

The Dvořák Society

For Czech and Slovak Music

50th Anniversary: 1974 – 2024

Newsletter No. 148, November 2024



The Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Choir and soloists at the Proms. See two reviews starting on page 8. Photo: © BBC | Andy Paradise

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The Dvořák Society Newsletter is issued quarterly. The Editor welcomes articles, letters, and photographs on all aspects of Czech and Slovak music, but reserves the usual editorial prerogatives. Views expressed in individual articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society.

Authors are encouraged to submit material to the editor electronically but articles may also be submitted as a manuscript.

The newsletter is published in February, May, August and November. The deadlines are 1st January, April, July and October, respectively.

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Between The Deadlines

Notes from your Chairman

This summer, our President Jakub Hrůša has conducted two of this season's Proms to great acclaim. The second Prom on 28th August included the *Military Sinfonietta* by Kaprálová (Prom premiere), the rarely heard *Piano Concerto* by Dvořák and Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* with programme notes by Nigel Simeone and Paula Kennedy. Unfortunately, I was out of the country but reports of these concerts are on page 8.

Jakub was also busy at this year's Prague Dvořák International Music Festival where he conducted three concerts – Saturday 7th September Dvořák's *Carnival Overture*, Op. 92, Suk's *Fantasy for Violin and Orchestra* and another performance of the *Glagolitic Mass*, followed by the Bamberg Symphony on Monday in a programme of Smetana – *Richard III*, Op. 11, *Wallenstein's Camp*, Op. 104, and *Hakon Jarl*, Op. 16, plus Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* and then an open-air concert featuring Mahler's 7th *Symphony* at the Prague Exhibition Grounds played by the Czech Philharmonic/Bamburg Symphony two days later. Some of us will have the opportunity to hear Jakub conducting his Bamberg Orchestra at the Janáček Festival in November.

I attended a piano recital (of non-Czech music) given by the Japanese pianist Mao Fujita, the soloist in the Dvořák *Piano Concerto* at the Proms mentioned above. Towards the end of the recital, whilst playing one of Liszt's *Fantasy – Years of Pilgrimage* he very dramatically managed to break one of the bass strings of the Steinway piano in the Rudolfinum. Quite surprisingly, after some consideration, he then proceeded to play 3 encores somehow avoiding the broken string.

Whilst in Prague I had a meeting with Anna Poppová (HAMU) to discuss aspects of the DS Scholarships for 2025. I also met Josef Švec, the 19 year old cellist who attended the Cadenza International Summer School sponsored by the

Society (see page 6 for his report). I also took the opportunity to visit Nelahozeves to see the newly opened and renovated Museum in Dvořák's Birth House. The House has been transformed and expanded with state-of-the-art interactive exhibitions and offers a concert room and facilities for children's learning activities, see page 24 for some photos. The village church opposite the House is currently closed and undergoing extensive repairs. The usual Anniversary events were held on Sunday 8th September with a concert in the House and an open-air concert in the Castle courtyard. This year there was an additional event – a conference organised by Elenore Kinský (Lobkovicz Foundation) on the following day, focusing on Dvořák's early years. David Beveridge, Michael Beckerman and Veronika Vejvodová, the Director of the Dvořák Museum in Prague, gave presentations.

As I was in CZ I was able to join this year's *On the Trail of Dvořák* event led by our Vice-President David Beveridge. This year it was in Brno. The tour included an organ recital at the newly restored St Jacob's followed by a short walking tour led by Jiří Zahrádka (the Janáček scholar) of historic sites, eventually working our way to Janáček's Memorial House where he gave an informative talk. The highlight of the day was the concert at Besední Dům which partly recreated the programme from 15th December 1878 which featured works by both Dvořák and Janáček. Dvořák's *Three Male Choruses to the Words of Slovak Folk Songs*, Op. 43, sung by the men of the Czech Philharmonic Choir of Brno, was followed by *The Wild Dove*, Op. 110, which had its world premiere in Brno in 1898. The two Janáček works were *Four Male Choruses*, JW IV/17 (with 2 pianos) and the cantata *Amarus for solo voices, mixed chorus and orchestra* to a poem by Jaroslav Vrchlický. The cantata, which was completely new to me, had a magnificent rendition aided by two impressive male soloists – the tenor Jaroslav Březina and the baritone Roman Hoza. Of course, the day would not have been complete without a meal

featuring dumplings (both savoury and sweet). On such occasions, it is always a pleasure to meet members of our sister organisation in Prague – Markéta Hallová, Jarmila Tauerová, Veronika Vejvodová and Jitka Suková amongst others. As we travelled by train to Brno we had plenty of opportunity to catch up on news. They, of course, send their best wishes to members of the Society. I want to congratulate Jan Simon, David Beveridge and the team for another stimulating “On The Trail” event.

A truly memorable day.

M. David Roberts

This is your editor writing

This is my tenth Newsletter. In the last one, we reported about the Society's 50th birthday party and the Leamington Music Festival dedicated to Czech music. Today there is less to write about.

But please visit our website, there is a [detailed report](#) with pictures about these events.

Last Saturday we (yes, you have guessed, my wife and I) spent another day at the Royal Pump Rooms, we attended the first two concerts of the Brodsky Quartet. The event included all 15 String Quartets of Dimitri Shostakovich in six concerts spread over two days. On the way home on the train I was wondering: Is it possible to have a similar event with Dvořák's String Quartets?

At this year's Proms, there were three concerts dedicated (mostly) to Czech music and two of them were played by Czech musicians. I received two reviews. Of course, I include both of them, starting page 8. As already I mentioned: my role as the editor is to facilitate not to censor. Both reviews are rather personal. My takeaway is that I must familiarise myself with Suk's *Asrael Symphony*.

You may ask what determines the order of articles in the two review sections. They are strictly in the order I receive them. Only once did I, that was in the last Newsletter, not follow this rule. I had a good reason for that...

The next Newsletter's submission deadline is 1 January 2025. Please send me

your reviews, contributions and comments. Without them, the Newsletter would be shorter and duller. My details are on top of page 2...

Tomy Duby

Membership News

MEMBERSHIP

We welcome as a new member **Dr Juraj Ivanyi** of Blackheath, London.

We are sorry to record the deaths this summer of two longstanding members, **Donald Smith** and **Graham Slater**. Graham compiled the discography of Václav Talich recordings and edited it with additional material to form the Dvořák Society Occasional Publication No.3 on Talich, published in 2003.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Another year has passed and it is again time to remind you that **subscriptions for 2025 are due on 1st January**. We do not send individual reminders, so this notice is a request to all members to see that their subscriptions are paid promptly.

Young member (under 25 on 1 Jan)	Free
Full-time student	Free
Individual members	£30
Joint members (two at one address)	£40
Corporate (non profit-making)	£30
Corporate (profit-making)	£50
Overseas mail supplement (for all non-UK addresses)	£10

Payments can also include optional subscriptions to the International Martinů Circle (**£14** for email membership or **£21** for postal membership) and/or Czech Music (**£25**), a Prague-based magazine in English. Donations to our Scholarship Fund are also very welcome.

Payment methods

In order of preference (for processing time and cost to the Society):

1. By Banker's Order (for those with UK bank accounts). To set up a Banker's Order if you do not have one please send the details to me, using the form which you can print from the Society's website <http://www.dvorak-society.org/bankers-order.pdf> or obtain from me. If you already have a Banker's Order please check that it is for **the right amount**, and ask your bank to correct it if necessary.
2. By electronic bank transfer. The Society's banking details are in the table below. If possible please add a

note saying who the payment is from and send me an email to say that you have paid this way.

Account:	Dvorak Society of Great Britain (NB: no 'The' and no diacriticals)
Sort code:	20-35-27
Account no:	80348554
IBAN:	GB14 BUKB 2035 2780 3485 54
SWIFTBIC:	BUKBGB22

3. By cheque in pounds sterling (not euros or other currencies) payable to The Dvořák Society and sent to the Membership Secretary.
4. For overseas members unable to use any of the above, payment may be made in pounds sterling by PayPal. You do not need to register with PayPal to do this, but you must have an email address. If you wish to use PayPal for the first time please let me know, and I shall initiate a *request for payment*. I shall do this automatically in late December for all those who have paid in this way before. When you pay please add a note saying that the payment is for a subscription. In special circumstances payment by PayPal is available to UK members too; please consult me about this.

COMMUNICATION

Please remember to tell me if you change your postal address, telephone number or – especially – **email address**. This information will be used only for Society business in accordance with our published Privacy Notice. I prefer to use email for communications, as this is the quickest and cheapest way to make contact.

From time to time I circulate information about forthcoming events, often at short notice. For this I use the webmail facility which comes with our website. Recently quite a number of such emails, particularly those to "...@icloud.com", have been rejected with the message "rejected due to local policy". I don't know what to do about this – any advice will be welcome. Please do what you can at your end to ensure that messages from membership@dvorak-society.org are not rejected or treated as spam.

I am always happy to act as go-between if you want to contact another member.

Terry Heard, Membership Secretary
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Antonín Tučapský. [British Music Collection](#)

Remembering Antonín Tučapský

Ten years after Antonín's death, I am writing to the Society about two songs which were composed for me in 2008. He wrote them "with thanks and gratitude" after his beautiful *Stabat Mater* was played on Classic FM along with pieces by other great Czech composers. The inclusion of his work was the culmination of some years of effort on my part.

The first song, *In England*, is to the words by the poet Marjorie Wilson. They describe what can be seen on a train journey past "green fields and peaceful cows and sheep", until "your journey's end". At that time I could still reach the keyboard of my piano (now crowded with books) and I played and sang the song to myself. When Karel and I next visited Tony and Beryl, she kindly sang it in a duet with me, but definitely for private hearing only.

The second song, *Sweet Sound*, is to a poem by Oliver Goldsmith. It starts "Sweet was the sound when oft at evening's close" and ends "the playful children just let loose from school".

Our Newsletter editor is putting both songs onto the Society's website. I would naturally be very pleased to hear from anyone who performs the songs, at home or elsewhere. I would pass on any comments to Antonín's family in Moravia.

With all good wishes

Yours sincerely

Marian Werner

These songs are on the subpage of our Society's website home page called [Czech Composers and Scores](#).

