

The Dvořák Society

For Czech and Slovak Music

50th Anniversary: 1974 – 2024

Newsletter No. 146, May 2024



Jakub Hruša in conversation with Nigel Simeone at the Czech Embassy on 20 March 2024. Read more about this event on page 10. Photo: Erik Weisenpacher

PRESIDENT: Jakub Hruša

PATRONS: Karel Janovický† and Richard Phillips

VICE-PRESIDENTS: David Beveridge, Sylvie Bodorová, Petr Dvořák, Markéta Hallová, Steven Isserlis, Miloš Jurkovič, Radoslav Kvapil, Alena Němcová, Jan Smaczny .

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Between The Deadlines

Notes from your Chairman

It is a happy coincidence that our 50th anniversary falls in the same year as the designated Year of Czech Music.

On Tuesday, 12th March some of us attended the Panel Discussion at the Czech Embassy to mark the 200th anniversary of Smetana's birth organised by the Czech Centre. There was a distinguished panel of experts. Full details of the event can be found on page 9. For those unable to attend it is now possible to watch the discussion on the available YouTube link.

The first actual event of our anniversary year was the joint DS/BCSA meeting at the Czech Embassy Cinema on Wednesday evening 20th March for an "In Conversation" with our President Jakub Hrůša and member Nigel Simeone. The evening proved to be both entertaining and enlightening. Susan Jenkinson has provided a report of the evening on page 10 of the Newsletter. We are grateful for this opportunity to have this joint venture with BCSA and thank them for their technical organisation.

There is plenty more music to look forward to, not only at the Leamington Summer Festival (for details see page 23) in early May but also Prague Spring and the other regular CZ festivals. Preparations for the Society trip to Brno for the Janáček Festival in November are well underway. There are also provisional plans for a concert of piano music by Smetana at Velehrad given by Tomáš Víšek.

On 31st October Trinity Laban Conservatoire will be putting on a special anniversary orchestral concert of Czech/Slovak music. Full details will be announced in a later Newsletter, the Society website and Facebook page.

Three Committee members visited the Senate House on 14th March to discuss plans and arrangements to work on the DS Collection. We anticipate holding an exhibition at the Senate House of selected items from the Collection this Autumn.

This year we hope to support some Czech/Slovak music students to attend a summer school in the UK. Invitations have been sent to the music academies in Prague, Brno and Bratislava to nominate candidates for the [Cadenza Summer Music School](#). It will take place at the Purcell School in Bushey from 22 to 28 July. We have two candidates – Judita Dostálová, a viola player, and Josef Švec, a cellist both from Prague Conservatory, see page 17.

Some reminders. If any members have memorabilia such as concert programmes, or photographs of any events which have happened in the last 50 years please let either the Editor or me know. There will be a display at Leamington. There is a useful page on the website, [About Us](#), which gives a short history of the foundation of the Society in March 1974 and lists past founding members and past Presidents.

Can I reiterate that it would be wonderful if as many members as possible helped to celebrate our Anniversary by attending the Leamington Summer Festival in person and also be present or follow on Zoom the AGM and the talk on *Dvořák in England* to be given by one of our Vice-Presidents, Dr David Beveridge? Full details of the programme have been circulated and were included in the last Newsletter.

A reminder that our bumper book sale is ongoing. Books are available for sale through the e-shop with a special anniversary offer of 75% off all titles. A selection will be brought to Leamington. 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 donation to the Society would be appreciated in exchange for any CDs ordered.

M. David Roberts

This is your editor writing

March 2024 was very hectic. We were three times in London. First were the three events at the Wigmore Hall remembering the music created and performed at Terezín. Their reviews start on page 7. These were followed by two events at the Cinema of the Czech Embassy: David Roberts introduced them in his column.

April will be no less exciting as my wife and I will be in Prague for ten days, our first trip after COVID-19. We already have tickets to the new *Rusalka*! To my surprise the performance was almost sold out: I got tickets to the penultimate row in the 2nd balcony. I was less lucky with the staged performance of *The Cunning Little Vixen* at the Rudolfinum conducted by Jakub Hrůša: all tickets were sold out. Once in Prague, we will be looking for small, less advertised events: music is

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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The Newsletter is produced with generous financial help from the Czech Foreign Ministry.

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Founded 1974

everywhere in Prague. I plan to report in the next Newsletter.

But the real fun will start the first week of May: the 50th celebration of our Society, AGM followed by a lecture by David Beveridge on Dvořák in Britain. All this is wonderfully embedded in the Leamington Summer Music Festival 2024 with plenty of Czech music. The full programme is on page 23. I am looking forward to seeing (some) of you there!

The next deadline is 1 July 2024. Please let me have your reviews, contributions and comments. Without them, there will be no Newsletter...

Tomy Duby

Membership News

MEMBERSHIP

We offer a warm welcome to new members Lucie Wenigerová of London and David Moth and David Falconer of St Ives, Cornwall. Leamington Music has become a separate corporate member (contact person Helen Beecroft), on the retirement of Richard Phillips. Richard remains an individual member and our Patron.

Since our last Newsletter report we have been saddened to hear of the deaths of several members: Dorothy Pettinger (December 2022), Jennie McGregor-Smith (October 2023), Irena Goldscheider (Autumn 2023), our Patron Karel Janovický (formerly Bohuš Šimsa, January 2024), Marie Suková (Honorary Member, widow of violinist Josef Suk, January 2024).

MEMBERSHIP

Payment by electronic bank transfer is encouraged as the processing charge that the Society has to pay is less than for a cheque (not to mention the hassle of paying in cheques these days). If you pay a subscription by bank transfer please tell me by sending an email to either of the email addresses given below. The details for bank transfers are as follows:

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

NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

The cost of printing and posting four Newsletters each year now takes a considerable slice of the Society's income. Each Newsletter is now sent to overseas members by email, and about 20 UK members have also chosen to receive them by this method. We encourage other UK members to switch to e-Newsletters, to cut down on our printing, packaging and postage costs and reduce our carbon footprint. If you would like to make this change please send me an email to let me know.

To send Newsletters electronically, and for the other information for members which I circulate from time to time, I use the webmail facility of our website. Having worked well for the ten previous Newsletters, this suddenly started regarding the pdf attachment of Newsletter 145 as junk and refused to send it. Lengthy efforts by our Webmaster to get this resolved were fruitless, so now all I can do is send the link to the pdf Newsletter on our website, which members can then download if they wish. I regret this degradation of our service but have so far received no feedback to indicate that it caused a problem. I am always happy to send the pdf file individually to any member who requests it.

WEBSITE PASSWORD CHANGE

The password needed to gain access to the Members' Section of www.dvorak-society.org is changed each year, shortly after our Annual General Meeting. All members are sent the new password and told when the change will take effect. So please keep your eye open for this notification in May.

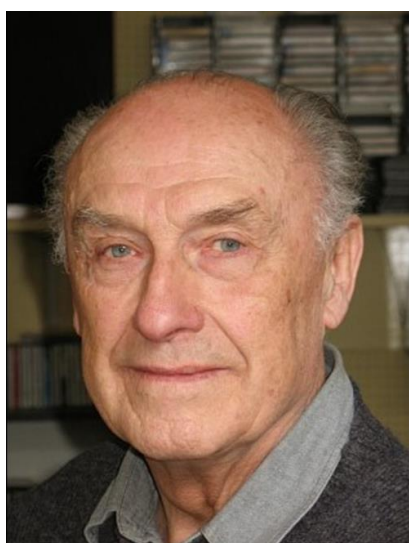
Terry Heard, Membership Secretary
67 Lewisham Hill, London SE13 7PL
020 8852 9263
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Obituary

Remembering Karel Janovický

It is with great sadness that we record the death of Karel Janovický on 9 January 2024 at the age of 93.

Karel was born Bohuš František Šimsa in Plzeň, Czechoslovakia on 18th February 1930. His father, who was also Bohuslav Šimsa, though originally a master tailor, was a baritone soloist in Plzeň opera from 1935–1948. His mother, a dressmaker, was also interested in opera. Karel started piano lessons at the age of five and it wasn't very long before he could accompany his father in his singing of lieder and arias. From a young age, he watched opera from the wings of the theatre.



Having been born in 1930 Karel's childhood and teenage years were much affected by the Nazi occupation of the country and then by the communist takeover of early 1948. While at school he had composed a *Piano Trio in A flat for piano, violin and viola* and this was performed at his secondary school with the arts professor playing the viola. He wanted to study conducting at the Prague Academy of Music but because his family was middle class and not of the right political persuasion his application was rejected.

During the brief period of freedom between the end of the war and the communist takeover Karel was an enthusiastic member of the scout movement and it was there that he met and fell in love with his future wife, Sylva Maiwaldová. He left Czechoslovakia in October 1949 because of perceived threats to the life of his future father-in-law, the economist and social democratic politician Professor Karel Maiwald. Professor Maiwald offered to include Karel in his family's escape plan, having promised Karel's father that he would look after Karel like his own son. In fact, Karel left a day or two later than the Maiwalds but was soon reunited with Sylva and her family. Karel had originally been living in a refugee camp for single men in Stuttgart, whereas Sylva and her family had been placed

in a family camp in Nuremberg. It was there that Karel and Sylva were married in May 1950.

Life was not easy in the camps where they spent a total of fourteen months but Karel sometimes composed and during that time he sent some of his compositions to the Surrey College of Music in Ewell where one of the college professors was Jan Šedivka, the then well-known Czech violinist. Karel was offered a place at the college and a small bursary. And so, at Christmas 1950 Karel arrived in England having been initially granted a visa for a two-year stay as a student. Sylva was allowed to accompany him.

Karel's visa was eventually extended for a further two years and during his time in Ewell he passed three external diploma examinations of the Royal College of Music, Royal Academy of Music and Trinity College of Music. Finally, he enrolled externally for a recently created M.Mus. degree at the Royal College of Music and passed. From November 1954 he did not need a further visa to stay in the country and he was allowed to work. His life in Britain had finally reached stability and a year later his father-in-law, who had a research post at Cambridge University, bought a house in Muswell Hill and the whole family moved in together.

