

# The Dvořák Society

*For Czech and Slovak Music*

*Founded 1974*

**Newsletter No. 150, May 2025**



**Winners of the 2025 Antonín Dvořák Classical Music Competition: Melissa Lam (cello), USA and Matteo Hager (violin), CZ. For more information see the page 6. Photo: [ADCMC](#).**

**PRESIDENT:** Jakub Hruša

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

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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

Since Newsletter 149 there has been a good deal of activity behind the scenes. Preparations are well advanced for the next Occasional Publication *Dvořák and England*, which will be a bumper edition written by Dr David Beveridge and include copious illustrations. This promises to provide a fascinating insight into the relationship between Dvořák and England, and an informed account of the people and places associated with performances of his music. As is customary, members will receive a copy and non-members will be able to purchase a copy via the website (in two different formats).

Thanks are due to Mike Crump who has kindly offered to catalogue the LPs currently held in the Senate House Depository in Egham. This is a major undertaking as we are obliged to remove all the LPs from there, before cataloguing and then dispersing to different appropriate collections, etc. Work on this will commence in April/May.

Rosemary Terian, the widow of Greg, has kindly provided some recordings of Martinů works which by request are to be donated to the Martinů Institute. There are also some books on Martinů which will be listed in a forthcoming Newsletter and for sale to members.

Our AGM will be taking place on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May at 2.30 pm and will be held on-line via Zoom. Following the meeting, Nigel Simeone will give an illustrated talk entitled *Sir Charles and the Czechs: A Centenary Celebration* marking the anniversary of our former President, Charles Mackerras. (see page 19 for details).

Appropriately, under the Mackerras Fund we have recently been able to provide a grant to Green Opera, an award-winning sustainable opera company and arts charity. TESTAMENT, weaves together four centuries of vocal music to create a powerful commentary on humanity's relationship with the

natural world. The programme imaginatively combines the staging of works from the Baroque era to contemporary composition, featuring Monteverdi's dramatic *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*, Janáček's emotionally charged *The Diary of One Who Disappeared*, and the never-before-staged *Try Me, Good King* by the acclaimed American female composer Libby Larsen. There will be four performances between 16 and 19 July 2025, Grimeborn Festival, Arcola Theatre, London.

Following further contact with Karel Janovický's family, and with their support we were planning to hold a concert in Karel's memory in the first quarter of 2025 to include some of his compositions and also contributions from Emmy Destinn competition winners. Due to professional commitments of the artists, we have had to postpone this until September. A date will be announced in due course.

If you are thinking of travel to Czechia during 2025 here are two upcoming events which might be of interest to members:

#### **Příbrám – Dvořák Festival 22<sup>nd</sup> April – 3<sup>rd</sup> May**

This is a link to a [YouTube video](#) of the announcing this year's Festival which is in its 56<sup>th</sup> year. In 2026 there are plans to have a programme concentrating on Dvořák's links with England.

#### **8<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

Following transfer of the ownership of Dvořák's birthplace from the National Museum to the Lobkowicz Collective and the subsequent extensive renovations, there will be a Grand Opening celebration **in Nelahozeves on Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> September 2025**. Full details will appear on the DS Facebook page and website.

Information on other music festivals in the Czech Republic and Slovakia can usually be found either in the diary of events (pages 17 ff.), the DS Facebook page or the DS website.

By the time you read this column I will have performed Dvořák's 4<sup>th</sup> Symphony, in d minor Op.13 on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April with my local symphony

orchestra, the North Staffordshire Symphony Orchestra (NSSO). The work was unknown to me and the vast majority of the orchestra. Even locating a set of parts in the UK was a major undertaking. The music itself has strong overtones of Wagnerian harmonies with the occasional nod towards the mature Dvořák and Slavic references. We have greatly enjoyed rehearsing the piece. Also it is a golden opportunity to advertise the Society to a wider audience as I have arranged to display membership leaflets and a selection of books.

A gentle reminder that we still have a few copies of the CD - *Franz Liszt and Czech Music* (Arco Diva) to offer to members at the special price of £5.00 (including p & p) on a first come first serve basis. (A review was included in Newsletter 148).

Can I also draw attention to the Dvořák medallions on offer through the Society website? There are still some available. Please note that the Smetana Medallions have completely sold out. Please see page 15.

**The book sale ceased on 31<sup>st</sup> March and prices have reverted to their pre-anniversary charges.**

*M. David Roberts*

## ***This is your editor writing***

This is my twelfth Newsletter.

Recently I got involved in digitalising old DS Newsletters. I started with Volume 1 from 1974. I am currently at Volume 9, 1983. I have uploaded the scanned issues to our website to the [Newsletter Archive](#) web page. It is in the Members Section of our website, so you need our password to access it.

It is exciting to read these old Newsletters (though their name has changed since Volume 1, currently – that is in Volume 9 – it is *Czech Music*): Most issues have a longer article dedicated to a specific issue related to Czech or Slovak music. For example, Volume 6 (1980), Issue 1 has a four-page long densely-type article by Anthony Hodgson about the records of Dvorak's 8<sup>th</sup> symphony. Or a similarly long and dense article appeared in Volume 7 (1981), Issue 1 about the Smetana Quartet; according to Wikipedia the Quartet stopped performing in 1989. Volume 8, Issue 2 has a 9-page article by

Sir Cecil Parrott called *Goethe and Tomášek*. I am sure that you know who Cecil Parrott is (he was the first to translate *The Good Soldier Švejk* into English). But who is Jan Václav Tomášek? Well, now I know...

Those newsletters were typed in an IBM Selectric typewriter and the typos were corrected with Tipp-Ex.

There will be a new concert hall in Brno! The ground-breaking ceremony took place end of February.

The next Newsletter's submission deadline is 1 July 2025. Please send me your reviews, contributions and comments. Without them, the Newsletter would be shorter and duller. My details are at top of page 2...

*Tomy Duby*



Stone laying ceremony of the new Janáček Cultural Centre in Brno. Second on the right is the Czech prime minister Petr Fiala. Photo: M Schmerková, [Brno Daily](#).

I believe that the petite lady on the left is Alena Veselá. Her 100th birthday is celebrated in Newsletter 143, page 1.

## ***Membership News***

### **MEMBERSHIP**

We offer a warm welcome to new member Christina Schuetz of Blackheath, London, who is studying at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance.

Since our last Newsletter report, we have been saddened to hear of the deaths of two members: Richard Hall (August 2024), and Jaroslav Mihule (December 2024, aged 94). Professor Mihule, author of a major study of Martinů, had been an Honorary Member since 1989.



## PAYMENT DETAILS

Payment by electronic bank transfer is encouraged as the processing charge which 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:

|             |                                                                     |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Account:    | Dvorak Society of Great Britain<br>(NB: no 'The' and no diacritics) |
| 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 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.

## WEBSITE PASSWORD CHANGE

The password needed to gain access to the Members' Section of [www.dvorak-society.org](http://www.dvorak-society.org) is changed each year, shortly after our Annual General Meeting. All members for whom we have an email address 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  
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## Obituary

### Prof. Jaroslav Mihule 1930–2024

Over the last few decades, it has become customary to celebrate a 'Year of Czech Music' whenever the date ends in the number 4. Bedřich Smetana's life spanned the years between 1824 and 1884, Leoš Janáček and Josef Suk were born in 1854 and 1874 respectively, and Antonín Dvořák passed away in the spring of 1904. Bohuslav Martinů, who lived from 1890 to 1959, remains outside this scheme in

numerological exile, just as he was in geographical exile for much of his life. He can be included in this company only by proxy, and could surely have no finer representative than musicologist Professor Jaroslav Mihule, whose death occurred on 20 December 2024, a few weeks after he had celebrated his 94th birthday.

Mihule's musical talents were apparent at a very young age, and it was originally felt that he would study to become a piano virtuoso. He was apparently also a fine oboist, but eventually chose to study composition and conducting at the Prague Conservatoire, an institution to which he remained close. A turning point in his life came when he was introduced to the music of Bohuslav Martinů by the composer's friend Karel Šebánek, who later also introduced him to Charlotte Martinů.

