Dances</em>, op. 46</td>
<td>Victorian Orchestra. Melbourne Town Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 2. 1891</td>
<td><em>Slavonic Dances</em>, op. 46</td>
<td>Victorian Orchestra. Melbourne Town Hall. Given the presence of captain and officers of the Austrian warship ‘Saida’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. 2. 1891</td>
<td><em>The Spectre’s Bride</em>, op. 69</td>
<td>Melbourne Liedertafel. Melbourne Town Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. 5. 1891</td>
<td><em>Slavonic Dances</em>, op. 72 (two movements)</td>
<td>Victorian Orchestra. Melbourne Town Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. 6. 1891</td>
<td><em>Slavonic Dances</em>, op. 46 (two movements)</td>
<td>Victorian Orchestra. Melbourne Town Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. 4. 1892</td>
<td><em>Stabat mater</em></td>
<td>Melbourne Philharmonic Society. Melbourne Town Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. 11. 1900</td>
<td><em>Stabat mater</em></td>
<td>Melbourne Philharmonic Society. Melbourne Town Hall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Music critics always greeted performances of the *Slavonic Dances* with fond affection. Of the performance of the second set of dances (op. 72) by the Victorian Orchestra in May 1891, one reviewer wrote:

‘Dvorak’s “Sclavonic Dances” [...] may be heard a great many times without any fear of its becoming wearisome. There is something strangely fascinating about these dances, whether it be in the quaintness of the semi-melancholy Sclavonian melodies or the continual changes of measure. There is endless variety and never-failing charm, to which the more than ordinary skilful orchestration largely contributes.’87

At a Musical Evening arranged by the Melbourne Philharmonic Society and held at the Athenaeum Club in 1891, Dvořák’s *Piano Quartet in D* (op. 23) was heard.88 In that same year the Melbourne Liedertafel again performed *The Spectre’s Bride*.89

Whilst reviewers commented once more on the dramatic power and remarkable orchestration of the work, problems of balance were again present. The solo singers were especially disadvantaged, ‘having to contend against an orchestra that played the pianissimo passages forte, and caused the voices to sound as sparrows in a thunder storm’.89 The notice in the *Australasian Critic* was especially scathing about the problems encountered in this performance:

‘[the conductor] had his orchestra [the Victorian Orchestra] under no sort of control, the performance consequently degenerating into a competition between singers and band as to which could overpower the other. It is hardly necessary to add that the band distanced all rivals.’90

Even so, following the dissolution of the Victorian Orchestra in 1891, Melbourne and its great choral societies again lacked any possibility of doing justice to Dvořák’s large-scale compositions.91 The Philharmonic Society’s prospectus for 1892 advertised a performance of the *Requiem* (op. 89), a work composed for the Birmingham Festival in the previous year. But 1892 was not a happy year for the Philharmonic Society and Dvořák’s *Requiem* was not heard in Melbourne for years to come.92

When, in 1902, the *D Major Symphony* was next programmed by the Philharmonic Society, the *Argus* reported that this ‘superb tone-drama in four acts’ could not be done full justice by the undersized orchestra assembled for the occasion.93 A less critical report in *Table Talk*, however, noted this composition as

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87 *Australasian*, 16 May 1891, p. 935.
88 *Age*, 1 October 1891, p. 6.
89 *Argus*, 24 February 1891, p. 6. The *Australasian*, 28 February 1891, p. 401; *Age*, 24 February 1891, p. 6 and *Table Talk*, 27 February 1891, p. 13 made similar complaints.
90 *Australasian Critic*, 1 March 1891, p. 146. The *Australasian*, 28 February 1891, p. 401 reported: ‘On this occasion the solo voices were overwhelmed by the orchestra which seemed of the opinion that such directions as pianissimo &c. were scarcely worth taking notice of.’
91 A report appearing in the *Magazine of Music*, March 1892 stated that because of the lack of work, many of the best [orchestral] musicians had recently left Melbourne.
92 Beginning in 1891, Melbourne experienced an economic depression, which led to diminished membership of the Society with harsh financial consequences. With the demise of the Victorian Orchestra, the Philharmonic Society was obliged to re-establish its amateur instrumental ensemble.
93 *Argus*, 9 September 1902, p. 7.
'the piece de resistance' of the program: ‘a beautiful work, which the orchestra may be said to have done very fair justice to, when it is considered that it is composed of amateurs with only a few professionals leading’.94

Notwithstanding repeat performances of the Stabat mater, Symphony in D and The Spectre’s Bride given in the 1890s and beyond, it was many years before Dvořák’s remaining symphonies, concertos, and works for stage came to be heard by Melbourne’s audiences. Perhaps this was because the concerts of the 1888 Exhibition introduced the music lovers of Melbourne to an extensive new repertoire, and with the expansion of musical horizons the music of Dvořák could not be regarded as being so unique as in former times. Besides, in 1891 a Conservatorium of Music was established within the University of Melbourne. New influences on the city’s musical life came from the taste of the founding Ormond Professor of Music, G. W. L. Marshall-Hall, an orchestral conductor of some distinction. His syllabus included ‘German Translation’ and ‘History and Aesthetics’, a subject which concentrated on the theories of Wagner.95 The repertoire conducted by Marshall-Hall for the Melbourne Liedertafel (and with his own orchestra) tended to be heavily biased towards Wagner and Brahms. His orchestral and choral programs were drawn from composers whose works were to become standard in Melbourne for more than a generation, with music of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Wagner and Weber prevailing.96 The dominance of German music became even more entrenched with Marshall-Hall’s successor, Franklin Sievright Peterson, who was appointed to the Ormond Professorship in 1901.97 An undated letter of complaint drafted by Peterson to Madame Boema – then a member of the Conservatorium staff – reveals the extent of Peterson’s cultivation of German musical taste among staff and students, and it demonstrates Boema’s unwillingness to comply with the trend. Peterson wrote: ‘[…] I look in vain in the list of works [to be presented at the annual concert] for evidence of sufficient interest […] in the greatest masters – Bach, Haydn, Schumann, Schubert, Brahms, Franz.’98 By 1906 Madame Boema’s teaching at the Conservatorium had ceased.