Karel earned his living as a freelance musician, composer and teacher and as he gave public performances as a pianist he decided to change his name to the one we all knew him by. He did so because his name was identical to that of his father back in Czechoslovakia and this could have caused problems for his father.

Eventually, he started working for the BBC where he began as a freelance contributor, being accepted into the gramophone department of Radio 3 in 1964. He was occasionally drawn into the activities of the Czechoslovak service of the BBC World Service as a freelance reporter, eventually joining as a member of staff. From 1980 to 1990 he was head of the Czechoslovak section, being the first native Czech to serve in this capacity. During his period at the BBC Karel composed very little and it was in 1990 that he was able to return to Czechoslovakia after a forty-year absence.

At about this time, Karel joined the committee of the Dvořák Society and contributed in many ways: accompanying members on the first Society trips, giving talks, contributing articles for the Newsletter and becoming involved with musicians who gave recitals for us at the Czech Embassy, often composing a piece, especially for them. He was involved with the Emmy Destinn competition for young opera singers, regularly acting as a judge. Unfortunately, Sylva sustained a bad fall while Karel was with us on a trip to Brno in the autumn of 2009. He had to go home immediately and from that time on he seldom left her for any extended period.

Until recently Karel acted as Czech language coach for Covent Garden Opera and Welsh Opera. He continued to compose until a few months before his death and was a

member of our committee until the end. While he cared for the needs of Sylva she dealt with his emails and made sure that he was aware of all the material which arrived on her computer for him.

Karel will be much missed by all of us for his constant support, his wry sense of humour and his vast knowledge of music and all things Czech.

Annette Percy

Remembering Ian Trufitt

Fifty years is a long time and The Dvořák Society for Czech and Slovak Music was founded 50 years ago. The story can be found on our website. We will be celebrating this anniversary at the Leamington Festival which is on Thursday 2nd May to Monday 6th May. In addition to our AGM on Saturday 4th at Leamington there will of course be a cornucopia of Czech music during the weekend.

I joined the society shortly after its inaugural meeting but my memory now is a little vague and short on detail. I moved to London in the summer of 1974 but my family home is in south Birmingham and from there I visited Ian's cottage several times to chat about Czech music. It was a couple of miles south of Stratford-Upon-Avon. Sadly, he died in a road traffic accident on a local lane in 1976.

Ian is buried in the village churchyard in Wilmcote which is a couple of miles north of Stratford and just 13 miles from Leamington. The postcode is CV37 9XD. Any member who attends the AGM and perhaps a concert or two over the bank holiday weekend might consider the short drive to Wilmcote for a moment's quiet reflection at his graveside. It is situated at the rear of the village church in the fourth row from the back.

John Beale

25 years ago

Dvořák Society Newsletter No. 47 appeared in April 1999 and was my first issue as Editor.

The Society had celebrated its 25th Anniversary on 9th March and there had been celebrations in York, Southport, Edinburgh and London. In York a small gathering had been arranged by Tony and Muriel Pook; in Southport seven North West members had gathered for dinner at the home of Bill and Vera Marsden and Richard Beith had given a talk on *Czech and Slovak musicians on stamps and postal stationery*. In Edinburgh, there had been a party complete with cake at the home of Claire Orr, food being provided by Claire and Dorothy Pettinger, while in London the celebration had actually taken place on the 8th March at the Czech Centre which at that time was in Great Portland Street. About 60 people had attended, there had been a brief visit from the Slovak Ambassador and representatives from both Czech and Slovak Cultural



Source: John Beale

Departments had been present. During the evening Graham Melville-Mason had announced the formal launch of the Dartington Scholarship Appeal. Refreshments had been provided by Pat Pullman and the party culminated with the cutting of a cake (decorated with the Society badge) by Graham and everyone singing 'Happy Birthday'.

The Society had received a congratulatory letter from Míla Smetáčková, President of the Czech Music Society in Prague, and this was accompanied by music and words for a congratulatory song composed by Pavel Jurkovic. Besides her congratulations, Míla Smetáčková had sent a detailed report of the activities of the Society and this appeared later in the Newsletter. Míla was to become a regular contributor to the Newsletter.

A 25th Anniversary Weekend had already been held in Edinburgh on 27th and 28th March. Thirty members and guests had enjoyed a Celebration Dinner at the Caledonian Club organised by Ted Pettinger. Before the dinner, Graham Melville-Mason had given a talk on *The life and works of Vítěslav Novák*.

The Society AGM was to be held during the morning of Saturday, 1st May, at the Czech and Slovak House in West Hampstead. After a break for lunch so that everyone could enjoy a traditional Czech meal in the restaurant, there would be a talk given by Petr Pokorný on *A composer's view of the present state of contemporary music in the Czech Republic* and this was to be followed by a *Bring and Buy Sale* in aid of the Scholarship Fund.

A Series of Anniversary Lectures was to be delivered on Thursday evenings at the Czech Centre as follows:

6th May: *Nationalism in Czech music – is it due for re-labelling?* by Karel Janovický,

3rd June: *The Moravian influence on Czech music* by Antonín Tučapský.

7th October: *Dvořák, Göbl and Sychrov* by Graham Melville-Mason.

4th November: *Janáček's Women* by Patrick Lambert.

2nd December: *The Czech String Quartet Tradition*, by Tully Potter.

The Warwick and Leamington Festival was to celebrate its 20th Anniversary from 30th June to 11th July at the same time that we were marking our 25th Anniversary. Richard Phillips, Director of the Festival and a Society member, had arranged a programme of Czech music and had set aside Sunday, 4th July as the Dvořák Society's own day, a day which commenced with a morning visit to Wilmcote to visit the grave of our founder Ian Truffitt, and an afternoon with music by Eben, Janáček and Suk followed by a Dvořák Society Reception.

Since Shawn Pullman had relinquished his role as Newsletter editor but was continuing his work as Secretary of the Society he needed a column of his own. This column appeared on page 2 of the Newsletter as *Shawn: short & sharp*#. Shawn was already planning the next Society trip which would take place from 18th October to 1st November and would include Brno and Bratislava as well as Prague.

Lorna Dobson's *Lorna Corner* appeared as usual, Mark Todd reported on *Recent Concerts and Discs*, Vera Marsden contributed her *Library Report* which listed recent additions to the *Library* which was then housed in the Marsden household. Then there was Greg Terian's *Martinů Review*, almost three pages of Bill Marsden's *Record Review*, a short *Record Review from Prague* by Graham Melville-Mason, seven pages of Peter Herbert's *Peter's Pages* which included an advance notice of a 25th Anniversary Celebration to be held in Garstang on Saturday 19th June.

Richard Beith, who was then Corporate Member Secretary, welcomed the Emmy Destinn Foundation and its Founder and Chairman Jarmila Karas who announced the official re-opening of Emmy Destinn's Castle in Stráž nad Nežárkou in Southern Bohemia which would take place on 11th May.

In April 1999 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

I just realized that Annette created the MS Word document of this Newsletter. That was 25 years ago...



From the New World

On 2 March 2024 my husband and I had the opportunity to attend Leoš Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* (in the revised version by Jiří Zahrádka) presented by the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM). CCM is well regarded for its fine graduate vocal program, and the cast of *The Cunning Little Vixen* for the Saturday evening production was even and impressive. How satisfying too, that Czech language productions in the U.S. have seemingly become expected and the norm (Czech language coaching was provided by David Adams and Timothy Cheek for this particular production).

While certainly well sung, perhaps due to the lack of a note from the stage director in the digital-only program, the production came off as somewhat unconvincing and two-dimensional, lacking in depth and cohesion. This was due to numerous factors, but one example was the questionable decision for the human characters to be hidden behind grotesque-style masks, inhibiting facial expressions and thereby also a sense of connection between the characters onstage as well as with the audience. Another odd choice was the long and drawn-out silent "slow-motion" positioning of the cast on stage before the music commenced at the beginning of the opera, and especially again following the interval. Also following the interval was the perplexing use of colored light circles projected on stage from above, which encircled various characters on stage, 'freezing' them in time and space. The intended symbolism remains a mystery to me. Such lighting effects were in striking contrast to earlier treatments – interesting, yet surprisingly different from the bulk of the production.

The orchestra was comprised of CCM's outstanding student musicians under the skilful leadership of the production's Assistant Conductor Stephan Fillare. Maestro Fillare's command of the score was evident throughout, clearly contributing to the musical success of the production.

Two separate casts comprised the principal roles of the four performances; the complete program including singers' names and bios may be found online [here](#).

It is clear that the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music continues to be a leader in the training of opera casts of the future. Despite the somewhat unconvincing, even occasionally mystifying staging, this production of *The Cunning Little Vixen* was musically assured and very impressive indeed.



Sonya Szabo Reynolds



Events and Concert Performances

The next three reviews cover this remarkable event at the Wigmore Hall in London dedicated to music created and performed at the concentration camp Terezín between 1942 and 1944.

Terezín – Theresienstadt: Nash Ensemble, with introductory films, Wigmore Hall, London W1, on Saturday 9 March 2024

The excellent series of concerts *From My Homeland, Music from the Czech Lands + Brahms*, given by the Nash Ensemble, concluded with three events dedicated mainly to the music and artists incarcerated by the Nazis in the former garrison town of Terezín from 1941–1945. The two chamber music concerts were preceded by an introduction by the writer and broadcaster, Simon Broughton to two films he had made: *The Music of Terezín* (1993 with the BBC and Czech Television) and a shorter interview with holocaust survivor and actress, Zdenka Fantlová, a lively raconteur of her experiences and now deceased, but who lived to the age of 100.

There was no doubt that conditions at Terezín were dreadful, with up to 60,000 people crammed into a town intended for 6,000. There was little food, diseases spread and many died there. However, it was not an extermination camp like Auschwitz, to which large numbers were later sadly sent. The Jewish prisoners enjoyed a remarkable cultural life, generally free from many of the restrictions they had experienced in the outside world.