Mihule's contribution to the literature on Martinů is all the more impressive when one considers the difficult circumstances under which much of it was produced. He resented and resisted the imposition of Communism on his country and therefore found himself relegated to the sidelines; between 1948 and 1989, he was obliged to work at the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport of the Charles University in Prague. In those days, music teachers for elementary schools were taught at such faculties; Mihule therefore wrote a large number of books on the musical education of children but could only devote himself to the study and promotion of Martinů's music when his duties permitted. Martinů's music itself was, for many years, proscribed by the Czechoslovak government. Nevertheless, Mihule produced a volume on the Martinů symphonies as early as 1959 and in 1974 followed it up with his biographical study *Bohuslav Martinů: profil života a díla* (*Bohuslav Martinů: a profile of his life and work*).



Jaroslav Mihule in 2016. Photo: Vojtěch Havlík, [vltava.rozhlas.cz](http://vltava.rozhlas.cz).

With the collapse of Communism in 1989, Mihule gradually assumed the more prominent roles that should always have been his lot. He became a Prorector of Charles University in 1989 and in this capacity was responsible for the award of Honorary doctorates to the composer Petr Eben and the pianist Rudolf Firkušný (a close friend of Martinů and an enthusiastic performer and

promoter of his works). He also produced a far more comprehensive biography – *Bohuslav Martinů: Osud skladatele (Bohuslav Martinů: the fate of the composer)*. Published in 2002 and extending to over 600 pages, this book is an outstanding scholarly achievement, scrupulous in its research and full of fascinating detail that is not to be found elsewhere – Mihule's greatest service to the composer whose music he adored.

Although Prof. Mihule will surely be best remembered for his work on Martinů, he was a man of many talents. His linguistic prowess was phenomenal – Russian and German were compulsory at school, and to these he added Latin and Ancient Greek, French and English. In the emails I exchanged with him at the end of his life, when he accepted Honorary Membership of the International Martinů Circle, he expressed himself in a friendly, yet elevated and polished style, (whether writing in Czech or in English). He was unfailingly polite and astoundingly modest. These qualities surely helped in his late diplomatic career – between 1994 and 1997 he was the Czech Republic's first ambassador to the Netherlands.

I sincerely hope that Mihule's work will one day be translated into English, making his peerless scholarship accessible to a far greater number of Martinů's growing band of admirers.

*Michael Crump*

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## 25 years ago

Dvořák Society Newsletter No. 51 appeared in April 2000 and was the fifth issue under my editorship.

The first item in this Newsletter reiterated the Honour for Petr Eben, first announced in Newsletter 49 Extra, that the Royal College of Organists had awarded Petr Eben an Honorary Fellowship in recognition of his standing as a composer, his enormous contribution to organ music and his talent as a great improviser on the instrument. We had now heard that the award ceremony would take place in Manchester on Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September, appropriately at the Royal Northern College of Music where Petr Eben had been a visiting professor of composition in the mid-1970s.

At last, a Dvořák statue was to be unveiled in Prague! Jarmila Gabrielová of the Czech Musicological Society and Milan Pospíšil, Vice-President of the Dvořák Society in Prague, had informed us that a modest conference was to take place in Prague on 9th September in conjunction with the unveiling of the statue. The conference was to concentrate on the background to this event as well as the history of the 'battles' against Dvořák and his school and their social and political context.

Not only would Jiří Bělohlávek be conducting *Jenůfa* at Glyndebourne during the summer but after that we could look forward to the revival of the Trevor Nunn production of *Kát'a Kabanová* at the Royal Opera House in November

and a new revival of David Pountney's production of *The Cunning Little Vixen* at English National Opera in February 2001.

Shawn Pullman, in his *Shawn: short and sharp* column brought up the question of Annual Dinner versus Annual Lunch about which a questionnaire had been previously circulated. The Dinner held at the Marlborough Hotel to mark our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary had been a great success. 83 members and guests had been present to enjoy the recital by the Panocha Quartet and the dinner while the raffle had raised £328 for the Scholarship Fund.

The 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lecture Series had drawn to a close on 2<sup>nd</sup> March with a fascinating and well researched talk by Jiří Pilka on father and son, Jan and Rafael Kubelík. However, the success of the meetings had prompted us to extend the lectures into the autumn when they would continue on the first Thursday of each month at the Czech Centre.

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was to take place on Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> April, at the Czech Club in West Hampstead.

Jordans Music Club had announced its 57<sup>th</sup> Season of summer concerts to take place in the Mayflower Barn in the Chilterns. Czech and Slovak artists performing this year were the Guarneri Piano Trio, the Martinů Quartet, Marian Lapšanský, the Panocha Quartet and the Czech Nonet.

Lewis Stevens reported on a very successful Fibich Evening which had taken place in Edinburgh on 24<sup>th</sup> March. The evening had been organised by our Edinburgh member Tim Paxton together with friends. In the intimate setting of the concert room of the Edinburgh Society of Musicians, they had performed the *Piano Quartet in B minor, Op. 11* followed by *Moods, Impressions and Reminiscences, Op. 41, 44, 47 and 57*.

Lorna Dobson, in her Lorna Corner, reported that the Czech Philharmonic under the baton of Vladimir Ashkenazy had been on an extensive tour of the United States during March giving a total of sixteen concerts. Plans were at this time underway for a tour of South America in June.

The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society had recently announced the appointment of their new Music Director. Gerard Schwarz would take over from Petr Altrichter in the 2001/2002 season.

Lorna reported on a visit to Singapore during which she had met with the Society's three members living there: Voon Shih Hui, Sy Lily and So Nam.

The next Dvořák Society course at Burton Manor would take place from Friday, the 8<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, the 10<sup>th</sup> of September. Graham Melville-Mason would be the Tutor for the weekend when the subject would be Dvořák and his pupils.

Pavel Novák's new piano quartet *Marian Variations* would be premièred at Painswick Music Society by William Howard and the Schubert Ensemble on 8<sup>th</sup> April.

Greg Terian's Martinů Review highlighted a new CD of Martinů from the Bohemian Ensemble of Los Angeles. He introduced it with the words of Michele Zukovsky who had instigated an earlier Summit recording of Martinů: "This disc presents a kind of musical journey reflecting the rich and varied compositions of Bohuslav Martinů, an artist whose own life's journeys offered poignant testimony to the times in which he lived".

Greg Terian was enthusiastic about a new disc *Fantasia for Theremin* on the American Mode label. Although he recommended the disc he drew attention to the warning on the cover: "The extreme frequency range of the theremin may damage some speaker systems". He had noted at a recent concert that the BBC Symphony Orchestra has now added a theremin to its complement.

*The Greek Passion* was to be performed under the baton of Sir Charles Mackerras at the Royal Opera House in late April and early May and the biennial Martinů Festival would take place over the weekend of 19–21 May in Polička.

Pianist Ivan Moravec would be performing at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on 5<sup>th</sup> May.

Bill Marsden's Record Service Report included several reviews of recent CD issues and two pages of CDs which were available for purchase.

Graham Melville-Mason's Record News from Prague listed a significant number of new issues from Supraphon, Panton and other labels. And Vera Marsden's Library Report listed a number of donations of books from members.

Membership Secretary Peter Herbert in his Peter's Pages welcomed 27 new members to the Society.

Peter had been amongst those of our members who had attended a symposium and concert on *The Birth of an Opera: Janáček, Brno and Jenůfa* arranged by the University of Nottingham Department of Music on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2000. Peter reported feeling a little like a fish out of water as a non-musicologist but he had learned a great deal during the day which centred on the work in progress being done by Mark Andus in reconstructing the second act of *Jenůfa*. In his introduction Mark Andus played recordings showing clearly how Janáček had altered his plans for large sections of the work as a response to criticism, suggestions, early Brno performances and his own developing ideas.

Jan Smaczny explored *Jenůfa* with a view to the moral and other standards of the day and Geoffrey Chew commented on *Jenůfa* as a social document. After an excellent lunch there was a mini recital by Constantia Elia and Alina Kolonitskaya playing a four-hand piano version of the original overture to *Jenůfa*, and *Jealousy*.

Karel Janovický spoke on the way Janáček set his words to music, contrasting folk music and speech melodies and how these two made their way into the composer's works. Alena Němcová looked at Janáček's

origins as a dramatist, examining his early career and the influences made on his work.

Graham Melville-Mason looked at *Jenůfa* on record. It is Janáček's most recorded opera but modern scholarship allows for further exploration.

