

The Dvořák Society

For Czech and Slovak Music

Founded 1974

Newsletter No. 151, August 2025



The Czech Philharmonic appoints Jakub Hrůša as Chief Conductor and Music Director from the 2028/2029 season.

Congratulations to our President!

Source: [Czech Philharmonic](https://www.czechphilharmonic.cz/). Photo: Petr Chodura



Between The Deadlines

Notes from your Chairman

Thank you to those who attended the AGM held online, which took place on 10th May. Our online meetings enable international members to attend, and this year was no exception. Following the meeting, Nigel Simeone gave a fascinating and informative talk entitled *Sir Charles and the Czechs: A Centenary Celebration*, marking the anniversary of our former President, Charles Mackerras. The talk was recorded and is now available to watch via the link on the [members' section](#) of our website. It includes several music extracts of recordings made by Sir Charles.

A few days before the AGM, we heard the sad and unexpected news of the death of the composer and conductor Ronald Corp, who was a long-time member. As I write this, Radio 3 Breakfast played one

of his many recordings. I noticed in Newsletter #10 that Ronald gave the world premiere of Dvořák's *Seven Intermezzi* (B15) with the New London Orchestra at St John's Smith Square in January 1991.

One of the responsibilities the Committee has had to tackle is the matter of materials collected by the Society over the years. As has been previously reported, Senate House (University of London) took the decision not to give shelf-space to LPs, CDs and hard copies of Music Journals. Consequently, we have had to remove the LPs and CDs from the Depository in Egham and now have the major task of sorting, cataloguing and finding a permanent home (and not being housed in a member's garage or attic).

Thanks are due to Mike Crump, who has started to catalogue the LPs, and John Beale, who is currently storing the CDs, both removed from Egham. The CDs of Czech and Slovak music have been separated and

PRESIDENT: Jakub Hrůša

PATRON: 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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The Dvořák Society Newsletter is published 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. **Editor: Tomy Duby, tel.: +44 7878 190 244, e-mail: newsletter@dvorak-society.org.**

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they are now with the Secretary, Susan Jenkinson, from whom a list is available. There are also quantities of cassettes (private recordings) and VHS videos, which also have to be gone through and either disposed of or transferred to more usable formats. The fate of the music journals held in the Depository is a bridge we have yet to cross.

We are also taking steps to have a digital library of past publications. Tomy Duby has scanned a number of early issues of the Journal, and these have been posted to the DS website. RILM are interested in obtaining scans of our Newsletters from 1988, and this process has also commenced. Given the range of our publications, both in format and pagination, we are now looking to have these professionally digitised.

By the time you read this column, I will have performed Martinů's *Memorial To Lidice* on Saturday, 28th June, at the King's Hall in Stoke-on-Trent with my local symphony orchestra, the North Staffordshire Symphony Orchestra (NSSO). This is part of the centenary celebrations of the establishment of the city of Stoke-upon-Trent. The programme includes other music with local connections – Havergal Brian's *English Suite* and Walton's *Spitfire Prelude & Fugue*.

The production of the next Occasional Publication *Dvořák and England*, written by Dr. David Beveridge, has been slightly delayed. Members can now expect to receive their copies in late summer.

The Committee has approved funding support towards two projects:

Robert Rawson and the Harmonious Society of Tickle-Fiddle Gentlemen with Hana Blažiková are performing music associated with Count Wenzel von Morzin, including Antonio Vivaldi, František Jiránek, and Antonín Reichenauer. This CD, which includes several premieres, will be released in the autumn.

A book on Janáček's *Sinfonietta* by Jiří Zahrádka

and Nigel Simeone with a foreword by our President will be published by Boydell in 2026.

Under the Scholarship scheme, two string players, Viktoria Kovaka (viola) and Jan Petrov (cello), from the Prague Conservatoire will attend the one-week Cadenza International Summer School to be held at the Purcell School from 19th to 25th July.