The Music of Terezín concentrated not only on the music of the four main composers, Gideon Klein, Viktor Ullmann, Hans Krása and Pavel Haas, who lived there but were later transported and died elsewhere, but also on the variety of musical and theatrical activities by others, too. Somehow musicians managed to smuggle in musical instruments, and we heard unusual arrangements of, for example, a sonata for violin and piano played with an accordion instead. Such arrangements, extracts from chamber music, operas, including the children's opera *Brundibár*, songs for choir and cabaret numbers, all written in Terezín, often on homemade manuscript paper, were performed mainly on the site by musicians for the 1993 film. There were interviews with survivors, including the composer František Domažlický, the pianist Edith Kraus and the singer Karel Bermann. Both Edith and Karel gave moving performances in the film. They were all alive in 1993 but have since passed away. Famous conductors were mentioned, such as Karel Ančerl

who survived the holocaust, and Rafael Schächter who conducted 16 performances at Terezín of Verdi's *Requiem* before being transported to Auschwitz.

The Jewish inhabitants administered the site themselves, although the Nazis made checks on their activities. Unfortunately, this included Viktor Ullmann's short opera, *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* (The Emperor of Atlantis), which the Nazis realised was a caricature of Hitler and so it was banned after the dress rehearsal.

The interviews with the writer, Ivan Klíma, the artist Helga Weissová-Hosková and the actress Zdenka Fantlová all give amazingly positive views of their lives in Terezín, although the conditions were not as rosy as suggested at the inspection by the Red Cross. The photography is excellent and the music is well chosen. The sound quality of the music was rather harsh at Wigmore Hall, but I have found this very moving film on the internet where it is better. Please go to www.ort.org and search for *The Music of Terezín* and see and hear it for yourselves.

As the programme notes mention, Viktor Ullmann wrote: "Theresienstadt has served to enhance, not impede, my musical activities, that by no means did we sit weeping by the waters of Babylon and our will to create was equal to our will to live."

Downstairs at Wigmore Hall, there was an exhibition of pictures, courtesy of the State Jewish Museum, Prague, drawn by children at Terezín. Some were in black and white but many were colourful, all poignant reminders of their lives there.

Susan Jenkinson

Nash Ensemble concert, 5.30 pm on Saturday, 9 March 2024 at the Wigmore Hall in London

Gideon Klein was 24 years old when he completed his *String Trio* on 7 October 1944. Two weeks later he was transported "to the east", and in January 1945 he was murdered. The performance we heard at the afternoon Wigmore Hall concert on 9th March, brought home to me as never before what a loss this was. The trio's three movements take just about 12 minutes to play but cover a wide emotional range. The opening *Allegro* has a busy jauntiness which reminded me of parts of *The Cunning Little Vixen*. The heart of the work is a set of eight variations on a Moravian folk song, ranging far and exploiting all three instruments to the full, but characterised by the prevalent Scotch Snap rhythm. The lively third movement has a chugging *perpetuum mobile*

in a complex variety of metres which alternates with two appearances of a more lyrical passage.

This was followed by Hans Krása's *Tanec (Dance)*, also written for string trio. Krása was very active in Terezín's musical life and is chiefly remembered for his children's opera *Brundibár*. He died in Auschwitz in October 1944, just ten days after Klein finished his Trio. *Tanec* is a short piece with a lively opening section followed by gentler sections (including the first theme slowed down), a return to the original tempo and an ambiguous end (perhaps reflecting the circumstances of composition). Though the writing is fierce at times it is also unmistakably Czech, with plenty of thirds and sixths.

The Nash Ensemble members playing these trios, Benjamin Nabarro (violin), Lawrence Power (viola) and Adrian Brendel (cello), brought precise, full-bodied and committed playing. Lawrence Power's beautifully focused viola sound was mesmerising.

The trio were joined by Jonathan Stone (violin) for the String Quartet No. 2 of Pavel Haas *From the Monkey Mountains*. Haas died in Auschwitz on the same day as Krása. He wrote this quartet in 1925, just two years after his teacher Janáček's first quartet, and was inspired by a summer trip to these mountains in the Moravian highlands. The four movements aptly reflect their titles. *The landscape* is mellow and lyrical. The Scherzo *Coach, coachman and Horse* is a vivid description of what sounds like a difficult journey, with a lumbering coach and squeaky wheels on a bumpy track – the quartet really went to town here. *The Moon and Me* is contemplative, and the finale, *Wild Night*, including a rumba, is a festive romp, which has an optional percussion part (played by Chris Brannick) to add to the fun.

After three such intense performances František Domažlický's *Song Without Words* for string quartet, came as a relaxed contrast. Domažlický survived the war and lived until 1997. He has over eighty compositions listed (including a concertino for bagpipes and orchestra), though nothing except this *Song Without Words* and some male voice choruses is earlier than 1953. This gentle, tuneful piece of salon music was composed in 1942 and performed secretly in a Terezín attic. At the end of such an outstanding but demanding concert, it was good to be reminded that appalling conditions can give rise to simple, delightful music too.

Terry Heard

Terezín – Theresienstadt. Dedicated to the artists and to the music performed in the Terezín Ghetto 1941 – 1945.

Nash Ensemble, Wigmore Hall, 9 March 2024.

This was the third event at the Wigmore Hall in London dedicated to the music performed in Terezín. We heard the Nash Ensemble in several different configurations. In the

first half as a string quartet playing the third *String Quartet* Op. 46 by Viktor Ullmann, and then in *Smetana's Piano Trio in G minor* Op. 15. In the second half we heard *Three Songs for Baritone, Clarinet, Viola and Cello* by Hans Krása followed by *Songs for Voice and Piano* by Viktor Ullmann, Carlo Sigmund Taube, Ilse Weber and Adolf Strauss. The concert concluded with an *Instrumental Suite* from the children's opera *Brundibár* again by Hans Krása arranged by David Matthews.

The only piece I had heard before was the Ullmann's *String Quartet*. I reported about it in the Newsletter #142, page 9. This is a remarkable composition: it is modern but I could follow its logic. For example, the slow movement, the *Largo*, is a fugue. Not in a strict form of JSB, but clearly a fugue with the viola leading it.

However, the highlight of the evening (no, for the day, as we were there for the 5:30 pm concert) for both of us (that is, as you may guess, for my wife and me) were the emotionally charged songs so beautifully sung by the young German baritone, Konstantin Krimmel.

The *Three Songs* by Krása were in Czech. What struck me most was that the three accompanying instruments perfectly matched the pitch of Konstantin: they blended so nicely together.

The remaining songs were accompanied by Simon Crawford-Phillips on the piano. The first one, by Ullmann, was in Yiddish. They were followed by songs in German by Ilse Weber (1903–1944) and Adolf Strauss (1902–1944), both born in Bohemia and growing up in a German-speaking milieu. Two further things surprised me: the beauty, and simplicity of the poetry: I could anticipate the rhyme before I heard it sung. And Krimmel's masterly interpretation: I could understand every word!

The concert ended with the *Instrumental Suite* from the opera *Brundibár*. This arrangement took full advantage of the Nash Ensemble – it included nine musicians: piano, string quartet, flute, clarinet, trumpet and percussions. The stage of Wigmore Hall was just enough for them. On YouTube, I found an arrangement with 9 musicians and a conductor, with no percussions but with a double bass. There is an amateur recording of this opera from The Estates Theatre in Prague sung in Czech. When listening to any of these I find it difficult to disengage the music from the historical events. Go and listen to this haunting music. Maybe you will agree with me.

A very good recording of this concert is available until 7 June 2024 on the Wigmore Hall website, www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/whats-on/202403092000.

Tomy Duby



Smetana unveiled: Exploring the Man, the Music and the Myths. The Czech Embassy Cinema, London, on Tuesday 12th March 2024.

This informative event was organised by the Czech Centre within the framework of the Year of Czech Music and Smetana 2024, in collaboration with Czech Tourism. It was introduced by the Director of the Czech Centre, Přemysl Pela. Kateřina Hobbs of Czech Tourism gave examples of the importance of Czech music for many tourist destinations. The Year of Czech Music has been celebrated nearly every decade since 1924, the 100th anniversary of Smetana's birth, and since then expanded to include the music of Antonín Dvořák, Josef Suk, Leoš Janáček, Bohuslav Martinů, and other composers from the Czech lands. Now we are celebrating the 200th anniversary of Smetana's birth with a variety of events including the evening's discussion of his life and works. For further information see www.rokceskehudby.cz/en/smetana200.

The discussion was chaired by John Allison, Editor of Opera magazine. On the panel of experts were Jan Smaczny, Emeritus Professor at Queen's University, Belfast, Dr. Thomas Jaermann, composer and musicologist, Sandra Bergmannová, Director of the Bendřich Smetana Museum and Tomáš Hanus, Music Director of Welsh National Opera, who joined the discussion via Zoom from Brno where he was conducting the latest production of *Dalibor* (to complete this wonderful circle, directed by Sir David Pountney).

There have been more composers in Bohemia and Moravia per square mile than elsewhere and their popularity abroad, especially in Britain, was discussed. Apart from *Má Vlast* and possibly *The Bartered Bride*, other works by Smetana are not well-known in Britain. Czech music certainly had a following in England when Antonín Dvořák visited and had some of his works performed here. Other conductors such as Charles Mackerras and Libor Pešek have since made audiences more familiar with a wider range of Czech music. John said that he had interviewed Libor Pešek many years ago and that Pešek had explained the appeal of Czech music lay in its emotion: *British audiences had been taught to keep their emotions under wraps, but Czech music gave them a welcome opportunity to live their emotions through the music. This was basically why Dvořák, whose music sometimes has too much emotion, was so successful.* However, the choral music of Dvořák was performed here more often in the late 19th and early 20th centuries than now, although the music of a larger range of composers is now available. Sandra was asked about the number of UK visitors to the Smetana Museum in contrast to those of other nations. She reported that there were comparatively few in contrast to the larger numbers from Germany and Asia.