In the evening the Nottingham University Choir, the University Philharmonia and conductor Jonathan Tilbrook had given an excellent concert in Nottingham's Albert Hall.

Peter's Pages continued with a number of items one of which helped to solve the then problem of inserting Czech accents into our typescripts. Thanks to two of our members, Peter Chitty and Olga Štěpánek, Peter had acquired a goodly number of copies of keyboard template stickers which could be affixed to normal QWERTY computer keyboards. One could thus swap between English and Czech layouts by using ALT-SHIFT. We shouldn't brag but Dvořák Society publications were well ahead of the British Czech and Slovak Association's in this particular skill.

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As you will know from the last few issues of this Newsletter I had hoped to be able to report on the publication of Czech Music, the Journal of the Dvořák Society for Czech and Slovak Music, Vol. 21 at this point. But it is impossible to verify the exact publication date. This issue bears the date 1999/2000, the list of officers and committee members is from an earlier year and on further examination the eleven obituaries recorded therein include four people who did not die until the middle of 2001.

So, I am sorry folk but, in the interests of accurate reporting, you will have to wait.

*Annette Percy*

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## **2025 Antonín Dvořák Classical Music Competition**

Things move forward also in the world of classical music competitions. This one, organised by our sister organisation in Prague, Společnost Antonína Dvořáka, was completely online: the participants were asked to submit video recordings of their performances. They had to include one composition by a Czech composer, the length of the recording depended on the participant's age: it ranged from up to 7 minutes for the youngest to 25 minutes for those aged 25 or more. There were 24 instrumental categories from piano and violin to vibraphone and marimba.

The winners were announced on 15 March this year. The competition was on a high level. The international jury decided to award 16 Grand Prize Awards (for



different musical instruments). The Star Grand Prize was divided between two participants: Melissa Lam (cello), USA, and Matteo Hager (violin), CZ. Their photos are on page 1 of this Newsletter.

As Slávka Vernerová, the pianist of the Dvořák Piano Quartet and the president of this competition, wrote to me: *It is gratifying that the music of Czech composers attracts the interest of so many young musicians around the world.* You can find more about this competition on its website, [www.dvorak-music-competition.com](http://www.dvorak-music-competition.com).

**Tomy Duby**

## A Brno centenary event

Our member **Nigel Simeone**, who received the Janáček Medal in Brno last November, has written that "after a surprise invitation from the Masaryk University, I was in Brno again at the end of January. **Jiří Zahrádka** [director

of the Janáček Archive], **Graeme Dibble** [the English translator of Zahrádka's books on Janáček operas], and I were presented with the University's silver medal and with scrolls of positively Ruritanian splendour. This event, held in the hall of the Law Faculty, was to celebrate 100 years to the day since Janáček was awarded his honorary doctorate – I was so glad to be able to be there to mark that occasion, and the university had a display with Janáček's original certificate. The ceremony itself was delightful (very efficiently run, and with no speeches, apart from a short one by the Rector at the beginning). It ended with a terrific performance of the Intimate Letters String Quartet. Then a pleasant hour of drinks and snacks before we walked down the road to the opera house in time for a wonderful – very moving – performance of Martinů's *Stories about Mary*. I was only there for two days, but it was a busy and hugely enjoyable visit."

**Terry Heard**



## Events and Concert Performances

### Compositions by Karel Janovický in a Memorial Concert, Small Spanish Hall, Španělská 10, Prague, 19 December 2024.

At the height of the Advent season the Society of Czech Composers, a member organisation of the Association of Musical Artists and Musicologists, presented an interesting evening of chamber music dedicated to two very different Czech composers connected by a coincidental but fundamental fact, their deaths in 2024.

Whereas Oldřich Semerák (1932–2024) lived his whole life in his homeland, where he also fully developed and put to use his musical talent as an instrumentalist, teacher and composer, the fates of Karel Janovický were diametrically opposed. Composition eventually took a back seat to his many other activities; thus all the more meritorious is the attention devoted by the Society of Czech Composers with this concert to his musical works, still little known in Czechia.

Karel Janovický, born as Bohuš Šimsa in Plzeň (Pilsen) on 18 February 1930, grew up in a music-loving family. His father, originally a tailor, performed as a baritone with the Pilsen opera company. The musical talent of young Bohuš was first developed by two well-known teachers in the city, pianist Oldřich Filipovský and composer Josef Bartovský. After graduating from a pedagogical secondary school in 1949, he applied to the College of Music of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague intending to study



Jana Vonášková-Nováková (violin) and Petr Novák (piano) after the Memorial concert. Photo: J. Tauerová.

conducting. However, due to the Communist takeover of Czechoslovakia in 1948, he was not accepted. The family was subjected to political repression; the father was dismissed from the theatre, and the tailor's shop was confiscated from the parents. Despite an offer of studies at the College of Liberal Arts of Charles University, the nineteen-year-old Bohuš decided to emigrate in the autumn of 1949 with the family of Sylva Maiwaldová who later became his partner in life. During a difficult year-

long stay in German refugee camps, he intensively studied and composed.

After arriving in England in 1951 he studied music at several vocational schools. He was strongly influenced especially by the violinist Jan Šedivka (1917–2009) in chamber music and the composer Mátyás Seiber (1905–1960), of whom he was a private pupil. After completing his studies at Royal Academy of Music and graduating in 1956 from Royal College of Music, for several years he earned his living as a freelance musician. He gave concerts, composed, and taught music theory, composition and piano. During that time, for the protection of his parents, he began to use the pseudonym Karel Janovický. From 1964 to 1990 he worked for BBC Radio in various positions—as producer, director, programmer, reporter, columnist and announcer—and for the last several years of his service there he headed the Czechoslovak department of the BBC World Service. He was also intensively involved over a long period of time in the dissemination and popularisation of Czech classical music, though he took an interest in jazz as well. In recent years one of his conspicuous activities was his work as a member of the executive committee of the Dvořák Society for Czech and Slovak Music.

Despite the demanding work in which he engaged throughout his life, he never stopped composing. The list of his works encompasses almost a hundred opus numbers—see Jana Nováková's diploma thesis *Život a dílo Karla Janovického (The Life and Work of Karel Janovický)*, Academy of Performing Arts, Prague, 2007. In the main they are chamber works, often written for non-standard instrumentation, but also represented are string quartets, sonatas for piano and violin, songs, choruses, concertos and several symphonic works. Many of these were written for specific performers, such as the Piano Quartet given in its world premiere by the Dvořák Piano Quartet in the 2017 Prague Spring Festival, or some of the violin sonatas written for Jana Vonašková-Nováková (a performer in the memorial concert), who became friends with the composer during her studies in the United Kingdom and plays his works periodically.

Janovický's compositional style is based on the musical heritage of the last century. His works are usually tonal, characterised by strong inner expression and their own identity. His music has begun to be performed with some frequency in Czechia only during the past few decades, often thanks to the activities of friends among musicians, especially members of the association called *Přítomnost (The Present)* and the Society of Czech Composers. At a concert presented in 2014 by the Antonín Dvořák Society of Prague on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the British Dvořák Society and a visit by many of its members to Prague, Janovický's witty composition for chamber orchestra *Prelude and Double Fugue* on well-known themes from works by Smetana and Dvořák,

composed in 2003, was played in the new hall of the Prague Conservatory.

Works by Janovický performed in the Prague Memorial concert in December 2024 began with a charming set of piano pieces for children from 1963, *All Kind of Plonkybles*. The headings of all ten pieces refer humorously to the world of children and the composer's playful relationship to music. Intended for 'two-hand piano and for a while also four-hand piano', the pieces were played by Tomáš Hostýnek and Petr Novák of the Pilsen Conservatory. The two-movement *Sonata No. 3* from 2020, relatively short in duration but all the more powerful in expression, was performed with evident personal passion and commitment by Jana Vonašková-Nováková (first violinist in the Pražák Quartet) with her brother Petr Novák at the piano. Finally, the four-movement *Impromptus on Old Scottish Airs for Flute and Piano* from 2008 remained entirely in Pilsen's hands, as the flute part was played by Ivana Bartová, who works there, and the piano by Petr Novák.

Contributing to the extraordinary atmosphere of this successful concert were not only the presence of the composer's son, Cyril Šimsa, who lives and works in Prague, but also the opportunity for informal conversation with the performers. Considering the warm reception the composer's works received, one can only hope that Czech audiences will encounter the music of Karel Janovický on concert stages more and more often.