Ian Trufitt's Headstone Repaired

Ian Trufitt was the founder and first chairman of the Dvořák Society. He died tragically in a motorcycle accident two years after founding the Society. He is buried in the village of Wilmcote. During the 50th celebration of the Society, five members visited his grave and noticed that the headstone was tilted. John Beale organised the



Repaired Ian Trufitt's Gravestone. Photo: John Beale.

repair. The repaired headstone is in a picture on the next page. Thanks to John for his effort and involvement!

25 years ago

Dvořák Society Newsletter No. 49 appeared in October 1999 and was my third issue as Editor.

Shawn Pullman in his column *Shawn: short and sharp* noted that as this Newsletter dropped through our letterboxes 28 members of the Society would be enjoying an extensive Society Trip with a very full itinerary of events in the Czech and Slovak Republics. (I was lucky enough to be one of those 28 members!)

It was good to report that our London-based Czech composers were both experiencing success in their home country: two works by Karel Janovický had been premiered at the House of the Stone Bell in Prague's Old Town Square on 25th October, Musica Gaudeans had played his quartet *In Praise of Haydn* and Roman Fojtíček of the Bohemian Saxophone Quartet performed his new *Sonata for Saxophone* together with the young pianist Jana Vychodilová.

Antonín Tučapský's *Concertino for Piano and Orchestra* had been performed by Pražský Studentský Orchestr, conductor Mirko Škampa, at the Church of St. Simon and St. Jude on 29th October. This had been followed by two performances (world première) of his *Concerto for Viola and Orchestra*, soloist Pavel Peřina, by the Prague Symphony Orchestra (FOK) in the Smetana Hall on 2nd and 3rd November.

Lorna Dobson reported that Petr Altrichter had made his debut at the BBC Proms with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra on 16th August. The programme had included Suk's *Scherzo Fantastique*, Brahms' *Violin Concerto* with Pamela Frank as soloist, and Dvořák's *New World Symphony*.

The Eighth Annual Scottish Dinner had taken place at the Caledonian Club in Edinburgh on the evening of 25th September. The pre-dinner talk had been replaced by the playing of a talented quartet led by cellist Tim Paxton. Pieces performed were Novák's *String Quartet No. 2 in D*, Op. 35, and Petr Eben's *String Quartet*. The company then proceeded downstairs to an excellent four-course meal. The evening, like so many previous evenings had owed everything to the organizational abilities of Ted Pettinger but after dinner, Ted announced that he would soon be returning to live in England and that his duties would henceforth be taken over by Tim Paxton.

In his *Martinů Review* Greg Terian reported on the current year's performances at the Bregenz Festival the highlight of which had been a new performance of the *Greek Passion* in its original version. Aleš Březina had been on hand before each performance to give a detailed talk on the genesis of the work and how he had come to discover the existence of the original version and had begun to piece it together. The production by Messrs Pountney, Lazaris and Lecca was eye catching with a rotating stage and actions taking place at several levels.

Greg went on to write about Guy Erisman's recent discovery of the original score of Vítězslava Kaprálová's *Prélude de Noël* in the archives of French radio. Karla Hartl had recently secured a copy of the score. The piece had been composed to open a programme which was broadcast to occupied Czechoslovakia on Christmas Eve 1939. The script for the programme was written by Jiří Mucha who was at that time about to marry Kaprálová. Martinů had also taken part in the programme but it was not possible to establish which of his works had been performed.

Greg reported on the recent death of Paul Sacher at the age of 93. Sacher had, of course, offered invaluable friendship and support to Martinů in Switzerland towards the end of his life.

Special events had taken place in London to mark the 40th Anniversary of Martinů's death. On 31st August a recital at the Czech Embassy by the M. Nostitz Quartet had included the *String Quartet No. 2*. The following day an event at the Czech Centre had Aleš Březina introducing his own film on the life of Martinů and a video of excerpts from the Bregenz production of the *Greek Passion*. In addition, there were reminiscences of the composer from Vilém Tauský.

Graham Dixon reported on the weekend course on *The Life and Works of Martinů* which had taken place at

Burton Manor on the Wirral from 10th to 12th September. This had been the fourth of a traditional series of weekend courses on Czech music by Graham Melville-Mason. "£105 per person including accommodation, dinner on Friday evening and all other meals up to and including lunch on Sunday, PLUS Graham's magic blend of erudition and charm, was an irresistible bargain that should not have been missed. Thirty people had the good sense not to miss it, all but one of whom were, I believe, members of the Society."

Míla Smetáčková, President of the Czech Music Society in Prague reported on the summer activities of the Society. These included the *International School for Early Music* which took place during the first ten days of July each year. The school took place in Valtice in southern Moravia and was attended by about 350 students, young and old, amateur and professional, Czech nationals and foreign visitors.

Bill Marsden in his Record News reported that since he took over the running of the Record Service in August 1998, over forty members of the Society had used it to order CDs. Amongst the CDs bought had been nine copies of the Mackerras recording of *Rusalka*.

Vera Marsden in her Library Service Report thanked various members for additions to the Library since the publication of the 1999 Year Book. (In this period a list of the contents of the Library appeared regularly in the Year Book.)

Current Membership Secretary Peter Herbert in his *Peter's Pages* reported the death of the composer Klement Slavický (1910–1999) who had served as one of our Vice-Presidents.

Peter announced a concert by the Krommer Ensemble, led by our very own member Alf Pollard, which would take place at St Thomas's Church in Garstang on Saturday, 20th November.

Our member, the conductor Martin Turnovský had conducted a concert in Terezín on 5th October as part of the International Scientific Conference – *The Holocaust Phenomenon*.

Sylvie Bodorová's Terezín *Ghetto Requiem* had been performed by the Emperor String Quartet with baritone Nigel Cliff at the Harrogate Festival at the end of July.

Peter would relinquish his role as Membership Secretary at the next AGM and would be handing over to Tony Pook who was already a member of the committee.

To my surprise as Editor at the time there was a Newsletter 49 Extra which had arrived through my letterbox along with the main Newsletter 49 while I had been away on the Society trip. This one-page issue congratulated Sir Charles Mackerras on his 7th Gramophone Award for his Decca recording of *Rusalka* and also our Patron Petr Eben on being elected an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Organists.

At the time of the appearance of this Newsletter, there was still no sign of the publication of *Czech Music, the Journal of the Dvořák Society for Czech and Slovak Music*, Vol. 21.

Annette Percy

Dvořák Society Scholars

Cadenza International Summer School – Report

This summer from July 22nd until July 28th, I had the enormous privilege to be a part of the Cadenza International Summer Music School, studying with professors at the highest level. Throughout the week-long masterclasses, I was a part of a string quartet with wonderful students from the Royal Academy of Music and Guildhall School of Music. We attended a total of six coaching/lessons with our quartet, playing the first movement from L. v. Beethoven's *String Quartet* Op. 18 no. 1, to Laura Rickard, Levon Chilingirian, Dorothea Vogel and Jacky Woods. In addition, I also participated in solo lessons with the amazing Robert Max and Robert Cohen. Both aspects were absolutely mind-opening, for example, I played in a string quartet for the very first time and found a new but very strong interest in it. Most importantly however studying J. S. Bach's *Cello Suite no. 3* with Robert Max, and cello concertos by Schumann and Dvořák with Robert Cohen was exceptional, finding out new ways to improve myself both as a musician and as a person.

At the final concert, I played the first movement of Beethoven's *String Quartet*, Op. 18 no. 1.

Josef Švec

Postscript by David Roberts.

Following Josef's return to CZ, he resumed his final year of cello studies at the Prague Conservatoire. In early September Josef participated at the [International Cello Competition](#) organised by the Academy of Music in Bratislava (VŠMU), where he played Bach, Martinů, and David Popper. The set piece was a new composition by the Slovak composer Mirko Krajčí. [Josef won the third prize in Category I](#) for cellists aged up to 21. There were 48 candidates in this category.

Later in September, he played at the Chamber Music Master Classes held as part of this year's Dvořák Prague International Festival.

There is a short article about the Cadenza International Summer School and Josef Švec in Newsletter #146, page 17.



Events and Concert Performances

Haydn, Glass and Smetana: String Quartets Coull Quartet, Warwick Unitarian Church, Warwick, 30 June 2024

It would be easy not to know about this concert. But by ordering tickets for the Leamington Music Festival (for reviews see Newsletter #147, pages 11 to 15), I got on Warwickshire County Council's mailing list. (Warwick and Leamington Spa are two neighbouring towns.) When the ad came, it was not hard to decide to go. When we arrived there, we found ourselves in a building from 1780 with about 120 chairs, a table covered with home-made cakes and people standing everywhere, drinking coffee and chatting. The stage was cluttered with all kinds of things one may find in a Community Centre, four music stands, four chairs and four gentlemen tuning their instruments and relaxing before the concert.

At 11.30 am sharp all took their seats and after a brief introduction by the second violinist (Philip Gallaway) reminding us that the Coull Quartet was celebrating its 50th anniversary, the music started with Haydn's *Quartet in G*, Op. 64 No. 4, (composed in 1790!). What a good way to start a Sunday Coffee Concert!

Next, we heard Philip Glass's *Quartet Satz* from 2017. I like Glass, so I knew what kind of music to expect. But I was also pleased to hear gasps of approval from the audience after this seven-minute-long piece.

Smetana's *String Quartet No. 1 in E minor 'From My Life'* was the final piece. I recently presented it (together with No. 2 as a contrasting piece) in my U3A classical music group. I enjoyed this performance! Jonathan Barritt (viola) wonderfully played the cadenza-like opening of the first movement. Nicholas Roberts' (cello) wonderful way of playing two instruments at a time in the Polka (2nd movement from *Meno mosso*) was the high point for me: the village double bass and his cello. The two repeated quavers were not just *staccato* but *spiccato*! I could not believe my eyes and ears, so once back home, I checked the score and several YouTube recordings. No sign of *spiccato* anywhere except in my head...

This was a most enjoyable chamber concert at a community level (I already wrote about this in Newsletter #144, page 7): I got much more than I had anticipated!

Tomy Duby

Wihan Quartet at Benslow Music, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, on Friday 23 August 2024 at 8pm

In 1929 Little Benslow Hills, a large Victorian house in Hitchin, was bequeathed to the Rural Music Schools Association "to be used in perpetuity for the support of music making". With many physical additions this is now the home of the Benslow Music Trust, which each year runs over two hundred short residential courses for musicians of all varieties and standards. See <https://benslowmusic.org>.