Three CDs (£5.00, including p&p) have been made available through the e-shop on the DS website. Full details of the contents are to be found on the [website](#).

Franz Liszt and Czech Music – performed by Tomáš Víšek.

Antonín Dvořák: Unreleased – also performed by Tomáš Víšek.

Echoes Of The Past – Historical recordings of the Czech baritone Otakar Kraus were made by The London Transcription Service of the BBC in the early 1940s. These include music by Martinů (*Nový Špaliček*), and various folk-song arrangements by Janáček, Novák, Geraldine Thomson Mucha and Walter Süsskind. This CD was previously provided to existing DS members. These transcriptions are copyrighted by the Society and are available nowhere else.

A few of us intend to attend the Grand Opening celebration in Nelahozeves on Monday, 8th September 2025. Perhaps see you there?

Postscript: Following the recent announcement of the death of the pianist Alfred Brendel, I was interested to learn that he was born in Loučná nad Desnou, about 64 kilometres north of Olomouc. Also, having just finished reading a biography of the composer and eminent teacher Franz Schreker, I found out that he, too, had Czech roots, his father having been born south-east of Prague before moving to Hungary and then to Vienna.

M. David Roberts

This is your editor writing

This is my thirteenth Newsletter.

Beginning of May, we spent 10 days in Bratislava on a private visit. As it was between two public holidays (1st and 8th of May – no longer the 9th, as it was celebrated during the communist regime!), not much culture was on. Nevertheless, we were part of an interesting concert about which I report on page 8.

In the last Newsletter (#150, page 3), I reported that I am involved in digitising old Newsletters. Recently, David Roberts and I had a Zoom meeting in which we cleared the confusion I created by misnaming the scanned publications. What I scanned so far were *DS Journals*, published between 1978 and 1984, and not *DS Newsletters*. Most of them were called *Czech Music*. The first DS Newsletter (Newsletter #1 in my parlance) appeared in June 1988, and its editor, Shawn Pullman, introduced it with the following words: *Let me first of all say that this is designed to keep members in touch and aware of forthcoming events. It does not in any way replace our excellent journal CZECH MUSIC*. You can access all publications scanned so far on the [Members Section](#) of our website.

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

Tomy Duby

Membership News

MEMBERSHIP

We welcome Mavis Pilbeam of London as a new member.

We were sorry to learn recently of the death, about a year ago, of Julian Clapham, who with his wife Jennifer had joined the Dvořák Society over thirty years ago. Julian was the son of the distinguished scholar Dr John Clapham (1908–1992), author of two major books on Dvořák and much else, who took the chair at the Society's inaugural meeting in 1974. The Society has sent condolences to Jennifer.

WEBSITE PASSWORD

A password is needed to gain access to the Members' Section of the Society's website (https://www.dvorak-society.org/?page_id=112). In May, this password changed. The new password has been sent by email to all members for whom I have an email address. If you want to know what the new password is, please contact me.

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Obituary

Mike Fage (1944–2025)

It is with regret that we report the passing of former Dvořák Society Committee Member, Mike Fage, on 12th April 2025 at the age of 81. He joined the Dvořák Society in 1998 and was a Committee Member from 2020 until 2024. Mike was a talented musician and a conscientious and experienced communications technician, playing an important part in reshaping and developing the Dvořák Society's website and social media.

On leaving school at 18, Mike took up a traineeship as a technical operator at the BBC with the overseas radio services. His career developed rapidly, and he soon joined a team of studio managers at Bush House. In 1967, he married Judith, a fellow studio manager, and they had two daughters, Alice and Cecilia. In 1973, Mike was invited to join the production team launching the radio programme *Newsweek*. He then moved to television, working on the smooth and effective start of BBC2.

In 1994, Mike started a new career. He took early retirement from the BBC, which offered retraining courses. Mike, who already played the cornet, trumpet and the French horn, opted for a conducting course based in the Czech Republic, supported by a wonderful team of successful conductors from across the world. In training as an orchestral conductor there, he developed a particular love of the Czech Republic. He became fluent in Czech and continued to study the language for the rest of his life. He always made interesting contributions to the Czech Centre's Advanced Class. I recall that the first time I heard him speak, he delivered an illustrated talk on the history of musical instrument making in Northern Bohemia and the surrounding areas.