To further illustrate the human character and personality of Bohuš Šimsa / Karel Janovický it perhaps remains only to add that a lifelong passion (and support) of his was scouting. In 2011 the Czech Republic honoured him with the *Gratias Agit* award of the Minister of Foreign Affairs for his contribution to spreading the good name of his homeland abroad. One can read about the many vicissitudes of his interesting and supremely fulfilled life in Silva Šimsová's book *Láska v exilu (Love in Exile)*, published by Ronado in 2019.

**Jarmila Taueroová**

(translated by David Beveridge)

**D. Shostakovich, Cello Concerto No. 1 and Symphony No. 5, Czech Philharmonic, Semyon Bychkov and Sheku Kanneh-Mason (cello) Barbican Hall, London, 7 March 2025**

I may be criticised for including this review in our Newsletter: Shostakovich has no known connection to Czech or Slovak music. However, as it was played by the Czech Philharmonic with Maestro Bychkov, it qualifies for inclusion.

The last time we (yes, you have guessed, that is my wife for almost 55 years and I) saw and heard the Czech Philharmonic in London was that memorable and



emotional concert on 28 October 2018 at the Royal Academy of Music. Then it was the music of Smetana and Dvořák (cello concerto and one of the symphonies). But it was already Maestro Bychkov conducting...

The concert started with Shostakovich's *Cello Concerto No. 1* wonderfully played by Sheku Kanneh-Mason. It was originally composed in 1959 for Mstislav Rostropovich. It is fiendishly difficult, even [Wikipedia](#) says that it is *considered to be one of the most difficult concert works for cello*. I think that Sheku (who by the time you read this review, will be 26) has become a mature musician. Susan Jenkinson pointed out that Sheku played this concerto in 2016 when he won the BBC Young Musician of the Year contest.

After the break, we were treated to Shostakovich's *Fifth Symphony* (composed in 1937). It showed the orchestra and Bychkov at their best: from the most gentle *pp* of the first violins (I do not have the score to tell how many *p*'s were required; I remember seeing six *p*'s in one of Tchaikovsky's symphonies!) to the hair-raising *ff*'s of the finale. This symphony, like many romantic ones, tells a story: It starts in a tragic, contemplative mood of the first movement that includes a quotation from Bizet's *Carmen*, Shostakovich's favourite opera, and ends in a very triumphant march. When it was composed, it was Shostakovich's rehabilitation following the terrible criticism after *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. Is this what we need in today's confusing and complex times 88 years later? Together with the *Cello Concerto*, I think that YES!

And then, after that massive climax that only a really first-class orchestra at the Barbican can provide, came the time for the encore. "What will it be?" Tania asked me.

"Surely Dvořák" I whispered, still full of emotions, thinking of one of the Slavonic Dances: the five percussion players, among them two ladies, were still on the stage. No, it was the other extreme: the very gentle *Nimrod* from *Enigma Variations*. What a choice: the Czech Philharmonic conducted by its Russian-born conductor playing Elgar to an English audience! Because music is a means of non-verbal communication, I leave the interpretation to you...

PS: I agree with Michael Beckerman (see the last newsletter, page 13) that *no conductor has more beautiful and beautifully choreographed hands than Bychkov*.

**Tomy Duby**



Sheku Kanne Mason and the Czech Philharmonic.  
Photo: Mark Alan/Barbican.



## ***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](mailto:secretary@dvorak-society.org), for further information.*

**Vilém Blodek: *V studni (In the Well)*, a comic opera in one act, libretto by Karel Sabina.  
Zdeněk Kroupa, Ivo Židek, Milada Šubrtová,  
Štěpánka Štěpánová / Prague National Theatre  
Choir and Orchestra / František Škvor,  
Supraphon, SU43412**

"One of the most promising composers of this period was Vilém Blodek (1834–74). His one-act opera, *In the*

*Well*, belongs to a group of comic village operas with Sabina librettos, and it has remained a repertory opera in Czechoslovakia ever since its first performance in 1867." (*Czech Opera* by John Tyrrell, Cambridge 1988/2005.)

In the above Tyrrell neatly places Vilém Blodek in the story of Czech opera: illuminating him as a contemporary of Smetana, he confirms him as a cornerstone of the nation's operatic repertoire.

Yet how many outside the Czech lands, or without a specialist interest in the repertory, would even recognise his name let alone his work? Few, I suspect, which is a pity.

True, Tyrrell continues by speaking of Blodek's "rather four-square craftsmanship", owing "as much to Nicolai and Lortzing" as anything Czech, yet just because he isn't Smetana, it doesn't mean he isn't worthy of our attention. Whilst the plot is straightforward and the characters are not strongly drawn, the work is full of attractive melodies and has a charming period feel.

And, let's not forget, it was one of the first operatic works to 'travel' outside Bohemia, being heard in St. Petersburg, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Leipzig and Vienna by the mid-1890s.

For a comedy, this opera starts unexpectedly with a brooding, slow and atmospheric prelude, but the action centres after all on a moonlit Midsummer's Eve. After a reflective aria for Lidunka (the 'witch figure') we then move into a gently lilting, rustic second scene, with the village chorus, and thus the mood and setting are established.

The recording is excellent, and the cast is drawn from National Theatre regulars. Šubrtová (Lidunka), for example, starred for over 40 years at the opera (a famous Rusalka and Jenůfa), whilst the career of Ivo Židek (Vojtech) virtually overlapped his colleagues at the same house. He was immediately familiar to me from other Supraphon recordings of Smetana and Janáček, and it was a real pleasure to become reacquainted with his singing, for example in his aria *Chce vidět v studni tváři* (*She wants to see his face*).

Zdeněk Kroupa's firm bass meanwhile makes the most of his comic opportunities as the jilted old farmer, Janek.

One might detect a certain hardness to the voices and to the sound overall, more accurately a certain 'sheen'. However, this is characteristic of Slavic voice production (and recording) at the time, and not to the music's detriment.

Moreover, technically speaking this is a fascinating issue, as the accompanying notes confirm "*In the Well* was only the second opera that Supraphon recorded in stereo, back in 1959, closely following Krombholc's *Káťa Kabanová*".

Indeed, so far in advance was it of Czechoslovakia's capability to press stereo LPs, the company issued only a limited number of mono discs, intended exclusively for the Gramofónové závody record club. After a couple of years, Artia then issued the set again in mono. Although in their catalogue for some years, it subsequently disappeared from their lists. The current issue is therefore a lovingly crafted remastering of the original stereo tapes.

Blodek, alas like his great contemporary Smetana, ended his life mentally disabled and institutionalised. His hopes for a second opera, *Zítek*, dashed, and he was forced

to leave it unfinished. Following his death, Blodek's widow pressed Smetana to assist, but his own illness was too far advanced, and he refused.

A sad end to a promising career, but at least his charming folk tale *In the Well* lives on, and now in the splendid stereo sound originally envisaged.

NOTE: This review is from a CD-quality WAV download, provided by Supraphon (CD listing above). *In the Well* is also available in an alternate Supraphon recording from the 1980s. Originally, on LP it is now only accessible as a download, coupled with Act 1 of *Zítek* (VT0623-2).

Ian Bailey



Source: [Supraphon.cz](https://www.supraphon.cz)

**Olga Mojžíšová, *Smetana and Opera in his Correspondence and Diaries*, in Aleš Březina and Ivana Rentsch (eds.), *Bedřich Smetana and European Opera*, Königshausen & Neumann GmbH, Würzburg 2024, ISBN 978-3-8260-8349-5, pages 133-154. This book is available in [open-access](#) and [print](#) versions.**

On a dull February day, I received an email from Aleš Březina announcing the publication of a book edited by himself and Ivana Rentsch called *Bedřich Smetana and European Opera*. It is a collection of 13 talks presented during a colloquium between 2 and 4 June 2023 in Litomyšl.

The paper by Olga Mojžíšová captured my interest: what new can be said or written about Smetana that has not been told? On the other hand, I realised that almost



everything there would be new to me. So I sat down and it did not take me long to read these 20 pages and 80 footnotes well translated from Czech by Gerald Turner. According to Olga's biography on page 291 of the book, she is well-qualified to write about Smetana: she was the head of the Bedřich Smetana Museum and worked on the critical edition of his letters and diaries. Her contribution to this colloquium is almost exclusively based on these two sources.