It was a privilege to hear the Wihan Quartet perform in the informal surroundings of the Peter Morrison Hall, with its excellent acoustics, at Benslow. Their Friday evening concert preceded a weekend course there for pre-formed string quartets they were tutoring. Course participants included the Heartwood Quartet, whom the Dvořák Society were sponsoring as Scholars. (See Newsletter #147, pages 8-9.)

The Wihan Quartet's programme consisted of Leoš Janáček's dark and dramatic *String Quartet no. 1*, '*Kreutzer Sonata*', Bedřich Smetana's often mysterious and turbulent *String Quartet no. 2*, and in contrast, Antonín Dvořák's wistful and lyrical *Quartet no. 9 in D minor*, Op. 34. The Wihan Quartet's interpretations were both exuberant and thoughtful, as they played with intensity and precision. Their interaction with each other was particularly evident, with the cellist, Michal Kanka at the centre, facing the audience as well as his fellow musicians.

As readers may know, this renowned Czech string quartet was originally founded in 1985, taking its name from the eminent Czech cellist, Hanuš Wihan (1855–1920), to whom his friend Dvořák dedicated his Cello Concerto. Next year the Wihan Quartet will be celebrating forty years since its foundation. The two violinists in the present quartet, Leoš Čepický and Jan Schulmeister, were founder members, with Jakub Čepický (viola) and Michal Kanka (cello) joining them in 2014 and 2015 respectively. The Wihan Quartet has been awarded many prestigious prizes in international competitions and regularly gives concerts at home and abroad. In the UK, they have often given inspirational master classes and tuition to students and to amateur and semi-professional groups at music colleges and at Benslow.

The concert was open to members of the public and to those participating in the weekend course. For those who live within a reasonable distance of Hitchin, we would recommend consulting www.benslowmusic.org/concerts for similar uplifting events.

Susan Jenkinson and Terry Heard

BBC Proms Nos. 49 and 50. Royal Albert Hall, London, 27 and 28 August 2024

The 'Year of Czech Music' was celebrated in style at the Proms this year. Two concerts given by the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra (conducted by our president Jakub Hrůša) and several days later a further concert by the Berlin Philharmonic with a performance of *Má vlast*. I was fortunate to be able to attend the two Czech Philharmonic concerts and, as a bonus, to stay in London with my son and his girlfriend for a couple of days. Hrůša will take up the post of Music Director of the Royal Opera House in September 2025. I wonder if we can look forward to more Czech operas at the ROH?

Prom 49

The highlight of the two nights for me was Dvořák's *Cello Concerto in B minor Op 104*. This is such an outstanding work, even by Dvořák's standards. I love every moment – the declamatory entry of the cello, the woodwind in the second movement, (the clarinet was singled out in the applause) and above all the incredibly moving solo violin quote of *Lasst mich allein* towards the end – such a real stroke of genius. His memory of and still an existent passion for Josefína Čermáková shines through and for me, it is a 'tingle moment'.

I have several recordings of the concerto and also I remember a number of concerts – including Alisa Weilerstein (with the Czech Philharmonic in Birmingham) and Stephen Isserlis (*B minor* and *A major Concertos* in Malvern). So, I was expectant of pleasure from the very first bars and I was not disappointed. Anastasia Kobekina gave a lovely rendition that was full of warmth. I enjoyed her distinctive and contemplative phrasing of the concerto's lyricism. Hrůša and the orchestra contributed to an excellent performance.

After the interval came Josef Suk's extensive *Asreal Symphony*. In the previous month I had taken the time to refresh my memory of the Suk symphony (I have Libor Pešek and the Liverpool Philharmonic recording) and so was fully prepared. The work has grown on me and I was gripped for the hour. There was so much I enjoyed and particularly the quiet, magical and peaceful ending with the conductor and orchestra all at one. The audience recognised this and held back their applause impeccably until Hrůša lowered his baton after 30 seconds. The magic of silence! It was well received but not enthusiastically. Afterwards, as we walked to South Kensington tube

station I was chatting to a couple who found the symphony too long and hard work to appreciate.

Prom 50

The concert's overture was Vítězslava Kaprálová's *Military Sinfonietta*. Not a piece I know. It was an interesting and exciting piece that started with a bang and held an energetic pace throughout. I approve the selection of a lesser-known Czech composer to add to the mix in the 'Year of Czech Music'. It enabled the percussion section and large orchestra to show off their skills.

The first live performance I heard of Dvořák's *Piano Concerto in G minor* was in Symphony Hall about five years ago with Stephen Hough and the CBSO. A performance I distinctly remember and was hoping for more of the same. Certainly, Mao Fujita didn't disappoint. Playing the Kurz version he dazzled as a virtuoso pianist; yet he was gentle and had a sensitive singing touch necessary for the middle movement. The third movement skipped along happily and led us to the conclusion of the concerto. I was disappointed that there was no encore. Having heard the *Cello Concerto* on the previous night I am reminded of the wonderful quote on Wikipedia "An attractive *Piano Concerto in G minor* with a rather ineffective piano part, a beautiful *Violin Concerto in A minor*, and a supreme *Cello Concerto in B minor*".

Finally, one of Czech music's great masterworks – Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* with Hrůša and the orchestra being joined by an organist, four soloists and the Prague Philharmonic Choir. Of course, the soloists had penetrating contributions to the mass but it was the choir and orchestra that impressed and of course Janáček's complex and incredible score. What a sound world he conceived! The impact of this performance was stunning. Well done Jakub Hrůša and the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra! At its conclusion there was, justly, a roar of approval from the promenaders. Walking back to South Kensington tube station the fanfares danced around my mind just as they had done after my first performance in St Vitus Cathedral Prague in 1973.

John Beale

The Royal Albert Hall reverberates to Czech Music! Patrick Lambert reports on a high point in the Proms season

For lovers of Czech music the 2024 Prom season reached its zenith in the last days of August with a visit by the Czech Philharmonic under their Principle Guest Conductor Jakub Hrůša to present two concerts devoted entirely to Czech music (Tuesday 27th & Wednesday 28th), followed three days later by the Berlin Philharmonic under their Chief Conductor and Artistic Director Kirill Petrenko to give a complete performance of Smetana's *Má vlast* (Saturday 31st). I was fortunate enough to attend all three

concerts in person and later to be able to judge how they came over to the Radio Three audience, thanks to Radio Three and BBC Sounds.

Celebrating *The Year of Czech Music*, Maestro Hrůša's dramaturgy could hardly have been improved upon – first, a pairing of key works with strong biographical and personal connections: Dvořák's *Cello Concerto* with its touching memories of his beloved sister-in-law Josefína Čermáková and Suk's *Asrael Symphony* lamenting the death of his great teacher and father-in-law (Dvořák) as well as his young wife Otilie (Dvořák's oldest daughter). Then, the following evening, a magnificent demonstration of the sheer diversity of Czech Music: Vítězslava Kaprálová's *Military Sinfonietta*, Dvořák's least known, but just as valuable, *Concerto in G minor for piano and orchestra* and finally, to crown the visit, Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* in which the Czech Philharmonic was joined by the Prague Philharmonic Choir, specially flown over for the occasion.

Still within living memory is the Prom concert in August 1968 when Rostropovitch, partnered with a Soviet orchestra, played Dvořák's *Cello Concerto* with tears flowing down his cheeks as Russian tanks occupied Prague. Now, more than half a century later, we were to hear another Russian-born soloist – Anastasia Kobekina, former BBC New Generation Artist – perform the same work under rather different circumstances: partnered by Czech musicians and with Russian aggression focused on a new target. In a brief interview with Tom Service, who presented the concert on air, she remarked what a privilege it was to play Dvořák with a Czech orchestra: *They play with such generosity, I certainly get inspired*. Exuding self-confidence, she made an impressive entry onto the stage in a bright red dress. We were soon to discover that this matched her flamboyant performing style. She took a highly Romantic, even rhapsodic, approach to the music, showing a tendency to linger lovingly over lyrical passages, such as the interplay with solo flute in the first movement and the allusion to the melancholy song, much beloved by Josefina, in the slow movement. Perhaps her playing could be summed up in two words: "Russian soul". Would she, I wondered, have recognised towards the close of the work in the moving dialogue with solo violin the allusion to Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* with its descending motif, a *sigh of regret for what might have been*? In the hall and even on the radio, the start of her long sustained note crescendoing into the final bars was barely audible. As might be expected, Hrůša and his orchestra partnered her with admirable sensitivity and skill, and the performance was received with a storm of applause from the Prommers, who had already clapped spontaneously after the opening movement. For an encore, Anastasia Kobekina celebrated her Proms debut by choosing to play a merry little Spanish style *Galliarda*, arranged, as she announced, *by my favourite composer – my father!* Here,

she was accompanied on tambourine by Pavel Polívka, who had joined her from the percussion section.

Suk's *Symphony in C minor 'Asrael'*, Op. 27, which comprised the second half, had only been heard once before at the Proms (in 1991, when Libor Pešek conducted the RLPO). It is undoubtedly a lengthy composition – in five movements, divided into two parts – but, now that present-day music lovers are fully accustomed to the symphonies of Bruckner and Mahler, there is no reason why this noble and inspiring music should not go straight to the hearts of an enthusiastic audience such as the Prommers. Distraught at the deaths of the two persons who were closest to him, Suk inscribed the symphony "to the sublime (*vznešené*) memory of Dvořák and Otylka", and the title invokes the name of the mythological Angel of Death. In his conversation with Tom Service recorded for the live broadcast, Hrůša declared: *It's one of the most personal and touching pieces of music of that genre that I know. And I think Suk – after all that tragedy and his own successful attempt to find his way out of the sadness, and being, you know, shattered by what happened – found a catharsis, he found a peace... I always say there is something encoded in this work, which has a similar story behind it to Death and Transfiguration by Strauss, but this is much more sincere and every note of the piece really lived by the composer in his heart. So, at the end, I myself always feel transfigured. Our last performance several players were so touched by what they have just experienced some of them were crying on stage. It's really an amazingly touching piece of music and anyone having an open heart can be transformed by this experience.*

