

Antonín Dvorák's arrival in the United States in the autumn of 1892 was nearly coincident with the fourth centennial of Columbus' landing in the New World, and Dvorák's sponsor asked him to compose a new choral work to be performed at the celebrations. A poem by Joseph Rodman Drake was to be the text for this new work, but Dvorák did not receive the completed text in time (although he eventually did set it as *The American Flag*, Op. 102). So, during the summer of 1892, he instead composed the *Te Deum* for soprano and bass vocal soloists, chorus, and orchestra, Op. 103. The work represents something of Dvorák's musical thinking immediately prior to the important American phase of his career.

Dvorák shapes the *Te Deum* text into four sections of music that more or less correspond with four-movement symphonic form. Midway through the opening *Allegro moderato maestoso* movement, the soprano soloist comes out of the woodwork to help out with the "Sanctus Dominus Deus" text; the tranquil lyricism of her melody forms a perfect contrast to the stately choral music and vigorous orchestral sixteenth notes of the rest of the movement.

The slow movement, *Lento maestoso*, begins in E flat major with an enthusiastic bass solo. By the end of the *Lento* Dvorák has moved to G flat major, in preparation for the B minor key of the following scherzo-like "movement" (with the text "Aeterna fac cum Sanctis tuis").

The finale is an expansive and flexible thing—tempo and key develop freely, beginning *Lento* and B major and finishing in G major with exactly the same tempo as the opening section of the *Te Deum*. The outline of the solo soprano melody that opens this section is something that, by all rights, should not work, but which, through Dvorák's magical pen, does, and how! At the end of the work, as both key and tempo recall the *Te Deum*'s opening, the jubilant sixteenth note motive from that opening is called out of retirement as well, so that a happy conclusion may be drawn from a cyclical detail.

Latin and English text

Latin text	Translation from the Book of Common Prayer
Te Deum laudamus:	We praise thee, O God :
te Dominum confitemur.	we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.
Te aeternum Patrem	All the earth doth worship thee :
omnis terra veneratur.	the Father everlasting.
Tibi omnes Angeli;	To thee all Angels cry aloud :
tibi caeli et universae Potestates;	the Heavens, and all the Powers therein.
Tibi Cherubim et Seraphim	To thee Cherubim and Seraphim :
incessabili voce proclamant:	continually do cry,
Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,	Holy, Holy, Holy :
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.	Lord God of the Sabbath
Pleni sunt caeli et terra	Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty :

maiestatis gloriae tuae.
Te gloriosus Apostolorum chorus,
Te Prophetarum laudabilis numerus,
Te Martyrum candidatus laudat exercitus.
Te per orbem terrarum
sancta confitetur Ecclesia,
Patrem immensae maiestatis:
Venerandum tuum verum et unicum Filium;
Sanctum quoque Paraclitum Spiritum.
Tu Rex gloriae, Christe.
Tu Patris sempiternus es Filius.
Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem,
non horruisti Virginis uterum.
Tu, devicto mortis aculeo,
aperuisti credentibus regna caelorum.
Tu ad dexteram Dei sedes, in gloria Patris.
Iudex crederis esse venturus.
Te ergo quaesumus, tuis famulis subveni:
quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.
Aeterna fac cum sanctis tuis in gloria numerari.

[added later, mainly from Psalm verses:]
Salvum fac populum tuum,
Domine, et benedic hereditati tuae.
Et rege eos, et extolle illos usque in aeternum.
Per singulos dies benedicimus te;
Et laudamus Nomen tuum in saeculum, et in
saeculum saeculi.
Dignare, Domine, die isto sine peccato nos
custodire.
Miserere nostri Domine, miserere nostri.
Fiat misericordia tua,
Domine, super nos, quemadmodum speravimus
in te.
In te, Domine, speravi:
non confundar in aeternum.

of thy glory.
The glorious company of the Apostles : praise thee.
The goodly fellowship of the Prophets : praise thee.
The noble army of Martyrs : praise thee.
The holy Church throughout all the world :
doth acknowledge thee;
The Father : of an infinite Majesty;
Thine honourable, true : and only Son;
Also the Holy Ghost : the Comforter.
Thou art the King of Glory : O Christ.
Thou art the everlasting Son : of the Father.
When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man :
thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.
When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of
death :
thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all
believers.
Thou sittest at the right hand of God : in the
glory of the Father.
We believe that thou shalt come : to be our
Judge.
We therefore pray thee, help thy servants :
whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious
blood.
Make them to be numbered with thy Saints : in
glory everlasting.

[added later, mainly from Psalm verses:]
O Lord, save thy people :
and bless thine heritage.
Govern them : and lift them up for ever.
Day by day : we magnify thee;
And we worship thy Name : ever world without
end.
Vouchsafe, O Lord : to keep us this day without
sin.
O Lord, have mercy upon us : have mercy upon
us.
O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us :
as our trust is in thee.
O Lord, in thee have I trusted :
let me never be confounded.