This paper naturally splits into two halves: The first relates to Smetana's life until his move to Gothenburg (in 1856). Between 1840 and 1843 he was studying in Plzeň. He played the violin in the orchestra at local charity events and visited the local theatre. His diary contains a damning review (in my humble opinion in excellent German!) of Donizetti's *La Fille du regiment* (*The Daughter of the Regiment*): *Today was thus not satisfying...* (page 136). I singled out this opera as some of us know it the 2008 Metropolitan production with Natalie Dessay and Juan Diego Flórez that was shown in cinemas.

The second half covers, of course, the post-Gothenburg time when Smetana was actively engaged in writing and conducting operas. But this was also the period when his health was failing. As before, I limit myself to one – I think very touching – quotation from Olga's paper: his letter to Marie Blodková (the wife of Vilém Blodek, see the previous review. The review is again in German!) Smetana complains about difficulties in composing after becoming deaf.

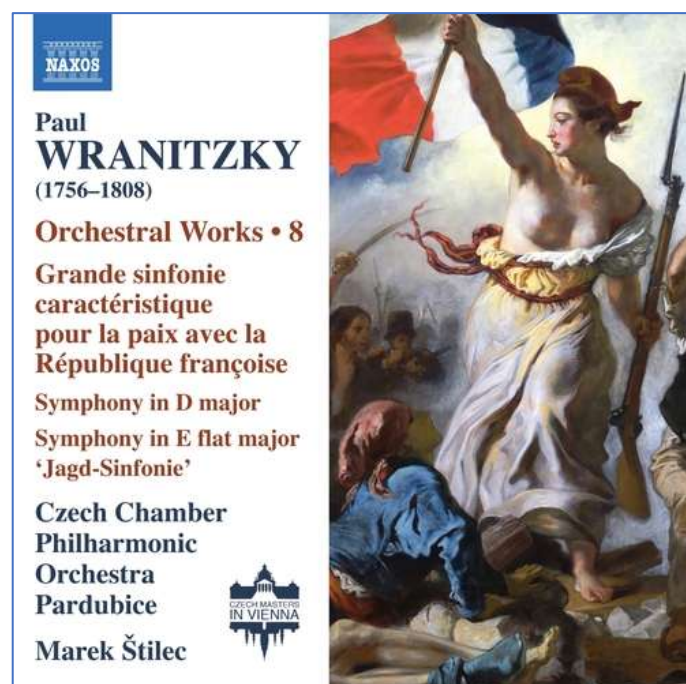
To summarise: you do not need a PhD in musicology to read this well-researched and well-written paper. If you do not like footnotes, you may skip them. However, they brought the man Smetana much closer to me!

**Tomy Duby**

### **Paul WRANITZKY: *Orchestral Works*, Vol. 8 Czech Chamber Philharmonic, Pardubice, Štílec Naxos 8.574619**

Paul Wranitzky (Pavel Vranický) was born in the southern Moravian village of Neureisch (today Nová Říše, Czech Republic) in 1756 the same year as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and lived until 1808. Like many other mid-European musicians he gravitated to Vienna where he spent most of his life. He was well regarded and, in his time considered, in as high an esteem as his contemporaries Mozart and Haydn and later Beethoven.

He was a prolific composer and at least 45 symphonies are known to have survived over the years. Many were held in private collections by the nobility including Empress Maria Theresa of Austria. This could explain part of the reason that his works fell off the radar over the years since about half of the symphonies were never published and hence not available for performance.



Source: [naxosdirect.co.uk](http://naxosdirect.co.uk)

Thanks to the Wranitzky project many of his previously unpublished works have now been made available. See [www.Wranitzky.com](http://www.Wranitzky.com)

Naxos are spearheading this revival, and we now have the eighth volume of his orchestral compositions, and this CD includes three symphonies.

The *Symphony in E flat Major* is one of the three symphonies he composed which are descriptive of hunting. The orchestration is interesting in that a lot of thematic material is led by wind ensembles to take us into the milieu of a forest hunt.

The *Symphony in D Major* is more traditional and more in keeping with what we would expect from a contemporary of the master of the symphony Haydn. It has a very upbeat rustic feel to its final two movements.

The final *Symphony in C minor* known as *The Grand Symphony for Peace with the French Republic* is a much longer and programmatic affair, written in 1797 when Austria was striving for peace with Napoleon's army having sustained heavy wartime casualties. Unlike the later *1812 Overture* by Tchaikovsky which is likewise programmatic of war, this is less bombastic and of a quieter nature. Its four movements include 9 subsections and incorporate various military marches described by national characteristics including an English, Austrian and Prussian march. The second movement is a funeral march depicting the death of Louis XVI of France. This predated by many years the use by Beethoven of the funeral march in his *Eroica* symphony. The final movement is full of hope and optimism, and it sounds to me that the military marches are transmuted into more playful dance-like motifs in keeping with this mood of hope.



Emperor Franz II forbade the performance of this symphony in Vienna since peace negotiations were at a delicate juncture and sadly failed. By 1799, war had recommenced.

The Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra, Pardubice conducted by Marek Štilec give an admirable account in this recording. Though not a large ensemble they manage to bring nuance and subtlety to these very different symphonies. I have heard three other recordings of the *Grand Symphony for Peace* and this recording takes the music at a slightly slower tempo emphasizing the melodic invention and emotional underpinning of the piece.

As you might have guessed, I am a great fan of Wranitzky and am delighted that this new CD presents three different pieces of music each interesting and enjoyable to listen to.

**Alan Rosenfelder**

For the review of volume 7 of Wranitzky's Orchestral Works see Newsletter #149, page 17.

## **KORNGOLD: SYMPHONY IN F SHARP**

**Piano Version – Erich Wolfgang Korngold**

**Orchestral Version – Orchestra Della Svizzera Italiana / John Mauceri**

**SUPERTRAIN RECORDS STR062**

It is rare to be able to start a review by claiming the content is unique, but in this case, it is no exaggeration.

None of it has been widely available; indeed part was all but unknown. Until recently, only a few family members and close associates were aware of a collection of acetates, featuring the composer himself, in piano reductions of orchestral scores. Presumably intended as a tempo guide for prospective performers, they were passed to Korngold's son George, and thence to grandson Leslie.

I will not dwell upon the process which then ensued... it is covered not only in the excellent CD sleeve notes but in a splendid article by Korngold biographer, Jessica Duchen in the current issue of BBC Music Magazine<sup>(1)</sup>.

Set down on a Hollywood film stage, sometime around 1952, Disc One commences with Korngold tersely announcing *First movement* before passionately setting about the opening paragraphs of his symphony amidst a dark turmoil of sound. The recording just about copes although some of the musical lines can be at times difficult to determine.

Although the piano itself is obviously not a top drawer, his technique is still formidable and he pretty much copes, although the helter-skelter tempo he sets for the scherzo is even beyond him... indeed, unlike the other movements,

it is only fragmentary *sections* of the scherzo that are illustrated, possibly for that reason.

A certain darkness, turmoil and sense of regret (?) is clearly apparent, more so than I have detected in previous performances and recordings of the symphony. Indeed this is a thread picked up in the sleeve notes, in John Mauceri's performance of the work on Disc Two, and in Duchen's article.

Through a mixture of their perceptions, and various casual remarks, Korngold once referred to the first movement's flute theme as "the theme of reconciliation", Ernst, the composer's grandson, in tandem with Mauceri, view the symphony quite differently from many recent interpretations. In essence, not as a swashbuckling, movie-stage-inspired work, but rather a deeper reflection on the Nazi's attempt to eradicate a generation, indeed a race, the fury and resentment that such a thing could happen, and the struggle to emerge from the bitter and twisted aftermath that ensued.

Thus Mauceri's orchestral recording, with the Swiss Radio Orchestra, is slower, sometimes more emphatic, wistful even harrowing to a degree that we do not usually encounter. Even the devil-may-care finale is slower, although not without rhythmic points and sudden twists, the final resolution is harder won but nevertheless satisfying.

Sound quality of the 1997 radio tapes once again is very acceptable and more than passes muster. I found no special problem either with Korngold's earlier piano studio sound, though some may be troubled by an instability in the piano image in certain places, the mono sound seeming to wander across the soundstage between left and right-hand channels<sup>(2)</sup>.

