

DOLCI BY THE BAY, CONCERT NO. 8

Ted Rust, oboe — Viva Knight, piano

April 12, 2013

Five Songs, op. 107 Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

#4. Catkins — #5. Girl's Song

Johannes Brahms was one of the first people outside Czechoslovakia to recognize Antonin Dvorák's genius, and helped establish him as a major composer.

These songs are from a set of five that Brahms wrote in 1886. Catkins (pussywillows) are the flower of a birch or willow tree, which the song calls spring's first greeting. The second song is set in a spinning-room, in the voice of a girl who weeps because she has no lover.

Sonatina, op. 100 Antonin Dvorák (1841-1904)

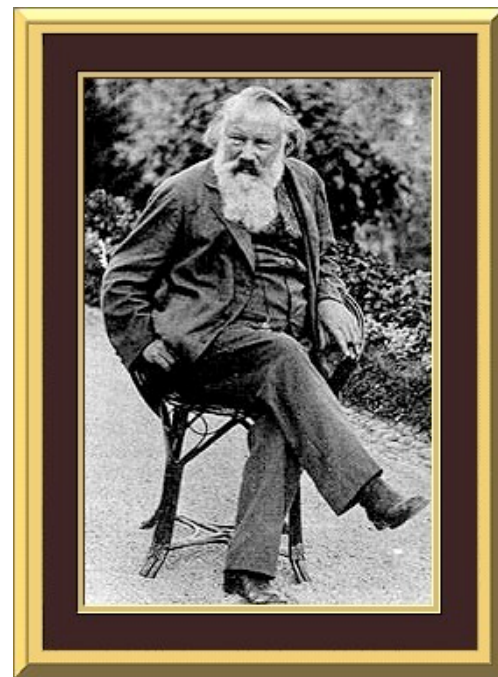
Allegro risoluto

Larghetto

Scherzo

Finale: Allegro

Dvorák wrote this Sonatina in 1893 for his violinist son and pianist daughter. He was then living in New York City for three years to serve as director of the National Conservatory and to study American folk music with a goal of helping to create an American style of classical music. Sorely homesick, he spent his summers in the Czech-speaking village of Spillville, Iowa where he could hear and use his native language. While in America he composed the symphony "From the New World," the "American" string quartet and several other works, including this Sonatina. It uses popular song ("My Darling Clementine"), Native American chant, African-American song, carousel music and a rollicking polka in much the same way he probably spoke English: intelligibly with but a strong Czech accent. His American Indian chant may have the flavor of a Gypsy song, but why not? It's not nearly so outrageous as Mel Brooks' Yiddish-speaking Indians in "Blazing Saddles."



Next Week — Gardens, Bugs and Snakes