I have only one word for Hrůša's performance (borrowed from Suk): sublime! Having known and loved since my student days Václav Talich's incomparable, but nowadays rather antique sounding recording, I found this Proms performance, with Suk's Mahlerian orchestral sounds reverberating through the vast space of the Royal Albert Hall, quite an ear opener. Hrůša employed an exceptionally wide dynamic range, from the quietest of *pppp* double bass *pizzicatos* to the most demonic thuds on timpani (the Radio Three balance engineer coped expertly with this). It was revelatory to hear so much fine detail, such instrumental clarity and such precision of ensemble. Above all was Hrůša's ability to draw from his musicians such sensitive and heartfelt playing. For instance, the solo cor anglais in the tragic first movement and, in the following *Andante* movement, the woodwind then trumpet intoning the *memento mori* motif from Dvořák's *Requiem* as a kind of *cantus firmus*, perfectly balanced against lamenting strings (a passage referred to admiringly by Hrůša in his interview). Then, in the scherzo movement – a menacing 'Dance of Death' – such virtuoso orchestral playing, contrasted in the central section with the utmost tenderness of the solo violin (concertmaster Jan Mráček) in a dream of lost happiness (such a pity that the prominent horn call based on a pair of augmented fourths – a motif

quoted from the music for *Radúz and Mahulena* where it signals the king's death – was fluffed). After the stormy outburst that brings Part One to its conclusion, the tension was relieved by applause followed by a minute's pause before Hrůša proceeded to the final pair of movements. The first of these, an *Adagio*, is a heavy-hearted yet tender portrait of Otylka, solo violin and flute calling despairingly for the loved one now departed and gently throbbing horns suggesting her failing heart. The Finale *Adagio e maestoso* brings the return of inner conflicts with nightmarish visions of a macabre 'Witches' Sabbath', eerie piccolo shrieks piercing the dark, inducing panic. Slowly and painfully, the music reaches a sunlit plateau. Hrůša worked magic with this conclusion, this 'transfiguration' as he calls it, bringing reconciliation, a brief return of the mournful cor anglais with its song of eternal longing, a last glimpse of Otilka, then softly repeated beatific harmonies high up, threatened by a dark harmonic undertow, until the hard-won concluding C major chords are calmly sounded. The packed audience, stunned perhaps by the emotional journey they had just experienced, held back its applause for a respectful twenty seconds.

Given the current musical climate of placing emphasis on women composers and conductors, it was a bright idea for the Czech Philharmonic to open their second concert with the remarkable *Military Sinfonietta* by Vítězslava Kaprálová. She had, in fact, made her debut conducting the Czech Philharmonic in this work, her graduation piece, at the age of twenty-two in the presence of Edvard Beneš, the Czechoslovak President and she went on to present it at the opening concert of the 1938 ISCM Festival in London conducting the BBC orchestra. The English critics rather patronisingly described her on that occasion as "the little girl conductor". Apart from her prowess with the baton, she was an enormously talented composer, as this stirring fifteen-minute piece proves. She studied in Brno with Janáček pupil Vilém Petrželka then in Prague with Dvořák pupil Vítězslav Novák. The *Sinfonietta* stems from the latter period before she went to Paris to study with Martinů and the Slovak character of some of the themes suggests Novák's influence. From the striking fanfare-like opening to the powerful, striving peroration, the score demonstrates remarkable technical accomplishment. It simply teems with ideas, switches mood from militancy to pastoral musings with ease and benefits from orchestration that is both imaginative and colourful, especially in the percussion department, which includes piano. Concerning the Janáček-like title, Kaprálová explained that, despite the ominous times (Czechoslovakia threatened by Hitler's expansionist ambitions), her *Military Sinfonietta*, which she dedicated to President Beneš, was conceived not as a "battle-cry", but in order to *depict the psychological need to defend that which is most sacred to the nation*. With evident enthusiasm Hrůša and his Czech musicians played the piece for all it was worth, bringing both precision and

conviction to their interpretation and driving the music to a compelling and, dare one say it, militant conclusion which brought the house down.

During this piece, the soloist's piano was already in position at the front of the stage, awaiting the arrival of the 25-year-old Japanese pianist Mao Fujita to perform Dvořák's *G minor Piano Concerto*, an unpretentious yet adorable masterpiece that is often viewed, unfairly, as a "Cinderella" work. Not so by our young pianist, who informed Tom Service that, though the solo part is horribly difficult and he spent six months working on it, he had come to love the concerto and wanted to play it more and more. This, I think, showed in his performance. He most certainly lavished on the music tender loving care, seeking out the essential poetry of the many lyrical passages. Everything was beautifully phrased and sincerely felt, and his lightness of touch was admirable; he never succumbed to the temptation to bang the piano. Just occasionally, I felt that repetitive sequences sounded a little laboured, but perhaps this is partly Dvořák's fault. In the wondrously beautiful, Chopinesque slow movement, I admired his limpid, caressing touch and in the brilliant finale, he brought an impish lilt and lightness to the rhythms. Apparently, Fujita had been touring this piece with the Czech Philharmonic and it showed in their close rapport, Hrůša coaxing from his players spellbindingly beautiful sounds in moments of interplay with the soloist. The Prommers loved it, vigorously applauding after the first movement and uproariously at the end. Mao Fujita could, I think, be happy with this, his Proms debut.

The climax to the Czech Philharmonic's visit was unquestionably Jakub Hrůša's thrilling account of Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*. In his conversation with Tom Service, he revealed that when he had first encountered Janáček's music as a teenager he had been struck by its "craziness", but it was craziness that was *totally consciously controlled... For me, the 'Glagolitic Mass' is one of the most daring pieces of his, the most original and also a very provoking case of combining spirituality with paganism, which seems like an oxymoron, you know, like things that cannot be combined and yet he managed*". For this impressive performance, attended by a packed audience of some five thousand listeners, no fewer than two hundred musicians had been gathered in the Royal Albert Hall – in addition to orchestra and conductor, the ninety-strong Prague Philharmonic Choir (choirmaster Lukáš Vasilek), organist Christian Schmitt, and soloists: Corinne Winters (soprano), Bella Adamová (mezzo-soprano), David Butt Philip (tenor) and Brindley Sherratt (bass), not forgetting the three extra clarinetists required offstage in the *Veruju (Credo)*.

Put simply, the performance was inspired! Hrůša judged the tempi to perfection and held the large forces together with immense skill. The Czech choir was magnificent, likewise the four soloists, who managed their difficult, high lying parts with accuracy and the requisite

fervour. Christian Schmitt, Principle Organist of the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra (of which Hrůša is Chief Conductor) took an original view of the Postlude. Instead of letting Janáček's striking *ostinato* figure dominate, driving the music relentlessly to its conclusion, he relished the harmonic progressions in an almost improvisatory manner, exploiting to the full the gargantuan Royal Albert Hall instrument and coming to rest on a thunderous long held chord of such volume that it threatened to lift the roof off the building. From my vantage point in the raising circle adjacent to the organ it left my ears ringing to such an extent that it seemed to rob the final orchestral number of some of its impact, but on listening later to the sound as broadcast I was pleased to find this not to be the case and the so-called *Intrada* was thrilling in its 'pagan' wildness. The audience responded in kind, and to prolonged applause Jakub Hrůša beckoned for the musicians to acknowledge it in turn, including the three offstage clarinettists who made themselves visible by descending an aisle to the right of the stage.

There is no doubt to my mind that the visit of Hrůša and the Czech Philharmonic greatly enhanced the reputation of Czech music and Czech musicians in the minds of the British audience. Just a few days later came the opportunity for the Berlin Philharmonic to make a similar impression. They came with their Chief Conductor and Artistic Director Kyrill Petrenko (born in Omsk in Siberia, but Austrian-trained and well-established in Germany), and for their first concert, they programmed a pairing of German and Czech masterpieces – Schumann's *Piano Concerto in A minor* and Smetana's cycle *Má vlast*. If one were to seek a connection between these two composers, it would be, I suppose, common roots in Romanticism and the sad fact that both ended their days in a mental asylum. The soloist in the Schumann was the Icelandic pianist Víkingur Ólafsson and all I need to report is that he gave a beautifully assured performance, sympathetically supported by the orchestra. Naturally, of far greater interest to members of the Dvořák Society is how the performance of Smetana's masterpiece by a German orchestra under the baton of a Russian conductor went. Before this Proms appearance, they had already performed *Má vlast* on a number of occasions, including the opening of the Prague Spring Festival in May. The latter event caused quite a stir among the critics, who, though not entirely convinced, were nevertheless delighted to point out that there was a Czech musician among the woodwind section, the bassoonist/contrabassoonist Václav Vonášek. I managed to catch the live broadcast online on the Vltava channel and have to admit that my own impression of Petrenko's interpretation was also mixed. Somehow, I did

not feel that the German musicians were truly in sympathy with the music, at least in the first four numbers. It was as if excessive attention to every detail of the score was smothering the main thrust of the music, heavy accenting making the music sound unduly repetitious and inflexible. However, on reaching the final pair of movements, *Tábor* and *Blaník*, everything seemed transformed. The players appeared to have warmed to their task and they now brought true commitment and excitement to the music. Perhaps they were able to relate the message of Smetana's music to the current conflict in Ukraine. The ultimate effect was glorious and inspiring.

I am happy to be able to report that the Berlin Philharmonic's Proms performance was more consistent and showed considerable improvement in overall impact. Among the members of the orchestra is a British horn player, Sarah Willis, and in the introduction to the live broadcast on Radio Three she was asked about their conductor's approach to Smetana's score. She replied: *Kirill lives what he conducts, and he loves a good love story, so he becomes what he conducts and he feels very close to this music – and it's a great story.* My own impression when comparing these two rival orchestras is that, while the Prague musicians may possess greater warmth of expression, the Berliners show exceptional discipline and technical precision in their playing. Their performance of *Má vlast*, revealed things in the score that I had never noticed before, interesting bass lines for instance and such cool precision and clarity in the interplay of the flutes in the opening of Vltava that it changed the intended impression of bubbling brooks. Also, the Polka episodes, so challenging for a non-Czech orchestra, were somewhat militaristic and a little joyless. It was mainly in the dramatic story-telling passages that the orchestra truly excelled. The Wagnerian swagger of the brass section was magnificent.

So, in conclusion, this performance certainly presented the highly receptive Royal Albert Hall audience with a musical feast. But, while it may have offered different insights into Smetana's patriotic masterpiece, I for one prefer the Czech way.

Patrick Lambert

We, that is my wife Tania and I, attended the previous performance of *Má vlast* at the Proms. That was in 2019. Jakub Hrůša conducted the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra. The concert started with Dvořák's *Violin Concerto* with Joshua Bell. Susan Jenkinson reviewed it in Newsletter 129, p. 11. For us this was a very emotional evening: it was almost on the day 50 years since our emigration...