It would take a very long article to do justice to the contents of the evening's discussions. The main subjects

included: the popularity of Smetana during his lifetime, his allies and enemies, what made him a 'nationalist' composer or otherwise, the use of mythology as well as history, his use of the Czech language, which after all, he had to learn, political controversies, his standing compared with that of Dvořák in Communist times, the popularity or otherwise of certain works by Smetana at home and abroad, his role as a teacher and conductor as well as a composer, his stay in Gothenburg, his piano music, the influences on his compositions of other composers, the impact of his deafness on his life and music, and his influence on later composers such as Janáček and Martinů.

Questions were asked about Smetana's two string quartets, with the disturbing high E4 near the end of the first quartet, part of the 'white noise' of his deafness, and the second quartet which sounded unlike anything else by Smetana. The panel agreed that it went beyond the conventions of the time, structurally and harmonically, and looked towards the music of, for example, Janáček. Schoenberg had admired it. Jan thought there was something 'visceral' about it.

Tomáš was asked to elaborate on his collaboration with Pountney in Brno on the current production of *Dalibor* which is already controversial and does not reflect the historical view of the character of Dalibor. He described it as a 'timeless' modern production and thought that controversy was an important feature. He also said that his children thought the music must be like the pop music of the time, with 'songs you could sing', as the motifs are sweet and easy to memorise.



From left to right: Jan Smaczny, John Allison, Thomas Jaermann and Sandra Bergmannová.

Source: [Czech Centre London](https://www.czechcentre.org.uk/)

Finally, a question was asked about the importance of the conclusions reached on the examination of Smetana's skull, which showed bones in his ear were damaged. Sandra elaborated on this topic, explaining that an accident had happened when he was about ten years old and was playing with some gunpowder in a jar with other boys. It exploded when he went to look at it, shattering glass into his face, which the boys tried to wash away with dirty pond water, thus infecting him and causing problems all his life. This was considered a suitably gory note on which to end!

To appreciate the details of the discussion, do listen to the recording on YouTube, [Smetana Unveiled](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)....

Susan Jenkinson

Just two brief comments: in the next review you will read that Janáček considered Smetana a father figure. The Kukal Quartet will perform Smetana's *Second String Quartet* twice: at the Czech Embassy on 2 May and at the Leamington Summer Festival on 4 May (see pages 19 and 24).

Czech conductor and Dvořák Society President, Jakub Hrůša in conversation with British musicologist, Nigel Simeone about their musical careers and Czech music on Wednesday 20 March 2024 at the cinema in the Czech Embassy in London

This was a joint event of the BCSA (British Czech and Slovak Association) and the Dvořák Society. Following introductions by Jana Nahodilová (Chairman of the BCSA) and David Roberts (our Chairman), Jakub Hrůša and Nigel Simeone each described their earliest encounters with the music of Janáček.

Firstly, Nigel recollected that, aged 14, he was on a school trip to Germany, where at one point they were given the choice of visiting the local docks or going to a performance in German of *The Cunning Little Vixen*. He chose the latter and was immediately drawn to Janáček's music, eager to discover more. Then Jakub related how, aged 9, he went to explore the communal loft in the block of flats where his family lived and came across an old gramophone with a pile of old 78 records. He had no idea what he would hear, but it was, in fact, Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*. He found it incomprehensible, but exciting, a kind of 'primordial force' and so he played it over and over again. The equipment did not work very well, but that gave the music added character!

The first main topic of conversation was concerned with what makes the music of Janáček, Smetana and Dvořák, Czech. Unusual components such as the mixture of historical and legendary aspects stood out. Each was also very individual, with Smetana being particularly ambitious and idealistic in his nationalistic vision. Previously, in Bohemia and Moravia, there had been a large number of good musicians, who, however, had not been as creative or famous as, for example, Mozart. Many had gravitated towards Vienna. Jakub mentioned that many Germans/Austrians had considered Czech composers to be inferior. However, Brahms in recommending Dvořák to the German publisher, Simrock, elevated his status and popularity with Germans. In comparing the music of Dvořák and Smetana, the two speakers pointed out that Dvořák adhered to traditional, Catholic views, whereas Smetana looked more radically into the future, became less conventional and more interested in political discourse, wanting to grab the



Jakub Hrůša. Photo: Erik Weisenpacher.

attention of his audiences. Although Smetana wrote a lot of piano music and two string quartets, it is really for his operas and the tone poem cycle *Má Vlast* that he is remembered by most audiences, whereas Dvořák is chiefly remembered for his symphonies, string quartets and religious works, despite also writing some operas. Smetana, despite his 'German' background and not writing and properly learning Czech until his late thirties, is considered the 'Father of Czech Music'.

Jakub pointed out that Janáček certainly considered Smetana to be a father figure in his compositions and wrote in 1925 that it was like being 'face to face with God'. However, Janáček was also more rebellious, looked towards Eastern European traditions, and even considered Smetana 'too German'. Janáček was concerned with portraying real life on stage, not idealised events as found in the operas of Smetana and had been inspired by the 'verismo' of, for example, Puccini. Nigel mentioned *Kát'a Kabanová*, and similarities to *Madama Butterfly*. Nonetheless, both speakers thought that Janáček was also influenced by, for example, Verdi and Tchaikovsky in his portrayal of sentiment. Moreover, Janáček respected Beethoven and conducted his *Missa Solemnis*. In his early years, he went on long walks with Dvořák, collecting folk songs together. However, it cannot be denied that, unlike Dvořák, Janáček found other sources of spirituality than in conventional religion. Even though he built his music for the *Glagolitic Mass* on the established structure of a mass, he chose an Old Church Slavonic text and not Latin. The work reflects his support for pan-Slavism.

Jakub Hrůša is currently the Music Director Designate of the Royal Opera, Covent Garden (Music Director from 2025) and so it was obvious that he would be asked about his future role there, including which operas he would like

to conduct. He pointed out that on the one hand, he wanted to serve mainstream operagoers and thereby discover some more frequently performed Italian, French and German operas which he had not yet conducted. On the other, he would like to introduce operas by Smetana and Janáček which had seldom been performed here. He was a little hesitant about operas by Dvořák, such as *The Devil and Kate* and *The Jacobin*, although he was in his element with Dvořák's symphonic music.

The power of stage directors to change the original settings of operas was discussed. Jakub felt that this fashion was fading and that external factors such as unusual staging should not interfere with the original intentions of the composer. The most stable element of all, is, of course, the music.

As for non-native speakers singing in Czech, it is often the case that Czechs do not understand them. However, some non-native singers even pronounce Czech more clearly than the Czechs themselves! He does not mind if the pronunciation is not absolutely perfect, but with hard work, convincing pronunciation can be achieved.

Finally, Jakub was asked how he is adapting to English food and weather. He replied that a large choice of food is available here from all over the world and that he accepts all kinds of weather.

Thanks are due to the BCSA and the Czech Embassy for their assistance in facilitating this informative and enjoyable evening. We look forward to cooperating in future events.

Susan Jenkinson

This was a remarkable event conducted in a very relaxed atmosphere. We -- the cinema was almost full -- felt that we were willing eavesdroppers on a natural and flowing conversation between Nigel and Jakub. Susan has wonderfully summarized the discussion. Recording of this conversation is available on YouTube <https://youtu.be/2iYko7oLimM>

Three additional things stuck in my mind: Jakub's modesty, his vision and his smile.



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.

Antonín Dvořák: Concerto in G minor for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 33 (Early version), edited by Ludmila Šmídová, Koniasch Latin Press / Association for Central European Cultural Studies, 2023, ISBN 978-80-87773-74-1; ISMN 979-0-9004046-2-6.

This newly published full score of the early version of Dvořák's piano concerto is welcome for at once several reasons. It provides a clear and well-set-out version of the little-known original (1876) version of the work, which differs substantially from the familiar version of 1883. The edition is based on a copy made by none other than Leoš Janáček from Dvořák's autograph manuscript *before* Dvořák undertook major revisions – entailing the wholesale replacement of entire pages. It is immediately striking that the outer movements of the early version are substantially longer than those of the standard version, and the respective piano parts differ fundamentally from each other. The new publication thus allows us to form a complete picture of Dvořák's earlier conception, which had hitherto been unpublished. This good-sized score is very clearly presented and is thus highly suitable for practical use, for study and performance alike. It is,

moreover, supplemented by a generous number of full-page colour reproductions (no fewer than twenty-four), drawn for the most part from the autograph manuscript and from Janáček's copy, and is endowed with an excellent preface and detailed critical notes. The performance and reception histories are discussed, editorial choices rendered explicit and justified, and a substantial bibliography and indices included. All the above material is presented in a manner that is precise, cogent, detailed and thorough. The publication of this exemplary edition will thus provide scholars as well as enthusiasts with yet another means of tracing out the development and maturation of Dvořák's thinking over a period of time, thus providing insights into the master's compositional processes.

The reader may wonder if this early version deserves to be heard alongside the definitive version. I do not know whether the publishers plan to make available performing material to accompany the score, but I imagine that a set of orchestral parts could readily be generated from the Full Score. Certainly, studying the edition, this reader is intrigued and would love to hear a performance of this version, which surely deserves also to be recorded. I do not

The image displays two pages of handwritten musical notation for the beginning of the first movement of Dvořák's Piano Concerto. The top page is Janáček's copy of the early version, and the bottom page is Dvořák's autograph upon the addition of his mature thoughts. Both pages show the first system of staves for various instruments, including Flauti, Oboi, Clarineti, Fagotti, Corni, Trombe, Timpani, Piano Solo, Violini, Viola, Cello, and Basso. The tempo is marked 'Allegro' and the meter is 3/4. The notation includes various musical symbols, notes, and dynamics.

The first pages of the score of Dvořák's Piano Concerto: Beginning of the first movement: Janáček's copy of the early version (top), and Dvořák's autograph upon the addition of his mature thoughts (bottom).

think the early version will supplant the mature version, but it certainly deserves to become available alongside it. Dr Šmídová and Koniasch Latin Press have thus done the musicological community, all who love the music of Antonín Dvořák and, not least, the composer himself, a considerable service.