For over 20 years, Mike was the conductor of local orchestras, such as the St Mary's Orchestra in Finchley, and he also had experience conducting orchestras in far-away places as Mumbai and Bogotá. His most proud achievement was as conductor of the BBC Ariel Orchestra, which consists of talented amateurs connected with the BBC who meet monthly to rehearse a symphony or concerto for pleasure. He officially retired from

conducting in 2019, although he occasionally conducted small chamber music groups and played the cornet, trumpet or French horn in various bands.

Mike and Judith enjoyed travelling, especially to New Zealand to visit their daughter, Alice. In 2022, they decided to move from North London to West Yorkshire to be near their daughter, Cecilia and family. Here, Mike resumed playing the cornet, inspiring his grandchildren to learn band instruments and play in local bands. Last year, his very active life was sadly interrupted by cancer, from which he did not recover.

Mike will be greatly missed as a friend and colleague in the Dvořák Society, as well as by his devoted family and wider circle of acquaintances.

Susan Jenkinson



Mike Fage (1944–2025).

I never met Mike in person. But I exchanged many emails with him: until he fell ill, he was proofreading the Newsletters.

25 years ago

Dvořák Society Newsletter No. 52 appeared in July 2000 and was the sixth issue under my editorship.

At a committee meeting shortly before the appearance of this Newsletter, Karel Janovický suggested that, since we had recently celebrated our 25th Anniversary, it would be a good idea to have a 25 years ago column. Peter Herbert, who was then Membership Secretary, provided me with back copies of Newsletters and Journals, and I started recording what had been reported in our publications from the very start.

And 25 years on, here I am still telling you about the activities of the Society 25 years ago...

Newsletter #52 started with congratulations to our Vice President Vilém Tauský on the occasion of his 90th birthday on 20th July. Vilém was to be awarded the *Jan Masaryk Gratias Agit* prize, which would be presented by the then Czech Ambassador, Dr Pavel Seifter, during a birthday celebration at the Czech Embassy on Wednesday, 19th July.

Míla Smetáčková of the Česká hudební společnost was to be in London during August, and she had agreed to give a talk to the Society about her late husband, Václav Smetáček and also the work of her Society at the Czech Club on Saturday, 26th August.

The New London Orchestra, under the baton of Society member Ronald Corp, was to give a concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on Tuesday, 11th July. The programme would include Martinů's *Sinfonietta 'La Jolla'* and Janáček's *Adagio*.

Shawn Pullman, in his Secretary's column, announced the Society's Annual Dinner for 2000, which, by public demand, would actually be a Lunch. The event would take place on Saturday, 28th October, venue to be announced.

Richard Beith had published a survey of the artistry of Rudolf Firkušný, which had recently been circulated to members as part of the Occasional Publication Series.

Our Chairman, Graham Melville-Mason, outlined the life and works of our Vice President, Jan Hanuš, who had celebrated his 85th birthday on 2nd May.

Petr Eben would be in London in early November to receive two Honorary Fellowships. In 1999, he had been awarded an Honorary Fellowship from the Royal Academy of Music and this year, that of the Royal College of Organists. Ill health had prevented him from attending at an earlier date.

The annual December Martinů Festival in Prague would be marked particularly by a performance of *Voják a tanečnice* (*The Soldier and the Dancer*) at the Státní Opera on 17th December.

One of the highlights of the 2000 Prague Spring Festival had been the performance of the third part of Zdeněk Fibich's melodrama trilogy *Hippodamie, Smrt*

Hippodamie (Death of Hippodamea), with a very strong team of Czech actors and actresses and the support of the Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra under František Preisler Jr.