Reviews of CDs and DVDs and other publications

The members of the society are encouraged to come forward and offer to review new releases of CDs. Please contact the Secretary, Susan Jenkinson, secretary@dvorak-society.org, for further information.

Franz Schmidt: *Fredigundis*

Vejzovic / Egel / Hollweg / Bunger / Sandu / ORF Choir / ORF Radio Symphony Orchestra / Ernst Märzendorfer
ORFEO C380012 (2 Cds) live recording, Wiener Musikverein 1979

I may as well get my modest gripe out of the way immediately. Whilst this is not a *bad* sound recording, the soundstage is rather foreshortened, and the orchestra sounds (for this marvellous hall) somewhat congested and cramped. That said the Musikverein's wonderful acoustic comes into its own in relation to several passages of distant or offstage effects.

The singers meanwhile are clear but well forward, a quite forgivable characteristic as this is a concert presentation, not a transmission from an opera house. Moreover, I understand this recording has been available over the years on several different pirate labels, and one hesitates to consider what it may have sounded like on them.

However, on to the plusses – and there are many!

Firstly full marks to ORFEO for contributing useful notes and, above all, a full text of the opera with a **translation into English**. So many CDs originating in *Mitteleuropa* in recent years have lacked translations, and even original language texts*.

Secondly, the effort is amply rewarded, as this is a fascinating score, very well performed by the Austrian Radio Symphony Orchestra directed by Ernst Märzendorfer, a name I had previously associated with the classical period, primarily Haydn.

Thirdly, the singers acquit themselves with equal distinction, in music which is frequently taxing. This is especially true of the title role, sung by one-time Karajan favourite, the Croatian Dunja Vejzović.

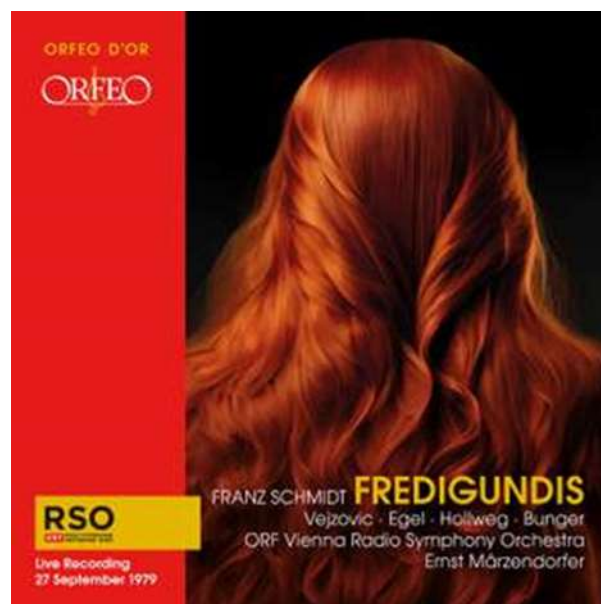
Curiously, elements of all three Wagnerian roles she recorded with the Maestro morph into Schmidt's character of Fredigundis. There is a soupçon of sorcery (Ortrud), an unsatisfied seductress (Kundry), and *eventually* a figure of redemption (Senta) – albeit that Wagner's character is true to her redemptive vision from the start – not after a bout of seduction and murder!

Set in the North Western territory of Sixth Century Franconia, the plot (no more absurd than many in opera)

is grounded in historical fact, which Schmidt further interprets through the lens of writer Felix Dahn's 1886 novel.

Fredigundis is a red-headed siren, seemingly enamoured of the noble Landerich, but who witnesses the arrival of Chilperic and his new queen, fatally ensnaring the monarch with her glance. She sneaks into the castle, disposes of Queen Gailswinth and seeks the crown for herself. The abandoned Landerich meanwhile seeks solace in the priesthood, rises through the ranks, becoming Praetextatus, Bishop of Rouen. Agonising over whether he should crown the new queen, he ultimately acquiesces.

Ensnared as the monarch Fredigundis gives birth to Chilperic's son, but retribution for her sins is at hand; first, the child dies, and then she mistakenly gives a poisonous draught (intended for her own suicide) to the King. Chilperic duly dies and is entombed in Rouen Cathedral. Fredigundis gives instructions that the tomb remain uncovered since she is determined to perform a strange, ancient rite to bring the monarch back to life. This fails, and the tomb cover crashes down over the body, entrapping the Queen's gorgeous red hair. Observed by the Bishop, Fredigundis' hair turns white, a sign of her acknowledged guilt and her pleas for redemption.



Source: [prestomusic](https://www.prestomusic.com)

In terms of style and sound-world – think Wagnerian historical-mythical drama, with the textural overtones of both the Bayreuth master and those of Richard Strauss.

All in all, as I implied, a bit bonkers in terms of plot, but a task here successfully realised and performed with commitment and style. It's unusual, and will certainly never be a repertoire work, but in this anniversary year is well worth revival on disc...maybe occasionally on stage? ENO anyone?

**I am not alone in this observation – see for example reviews by my esteemed colleague Paul Corfield Godfrey on the MusicWeb International website*

Ian Bailey

Kabeláč: Complete Chamber Music Capriccio 5522 (3 CDs)

Before these discs arrived I knew the name of Miloslav Kabeláč (1908–1979) but not his music. I am now keen to hear more. Born in Prague, he studied composition, conducting and piano at the Prague Conservatory. From 1932 he was music director at Czech Radio, where he conducted world premieres of works by Schoenberg, Hindemith and Dallapiccola. He lost this post and the possibility of public conducting in 1942 because he refused to divorce his wife, who was Jewish. He was then hidden in a hospital by sympathetic doctors, thus escaping enlistment for forced labour, and concentrated on composition, completing the first of his eight symphonies and other large pieces, plus many chamber works. For three years from 1945 his music was performed, but after 1948 it did not find favour with the communist regime. The more liberal policies of Alexander Dubček brought Kabeláč some national and international recognition, but “normalization” after the suppression of the Prague Spring excluded him and his music from public musical life.

This compilation of 12 works, giving in total three hours music, claims to present his complete chamber music. But the excellent accompanying booklet tells us that “well over half of Kabeláč’s compositions from the official catalogue of works have not been published, and numerous pieces have been neither premiered nor recorded to this day”, so there may be more to come. I hope so, as what is recorded here shows Kabeláč to be an adventurous composer with a strong individual voice.

The works presented cover most of the composer’s active life, from 1935 to 1976, in a wide range of styles. There are two pieces for solo flute (*Improvisations on an original theme*, Op. 29b, and *Short Suite (Partita piccolo)*, Op. 13), six for a solo instrument and piano (*Ballade for violin and piano*, Op. 27, and *Two Works for violin*, Op. 12, *Sonata for cello and piano*, Op. 9, *Sonata for horn*, Op. 2, *Sonatina for oboe*, Op. 24, *Suite for saxophone*, Op. 39), all expertly accompanied by pianist Robert Kolinsky who seems to be the driving force behind the whole project.



Source: [Capriccio](#)

Then there is a set of eight subtle and elusive Bagatelles for flute and harp, called *Lamenti e risolini*, Op. 53, and three works for larger forces, described below. All the performers are top class, as are the recordings, though the quiet bottom notes of the piano, which are used frequently, sound rather muffled. Full Czech, German and English translations are given. The works are not presented chronologically or by instrumentation, so each CD on its own gives a satisfying varied programme.

There are no duds here, but I particularly liked the early *Horn sonata* of 1935–36 (played by Stefan Dohr), and the *Suite for saxophone* (Kathi Wagner) and the *Oboe Sonatina* (Albrecht Mayer), both written over thirty years later. Kabeláč explores the full potential of all three instruments, with a matching range of piano accompaniment, taking us into unfamiliar but attractive territory. This contrasts with the set of *Hunting Songs for baritone and four horns*, Op. 37. These seven short folk-like Czech poems are set in an appropriately simple style (I was reminded of *Der Freischütz*) for baritone (sung by the excellent Jan Martinik), with some gorgeous close harmony from the horns. These would make a welcome addition to any recital – if there happen to be four horns available.

Two more larger works complete this compilation. The *Wind Sextet*, Op. 8, of 1939 has been recorded elsewhere and makes an admirable companion piece to Janáček’s *Mládí*. The instrumental requirements are almost the same, but with more doubling: flute/piccolo, oboe/cor anglais, clarinet 1/alto saxophone, clarinet 2/bass clarinet, bassoon and horn. The composition features some of Kabeláč’s musical fingerprints: the concentration on a couple of musical intervals (minor second and minor third in this case), and the use of an “artificial scale” of his devising.

Finally comes Kabeláč's last chamber work, the sonata *Fated Dramas of Man*, Op. 56, for trumpet, percussion, piano and narrator. This was written in 1975–76, when his music was banned and his health was declining. Kabeláč incorporates parts of his other works in what can be seen as a distillation of his life's work. In four movements for narrator and instruments (*Hamlet*, *Golgotha*, *Stabat Mater*, *Comenius*) with three spoken interludes between them (all delivered, in German, with affecting feeling by Stefan Kominsky) the composer reflects on existential questions of life and religion, in a moving farewell at the end of a troubled life.

Some of Kabeláč's larger works can be found on YouTube, as can a stimulating exploration and performance of his *Mysterium času* (*Mystery of Time*) by the Czech Philharmonic Youth Orchestra (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D73irBibw7E>). But this compilation of his chamber works can certainly be recommended as a starting point.

Terry Heard

Trio Bohémo: Smetana *Piano Trio in G minor* and Schubert *Piano Trio in E flat*. Supraphon SU 4344-2 and on Dolby Atmos

I first heard Trio Bohémo in February 2022 at St John's Smith Square in London, shortly after they had received the Parkhouse Award. From their particularly expressive performance of Dvořák's *Piano Trio in E minor*, *Dumky*, Op. 90. I thought that the musicians in this talented young Czech trio were going to become something very special (see Newsletter no. 138 pages 7–8). They have won several other prizes, including the International Johannes Brahms Competition and the International Joseph Haydn Competition to name just two. They have performed on well-known concert platforms including Wigmore Hall. Now I am delighted to report that Supraphon released their first CD in August 2024.