Haig Utidjian

EARLY RECORDINGS OF WORKS BY JANÁČEK REISSUED

Philadelphia Woodwind Quintet – Collected Recordings (12 CDs), Sony Classical 19658813262;

Janáček: *Mládí* and *Concertino*, Rudolf Firkušný and members of the Philadelphia Orchestra

Naxos Classical Archive 9.80243 (download);

Rejcha: *Wind Quintet Op 88 No 2*

Philadelphia Woodwind Quintet

Sony G010005062911L (download)

The first time I heard the name Janáček was on a Christmas Eve broadcast in the late 1950s when Vilém Tauský conducted his BBC Concert Orchestra in a performance on the radio of one of the short symphonic poems. Being intrigued and having enjoyed the performance I tried to discover what music by this composer could be found on discs. The catalogue seemed fairly small – ten-inch LPs of *Sinfonietta* and *The Diary of a Young Man Who Disappeared*. Then a new ten-inch Philips disc came up with two works called *Mládí* – which I went on to discover from the notes meant youth – and *Concertino*. I saved up to buy this and enjoyed the contents. The music teacher at school borrowed it and commented he wouldn't like to be one of the string players having to sit doing nothing in the first movement of the concertino.

For anyone who doesn't feel like obtaining the whole box, which will cost around £40, there is a Naxos Archive download of the two Janáček works at £5.60, and a download of the Rejcha coupled with two Mozart divertimenti – the Rejcha can be downloaded separately for £4.20. And if you are searching for the download you must use the spelling *Reicha*.

Mark Todd

Janáček: *Sinfonietta*, Leipzig Radio Symphony

Orchestra / Václav Neumann;

***Taras Bulba*, Vienna Symphony Orchestra /**

Henry Swoboda;

***Suite for Strings*, Wintherthur Symphony**

Orchestra / Henry Swoboda

Forgotten Records FR945

The works on this CD have been recorded many times since in performances of the highest quality in outstanding recorded sound, but these performances, recorded around 1950, are interesting evidence of the pioneers whose work

preceded and partly inspired worldwide interest in Janáček's music. Henry Swoboda – this is the form of his name used in USA – born in the Czech lands in 1895, worked for the radio in Prague and Brno before emigrating to USA before the second world war. He was a founder and director of the Westminster company for which he conducted a large number of recordings, including pioneering or early recordings of orchestral works by Czech composers – the first recordings of Dvořák's *Symphonies* 3 and 4 and orchestral works by Martinů as well as these two Janáček performances. The reviewer of the *Taras Bulba* in Gramophone in August 1954 drew attention to the orchestra's lack of familiarity with the music, and probable lack of rehearsal time, leading to late or missed entries, but thought that the spirit of the work was achieved all the same. The *Sinfonietta* performance, noted in Gramophone in April 1952, is so far as I know the earliest performance conducted by Václav Neumann to appear in a commercial recording – he would have been about thirty when the performance took place, several years before Supraphon issued any performances conducted by him. In this case, the orchestra seems better prepared and Neumann shows more enthusiasm than he sometimes achieved later on in life. So this is an interesting CD for anyone interested in the history of Janáček performance, as well as being enjoyable in its own right.

Mark Todd

Forgotten Czech Piano Concertos

Kovařovic/Kapralová/Bořkovec

Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra

Marek Kozák (piano), Robert Jindra (conductor)

Supraphon SU 4337-2, released 8 March 2024.

Supraphon has released this excellent CD featuring three piano concertos by Czech composers that are rarely heard. They don't often appear on the contemporary concert scene. In my opinion, this is a mystery since all three are of the highest quality and well worth listening to.

This CD will hopefully redress the situation. The musicianship and enthusiasm of the orchestra and the virtuosic piano playing are exemplary.

Karel Kovařovic (1862–1920) was a Czech composer and conductor from Prague best known for his operas and his revisions to Janáček's *Jenůfa* for performance. The piano concerto presented here is from 1887 and is a lush late romantic endeavour. It has a monumental first movement and musical fireworks from the piano. The piano is often accompanied by the cello section of the orchestra. All these features for me bring to mind the Brahms piano concertos.

Vítězslava Kaprálová (1915–1940) was a Czech female composer from Brno and her piano concerto of 1935 presented here was her graduation composition which she conducted herself at the Brno Conservatory. She would

later move to Paris to study with Martinů and other important composers. This piano concerto is remarkable to have been composed by a 20-year-old. It has a distinctive style and employs a large orchestra and there is a sense of a real mastery of the interplay between the piano soloist and the brass and woodwind sections. She died at the too young age of 25 but did leave a substantial body of compositions, best known is her *Military Sinfonietta*. Since 1998 there has been a Kaprálová society based in Canada which seeks to promote her works and the compositions of other female composers which have tended to be forgotten.

Pavel Bořkovec (1894–1972) is another Czech composer and teacher from Prague. He studied with Josef Foerster and Josef Suk. This piano concerto of 1949 is quite a hard-hitting affair with motoric rhythms and dense musical ideas. Reminiscent of late Martinů piano concertos with some hint of the underlying steel of the Shostakovich piano concertos.

I strongly recommend this CD as more than a curiosity but a very rewarding listening experience and hopefully a beginning of a renewed interest in these three composers.

Alan Rosenfelder



Franz Schmidt: *The Symphonies, Intermezzo & Carnival Music from Notre Dame*

BBC National Orchestra of Wales, conducted by Jonathan Berman

ACCENTUS, ACC 80544, 4 CDs

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of Franz Schmidt. He may seem an odd bedfellow for the composers usually featured by our Society, with his German/Hungarian father and Hungarian mother, but he was born in Pressburg (which is Bratislava in present-day Slovakia).

Taught piano by both parents he developed something of a 'love-hate' relationship with the instrument, albeit that observers such as Hans Keller marked his brilliance in playing. Indeed, his ambiguous feelings prompted him to write an early essay "Pianist...or musician?" Moreover, Theodor Leschetizky, no less, later commented that Schmidt showed potential, but added,

"The fellow will never be tidy."

A throwaway criticism/witticism, which stung and steered Schmidt away from the instrument, preferring the cello and the organ, although he continued to play and compose a small piano repertoire. Indeed, for a while, he was the principal cellist of the VPO.

By the early C20, drawn toward opera, he completed the first of two, *Notre Dame*, in 1902, but this almost appears an aberration. I cannot resist quoting Harold Truscott (Schmidt's only English biographer) here,

"... a (more) curious choice, it seems to me, for a mind more attuned to the symphony and chamber music I cannot imagine..."

Apart possibly from his oratorio *The Book of the Seven Seals*, if Schmidt is familiar at all to the wider public, it is for his orchestral music, primarily his four symphonies. Written in 1896, 1913, 1928 and 1933 they broadly embody a flowering of late romanticism, largely untouched by contemporary developments, but characterised by flowing richly scored melody.

Schmidt probably 'arrived' on the international record scene in 1973, with a Decca LP of the *Fourth* conducted by Zubin Mehta. Since then several distinguished conductors have essayed individual symphonies, whilst several more (Ludovít Rajter, Vassily Sinaisky, and both Neeme and Paavo Jarvi) have set down complete cycles. The latest to join their number is the Briton, Jonathan Berman, who from the notes accompanying this set, as well as his contribution to the *Franz Schmidt Project* (to be found at www.thefranzschmidtproject.com), is a 'man on a mission' to perform and promote the music of the composer, and one who is clearly unfazed by comparison with distinguished competitors.

Whilst all have something to offer, (Paavo Jarvi you may recall winning a Gramophone Award with his complete survey), Berman's approach I find quite marvellous. He is a little broader in all four works....controversially so perhaps in the middle movement of the *Second Symphony*, but always I feel to good effect. The singing, rich lines of the strings sound out wonderfully, and yet he can encapsulate the brass-topped grandeur at the end of the work with ease.

The playing of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, meanwhile, is splendid, a real achievement as they can hardly have been overly familiar with this music. There are particularly expressive contributions from the cor anglais, cellos, horns and the marvellous principal trumpet Philippe Scharz. He sets the seal on a quite magnificent

performance of the *Fourth*. Containing a funeral march the symphony marks the loss of Schmidt's beloved daughter Emma in childbirth, with a poignancy more deeply felt than in any other performance I know.

If you are still undecided about Schmidt, there is a rare opportunity to sample Berman and the orchestra's artistry by going to the BBC NOW's Digital Concerts platform online, to hear a performance of the *Third Symphony*:- www.bbc.co.uk/events/e569hn

Meanwhile, the presentation of the set by Accentus is superb, including an in-depth discussion with the conductor about the composer, as well as notes on the individual symphonies. The sound is impressive, although I felt a little 'leaner' in the *First*...to the music's advantage. A pity that the experienced team of Eadon & Keener couldn't have been utilised throughout.

No matter; if you're inclined... don't hesitate!!

(NB: To maintain transparency I should point out that, contrary to normal practice, a review set was not requested.....as the reviewer had already succumbed !)

Ian Bailey

Next time we are in Bratislava, I will show you where once stood the house where Franz Schmidt was born...



Source: Accentus Music

**Josef Labor: Piano Concertos for the Left Hand – *Konzertstück No. 1* (1915); *Konzertstück No. 2* (1917); and *Konzertstück No. 3* (1923)
Oliver Triendl/Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz/Eugene Tzigane, C5521**



Source: Capriccio

Josef Labor (1842-1924) was born in the Beroun region of central Bohemia. He fell victim to small-pox at the age of three, which left him blind. His parents, of Viennese origin, later split up and his mother returned to Vienna with her children. Here, despite his blindness, Josef's musical talents blossomed, and he became celebrated in the city and also in Germany as pianist, organist and composer. Over time he acquired influential musical friends, including Brahms and later the pianist Paul Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein lost his right arm in World War I, and went on to commission material for the piano left hand. Labor was the composer he turned to most often, and eleven works resulted, including these three concertos.