Greg Terian, in his Martinů Review, wrote about the Covent Garden production of *The Greek Passion*, which had exceeded all expectations.

Czech Television was in the process of completing a new documentary about Martinů's years in the USA.

The original project to perform both versions of the *Suite Concertante for Violin and Orchestra*, H 276, at the Prague Spring had been modified, and, in the event, only three movements of the original version were performed. Aleš Březina had kindly provided a lengthy and extremely detailed commentary on the genesis of the work.

Karla Hartl of the Kaprálová Society had requested that we publish the Annual Report of the Society for our members who are not on the internet. She wrote about the Society, which at this point had almost one hundred members residing in fourteen countries, of documenting Kaprálová's life and works, of promoting the music and of the Women in Music Internet Project.

Lorna Dobson, in her *Lorna Corner*, began by congratulating Tomáš Hanus on recently winning the silver medal at the Grzegorz Fitelberg International Competition for Conductors held in Katowice, Poland.

There was still time to book for the Society's annual weekend at Burton Manor in September. This year Graham Melville-Mason's subject would be *Dvořák and his pupils*. At the time of writing, 21 members had booked for the weekend.

Peter Herbert reported on an evening in May when Anthony Lewis-Crosby, former Chief Executive of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society, had introduced an evening with Libor Pešek at the Preston Recorded Music Society's private evening gathering on Three Giants of Czech Music. The three giants were Libor Pešek himself because of his role championing Czech music in the UK, Bedřich Smetana and Josef Suk. During the evening, the participants compared and contrasted various recordings of *Má vlast* and the *Asrael Symphony* – a most interesting and absorbing evening.

Mark Todd wrote at length about a performance of Dvořák's Early Cello Concerto at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on 22nd March. Steven Isserlis performed the piece with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, conducted by Paavo Järvi, and this was believed to be the first performance in Britain of Gunter Raphael's version of the unorchestrated early cello concerto which Dvořák wrote for the cellist Ludovít Peer, his colleague in the Provisional Theatre orchestra in 1865.

Bill and Vera Marsden reported on a performance of Korngold's *Die Tote Stadt* by Cologne Opera in April 2000. Although accepted as Korngold's most successful opera, stagings of the opera have been few and far

between. Bill and Vera had long pursued what had seemed to be an unrealisable ambition to see all five of Korngold's operas, and for this reason, they had been compelled to travel to Cologne. For them, *Die Tote Stadt* will remain firmly in their memories as an enthralling piece of early twentieth-century theatre, and a remarkable achievement as the third opera of a twenty-three-year-old composer.

In his Somerset Bulletin column, Ray Latham wrote of a performance of Janáček's *Fairy Tale* which had opened the second half of an ambitious concert following Schumann's *Fantasiestücke* and the Shostakovich *Cello Concerto* at the Waggon and Horses, Doultong Beacon on 9th April with pianist Fali Pavri and cellist Timothy Gill.

A further concert in the same venue on 28th May had featured the piano duo Olga Balakleets and Julian Gallant playing Dvořák's four *Slavonic Dances*, Op. 46, Nos. 1, 2, 4 and 6 for piano duo.

Richard Beith, with his philatelic hat on, reported that the first Czech postage stamp featuring Gustav Mahler had been issued on 9th May to commemorate the 140th anniversary of Mahler's birth.

David Cohen wrote of a visit to Prague for the Prague Spring 2000. It had been a mixture of trauma and pleasure. The trauma came when he was robbed in a café in Václavské náměstí and lost his passport, credit cards, spectacles and his diary. He had had to visit the British Embassy twice in order to obtain an emergency passport to get home. Unfortunately for David, the Festival was the least memorable he had attended and he had been to only three concerts in Prague and one in Plzeň.

David then went on to recommend Prague's own Classic FM radio station, which broadcasts all day and all night.

Bill Marsden's Record Service Report reported on good sales of CDs at recent Society events. Two pages of CDs for sale via the Record Service followed.

Graham Melville-Mason's Record News from Prague listed a large number of new issues, mainly from Czech sources.