94 Table Talk, 11 September 1902, p. 19.
95 TREGEAR, Peter: The Conservatorium of Music, The University of Melbourne, Centre for Studies in Australian Music, Parkville 1997, p. 20. An article, Melbourne Musical Degrees, which appeared in the Australasian Critic, 1 March 1891, pp. 144–145, was highly critical of Marshall-Hall’s plan to include German as a compulsory subject in the music degree. It was noted, however, that ‘Professor Hall does perfectly right in congratulating himself upon his knowledge of that language. It is without doubt a most useful acquirement for any musician, partly, as the professor says, because the best extant critical works on music [are] in that tongue – works of which no adequate English translations exist; partly, as he argues with less force, because the best songs ever written are set to German words, and the delicate art with which the music follows each inflection of the sense is lost upon all but German scholars.’ I thank Johanna Selleck for bringing this article to my attention.
96 For example, an orchestral program conducted by Marshall-Hall in 1892 comprised Beethoven’s Symphony No. 5; the soprano scena from Weber’s Der Freischütz; the Prelude to Wagner’s Lohengrin, as well as the Introduction to Act III; a song by Schubert and the ‘Unfinished’ Symphony. Reported in Magazine of Music, March 1892. Marshall-Hall Collection, Accession Box 64–63, 3/5. This is held at the Grainger Museum, University of Melbourne. On the other hand, according to a report of Archibald A. Lee who visited Melbourne in the first decade of the twentieth century, Marshall-Hall also introduced Melbourne audiences to works of ‘Berlioz and Liszt, to the Russians, to [Richard] Strauss, Caesar Franck and Debussy’. Cited by Thérese RADIC in GW. L. Marshall-Hall: A Biography & Catalogue, The Marshall-Hall Trust, Melbourne 2002, p. 10.
97 Before taking a degree at Oxford, Scottish-born Peterson trained as a pianist and organist in Edinburgh and Dresden.
Despite the pitfalls experienced in the performance of Dvořák’s works in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Melbourne, a taste for his music had been established. Scores and performance materials of at least three major works – *Stabat mater*, Symphony in D and *The Spectre’s Bride* – were held in the libraries of two important choral societies of the city. Aside from shortcomings in the performances of these works, the reviewers of the press remained captivated by Dvořák’s music. Melbourne’s response to a handful of works during the late nineteenth century and beyond demonstrates that the music lovers of the city remained in love with Dvořák.99

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**Melbourne okouzleno Dvořákem**

1885–1886 (a později)

Janice B. Stockigt

Autorka ve studii mapuje první provedení Dvořákových skladeb v Melbourne v letech 1885–1886 a zasazuje je do dobového kontextu tamního koncertního provozu.

Před Stoletou mezinárodní výstavou v Melbourne v roce 1888 zabezpečovaly koncertní život města tři instituce: Melbourne Philharmonic Society, Metropolitan Liedertafel a Melbourne Liedertafel. V běžné praxi byly rozšířovány o poloprofesionální hráče, což přispívalo k rozkolísané kvalitě jejich produkce. Pro utváření repertoáru měl zásadní vliv však Anglie, zprostředkovávaná zejména britským periodikem *Musical Times*. Prvními Dvořákovými skladbami, které pronikly do australské metropole, tak byly jeho „anglické“ kompozice *Stabat Mater* (29. 9. 1885), Symfonie č. 6 D dur (1. 12. 1885) a kantáta *Svatební košile* (25. a 30. 10. 1886). Jejich uvedení byla v denním tisku věnována značná pozornost; i přes četná kritická vyjádření k úrovni nastudování těchto skladeb byl Dvořák vynášen jako „nejpřednější“ ze soudobých skladatelů. Svérázné receptivní postoje byly v případě *Stabat Mater* určovány komparací se stejnojmennou Rossiniho kompozicí; symfonie však recenzenti jako „okci-
dentální“, „maďarskou“ nebo dokonce „exotickou hudbu ze střední Evropy“. Živoucí estetiku pozdní viktoriánské éry je možno vystopovat ve srovnávání Svatebních košil s Wagnerovým Bludným Holanđanem, Weberovým Čarostřelcem a Raffovou symfonii Lenora.

V průběhu Stoleté mezinárodní výstavy (1888–1889) a krátké existence prvního stálého profesionálního orchestru v Melbourne (Viktoriánský orchestr, 1889–1891) se prosadily ještě Slovanské tance. S rozšiřováním repertoáru však Dvořák postupně ztratil svou dosavadní výsadní pozici a koncertnímu životu začaly dominovat kompozice rakouské a německé.

Studie se několikrát zmíní o sopranistce Gabriele Roubalové, Pivodově žačce usazené v Melbourne a známé zde jako „Madame Boema“, a to v souvislosti s její účastí na provedení Stabat Mater a Svatebních košil, pedagogickým působením na tamní konzervatoři i jejími názory na Dvořákovu hudbu zachycenými v korespondenci s Pivodou.