They were termed *Konzertstück* although of normal concerto length. The 1915 performance of the first of them brought triumphant reviews. Yet following his death, Labor's music fell into oblivion. He achieved a mere paragraph in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. It has recently been revived, largely pioneered by the enterprising Capriccio CD label. The first of their five Labor CDs releases appeared in 2019, although a single issue of his organ works came earlier on the specialist Priory label.

In his later years, Labor clearly is regarded as a late romantic, but his style is more related to the earlier romanticism of Brahms, or even Schumann. Labor was undeniably an accomplished composer. These concertos in general lie easily on the ear. Particularly impressive on this recording is the imaginative writing for the soloist, no doubt a reflection of his skills as a pianist.

The first *Konzertstück* is in the form of a theme and variations, the other two having the traditional three movements of a concerto. In the latter, the lengthy middle sections tend to outstay their welcome, but the brief finale

of the 1917 work is refreshing. The pianism of Triendl is immensely impressive and he is well supported by the Rheinland-Pfalz Orchestra. The value of the release is enhanced by its booklet, which offers informative details on a little-known composer.

I have also the first of the Capriccio Labor recordings, of his early *Piano Quintet* and *Piano Quartet* (C5390), in which Triendl is again the pianist. They were written in the late nineteenth century and seem to fit more comfortably into that time frame, sounding more authentic and spontaneous than these concertos, which belong to the composer's old age, at a time when the likes of Prokofiev and Hindemith were breaking fresh ground. Wittgenstein and Labor were said to be unimpressed with the changing developments.

The success of the first disc encouraged Capriccio to continue the series, and I would suggest it is worth exploring further, as indeed it has already been in this Newsletter in reviews of other Labor chamber works by Susan Jenkinson (C5430) in the July 2021 edition, and Terry Heard (C5473) in August 2023.

Bill Marsden

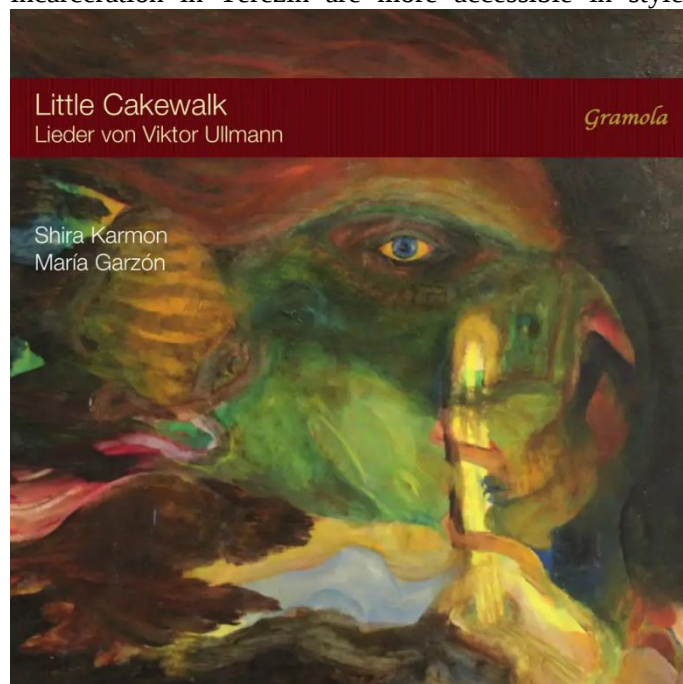
***Little Cakewalk, Lieder of Viktor Ullmann*
Shira Kamon (soprano) and Maria Garzón (piano),
Gramola 99292 (2023)**

This new enterprising release devoted to the songs of Viktor Ullmann is very much to be welcomed. There are 26 numbers in all, ranging from the brief ditty (and rather ironically titled) which gives the CD its name. The remainder of the material is spread across songs based on poems by Hölderlin, Steffen, Labé plus three *Yiddish Songs* Op. 53, and four numbers from *Sacred Songs*, Op. 20. Most of the songs date from the period 1937-1944 and include ones written whilst at Terezín (Theresienstadt).

Ullmann's work in Terezín brought about a striking turn to the Yiddish or Hebrew tradition which had not played a role in his work before. The composer identified himself as a Christian Anthroposophist but was unfortunately otherwise defined by the Nazis as a Jew because of his ancestry.

The songs reflect a range of styles from an early expressionist song to text by Frank Wedekind, showing the influence of his teachers from the Second Viennese

School (Berg, Zemlinsky etc). The short piece called *Little Cakewalk* clearly reflects his interest in jazz idioms. The remainder of the songs mostly written during his incarceration in Terezín are more accessible in style,



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

simpler and less harmonically complex but nevertheless sensitive and characterful.

The CD of nearly 65 minutes of music is probably not intended to be played in one sitting and for my taste preferably should be dipped into. Some of the tracks are excellent and affecting. My only caveat is, though excellently recorded, preference for a certain voice type is very much a matter of personal taste. As it is a solo lieder CD, the voice of Shira Kamon's will either appeal or not. I am afraid to say that in my case it does not. I find the upper range of her voice at times forced, aggressively harsh with too wide a vibrato, which is a pity as her lower range is pleasantly mellow. Ullmann does call for a wide compass in some of the songs. Full text with translation in English is provided in the expansive sleeve notes. The Yiddish songs however only have a translation in German. But please do listen and judge for yourself. Try track 1 or 22. There are many ways of sampling a track via an on-line dealer.

David Roberts



Letters to the Editor

Reply to Sonya Szabo Reynolds regarding the inclusion of Czech works in the ABRSM piano examinations. (See Newsletter no. 145 page 6.)

I regret that there are very few examples of Czech works on the current ABRSM (Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music) piano syllabus. As far as I can see they are: Martinů *Allegretto no. 4* from *Čtvrtky a osminky (Crotchets and Quavers)* H 257 for Grade 7 and Janáček *Andante no. 1* from *V mlhách (In the Mists)* for Grade 8.

The Trinity College of Music piano examination syllabus has a few more:

Ilona Jurníčková (b. 1947) *Little Stream* for Grade 3

František Xavier Dušek *Allegro from Sonata XII* for Grade 5

Zdeněk Fibich *Lento Assai from Moods, Impressions and Souvenirs* for Grade 5

Josef Mysliveček *Rondo in A* for Grade 6

Zdeněk Fibich *Lento no. 139 Op. 41* for Grade 7

Janáček *Lost for Words no. 6* from *On an Overgrown Path* for Grade 8

As for Jakub Metelka, I know his works a little, as I reviewed *The Little Virtuoso* in Newsletter no. 136 on page 21. I should add that I am an amateur pianist who only teaches willing young relatives. We have not tried any Czech pieces yet. Maybe we should...

Susan Jenkinson

Cadenza International Summer Festival

At Purcell School, Bushey, 22 to 28 July 2024.

The Dvořák Society candidates.

Judita Dostálová is a first-year student at the Prague Conservatory. She studies viola with professor Kristina Fialová Nouzovská.

Josef Matěj Švec studies cello at the Prague Conservatory with Peter Nouzovský. He plays a 1930 cello built by Benjamin Patočka.



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 February to May 2024. I am relying largely on the Široký dvůr web-site for information on smaller labels.

Arta

F10285 Dvořák: *Symphony No. 8/In Nature's Realm* (Musica Florea /Štrýncl)

Musica Bohemia

MBO312 Janáček/Krček: *Moravská Lidová/Pisni (Czech Songs)* (Hlavenková/Jacubů)

Nibiru

0175-2 Zelenka: *Te Deum/Missa Eucharistica/Credo* (Ensemble Inegal/Victora)

Opera Nova

ON02002 (CD) ON02002-3 (DVD)

Ryba: *Czech Christmas Mass* (Opera Nova Chamber Choir and Orchestra/Vajnár)

Supraphon

SU4334-2	Kalabis: <i>Cello Concerto/Concerto for Chamber Orchestra/Youth Overture</i> (Petráš/Janáček Philharmonic and Chamber Orchestras Ostrava/Kalabis)
SU4337-2	Bořkovec/Kaprálová/Kovařovic: <i>Piano Concertos</i> (Kozák/Prague RSO/Jindra) Reviewed on page Error! Bookmark not defined.
SU6909-2	Viklický: <i>'Beyond the Mountains, Beyond the Woods', and Nine other Compositions</i> (Emil Viklický Trio)
SU4337-2	<i>'Mystery of Early Baroque'</i> (5CDs) (Musica Antiqua Praha/Klikar)
SU4342-2	Dvořák/Ostrčil/Smetana/Suk: <i>My Home/A Tale of Šterník/Prague Carnival /Vyšehrad/Praga</i> (Prague Symphony Orchestra/Brauner)

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 February to May 2024.