In this the 200th anniversary of the birth of Smetana, it is appropriate that not only operas and symphonic works by 'the Father of Czech Music' should be widely performed, but also his beautiful *Piano Trio in G minor*. In Newsletter no. 147, Supraphon's recordings of Smetana's *Complete Operas* SU4335-2 were reviewed. It is now poignant that Supraphon has chosen to release his only piano trio, performed by Trio Bohémo, and that it is Supraphon's first classical recording to be also available on Dolby Atmos, enabling playback using special 'surround technology'.

What is also remarkable about this recording is that like that of Dvořák's *Complete Piano Trios* (SU4319) by the Pavel Haas Trio, (See Newsletter no. 144, page 11), it has been made not in the Czech Republic but in Britain, this time not in Monmouthshire but in Suffolk at the Britten



Source: [Supraphon](#)

Pears Studio, Snape Maltings. Moreover, Supraphon have employed the same recording producer, Andrew Keener, who with the Trio Bohémo has created two memorable recordings of Smetana's *Piano Trio in G minor* and Schubert's *Piano Trio in E flat*.

In the 'teaser' to this recording [Trio Bohémo - Smetana & Schubert: Piano Trios \(teaser\) \(youtube.com\)](#).....you will have an idea of the energy and sensitivity of Trio Bohémo in approaching both works. They clearly love working with the recording team at Snape Maltings, where they have come to feel at home for concerts and for making this recording with top-class technicians in England. Andrew Keener summarises his feelings about their work together, saying that it is wonderful to hear native Czech musicians play their music with such passion, understanding and attention to detail. They have made the structure of the work hang together and bring out its emotions. He says: *These young Czech musicians... love this piece to bits, and it shows.*

The Smetana *Piano Trio* is paired with Schubert's *Piano Trio in E flat*, which the Trio Bohémo chose as particularly brilliant. They point out that although nearly three decades separate the two compositions, Schubert's written in 1827 and Smetana's in 1855, they were both written when both composers were about 30 years old, approximately the same age as they are now as performers. The personalities of the two composers and the circumstances were certainly different, with Smetana writing shortly after the death of his four-year-old daughter, Bendřiška, and Schubert writing for friends to enjoy with him at home, admittedly at a time which was to be towards the end of his short life.

I cannot help comparing the sensitive sound and technical brilliance of the young Trio Bohémo here with that of the well-established Pavel Haas Trio in the Dvořák *Piano Trios*. Supraphon have made both recordings into masterpieces, which I thoroughly recommend.

Susan Jenkinson

DVOŘÁK: *Complete works for violin and piano*
Jiří Vodička (violin) and David Mareček (piano)
Supraphon SU 4340-2

Here is an extremely enjoyable and desirable new pair of CDs, containing all the compositions Dvořák wrote for violin and piano, and adding Fritz Kreisler's arrangement for violin and piano of the famous *Humoresque No. 7*. The performances were recorded in the Dvořák Hall of Rudolfinum at the end of last year and should appeal to all lovers of Dvořák's music.

Two of the pieces, the *Romance*, Op. 11, and *Mazurek*, Op. 49, will be familiar, especially in the form with an orchestra. As the booklet notes by Jan Kachlík convey, both were originally composed in that form; it is interesting here to have the opportunity to hear the composer's arrangements with piano. The delightfully engaging *Sonatina*, Op. 100, written by the composer in his American period for two of his children to perform, is also well-known, as are the *Four Romantic Pieces*, Op. 75. The *Sonata*, Op. 57, composed around the same period, as the *Violin Concerto*, is a reflective work which is surprisingly less often performed outside the Czech lands – Jan Kachlík suggests the immediate inspiration was Brahms's *Violin Sonata*, Op. 78, which Dvořák had heard in Prague performed by Joachim and Brahms himself. The beautiful *Nocturne*, Op. 40, exists in various other forms and the *Capriccio*, B. 81, is a virtuoso piece with a slightly uncertain compositional history as the booklet note suggests. The *Ballad*, Op. 15/1, is a five-minute sombre slow movement.

The excellent performers are both connected with the Czech Philharmonic. Members who have watched the orchestra's New Year's concert this year – still available to watch on the orchestra's Facebook page if you scroll down to the beginning of the year – will have heard Jiří Vodička's dedicated and distinctive performances of two of the *Romance* and *Mazurek* in their orchestral guise, with Jakub Hrůša conducting – the concert began with the *Nocturne* in its orchestral form, added to the programme after the tragic shootings at the University building across the road the previous month. Jiří Vodička is also on the roster of leaders for the orchestra. In the Unitel video series of Martinů symphonies conducted by Jiří Bělohlávek and Jakub Hrůša – written about in a previous Newsletter – Vodička can be seen as the leader in *Symphonies 3 to 6*, playing the important violin solo passages in the last two. The pianist in the performances on the new CDs, David Mareček, is also managing director of the Czech Philharmonic.

Supraphon has over the years issued excellent recordings of several of these works with violinist Josef Suk and pianists Josef Hálka and Jan Panenka and Pavel Šporcl and pianist Petr Jiříkovský, but this is the first set to claim to be complete. These performers strongly uphold



Source: [Supraphon](#)

the traditions of their predecessors. Jiří Vodička has a distinctive tone with an attractive bite and an instinctive and appropriately straightforward sympathy for the idiom of all these pieces, as well as virtuosity where required. David Mareček is a discrete and perceptive partner, less assertive than Josef Hálka and Jan Panenka in their performances with Josef Suk.

These performances and the accompanying booklet are available for download as well as in CD pair.

Mark Todd

Anton Reicha: *Chamber Works*
Albert Schweitzer Ensemble
CPO 555 397-2 (2 CDs)

Antonín Rejcha (later known as Anton or Antoine Reicha) was born in Prague in 1770 but after the death of his father a few months later he was brought up by his grandfather and uncle Josef (himself a virtuoso cellist and composer) in Klatovy, studying piano, violin and flute. In 1785 they moved to Bonn, where Josef conducted the court orchestra and Reicha played alongside his contemporary and lifelong friend Beethoven. When the French invaded Bonn in 1794, Reicha moved to Hamburg, where he taught, composed, and also studied mathematics and philosophy. After failing to establish himself in Paris he moved to Vienna (1801–06), becoming a friend of Haydn, and then back to Paris in 1806, where he lived until his death in 1836, taking French citizenship in 1829. In Paris, he was Professor of Counterpoint and Fugue at the Conservatoire, and he is best known as a teacher and music theorist, exploring innovations such as bitonality and polyrhythm. Among his numerous distinguished pupils were Liszt, Berlioz, Gounod, Farrenc and Franck.

Reicha was a prolific and fluent composer, mainly of piano or chamber works. Little of his music is played today, except for his pioneering wind quintets (25 of them). This recording of some of his other chamber music is therefore very welcome. There are four works, each lasting about half an hour, three for unusual forces. The recording is warm, clear and well-balanced throughout.

The *Grand Quatuor Concertant for piano, flute, bassoon and cello* is a virtuoso showpiece which the German-based Albert Schweitzer Ensemble players (Kiveli Dörken, Angela Firkins, Eckart Hüner and Tanja Tetzlaff respectively) dispatch with aplomb. But I found the repetitions in the 15 minute first movement tedious, and the florid piano part a bit too much. More attractively written for domestic consumption is the *Trio in G major for flute, violin* (Florian Donderer) and *cello*, easy on the ear if not particularly memorable. Unusually the *Menuetto*, often the shortest and lightest movement, is here the longest, with a full-scale development section. The most conventional of the four works (also the shortest) is the *Trio in A for violin, cello and piano*, the last of six trios written in 1824. This has a particularly attractive *Andante* movement with a turn of melody showing that Reicha had not forgotten his Czech roots.

For me the most interesting work is the *Quintet in E♭* for the unusual, perhaps unique, combination of *flute, clarinet* (Martin Spangenberg), *horn* (Tillmann Höffs), *bassoon and viola* (Florian Donderer again). This combination works very well. Replacing the standard quintet's oboe with the viola makes for a gentler mellow sonority. The five instruments are treated as equals, and all have their virtuoso moments. There are six movements: a short *Adagio* leading to an *Allegro assai* using the same

theme, a first minuet with two trios, an *Andante*, a much faster scherzo-like second minuet with tricky off-beat accents (impossible to dance to), and finally a theme with five variations in which each instrument takes its turn in the spotlight, ending together in a boisterous *Presto*. All the players have the technique to take Reicha's considerable challenges in their stride, and everyone seems to be having fun.

So here are four rare pieces, all well played and recorded, with at least one distinctive enough to be worth a place in today's chamber concert repertoire.

Terry Heard

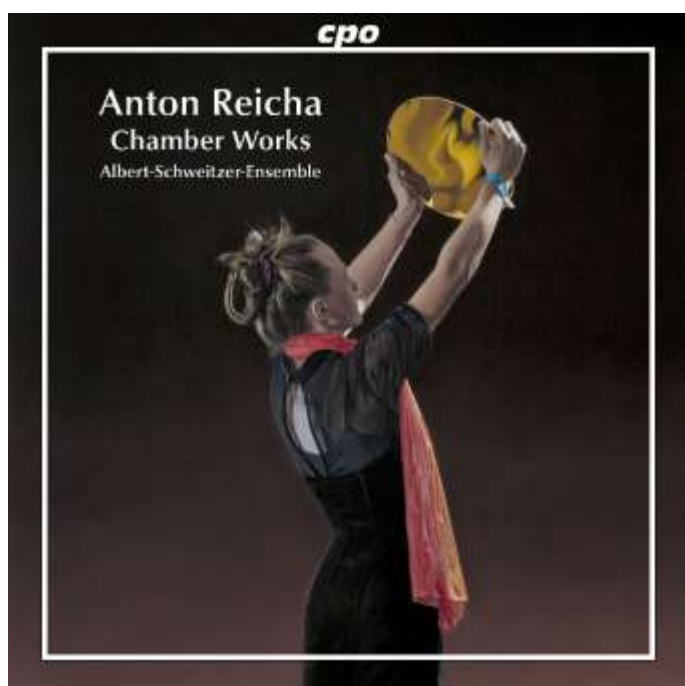
Franz Liszt and Czech Music ArcoDiva, UP0247 (2023) Tomáš Víšek (piano)

In the year of Czech music and Smetana's anniversary, it is useful to explore the highways and byways of piano repertoire, particularly of the more virtuosic variety. This thoughtful CD provides interesting insights into the links between Liszt, the development of the piano mechanism and Czech music. Václav Tomášek (1774–1850) is the least known of the four composers presented here and this neglect is difficult to understand. The three *Dithyrambs*, Op. 65, which open this recital disc, are a revelation. Pre-dating Liszt (he was 7 years old at the time of composition) they reveal an energy and brilliance requiring considerable technique and flair to bring off these pioneering compositions.

