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## Illinois State University Symphony Orchestra, February 27, 2022

Glenn Block Music Director

Maurizio Colasanti Guest Conductor

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ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts  
School of Music

Illinois State University Symphony Orchestra  
Glenn Block, Music Director

*Presents*

# MAURIZIO COLASANTI

**GUEST CONDUCTOR (ITALY)**

MUSIC BY DVOŘÁK, MARQUEZ



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2022

3:00 PM

CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS CONCERT HALL

THIS IS THE ONE HUNDRED AND TENTH PROGRAM OF THE 2021-2022 SEASON.



WONSOOK KIM  
COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS  
*Illinois State University*

FineArts@IllinoisState.edu

## Program

Please silence all electronic devices for the duration of the concert. Thank you.

Symphony No. 9 "From the New World", Op. 95 (1893)

Antonín Dvořák  
(1841-1904)

- I. Adagio, Allegro molto
- II. Largo
- III. Scherzo. Molto Vivace
- IV. Allegro con fuoco

Danzón No. 2 (1994)

Arturo Márquez  
(born 1950)

"The residency of Maestro Maurizio Colasanti is sponsored, in part, by a Sage Grant from the Provost's office."

### ASSISTED LISTENING DEVICES

Thank you for joining us for tonight's performance. We hope that you will enjoy the concert, and that you join us again for future performances here at the ISU School of Music. Please visit <https://finearts.illinoisstate.edu/music> for more information. Thank you for your support!

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## Program Notes

### Symphony No. 9 in E Minor, Op. 95 “From the New World”

Dvořák might never have come to the new world—or composed a symphony by the same name—had it not been for the tenacity of a dedicated, indefatigable, and fabulously wealthy woman. Jeanette M. Thurber, the wife of a millionaire green-grocer, had single-handedly established the National Conservatory of Music in New York City. When the conservatory needed a new director in 1892, Mrs. Thurber set her sights on Dvořák. At first, Dvořák wasn't interested. But Mrs. Thurber persisted, and after a long series of cables culminating in an offer of twenty-five times his current salary, Dvořák finally relented.

Once in America, Dvořák was drawn to American folk music of every kind. He frequently asked a black composition student, Harry T. Burleigh, to sing and play him Negro spirituals and plantation songs. According to Burleigh, “Dvořák just saturated himself with the spirit of these old tunes.”

Dvořák said: “I am convinced that the future music of this country must be founded on what are called the Negro melodies. In the Negro melodies of America, I have discovered all that is needed for a great and noble school of music. America can have her own music, a fine music growing up from her own soil and having its own special character—the natural voice of a free and great nation.” Dvořák set out to capture that spirit in his new symphony. (The composer was correct in his assessment in every particular save one: he could not have known that the “great and noble school of music” he predicted would one day become known as “jazz.”)

The debut of the *Ninth* sparked a debate over just how American it really was. No one can miss the resemblance of the first movement's flute solo to “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot.” The second movement's English horn melody is so like a Negro spiritual that someone later turned it into one, writing words to go with Dvořák's music. And we have it from Dvořák that Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha* inspired the symphony's middle movements—the second movement by Minnehaha's funeral scene, the third by the ritual Indian dance. But the music was Dvořák's: “I have simply written original themes embodying the peculiarities of Negro and Indian music and, using these themes as subjects, have developed them with all the resources of modern rhythm, harmony, counterpoint, and orchestral color.”

Yet when European audiences heard the *Ninth*, they found it to be as Bohemian as anything Dvořák ever wrote—and they were correct. Despite his enthusiasm, Dvořák's knowledge of American music was superficial; when he wasn't actively trying to sound American, he sounded just like Dvořák. And those who hear the landscapes of America in the *Ninth* might be surprised to know that Dvořák composed it before he had set one foot outside New York City. Perhaps it is, as Kurt Masur has observed, a great tragic symphony written on the theme of homesickness.

All such questions are insignificant beside the achievement of the symphony itself. It brims over with melody and drama. Its emotional span runs from quiet tenderness to sheer ferocity. It is full of magical moments—one thinks of the other-worldliness of the second movement's opening chords, and how they are reincarnated with fearsome power in the Finale. If Dvořák took little that was truly American, he gave back what is arguably the greatest symphony composed on these shores: a magnificent gift from a generous man. Our gratitude is due him—and, of course, to Mrs. Thurber.

Program notes by Mark Rohr, Portland Symphony Orchestra (2019)

## Danzón No. 2

A native of the Mexican state of Sonora, Márquez is known for his adroit incorporation of Mexican musical forms and styles into his compositions. One of Mexico's eminent contemporary composers, he is widely popular with Latin Americans for the accessibility and attractiveness of his compositions. Recipient of an impressive list of honors, his recent works include a commission from the San Antonio Symphony, a cello concerto, and an homage to Emiliano Zapata, the Mexican revolutionary.

After early musical training on trombone, violin, and piano, he became a student at the Conservatorio Nacional in the early nineteen seventies. He then went on to study in Europe with the eminent French composer, Jacques Castérède. He subsequently was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to the California Institute of the Arts, where he studied with the well-known American composer Morton Subotnick. Under the influence of the latter composer, earlier on he was active in a compositional style that featured mixed media excursions in dance, theatre, and film. Computers, tape, electro-acoustic devices, unusual percussion instruments, and actors all contributed to an avant-garde reputation. But all has not been on the cutting edge, for he is also known for his interest in popular urban musical styles, expressed in more conventional ensembles. His later move to a personal idiom made full use of traditional Mexican urban music—but not necessarily “folk” music. Representative of these compositions that have brought him worldwide fame are the eight *Danzónes* for orchestra. They take their stylistic cue from the music of the Mexican state of Veracruz, as well as of Cuba. *Danzón* No. 2, perhaps his most well-known work for orchestra, was commissioned by the National Autonomous University of Mexico, and had its première in 1994.