Alpha

Alpha 1054 Dvořák/Scarlatti: *Stabat Maters* (2CDs) (Soloists/La Tempête.Bestion)

Ambiente

ACD2047 Schmidt: *Organ Works, Vol. 1* (Andreas Jetter)

Avie

AV2656 Biber: *The Rosary Sonatas* (Choo/Apollo's Fire/Sorrel)

Brilliant Classics

95503 Dusík: *Complete Piano Sonatas and Sonatinas* (10CDs) (Various soloists)

95981 Dusík: *Sonatas Opp. 35 and 69 No.1, Vol. 10* (Petra Somlai)

97030 Dvořák: *String Serenade/Wind Serenade/Silent Woods* (Vavřínek/Czech Chamber Orchestra Pardubice/Mardirossian)

96596 Rejcha/Neukomm: *Clarinet Quintet/String Quartet, Op. 89/Clarinet Quintet* (Siegenthaler/Stamic Quartet)

Capriccio (Naxos)

C5519 Dohnányi: *Suite in the Olden Style; Variations on a Hungarian Folk Song/Arrangements* (Sofia Gölbadamova)

CPO (Naxos)

555370-2 Družecký(Druschetzky): *Oboe Quartets, Vol. 2* (Grundmann Quartet)

Genuin (Naxos)

GEB24853 Dvořák: *Symphonies Nos. 3 and 9* (Philharmonie Sudwestfalen (Shehata)

Hänssler (Naxos)

HC24057 Dvořák: *Violin Concerto/Romance/Mazurek* (Pocheikin/Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra/Raiskin)

Koch (reissued Deutsche Grammophon)

486587-2 Haas: *Scherzo Triste/Sarlatan/Unfinished Symphony* (Brno Philharmonic Orchestra/Yinon)

486598-2 Schulhoff: *Symphonies 1, 2, 3 and 5/Concerto for String Quartet and Winds* (Kyncl/Krivý/Kovář/Horák/Brno Philharmonic Orchestra/Yinon/
WDR SymphomyOrchestra/Schuller)

Marco Polo (Naxos)

8.225381 Fučík: *Dances and Marches* (Czech Chamber PO Pardubice/Štílec)

Orfeo (Naxos)

C380012 Schmidt: *Fredigundis* (Soloists/Vienna ORF Symphony Orchestra and Chorus)

/Marzendorfer)

Pentatone

PTC5287203

Smetana: *Ma Vlast* (CPO/Bychkov)**Somm (Naxos)**

Ariadne 5026-2

Schmidt: *The Book of the Seven Seals/Symphony No. 4* (Patzak and other soloists
/Munich Philharmonic Orchestra/Vienna Symphony Orchestra/Moralt)**SWRMUSIC (Naxos)**

SWR19130

Dvořák: *Symphonies Nos. 7 and 8* (Deutsches Radio Philharmonie/Inkinen)**Vox (Naxos)**

NX-3034CD

Dvořák: *Cello Concerto/Silent Woods/Rondo/Romance/Mazurek*
(Nelsova/Ricci/St. Louis Symphony Orchestra/Susskind)

NX-3035CD

Dvořák: *Violin Concerto/Piano Concerto* (Ricci/Firkůšný
/St. Louis Symphony Orchestra/Susskind)

NX-3041CD

Smetana: *Ma Vlast* (St. Louis Symphony Orchestra/Susskind)**Bill Marsden*****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. A selection will be brought to Leamington and other locations for purchase. 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***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 nearly 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		
1 May 24 7.30pm	Janáček: <i>Violin Sonata</i>	Nikolaj Szeps-Znaider violin; Saleem Ashkar piano Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/59753
2 May 24 7.30 pm	Schulhoff: <i>Five Pieces</i> Sylvie Bodorová: <i>Shorafot</i> Smetana: <i>Quartet No 2</i> Dvořák: <i>Cypresses</i> – selection	Kukal Quartet. Embassy of the Czech Republic, 26-30 Kensington Palace Gardens, London W8 4QY. Box Office: Eventbrite . Website: https://london.czechcentres.cz/en/program/kukal-quartet
8 & 10 May 24 7.00 pm	Martinů: <i>Comedy on the Bridge, Twice Alexander</i>	Royal Academy of Music, Marylebone Road, London NW1 5HT Box office & website: ticketing.ram.ac.uk

Date	Programme	Performers and Location
12 May 24 11.30am	Dvořák: <i>String Quartet in F Op. 96</i>	Minetti Quartet. Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141, https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/59780
12 May 24 3.00pm	Novák: <i>Piano Trio No. 2 Op. 27 'Quasi una ballata'</i>	Leonore Piano Trio. Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141, https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/59781
13 May 24 1.00pm	Dvořák: <i>String Quintet in E flat Op. 97, 2 movements. Arranged</i>	Calefax Wind Quintet. Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP. Box office: 020 7935 2141, https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/59783
19 May 24 7.30pm	Dvořák: <i>Piano Quintet No. 2 in A Op. 81</i>	Takács Quartet; Marc-André Hamelin piano. Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP. Box office: 020 7935 2141 https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/59793
27 May 24 1.00pm	Dvořák: <i>String Quartet in E♭ Op. 51</i>	Takács Quartet. Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP Box office: 020 7935 2141, www.wigmore-hall.org.uk
9 June 24 11.30am	Smetana: <i>String Quartet No. 1 in E minor 'From my life'</i> Janáček: <i>String Quartet No. 2 'Intimate Letters'</i>	Pavel Haas Quartet. Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP Box office: 020 7935 2141, www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/59830
16 June 24 11.30am	Dvořák: <i>Piano Trio in E minor Op. 90 'Dumky'</i>	Gould Piano Trio, Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141, https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/59843
24 June 24 7.30pm	Smetana: <i>String Quartet No. 2 in D minor</i> Dvořák: <i>String Quartet in F Op. 96 'American'</i> Janáček: <i>String Quartet No. 2 'Intimate Letters'</i>	Wihan Quartet Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP Box office: 020 7935 2141 https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/59858
30 June 24 11.30am	Janáček: <i>String Quartet No. 1 'Kreutzer Sonata'</i> Dvořák: <i>String Quartet in C Op. 61</i>	Talich Quartet. Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/59870
1 July 24 7.30pm	Smetana: <i>Piano Trio in G minor Op. 15</i> Dvořák: <i>Piano Trio in F minor Op. 65</i>	Julia Fischer VIOLIN Daniel Müller-Schott CELLO Yulianna Avdeeva PIANO. Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP, Box office: 020 7935 2141 https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/59874
South East		
5 May 24 7.30pm	Dvořák: <i>Slavonic Dances 1-3</i> Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 7</i>	Philharmonia Orchestra. The Marlow The Friars, Canterbury CT1 2AS www.marlowetheatre.com/book-online/532801/ 01227 787787
15 May 24 7.30 pm	Smetana: <i>Piano Trio Op. 15</i> Brahms, Schubert	Kinsky Trio. Engelfield House, Theale RG7 5EN, Box Office: 01635 522733, website: newburyspringfestival.org.uk
16 May 24 6.00 pm	Haas: <i>Wind Quintet</i> Janáček: Suite from <i>The Cunning Little Vixen</i> Dvořák: <i>American Quartet</i> arranged for wind quintet	Alinde Wind Quintet. St Michael and All Angels Church, Hughenden HP14 4LA. Box Office: 01442 920303 Website: chilternarts.com
16 May 24 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>String Quartet in E♭, Op. 51, + Haydn, Ravel</i>	Takács Quarter, St Mary's Church, Shaw, RG14 2DR, Box Office 016350522733 Website: newburyspringfestival.org.uk
17 May 24 12.30 pm	P. Haas: <i>Wind Quintet Op. 10</i> Janáček (arr. Pelikan):- <i>Suite from 'The Cunning Little Vixen'</i> . Dvorak (arr. Walter) - <i>'American' Quartet, Op. 96</i>	Alinde Wind Quintet, Corn Exchange, Newbury, RG14 5BD Box office: 01635 522733, newburyspringfestival.org.uk

Date	Programme	Performers and Location
17 May 24 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 8</i> + Mozart, Grieg	London Mozart Players, St Luke's Church, Grayshott GU26 6LF, Box Office: admin@grayshottconcerts.co.uk , grayshottconcerts.co.uk
18 May 24 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Cello Concerto</i> (Andrei Ionita - cello) + Schumann	London Philharmonic Orchestra, St Nicholas Church, Newbury RG14 5HG, Box Office: 01635 522733 Website: newburyspringfestival.org.uk
West Midlands		
15 May 24 7.30pm	Haas: <i>Study for Strings</i> Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 9</i> (<i>New World</i>)	CBSO. Symphony Hall Broad St, Birmingham B1 2EA https://cbso.co.uk/events/new-world-symphony 0121 780 3333
29 May 24 2.15 pm	Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 7</i>	CBSO. Symphony Hall Broad St, Birmingham B1 2EA https://cbso.co.uk/events/old-world-symphony 0121 780 3333
13 June 24 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Carnival Overture</i>	CBSO. Symphony Hall Broad St, Birmingham B1 2EA https://cbso.co.uk/events/barber-rachmaninoff 0121 780 3333
East Anglia		
4th May 2024 7.00 pm	Dvořák ; <i>Piano Trio No 3 in F minor</i> Op. 101 + Rheinberger	Guarneri Trio Prague, The Chapel, 64 Park Lane, Norwich NR2 3EF Box office: https://www.norwichchapelconcerts.org.uk/reserve-a-seat , Website: https://www.norwichchapelconcerts.org.uk
East Midlands		
1 May 24 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 7</i>	Royal Concert Hall Theatre Square, Nottingham NG1 5ND Philharmonia www.trch.co.uk/whats-on/philharmonia-orchestra-24/
2 May 24 7.30 pm	Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn	Guarneri Trio of Prague, Lakeside Arts, Djanogly Recital Hall, Nottingham NG7 2RD, Box office: 0115 846 7777 Website: www.lakesidearts.org.uk
North West		
24 May 24 7.30pm	Smetana: <i>Overture The Bartered Bride</i> Dvořák: <i>Violin Concerto</i> Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 7</i>	Czech National Symphony Orchestra The Bridgewater Hall Lower Mosley St M2 3WS www.bridgewater-hall.co.uk/whats-on 0161 908 9000
15 May 2.15 16 May 7.30 19 May 4.00	Dvořák: <i>Scherzo Capriccio</i> + S. Hough, Butterworth, Elgar	Hallé Orchestra, S. Hough, M. Elder. The Bridgewater Hall, Lower Mosley St M2 3WS, www.halle.co.uk 0161 907 9000
Yorkshire and the Humber		
18 May 24 7.00pm	Dvořák: <i>Scherzo Capriccio</i>	Hallé Orchestra, S. Hough, M. Elder. Sheffield City Hall Barker's Pool, Sheffield City Centre, Sheffield S1 2JA, www.halle.co.uk
North East		
15 June 24 7.30pm	Dvořák: <i>Cello Concerto</i>	Royal Northern Symphonia. St Mary's Square, Gateshead NE8 2JR 0191 443 4661, theglasshouseicm.org
Scotland		
21 May 24 1.00pm	Dvořák: <i>Serenade for Strings</i>	RSNO. Ayr Town Hall 21-29 New Bridge St, Ayr KA7 1JX https://www.rsno.org.uk/whats-on/
22 May 24 1.00pm	Dvořák: <i>Serenade for Strings</i>	RSNO. Airdrie Town Hall Stirling St, Airdrie ML6 0AS https://www.rsno.org.uk/whats-on/
23 May 24 7.30pm	Dvořák: <i>Serenade for Strings</i>	RSNO. Caird Hall City Square, Dundee DD1 3BB https://www.rsno.org.uk/whats-on/

