

Antonín Dvořák, Silent Woods (*Klid*) for Cello and Orchestra Op. 68 No. 5 Submitted by Jim Waddelow

Silent Woods is a repurposed work from a cycle for piano for four hands that is titled *From the Bohemian Forest*. Composed in 1883, each of the 6 movements depicts a different part of the composer's beloved Bohemia. After accepting an 1892 appointment as the Director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York City, Dvořák embarked on a thirty-nine city European concert tour with violinist Ferdinand Lachner and cellist Hanus Wihan. In order for Wihan (two whom the B-minor cello concerto would later be dedicated) to have a featured solo, Dvořák rescored the fifth part of the piano cycle for cello and piano over the course of two days in late December of 1891. The original Dvořák title was the *Die Ruhe* from the Czech word *Klid* (The Silence). Wihan, with the composer at the piano first performed the new version in Prague in March of 1892. After the work became instantly popular, the following year Dvořák scored it for cello and orchestra. Dvořák's publisher altered the title to the present day title *Waldesruhe* (Silent Woods). As the evocative title suggests, a reduced orchestration of flute, two clarinets, two bassoons, a horn and strings accompany the solo cello. A three-part form, the opening marking of *Lento e molto cantabile* immediately establishes the lyrical and emotional D-flat major melody. Much of the soloist's parts lie in the quieter middle register of the cello, and Dvořák chooses his moments in the powerful treble register of the instrument with care. A short, contrasting middle section marked *Un pochettino più mosso*, shifts to a minor tonality and pushes tempo and intensity. After several exchanges between the soloist and woodwinds, the orchestra builds to a high point that dissipates almost immediately, setting the return to the meditative opening theme. The soloist and orchestra alike quietly descend from the singing upper registers to end the piece on a long D-flat accompanied by whispering chords.

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