A *danzón* is a formal ballroom dance, similar in some ways to the tango, with much of the latter's passion and rhythms, but with its own intricate footwork. The habanera of Cuba is more or less an antecedent of the *danzón*, as it migrated to the cafes and dance halls of urban Mexico. The seductive, often melancholy, nature of the dance is irresistible, both in the simple bands of the dance halls, and equally in the masterful symphonic settings of Márquez. It lives on in Cuba and Mexico, danced by an older generation.

*Danzón* No. 2, rather than a simple exposition of a dance, in typical “square,” balanced sections, is an episodic exploration of the *danzón's* varied moods. It opens quietly and elegantly with extensive woodwind solos, with intensity and sophistication. A new and vigorous episode, introduced by the piano, leads to “punchy” accents, led by the brass. A sudden calm is quickly broken by smearing trombones, and yet another catchy idea. The piano then leads stylishly and pensively to the palm court environs of the ballroom. The serenity can't last long, and a return to previous vigor ideas ensues, with a stylish trumpet solo, ending with a gradually building frenzy. A momentary quietude featuring the piccolo and piano last only a second before the drive to the smashing conclusion.

This highly attractive paean to the *danzón* may be favorably compared to Ravel's masterful and evocative *La valse*. Both are sympathetic symphonic treatments of a traditional ballroom dance—but apotheoses seen through the lens of a kaleidoscope.

Program notes by William E. Runyan (2015)

## Biographical Notes

### Maurizio Colasanti

Maurizio Colasanti is recognised on the international scene as one of the most dynamic and eclectic conductors of his generation. He is widely acclaimed for his interpretations of contemporary music, including British composers such as Britten, Holst and Finzi; as well as for classical romantic music.

Maurizio Colasanti is also acknowledged for his fine performances of opera – the great Italian operas such as *Rigolotto*, *Otello*, *La Bohème*, *La Traviata* and *Gianni Schicchi* – he opened the season of Opera Korea conducting the Seoul Philharmonic at Seoul Opera House with Richard Strauss' *Salome* to excellent reviews, and Stravinsky's *Le Rossignol*, which he conducted at the Teatro Lirico di Cagliari. He began music studies very young, at the age of five, and played his first solo concert when he was seven, earning his first Diploma Cum Laude from the "Luisa D'Annunzio" Conservatory of Music. He later graduated from there with honors in Philosophy as well. He has been awarded several prizes at international music competitions including the First Prize in Capri, Pola. Maestro Colasanti has worked with many leading ensembles including such distinguished orchestras as: I solisti del Teatro alla Scala di Milano, Orchestra del Teatro Petruzzelli di Bari, Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana, Nord Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, the Deutsches Kammerorchester, the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra, the Villa Lobos Symphony Orchestra, Orquesta Sinfonica del Estrado del Mexico, Guanajuato Symphony Orchestra, New England Symphony Orchestra, the Istanbul Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestra Magna Grecia, and Seoul Philharmonic. He has conducted in many leading venues around the world including Carnegie Hall, New York; St. Martin in the Fields, London; the Teatro San Carlo, Naples; the Teatro dell'Opera, Rome; and Melba Hall in Melbourne, Australia. He has also worked at leading academic institutes such as the Royal Academy of Music, London and the Miami University of Music.

He has a large discography having recorded CDs with Bongiovanni (Bologna), Menabo (Rome), Iktius (Milan), Mondo Musica Verlags (Munchen), and Aulia. His most recent concerts have been conducting Verdi's *Requiem Mass* in the United States, Beethoven's *Symphony No 5* in the Czech Republic, and Beethoven's "*Emperor*" *Concerto* with the West Bohemian Philharmonic and he has just conducted Mozart's *Requiem* in Teramo, Italy with the Orchestra Benedetto Marcello. He was Principal Conductor and Artistic director of OSUEL, in Londrina, Brazil, and now he is Artistic Diretor of the Guadiagrele Opera Festival and Istituto Giuseppe Dell'Orefice.

In 2021 he has conducted many operas: Rossini *Cenerentola*, *Viaggio a Reims*, Verdi *Simon Boccanegra*, Purcell *Dido and Aeneas*, Donizetti *l'Elisir d'Amore*, Poulenc *The Voix Humane*. In the coming months will be released the CD "Virtue Amore" with the Tactus Record Company. In his intense career, he has worked with musicians such as: Aaron Rosand, Pay, Gunther Schuller, Larrieu, Paul Badura Skoda, Ayo. Some composers of our time Bogorelich, Vainio, Viana, have all dedicated lyric and symphonic works to him.

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Glenn Block, Music Director

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Maria Emmons  
Anna Woods  
Antonia Tapias  
Daniel Blanco-Aguilar

## Viola

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Ulzhan Yrдыrssova  
Cecily Weibring  
Shelby Fick  
Rhiannon Cosper  
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John St. Cyr  
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Samantha Wyland, *co-principal*  
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Rachel Nulf, *piccolo*  
Kirsten Towander

## Oboe

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Elli Ji, *English horn*

## Clarinet

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## Bassoon

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Kathleen Miller  
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Peyton Miles  
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## Tuba

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\*Creative Technologies Program (CTK)

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