International

Date	Programme	Performers and Location
Opera of the National Theatre Prague , Národní 2, 110 00 Nové Město www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en		
8 May 7.00 pm 12 Jun 7.30pm	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/the-bartered-bride-3266368
9 May, 2 June 24, 7.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/rusalka-146378962?t=2024-05-09-19-00
1, 18, May 24 6.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Armida</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/armida-119296423
24, 26 May 24 1, 16 June 24 7.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Secret</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/tajemstvi-146378963
Brno Opera , Rooseveltova 31, 602 00 Brno-střed www.ndbrno.cz		
3 May 7.00 pm 25 May 5.00pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/programme/
7, 22 May 24 6.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>The Devil and Kate</i>	https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/programme/
15 May 24 7.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i>	https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/programme/
Ostrava Opera , Antonín Dvořák Theatre Ostrava www.ndm.cz		
4 May 24 6.30 pm	Smetana: <i>The Brandenburgers in Bohemia</i>	https://www.ndm.cz/en/opera/programme/another-month/05-2024
5 May 5.00 pm 17 May 6.30pm	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i>	
6, 15 May 24 6.30pm	Smetana: <i>Dalibor</i>	
7 May 24 6.30pm	Smetana: <i>The Two Widows</i>	
9 May 24 6.30 pm	Smetana: <i>The Kiss</i>	
10 May 24 6.30 pm	Smetana: <i>The Secret</i>	
11, 29 May 6.30 pm	Smetana: <i>The Devil's Wall</i>	
12 May 24 3.00 pm	Smetana: <i>Libuše</i>	www.ndm.cz/en/opera/programme/another-month/05-2024 JIŘÍ MYRON THEATRE, Čs. legií 148, 701 04 Moravská Ostrava
Plzeň Opera, J.K. Tyl Theatre Smetanovy sady 16, 301 00 Plzeň, www.djkt.eu/en/opera		
3, 14 May 24 7.00pm	Smetana: <i>The Kiss</i>	https://www.djkt.eu/program?filter[soubor]=opera
9 May 24 7.00 pm	Smetana: <i>Choral music</i>	https://www.djkt.eu/repertoar/smetanovy-sbory-ve-velkem-2024
19 May 4.00pm 21 May 7.00pm	Dvořák: <i>Armida</i>	https://www.djkt.eu/repertoar/armida-2023
24 May 24 7.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i>	https://www.djkt.eu/repertoar/prodana-nevesta-2020

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.

The newsletter is published four times a year, in February, May, August and November.

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

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>

[Composers on page 1: Dvořák, Bodorová, Janáček, Cikker, Weinberger, Mysliveček, Smetana]

Events to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Dvořák Society, Leamington Spa between 2 and 6 May 2024: Dvořák Society Commission – World Premiere of work by Sylvie Bodorová

As part of the celebrations for the fiftieth anniversary of The Dvořák Society, Sylvie Bodorová, a Society Vice President, has been commissioned to write a work for the 2024 Leamington Music Festival. The premiere will take place on Saturday 4 May in the Royal Pump Rooms, The Parade in Leamington Spa. The work for oboe and string quartet will be played by Vilém Veverka and the Martinů String Quartet in the concert which starts at 7.00 pm.

In the Year of Czech Music 2024, the Leamington Music Festival also celebrates the bicentenary of the composer Bedřich Smetana and features eighteen composers born in the Czech Lands and fourteen musicians from the Czech Republic who will perform in the eleven concerts programmed between 2 and 6 May.

Sylvie Bodorová has called her new work *Psalms and Exhortations – Concerto for Oboe and String Quartet* and it will be performed by leading Czech musicians whom she knows well. It has five movements and the use of the word *Concerto* leads to the expectation of some virtuoso demands from the oboist. It was when Vilém Veverka recently recorded Bodorová's **Grido del Pastore** with harpist Kateřina Englichová that he suggested she should write a concerto for him.

Sylvie Bodorová was born in České Budějovice in 1954 and has composed a large number of works since the late 1970's. These include two oratorios *Judas Maccabeus* for the Prague Spring Festival and *Moses* for the Litomyšl Smetana Festival and two operas *The Legend of Katerina from Redern* premiered in Liberec and *Quo Vadis* premiered in Pilsen. She has written several concertos and a lot of chamber music. This year she also has two other commissions, a *Trumpet Concerto* from the Prague Spring

Festival and a *Violin Concerto* from the Allegro Vivo Festival based in Horn in Austria.

Between 1993 and 2004, Warwick Arts Society, the forerunner of Leamington Music, commissioned five works from Sylvie Bodorová. These were *La Speranza* for the Muhlfeld Trio in 1993, *Terezin Ghetto Requiem* for Nigel Cliffe baritone and the Škampa Quartet in 1998, *Ama me* for Nigel Cliffe and William Howard in 1999, *Megiddo* for the Schubert Ensemble of London in 2001 and *Vertumnus* for the Fine Arts Brass Ensemble in 2004. All the premieres took place at festivals in Warwick and Leamington.

Of these five works, the one that has had the widest circulation is *Terezin Ghetto Requiem* and its fifth performance in Leamington is in the final concert of this year's Leamington Music Festival on Monday 6 May in Holy Trinity Church in Beauchamp Avenue. The Škampa Quartet followed the premiere thereby giving the London premiere of the work at the Wigmore Hall with baritone Christopher Maltman. Nigel Cliffe gave further performances with the Emperor Quartet in the Harrogate Festival and the Schidloff Quartet in the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival and the Norfolk & Norwich Festival. They also gave the Czech premiere at the Prague Spring Festival in 2000.

The premiere of Sylvie Bodorová's commission on Saturday 4 May will be in a concert that includes Mozart's Oboe Quartet in F K370 and Dvořák's Piano Quintet in A Opus 81 with pianist Martin Kasík joining the Martinů Quartet.

Richard Phillips

Date	The Royal Pump Rooms, Parade, Leamington Spa, CV32 4AA, unless listed otherwise, www.leamingtonmusic.org
2 May 24 7:30 pm	Mahler: <i>Piano Quartet</i> movement, Schulhoff: <i>Duo</i> , Smetana: <i>Polkas</i> and Dvořák: <i>Piano Quartet in Eb</i> Op. 87. Amici della Musica: Philippe Graffin (violin), Elizabeth Wallfisch (viola), Raphael Wallfisch (cello) and Piers Lane (piano)
3 May 24 12:00 noon	Smetana: <i>Bagatelles</i> and <i>Impromptus</i> , Dvořák: <i>Suite in A</i> Op 98, Chopin: <i>Ballade in G minor</i> Op 23, <i>Nocturne in Db</i> Op 27/2, <i>Scherzo in Bb minor</i> Op 31. Martin Kasík (piano)
3 May 24 7:00 pm	Suk: <i>Elegy</i> , Smetana: <i>Trio in G minor</i> Op 15, Martinů: <i>Bergerettes</i> and Dvořák: <i>Trio in F minor</i> Op 65. Guarneri Piano Trio
4 May 24 11:00 am	Schulhoff: <i>Five Pieces</i> , Bodorová: <i>Shofarot</i> , Smetana: <i>String Quartet No 2</i> , and Dvořák: <i>Cypresses</i> (a selection). Kukal Quartet
4 May 24 2:00 pm	Dvořák Society AGM and at 3:30 pm talk by David Beveridge on <i>Dvořák in Britain</i> .
4 May 24 7:00 pm	Mozart: <i>Oboe Quartet</i> , Bodorová: <i>Oboe Quintet</i> PREMIERE (commissioned by The Dvořák Society), Dvořák <i>Piano Quintet in A</i> Op 81. Martinů String Quartet , Vilém Veverka (oboe) and Martin Kasík (piano)
4 May 24 9:15 pm	Dvořák Society Reception
5 May 24 12:00 noon	Mahler, Suk, Haas, Ullmann, Korngold, Janáček and Dvořák Simon Wallfisch (baritone) and Iain Farrington (piano)
5 May 24 2:30 pm	Warwickshire Music Hub – annual concert with students playing Czech music
5 May 24 3:00 pm	Talk about the Low-Beer Story behind Schindler's List and Brnenec project – by Daniel Low-Beer
5 May 24 7:00 pm	Bohemian Pot Pourri – Martinů, Haas, Klein, Smetana and Dvořák Martinů String Quartet , Vilém Veverka (oboe) and Martin Kasík (piano)
6 May 24 11:00 am	Dvořák: <i>Song to the Moon</i> , Eben: <i>Okna</i> , Smetana: <i>Vltava</i> from the <i>Má vlast</i> , Hummel <i>Trumpet Concerto</i> Imogen Whitehead (trumpet) and Oliver Hancock (organ) This concert takes place in the All Saints Church, Priory Terrace, Leamington Spa, CV31 1AA
6 May 24 12:30 pm	Kalivoda: <i>Introduction and Rondo</i> , Kofron: <i>Sonatina</i> , Mahler: <i>Urlicht</i> from <i>Des Knaben Wunderhorn</i> , Janáček: <i>On an Overgrown Path</i> (movements – piano solo), Ponto: <i>Concerto No 5</i> second movement, Beethoven <i>Sonata in F</i> Op 17. Ben Goldscheider (horn) and Richard Uttley (piano).
6 May 24 2:30 pm	Walk to sites connected with the Czechoslovak Free Army's time in Leamington 1940–42.
6 May 24 7:00 pm	Tauský: <i>Coventry Meditations</i> , Krása: <i>String Quartet</i> , Bodorová <i>Terezin Ghetto Requiem</i> and Schubert: <i>Quintet in C</i> . Martinů String Quartet , Simon Wallfisch (baritone) and Gemma Rosefield (cello). This concert takes place in Holy Trinity Church, Beauchamp Ave, Leamington Spa, CV32 5RE