\* \* \* \*



Source: [Supertrain Records](http://www.supetrainrecords.com)

To conclude... if you care for Korngold (as I know many do) I completely endorse this issue and strongly urge you to add it to your collection. Not only is there the fascinating story surrounding its 'birth', but the results themselves are well worth all the effort involved. Many thanks are owed to Richard Guerin and Supertrain Records, and all those handling its distribution to the wider public.

Moreover... it seems, as a footnote, that discs exist of the composer playing his so-called "Baby Serenade". How about it, Supertrain??

**Ian Bailey**

#### NOTES:

(1) *BBC Music Magazine March 2025 pp 49-51.*

(2) NAXOS kindly supplied both a WAV Download and a copy of the commercial discs and this effect appears on both. Whether this is a facet of the original discs, the DAT transfer or some other cause is unclear. **It did not impair my enjoyment one jot.** Moreover, if your amplifier has a MONO button, this will overcome the effect.

## 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 January to April 2025. I am relying largely on the Široký dvůr website for information on smaller labels.

#### **Arco Diva**

UP0257-2 Wranitzky (Vranický): *Violin Concertos in F, G and C* (Bonet/Wranitzky Kapelle/Štílec)

#### **Arta**

F10294-2 Miča: *Opera: O Původu Jaroměřic na Moravě (3Cs)* (Ensemble Damien)

F10290-2 Smetana: *Má Vlast* (Musica Florea/Štrýncl)

#### **Czech Radio**

CR1232-2 Smetana: *The Bartered Bride* (2CDs) (Soloists/National Theatre/Košler)

CR1239-2 Smetana: *Seven Operas (12 CDs)* (Soloists/National Theatre/Košler)

CR1243-2 Vorlová: *Songs* (Morozová/Jagerová/Matoušek/Hoza/Červenka/Bouska)

CR1252-2 Janáček: *The Diary of One who Disappeared* (Nekoranek/Eiríksdóttir/Kahánek)

#### **Nibiru**

0177-2 Blodek: *Flute Concerto/Symphony Schütz* (L'Armonia Terrena/Klauda)

0176-2 Zelenka: *Statio Quadruplex/Miserere* (Ensemble Inégal/Victoria)

#### **Supraphon**

SU4341-2 Blodek: *In the Well* (1959 studio rec.) (Soloists/Prague National Theatre/Škvor)

SU4349-2 Ančerl: *Live Recordings of Piano, Violin and Cello Concertos, 1954-62 (7CDs)* (Various soloists and orchestras)

### 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 January to April 1925.

#### **Brilliant Classics**

97342 Hummel/Haydn: *Trumpet Concertos* (Li/Del Civita Festival Orchestra/Sieghart)

97503 Moscheles/Reicha/Demerssemann: *Bassoon and Piano Works* (Carlini/Datteri)

#### **BR Klassik (Naxos)**

900223 Dvořák: *Symphony No. 7/Scherzo Capriccioso* (Bavarian RSO/Haitink)

#### **Capriccio (Naxos)**

C2060 Schmidt: *Organ Works* (Andreas Juffinger)

#### **Carus**

CAR83515 Zelenka: *Missa Gratias Agimus Tibi* (Stuttgart Baroque and Chamber Orchestras/Bernius)\

**Coviello**

COV92424 Dvořák: *Stabat Mater* (Soloists/Chorwerk Ruhr/Bochum Symphony Orchestra/Helgarth)

**CPO (Naxos)**

555672-2 Dvořák: *String Quartets Op. 2, 16, 6, Waltzes, Op. 54 (Vol. 5)* (Vogler Quartet)

**Dynamic (Naxos)**

CDS8003 Dvořák: *Piano Trios Nos. 1 and 2* (Trio des Alpes)

**Evil Penguin**

EPRC0069 Smetana: *String Quartets* (Zemlinsky Quartet)

**Genuin (Naxos)**

GDN25897 Dvořák/Mendelssohn: *String Quartets Op. 106 and Op. 80* (Simply Quartet)

**Harmonia Mundi**

HMM932248 Dvořák: *Piano Trios Nos. 3 and 4* (TrioWanderer)

**Hyperion (Naxos)**

CDA68433 Dvořák/Price: *Piano Quintets* (Hamelin/TakacsQuartet)

**Mirare Records**

MIR666 Dvořák: *Vers un Monde Nouveau (Towards a New World)*, Jonas Vitaud

**Naxos**

8.574619 Wranitzky (Vranický) *Symphonies in D and E Flat, Grande Sinfonie Caractéristique, Vol. 8* (Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orch./Štílec)

**Orchid Classics (Naxos)**

ORC100369 Dvořák/Mozart: *Romance, Op.11/Four Romantic Pieces, Op.75/Violin Concerto No. 5* (Grace Park/Prague Philharmonia/Villaume)

**Pentatone**

PTC5187021 Mahler: *Symphony No.3* (CPO/Bychkov)

PTC5187222 Dvořák: *Stabat Mater* (Soloists/Leipzig Radio Choir/Dresden Philharmonic Orch./Janowski)

**Supertrain (Naxos)**

STR062 Korngold: *Symphony Op. 40 - Piano Version/Orchestral Version* (Korngold/Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana/Mauceri)

**Bill Marsden**



This is the entrance to the **Široký dvůr** music shop on Loretan Square run by our members Jana Orsulíková and Pavel Bílek. An aerial view of the whole house is on page 20. Here is their website [cdmusic.cz](http://cdmusic.cz).

You can combine a visit to this shop with a nice walk on the Western side of Vltava.



## Recent Publications

### Bärenreiter

TP 438                      **Dvořák, A**                      *Rusalka, Op. 114* (Study Score) (C\Ger-Eng) Urtext

This title is available to buy from Bärenreiter's UK web shop at [www.barenreiter.co.uk](http://www.barenreiter.co.uk).

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## Dvořák Society's Sales

### Commemorative Medallions of Dvořák and Smetana

We have some medallions on offer:

On behalf of the Prague Dvořák Society, Pavel Herčík prepared a medallion with the portrait of **Antonín Dvořák** and the **Rudolfinum** (on the reverse). Its size is 50 mm. The medallion was produced for the 180th anniversary of the composer's birth in September 2021. It is available in brass or nickel. The medallions were minted in a Limited Edition of which we have a small quantity.

Prices of medallions with their covers (including postage and packing):

- brass in a blue plastic case – £6.50 ( two only)
- brass in a red synthetic leather case – £8.00 ( four only)
- nickel in a red synthetic leather case – £9.00 (five only).



Any member interested in purchasing a medallion, please get in touch with the [Chairman](#).