The connection between Liszt and Smetana is well documented. Smetana wrote to Liszt in 1848, dedicating his Op. 1 to him and also asking for a loan, which Liszt declined to give. Smetana esteemed Liszt to the extent that he said "I am an instrument of a higher power. With the help and grace of God I shall one day be a Liszt in technique and a Mozart in composition". Smetana, unlike Dvořák, the third Czech composer on this CD certainly possessed the technique.

On the remainder of the CD there are two Liszt pieces, four by Smetana and two by Dvořák. Both the Lisztian pieces have a Czech connection. The mighty paraphrase on the so-called *Hussiten-Lied* (not, in fact, Hussite at all) and the simpler, more reverential *Slavímo slavno sleveni* (*Let's celebrate glorious Slavs!*)

Liszt visited Prague on several occasions which enabled Dvořák to play the viola in the *Dante Symphony* under the composer's baton, and other works. There is no record of the two meeting and speaking to each other or of any later encounter. But the influence of the concept of the symphonic poem was brilliantly taken up later by Dvořák



Source: [Chandos](#)

in the setting of poems from Erben's *Kytice*. The two Dvořák pieces are *U mohyly* (*At the Hero's Grave*, Op. 85 no. 12) and *Na Svaté Hoře* and represent two different aspects of the composer – the former virtuostic and grandiose and the latter impressionistic conjuring up a picture of one of Dvořák's favourite places (the pilgrimage shrine near Příbram).

Macbeth and the *Fantasy on Czech Songs* by Smetana are equally contrasting. *Macbeth* was unpublished in the composer's lifetime and the manuscript has few performance indications. It is, in effect, a symphonic poem for piano inspired by Macbeth's encounter with the Witches. It is monumental in effect with its use of the whole keyboard. The *Fantasy* is constructed around 4 well-known tunes of the time and was composed in 1862. The final two pieces are from Smetana's six-part cycle *Rêves* (Dreams) and date towards the end of his life: *By the Castle*, and *Celebrations of Czech Peasants*. The former in the form of a tribute to Liszt, and the latter full of rustic gaiety.

This CD is highly enjoyable and Víšek does full justice to the required fireworks, playing with assured panache. It is excellently recorded, with informative liner notes.

David Roberts



Source: [prestomusic](https://www.prestomusic.com)

Letters to the Editor

Hello Tomy

How nice it was to see in the last newsletter (Newsletter #147, page 3) a picture of the glass harmonica player in Prague. I saw him back in March, while I was waiting for friends from the International Martinů Circle before a meal in the Czech restaurant in *Obecní dům* (Municipal House). I ended up having a chat with him for a few minutes and he even gave me a copy of the CDs that he was selling. Your note in the newsletter implies that two players alternate at this location, but the man I spoke to was called Petr Spatina. When I told him I was the IMC chairman, he said he was embarrassed that he did not read music, but what does it matter when you play with that level of skill?

When I came home I decided to see if he had any videos on YouTube, which he does. To my surprise, he had a fleeting taste of fame in this country, having appeared on the Jonathan Ross show several years ago! I'm glad you enjoyed the encounter as much as I did, and thanks for the reminder of a very pleasant and most unexpected musical treat.

Best wishes

Michael Crump

To see these videos, search on YouTube for Petr Spatina. Here is the [link](#).

Recent CDs on Czech and Slovak Labels

New Recordings on Czech/Slovak Labels

This list covers releases of Czech/Slovak music issued on CD and DVD during the period approximately from August to November 2024. I am relying largely on the Široký dvůr website for information on smaller labels.

Arco Diva

UP0251-2

Dvořák: *Love Songs/Gypsy Melodies/InFolk Tone/Songs from the Dvůr Kralove Manuscript* (Ester Pavlů/Charles Spencer)

UP0253-2

Krček: *String Quartets Nos. 8-13* (Czech Philharmonic Quartet)

- UP0242-2 Sommer: *Chamber Music for Strings* (Sommerová/Čepický/Sommer Chamber Orchestra)
- Czech Radio**
- CR1216-2 Soukup, L.: *Scandinavian Impressions* (Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra/Stil)
- Other Labels**
- SJK016 Kubelík, J. *Violin Compositions* (V. and M. Vilímec)
- PICD0062231. Teml: *Psalm/Missa Piccola/Missa 2022* (Piccolo Coro/Piccola Orchestra/Valášek)
- Supraphon**
- SU4350-2 'Pilgrimage Musical Journey of Krystof Harant to Jerusalem/Circa 1600'
(Cappella Mariana Constantinople)

New Recordings on Non-Czech/Slovak Labels

This list covers releases of Czech/Slovak music issued on CD and DVD during the period approximately from August to November 2024.

Archipel

- ARPCD0874 Dvořák/Beethoven: *Piano Concerto/ Symphony No. 1/Piano Concerto No. 1* (New York Philharmonic/NBC Symphony (Firkušný/Backhaus/Cantelli)

Audite

- Audite 97832 Dvořák/Smetana: *Symphony No. 8/The Wild Dove/Libuše Prelude* (Lucerne Festival Historic Performances/CPO/Neumann)

Berlin Classics

- 030341BC Dvořák: *Cello Concerto/Works for Cello and Piano* (Kloekner/Dörken/SWR Symphony Orchestra/Mäcelaru)

Capriccio (Naxos)

- C5534 Dvořák/Elgar: *Cello Concertos* (Harriet/Tomkünstler Orchestra/Sieghart) Krijgh

Chandos (Naxos)

- CHAN20272 Smetana/Suk/Coleridge-Taylor/Martin: *Piano Trios* (Neave Trio)

CPO (Naxos)

- 5554742 Labitzky, J. and A: *Waltzes, Polkas, Marches* (Soloists/Nuremberg Symphony Orchestra/Simons)

Eloquence

- ELQ4846393 *Rudolf Firkušný Edition (12 CDs)* (DG, Decca and Westminster recordings)

Gramola (Naxos)

- 92002 Dvořák/Bartók: *Symphony No. 9/Concerto for Orchestra* (Chicago Symphony Orch./Reiner)

LSO Live

- LSO0561 Dvořák: *Symphonies Nos. 6-9 (4 SACDs)* (LSO/C. Davis)

Naxos

- 8.504059 Schmidt: *Complete Symphonies (4CDs)*(Malmö Symphony Orchestra /Sinaiaky)
- 8.574562 Vranický (Wranitzky): *Symphonies in C and D/Merkur (Vol. 7)* (Czech Chamber Philharmonic Pardubice/Štílec)

Pentatone

- PTC5187216 Dvořák: *Symphonies Nos. 7-9/ Overtures Carnival, Nature's Realm, Othello* (2CDs)
(CPO/Bychkov)
- PTC5187239 Mysliveček/Mozart: *Flute Concertos* (Ana de la Vaga/English Chamber Orchestra)

SOMM (Naxos)

- Ariadne5032 Smetana: *Bartered Bride Overture/Má Vlast (exc.)/Wallenstein's Camp/String Quartet No. 1* (orch. Szell) (NBC SO/Boston SO/Szell)

Sony

- 19802825972 Dvořák/Ukrainian Composers: *Cello Concerto/Short Works for Cello* (Raphaella Gromes/National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine/Sirenko)

Unitel Editions (DVD/Blu-ray)

- 811008/811104 Martinů: *The Greek Passion* (Soloists/Vienna State Opera/Pascal)

Bill Marsden

Recent Publications

Bärenreiter

BA 10440	Dvořák, A	<i>Rusalka's Song to the Moon</i> for Soprano & Piano (Cz-Eng-Ger). Urtext 979-0-2601-0988-9, £ 11.00
BA 10421	Dvořák, A	<i>Suite in A major for Piano</i> , Op.98. Urtext, 979-0-2601-0945-2, £ 13.50
BA 11578	Smetana, B	<i>Easy Piano Pieces and Dances</i> . 979-0-2601-0987-2, £ 13.50

All titles are available to buy from Bärenreiter's UK webshop at www.barenreiter.co.uk.

Dvořák Society's Record Service and Sales

Books are still available for sale through the E-shop with a special anniversary offer of 75% off all titles, save for the latest Journal and one or two non-DS titles only published in 2023. If anyone is interested in obtaining second-hand CDs of Czech and Slovak music – a list of 300 or so titles is available on request from the Secretary. A small donation to the Society would be appreciated in exchange for any CDs ordered.

M. David Roberts

Emmy Destinn Foundation concert to celebrate the Year of Czech Music 2024

Beautiful arias and songs by Antonín Dvořák, Bedřich Smetana and Leoš Janáček performed by the winners and finalists of the Emmy Destinn Young Singers Awards 2023

Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel Hampstead, NW3 1NG

Saturday 9 November 2024, 7:30 pm. Tickets are £10 at the door and include a glass of wine.



Event Diary

Compiled by John Beale.

Additional concerts, entered by other members, can be found on the 'events' tab of our website, www.dvorak-society.org. Our Facebook Group, a private group with over 200 members, is being increasingly used to advertise online concerts, events, YouTube links and other matters which would be of interest to members. Its great advantage is its immediacy.