**Please note that the book sale via the E-shop on the  
Society's website ended on 31st March 2025**

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## 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](http://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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>London</b>            |                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 3 May 2025<br>7.30 pm    | Janáček: <i>String Quartet No. 2 'Intimate Letters'</i>                                                                                        | Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141<br>Hagan Quartet. <a href="https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60403">https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60403</a>                                                                                                                        |
| 4 6 May 2025<br>7.00 pm  | Janáček: <i>The Excursions of Mr. Brouček</i>                                                                                                  | Barbican London, EC2Y 8DS 020 7870 2500<br>London Symphony Orchestra. <a href="http://iso.co.uk">iso.co.uk</a> , tickets <a href="http://barbican.org.uk">barbican.org.uk</a>                                                                                                                                |
| 4 May 2025<br>11.30 am   | Schulhoff: <i>String Quartet No. 1</i><br>Dvořák: <i>String Quintet in E♭ No. 3 Op. 97</i>                                                     | Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141<br>Bennewitz Quartet + Vladimír Bukač (viola)<br><a href="https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60405">https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60405</a>                                                                                         |
| 7 May 2025               | Dvořák: <i>Mass in D</i>                                                                                                                       | Westminster Hall, Parliament Choir<br><a href="http://www.parliamentchoir.org.uk">www.parliamentchoir.org.uk</a>                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 11 May 2025<br>11.30 am  | Dvořák: <i>Piano Quartet No. 2 in E♭ Op. 87</i>                                                                                                | Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141<br>Leonore Piano Trio <a href="http://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60420">www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60420</a>                                                                                                                             |
| 17 May 2025<br>7.30 pm   | Dvořák: <i>Stabat Mater</i>                                                                                                                    | Church of St Peter and Paul, The Green, Chingford E4 7EN<br>Forest Choir, J. Rathbone (conductor), Ch. Enever (sop.), F. Jacklin (alt), E. Lloyd Jones (ten), S. Gadd (bass)<br><a href="http://ticketsource">ticketsource</a> , <a href="https://londonforestchoir.org/">https://londonforestchoir.org/</a> |
| 18 May 2025<br>11.30 am  | Janáček: <i>String Quartet No. 1 'Kreutzer Sonata'</i>                                                                                         | Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141<br>Novus String Quartet <a href="http://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60437">www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60437</a>                                                                                                                           |
| 25 May 2025<br>11.30 am  | Janáček: <i>Violin Sonata</i>                                                                                                                  | Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141<br>Stephen Waarts violin; Juho Pohjonen piano<br><a href="https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60449">https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60449</a>                                                                                         |
| 15 June 2025<br>11.30 am | Dvořák: <i>String Quartet in F Op. 96 'American'</i>                                                                                           | Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141<br>Carducci String Quartet <a href="http://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60489">www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60489</a>                                                                                                                        |
| 19 June 2025<br>7.30 pm  | Janáček: <i>String Quartet No. 2 'Intimate Letters'</i>                                                                                        | Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141<br>Ehnes Quartet <a href="http://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60499">www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60499</a>                                                                                                                                  |
| 29 June 2025<br>11.30 pm | Dvořák: <i>Gypsy Songs Op. 55 (arranged by Jiří Kabát)</i><br>Janáček: <i>Extracts from Moravian Folk Poetry in Songs (arr. by Jiří Kabát)</i> | Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141<br>Talich Quartet<br><a href="https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60518">https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60518</a>                                                                                                                     |
| 6 July 2025<br>11.30 am  | Dvořák: <i>String Quartet in G Op. 106</i>                                                                                                     | Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141<br>Vision String Quartet, <a href="http://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60531">www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60531</a>                                                                                                                         |
| 7 July 2025<br>1.00 pm   | Korngold:<br><i>Piano Trio in D Op. 1</i>                                                                                                      | Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141<br>Johan Dalene (violin), Andreas Brantelid (cello), Christian Ihle Hadland (piano). <a href="https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60534">https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60534</a>                                                     |
| 15 July 2025<br>7.30 pm  | Dvořák: <i>String Sextet in A Op. 48</i>                                                                                                       | Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141<br>Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective <a href="http://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk">www.wigmore-hall.org.uk</a>                                                                                                                                            |

| Date                                | Programme                                                            | Performers and Location                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 16 – 19 July 2025                   | <i>Testament.</i>                                                    | Grimeborn Festival, Arcola Theatre, London<br>24 Ashwin Street, London E8 3DL, <a href="http://www.arcolatheatre.com">www.arcolatheatre.com</a> .<br>An ambitious evening that weaves together four centuries of vocal music to create a powerful commentary on humanity's relationship with the natural world. Includes music by Janáček. |
| <b>South East</b>                   |                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 20 May 2025<br>7.30 pm              | Korngold: <i>Violin Concerto</i>                                     | The Marlowe. The Friars Canterbury Kent CT1 2AS 01227 787787<br>Philharmonia Orchestra <a href="https://marlowetheatre.com">https://marlowetheatre.com</a>                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 3 6 9 12 14 17 20<br>23 Aug 3.50 pm | Janáček: <i>Káťa Kabanová</i>                                        | Glyndebourne Festival Opera. New Rd, Lewes BN8 5UU<br><a href="https://www.glyndebourne.com/events/kata-kabanova/">https://www.glyndebourne.com/events/kata-kabanova/</a>                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>West Midlands</b>                |                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 26 July 2025<br>7.30 pm             | Dvořák: <i>Te Deum</i><br>+ E. Smith, Mathias                        | Hereford Cathedral, 5 College Cloisters, Cathedral Close, Hereford<br>HR1 2NG, Philharmonia Orchestra, G. Bowen (cond), soloists and<br>Three Choirs Festival Chorus, Cathedral Choristers, <a href="http://www.3choirs.org">www.3choirs.org</a>                                                                                           |
| <b>East Midlands</b>                |                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 2 May 2025<br>7.30 pm               | Dvořák: <i>Symphony No.9</i>                                         | Theatre Royal & Royal Concert Hall, Theatre Square, Nottingham, NG1<br>5ND, Hallé Orchestra, <a href="https://tickets.trch.co.uk/152181/152201">https://tickets.trch.co.uk/152181/152201</a>                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>North West</b>                   |                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 21 June 2025<br>7.30 pm             | Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 9</i>                                        | Ashton Hall, Dalton Square, Lancaster. LA1 1PJ<br>Haffner Orchestra <a href="http://www.haffnerorchestra.org">www.haffnerorchestra.org</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 5 July 2025<br>7.30 pm              | Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 6 in D major Op. 60</i>                      | Westholme School, Wilmar Lodge, Meins Road Warton BB2 6QU<br>Blackburn Symphony Orchestra, <a href="http://blackburnsymphony.org.uk">blackburnsymphony.org.uk</a>                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>South Yorkshire</b>              |                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 3 May 2025<br>7.30 pm               | Dvořák: <i>Symphony No.9</i>                                         | Sheffield City Hall Barker's Pool, Sheffield City Centre, Sheffield S1<br>2JA, Hallé Orchestra, <a href="http://www.sheffieldcityhall.co.uk">www.sheffieldcityhall.co.uk</a>                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Yorkshire and the Humber</b>     |                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 14 May 2025<br>7.30 pm              | Korngold: <i>Suite for two violins, cello, piano left-hand Op.23</i> | Kings Hall Station Road Ilkley LS29 8HB 07791 083326<br>Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective<br><a href="mailto:concertclubilkley@gmail.com">concertclubilkley@gmail.com</a>                                                                                                                                                                    |

## International

| Date                                                                                                                                               | Programme                          | Performers and Location                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Opera of the National Theatre Prague, Národní 2, 110 00 Nové Město</b> <a href="http://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en">www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en</a> |                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 4 May, 20 28 June<br>7.00 pm                                                                                                                       | Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>             | <a href="https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/rusalka-146378962">https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/rusalka-146378962</a>                                                 |
| 14 May 29 June<br>30 Aug. 7.00 pm                                                                                                                  | Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i> | <a href="https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/the-bartered-bride-3266368">https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/the-bartered-bride-3266368</a>                               |
| 15 28 May 7 pm<br>18 May 5.00 pm<br>8 26 June 7.00 pm                                                                                              | Smetana: <i>The Secret</i>         | <a href="https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/tajemstvi-146378963">https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/tajemstvi-146378963</a>                                             |
| 22 24 29 May<br>6, 13, 27 June<br>7.00 pm                                                                                                          | Janáček: <i>Jenůfa</i>             | <a href="https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/jeji-pastorkyna-Jf-g1CcVSOWgvmDPYmoYEQ">https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/jeji-pastorkyna-Jf-g1CcVSOWgvmDPYmoYEQ</a>       |
| 30 May<br>5 15 June 7.00 pm                                                                                                                        | Fibich: <i>Šárka</i>               | <a href="https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/sarka-YvrB3c67TbuATLaYEPYRow">https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/sarka-YvrB3c67TbuATLaYEPYRow</a>                           |
| 11 June 7.00 pm                                                                                                                                    | Smetana: <i>Libuše</i>             | <a href="https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/libuse-opera-1520281">https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/libuse-opera-1520281</a>                                           |
| 31 August 2025<br>7.00 pm                                                                                                                          | Janáček: <i>Káťa Kabanová</i>      | <a href="https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/katya-kabanova-3266350?t=2025-08-31-19-00">https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/katya-kabanova-3266350?t=2025-08-31-19-00</a> |



| Date                                                                                                                                        | Programme                          | Performers and Location                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>State Opera Prague</b> , Wilsonova 4, 110 00 Vinohrady, <a href="http://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en">www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en</a>         |                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 31 August 2025<br>5.00 pm                                                                                                                   | Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>             | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Brno Opera</b> , Rooseveltova 31, 602 00 Brno-střed <a href="http://www.ndbrno.cz">www.ndbrno.cz</a>                                     |                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 4 May 2025<br>6.00 pm                                                                                                                       | Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>             | <a href="https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/program/rusalka-13/">https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/program/rusalka-13/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 16 May 2025<br>7.00 pm                                                                                                                      | Janáček: <i>Jenůfa</i>             | <a href="https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/program/jeji-pastorkyna-3/">https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/program/jeji-pastorkyna-3/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 23 May 2025<br>7.00 pm                                                                                                                      | Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i> | <a href="https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/program/prodana-nevesta/">https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/program/prodana-nevesta/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 1 June 2025<br>6.00 pm                                                                                                                      | Dvořák: <i>The Jacobin</i>         | <a href="https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/program/jakobin-2/">https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/program/jakobin-2/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Ostrava Opera, Antonín Dvořák Theatre Ostrava</b> <a href="http://www.ndm.cz">www.ndm.cz</a>                                             |                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 4 May 2025<br>4.00 pm                                                                                                                       | Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i> | <a href="https://www.ndm.cz/en/opera/instance/6177-the-bartered-bride/2025-05-04/77010/">https://www.ndm.cz/en/opera/instance/6177-the-bartered-bride/2025-05-04/77010/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 5 7 May 2025<br>12 June 6.30 pm                                                                                                             | Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>             | <a href="https://www.ndm.cz/en/opera/instance/5666-rusalka/2025-05-05/77017/">https://www.ndm.cz/en/opera/instance/5666-rusalka/2025-05-05/77017/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Plzeň Opera J.K. Tyl Theatre</b> Smetanovy sady 16, 301 00 Plzeň, <a href="http://www.djkt.eu/en/opera">www.djkt.eu/en/opera</a>         |                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 6 May 11.00 am<br>17 May 7.00 pm<br>18 May 2.00 pm<br>24 May 7.00 pm<br>17 June 7.00 pm<br>18 June 11.00 am                                 | Smetana: <i>The Kiss</i>           | <a href="https://www.djkt.eu/en/repertoire/the-kiss-2024">https://www.djkt.eu/en/repertoire/the-kiss-2024</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 20 May<br>18 June, 7.00 pm                                                                                                                  | Smetana: <i>The Devil's Wall</i>   | <a href="https://www.djkt.eu/en/repertoire/devils-wall-2024">https://www.djkt.eu/en/repertoire/devils-wall-2024</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 30 May 2025<br>7.00 pm                                                                                                                      | Martinů: <i>Juliette</i>           | <a href="https://www.djkt.eu/en/repertoire/juliette-2024">https://www.djkt.eu/en/repertoire/juliette-2024</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Slovak National Theatre Opera Bratislava</b> SND New Building Pribinová 17, 819 01 Bratislava <a href="http://www.snd.sk">www.snd.sk</a> |                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 23 May 7.00 pm<br>25 May 5.00 pm<br>27 May 11.00 am                                                                                         | Suchoň: <i>Svätopluk</i>           | <a href="https://snd.sk/en/performance/16334/svatopluk/2025-05-23/19-00">https://snd.sk/en/performance/16334/svatopluk/2025-05-23/19-00</a><br><a href="https://snd.sk/en/performance/16335/svatopluk/2025-05-25/17-00">https://snd.sk/en/performance/16335/svatopluk/2025-05-25/17-00</a><br><a href="https://snd.sk/en/performance/16336/svatopluk/2025-05-27/11-00">https://snd.sk/en/performance/16336/svatopluk/2025-05-27/11-00</a> |

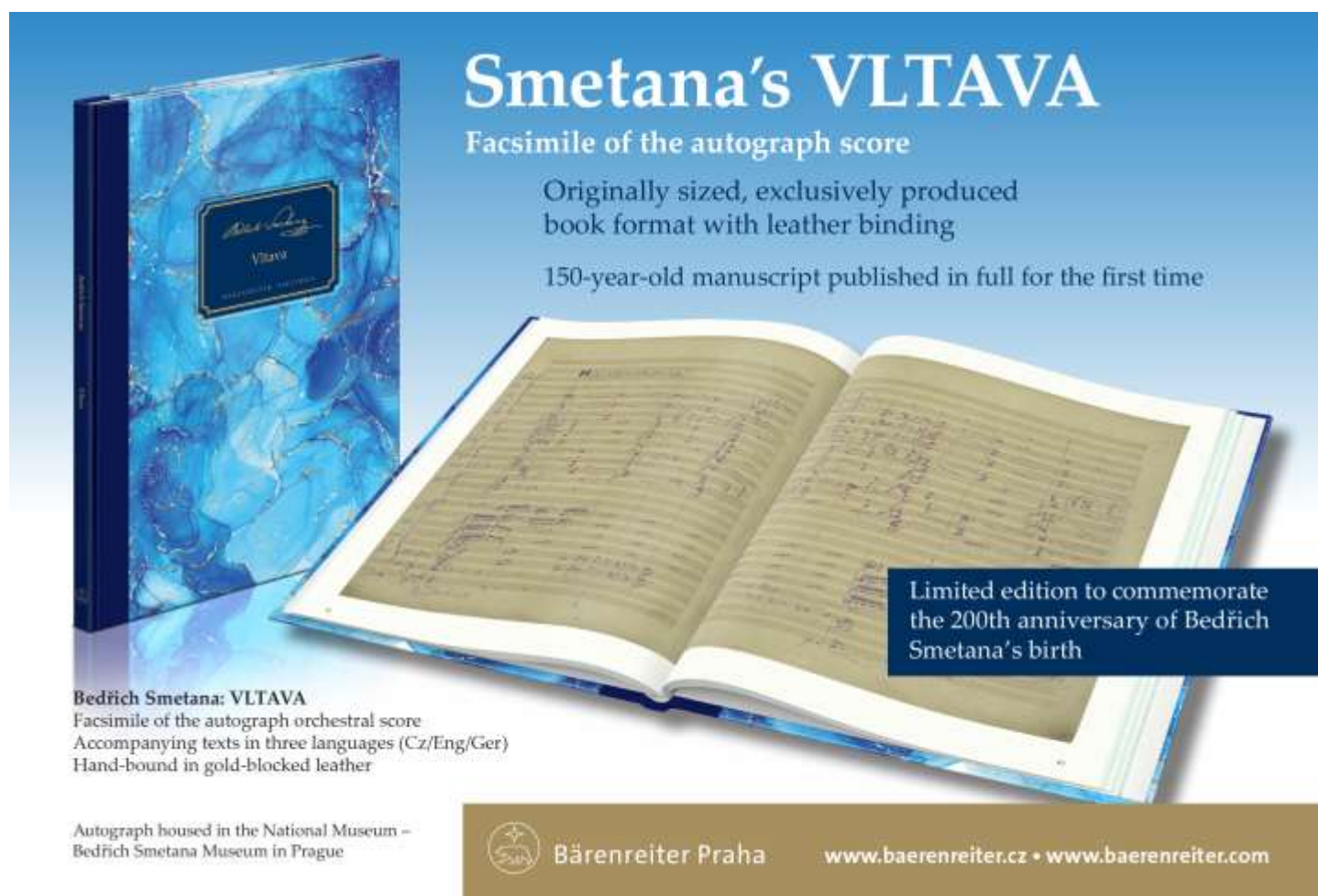
The Diary can only be compiled from information received. Please inform the Newsletter Editor (contact information on page 2) about events involving Czech and Slovak music and musicians.

The newsletter will be published in February, May, August and November. The deadlines 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](http://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>





# Smetana's VLTAVA

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Smetana's birth

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Composers on page 1: Dvořák, Bodorová, Janáček, Cikker, Weinberger, Koželuch, Smetana

## Annual General Meeting

The AGM of the Dvořák Society will take place on **Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 2:30 pm** (GMT + 1). The meeting will be virtual via Zoom. Full joining instructions will be supplied to members later via email.

For committee members see [Committee & Contacts](#) on our website.

After the AGM **Nigel Simeone** will give an illustrated talk entitled ***Sir Charles and the Czechs: A Centenary Celebration*** marking the anniversary of our former President, Charles Mackerras.





The Grand Opening celebration of the newly renovated Antonín Dvořák Birth House will take place in Nelahozeves on Monday, September 8, 2025. Photo: [House of Lobkowitz](#)



This wonderful building on Loretan Square in Prague houses the Široký Dvůr record shop (on the right hidden by the trees). The photo of the shop is on page 14. The left tower in the distance is Petřín.