UK

Date	Programme	Performers and Location
London		
9 Nov 24 7.30 pm	Arias from operas by Dvořák, Smetana and Janáček	Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel, Hampstead, London NW3 1NG. Emmy Destinn Foundation
10 Nov 24 11.30 am	Martinů: <i>Quartet for Oboe, violin, cello, piano</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60056 , 020 7935 2141
10 Nov 24 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Cypresses B152: Já vím, že v sladké nadeji V té sladké moci očí tvých Zde hledím na ten drahý list Nad krajem vévodi lehký spánek</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP Pavel Haas Quartet https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60058 , 020 7935 2141
30 Nov 24 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Violin Concerto</i> Dvořák: <i>Symphony No 8 in G</i>	Southbank Centre, Belvedere Rd, London SE1 8XX English Chamber Orchestra 020 3879 9555 www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/english-chamber-orchestra-with-pavel-sporcl/
1 Dec 24 11.30 am	Dvořák: <i>String Quartet in Ab Op 105</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP Escher String Quartet https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60094 , 020 7935 2141
8 Dec 24 11.30 am	Janáček: <i>Violin Sonata</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP, 020 7935 2141 Elena Urioste, Tom Poster, www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60106
22 Dec 24 11.30 am	Dvořák: <i>Piano Trio No 2 in G minor</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP, 020 7935 2141 Salieca Piano Trio, https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60129
3 Jan 25 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Piano Quintet in A Op 81</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP Peasmarsh Chamber Music Festival 020 7935 2141 https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/whats-on/202501031930
6 Jan 25 7.30 pm	Suk: <i>Piano Trio in C minor</i> Novák: <i>Piano Trio No. 2 Op 27 'Quasi una ballata'</i> Martinů: <i>Piano Trio No. 2 in D minor</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP Smetana Trio https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/whats-on/202501061930 020 7935 2141
15 18 23 27 30 Jan 25, 1 Feb 7.00 pm	Janáček: <i>Jenůfa</i>	Royal Opera House Bow St, London WC2E 9DD, 020 7304 4000 www.rbo.org.uk/tickets-and-events/jenufa-dates
18 Jan 25 1.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>String Quartet no. 12 in F, 'American Quartet', Op. 96</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP, 020 7935 2141 Javus Quartet https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/whats-on/202501181300
21 Jan 25 7.30 pm	Schulhoff: <i>5 Pieces for String Quartet</i> Martinů: <i>String Quartet No. 5</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP, 020 7935 2141 Pavel Haas Quartet, Boris Giltburg https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/whats-on/202501211930

Date	Programme	Performers and Location
27 Jan 25 1.00 pm	Janáček: <i>Pohádka</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP, 020 7935 2141 Anastasia Kobekina cello; Jean-Sélim Abdelmoula piano https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/whats-on/202501271300
South East		
23 Nov 24 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 8</i>	Brighton Dome Concert Hall, Church St, Brighton and Hove, Brighton BN1 1UE London Philharmonic Orchestra www.lpo.org.uk/event/isata-kanneh-mason-plays-beethoven-brighton-dome/ 01273 709709
8 Dec 24 3.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 8</i>	Eastbourne Theaters Compton St, Eastbourne BN21 4BP London Philharmonic Orchestra www.lpo.org.uk/event/strauss-horn-concerto-no-2-eastbourne-theatres/ , 01323 412000
West Midlands		
8 Nov 24 7.30pm	Smetana: <i>Quartet No 1 in E minor 'From my Life'</i>	Royal Pump Rooms, The Parade CV32 4AA Jubilee String Quartet www.Leamingtonmusic.org , 01926 334418
12 Nov 24 2.15 pm	Smetana: <i>Vltava</i>	Symphony Hall Broad St, Birmingham B1 2EA CBSO www.cbso.co.uk 0121 780 3333
15 Nov 24 1.00 pm	Pavel Haas: <i>Wind Quintet Op 10</i>	Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, Birmingham B15 2TT Lumas Winds Barber Concerts. Free
20 Nov 24 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Piano Trio in E minor Op 90 'Dumky'</i>	Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Castle Square, SY8 1AS Roscoe Piano Trio www.Ludlowassemblyrooms.co.uk 01584 878141
19 Jan 25 3.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Cypresses</i> Martinů: <i>String Quartet No 5</i> Smetana: <i>Quartet No 1 in E minor 'From my Life'</i>	Malvern Theaters, Grange Road, WR14 3HB, 07970 569293 Pavel Haas Quartet www.malvern-concert-club.co.uk
22 Jan 25 7.30 pm	Martinů: <i>String Quartet No 5</i> Janáček: <i>String Quartet No 2 'Intimate Letters'</i>	Pittville Pump Rom, East Approach Drive Cheltenham GL52 3JE Pavel Haas Qauartet www.cheltenhamtownhall.org.uk 01242 528764
Scotland		
6 Dec 24 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 9 From the New World</i>	Usher Hall Lothian Rd, Edinburgh EH1 2EA 0131 228 1155 https://www.rsno.org.uk/liveevent/dvoraks-new-world-symphony/
7 Dec 24 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 9 From the New World</i>	Glasgow Royal Concert Hall 2 Sauchiehall St, Glasgow G2 3NY 0141 353 8000 https://www.rsno.org.uk/liveevent/dvoraks-new-world-symphony/

International

Date	Programme	Performers and Location
Opera of the National Theatre Prague, Národní 2, 110 00 Nové Město www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en		
7 9 14 23 Nov 24, 7.00 pm	Fibich: <i>Šárka</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/programme

Date	Programme	Performers and Location
5 Dec 24 5.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/rusalka-1520151?t=2024-12-05-17-00
8 Dec 24 5.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>The Devil and Kate</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/cert-a-kaca-1520135?t=2024-12-08-17-00
11 Jan 25 5.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>The Devil and Kate</i>	www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/cert-a-kaca-1520135
1 Jan 25 5.00 pm	Smetana: <i>Libuše</i>	www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/libuse-opera-1520281
December 24 20 7.00 pm 26 5.00 pm January 25 10 7.00 pm	Janáček: <i>The Cunning Little Vixen</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/prihody-lisky-bystrousky-l-janacek-1639672
Brno Opera , Rooseveltova 31, 602 00 Brno-střed www.ndbrno.cz		
1 – 24 Nov 24	Janáček Brno Festival	Details of concerts can be found in Newsletter 145 Pages 22 23
3 4 Dec 24 7.00 pm	Janáček: <i>The Excursions of Mr Brouček</i>	https://janacek-brno.cz/en/3-12-2024-leos-janacek-the-excursions-of-mr-broucek/
6 30 Dec 24 7.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/program/rusalka-10/ https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/program/rusalka-11/
10 Dec 24 7.00 pm	Martinů: <i>The Miracles of Mary</i>	https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/program/hry/
4 Jan 25 5.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i>	https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/program/prodana-nevesta-4/
25 Jan 25 6.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/program/rusalka-12/
Ostrava Opera, Antonín Dvořák Theatre Ostrava www.ndm.cz		
13 Nov 24 6.30 pm	Smetana: <i>The Secret</i>	https://www.ndm.cz/en/opera/instance/6327-the-secret/2024-11-13/76688/
24 Nov 24 3.00 pm 30 Nov 24 6.30 pm	Janáček: <i>The Cunning Little Vixen</i>	https://www.ndm.cz/en/opera/instance/6305-the-cunning-little-vixen/2024-11-24/76696/ https://www.ndm.cz/en/opera/instance/6305-the-cunning-little-vixen/2024-11-30/76697/
5 Dec 24 6.30 pm	Smetana: <i>The Brandenburgers in Bohemia</i>	https://www.ndm.cz/en/opera/instance/6329-the-brandenburgers-in-bohemia/2024-12-05/76803/
28 Dec 24 4.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://www.ndm.cz/en/opera/instance/5666-rusalka/2024-12-28/76844/
18 Jan 25 6.30 pm	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i>	https://www.ndm.cz/en/opera/instance/6177-the-bartered-bride/2025-01-18/76854/
Plzeň Opera J.K. Tyl Theatre Smetanovy sady 16, 301 00 Plzeň, www.djkt.eu/en/opera		
2 Nov 24 7.00 pm 22 Nov 24 11.00 am	Janáček: <i>The Diary of One Who Disappeared</i>	https://www.djkt.eu/en/repertoire/the-diary-of-one-who-disappeared-2015
5 Nov 24 1 & 19 Dec 24 7.00 pm	Martinů: <i>Juliette</i>	https://www.djkt.eu/en/repertoire/juliette-2024
8 29 Nov 24 7.00 pm 31 Dec 24 6.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Kiss</i>	https://www.djkt.eu/en/repertoire/the-kiss-2024

Date	Programme	Performers and Location
10 Nov 24 7 Dec 24 7.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Devil's Wall</i>	https://www.djkt.eu/en/repertoire/devils-wall-2024
16 26 27 Nov 5 Dec 24 7.00 pm	Martinů: <i>Chapbook</i> (ballet)	https://www.djkt.eu/en/repertoire/chapbook-2024
6 17 Dec 24 7.00 pm	Smetana: <i>Dalibor</i>	https://www.djkt.eu/en/repertoire/dalibor-2022
20 Dec 24 7.00 pm	Jiří Antonín Benda: <i>Ariadne auf Naxos</i>	https://www.djkt.eu/en/programme
Slovak National Theatre Opera Bratislava SND New Building Pribinova 17, 819 01 Bratislava www.snd.sk		
12 Nov 24 11.00 am 13 Nov 24 7.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i>	https://snd.sk/en/performance/15654/the-bartered-bride/2024-11-12/11-00
17 Jan 25 6.00 pm 18 Jan 25 11.00 am 6.00 pm 19 Jan 25 11.00 am	Dvořák: <i>The Devil and Kate</i>	https://snd.sk/en/performance/15734/cert-a-kaca/2025-01-18/11-00
31 Jan 25 11.00 am 1 Feb 25 6.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Kiss</i>	https://snd.sk/en/performance/15743/hubicka/2025-01-31/11-00

The Diary can only be compiled from information received. Please inform the Newsletter Editor (contact information on page 2) about events involving Czech and Slovak music and musicians.

Starting in 2023 the newsletter will be published in February, May, August and November.

The deadlines are 1st January, April, July and October, respectively.

Links to **Janáček Brno 2024** a music festival in the Czech Republic: <https://janacek-brno.cz/en/>.

The Society's website also carries information about events and the latest news. For events which fall outside the copy date schedule please use the form on the website, www.dvorak-society.org

The Society also has a Facebook page. Once you have been accepted, members and non-members alike can post items on the page. This is the most immediate method of highlighting information. Please visit the Facebook page, **The Dvořák Society for Czech and Slovak music**, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/294065791781477>

Photos from restored Dvořák's birth house in Nelahozeves



"Of course, they were not all such Masses as we gave on the yearly Church Festival, when works like Cherubini's D minor, Haydn's D minor, or Mozart's C major were performed. Ah! Those yearly performances. They might excite a smile now, but how lovely I thought them then! Indeed, it was being ever in the midst of this musical element that developed the feeling within me and made me long to become a real musician."

Top left: view of one of the upstairs rooms. In the front is the display case with copies of Dvořák's *Lužanská Omša*, the red book: a score of the Mass.

Top right: the new entrance to Dvořák's Birth House

Bottom right: the organ pipes with sound recordings of Dvořák's compositions for the organ.

Bottom left is a quotation of Dvořák about Church music.

All pictures were taken by David Roberts during his recent visit to Nelahozeves.