Vera Marsden, in her Library Report, thanked members for a good number of additions to the Library.

Graham Melville-Mason had donated several LPs to the Library, and since they had proved to be duplicates, these were now offered for sale at 50p each, plus postage and packing. Profits would be donated to the Scholarship Fund.

Peter Herbert included his membership report in his usual Peter's Pages, but this was for the last time since Tony Pook had now taken over the Membership Secretary's post.

Peter had given a talk on Slovak music at a Recorded Music Society event in Bradford.

A talk for the Yorkshire branch of the Federation of Recorded Music Societies in Scarborough on Fibich and

the Nejedlý line had proved too involved for the audience present, and Peter felt that he should have stuck to talking about Fibich.

At Bridge of Allan Peter's talk *From my life – the Czech Addict's Tale* had gone down really well and the Scottish members of the FRMS had provided excellent cheer.

The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Libor Pešek, had welcomed a return visit from Josef Suk on May 3rd. The concert had featured only Italian music and Josef Suk had played Harold in Italy in a programme destined for the Prague Spring Festival.

As you already know, there was a long gap in the publication of Czech Music, the Journal of the Dvořák Society for Czech and Slovak Music, at this point in the Society's history. We hope to remedy this in the not-too-distant future when we can establish just when Vol. 21 actually appeared.

Annette Percy

Janáček Reflections

My occasional column

I first heard Simon Rattle conducting Janáček in 1977: *The Cunning Little Vixen* with Glyndebourne Touring Opera in Manchester. Five decades later, I was eager to hear what he would make of *The Excursions of Mr. Brouček* at the Barbican on 6 May. In the past, I have not always been convinced by Rattle's Janáček: the energy has been there, but he has sometimes tended to smooth out some of Janáček's bolder colours, or to fuss over details. Anyone following his series of Janáček operas in concert performances with the LSO will know that he is now more inclined to *let Janáček be Janáček* (as Jaroslav Vogel once put it): in other words, to trust the composer. This *Brouček* was one of the finest things I've ever heard Rattle conduct, relishing the music's astonishing colours and capturing all its dramatic power as well as its humour and poetry. The result was magnificent.

Last November, I saw the excellent *Brouček* in Brno, directed by Robert Carsen and conducted by Marko Ivanović, with Nicky Spence as a finely-characterised Brouček. That same production was staged at the Berlin Staatsoper this March, conducted by Rattle and with a cast including Lucy Crowe (Málinka), Aleš Bricein (Mazal),

Guyla Orendt (Sacristan) and Peter Hoare (Brouček). All four of these principals were in the LSO performance, and Doubravka Novotná – the terrific Málinka from the Brno staging – took on the multiple soprano roles of Waiter, Child Prodigy and Student. All the smaller parts were well taken, and the contribution of Tenebrae in the choral scenes was electrifying. How delightful it was to hear the bagpipe used in this performance, too. In the Brno production, this had been created electronically, and in the past it has been realised on de-tuned oboes, but at the Barbican we had a piper at the side of the stage with a folkish instrument that sounded absolutely right (closer to Northumbrian pipes than anything more raucous). The LSO played marvellously from first note to last. It's great news that this performance was recorded and will be issued by LSO Live.

2025 is a vintage year for Janáček's operas in London. It started in January with the revival of *Jenůfa* at Covent Garden – superlatively conducted by Jakub Hrůša and with an outstanding cast led by Corinne Winters; then came Rattle's *Brouček*. Opening on 4 November, we can look forward to a brand-new *Makropulos Affair* at Covent Garden – its first ever staging there. With Jakub Hrůša conducting and directed by Katie Mitchell (whose WNO *Jenůfa* was such a memorable experience), it should be unmissable. And if that isn't enough, Simon Rattle will be giving concert performances of *Makropulos* with the LSO in January 2026. Outside London (just down the railway line to Lewes), Glyndebourne Festival Opera is doing *Káťa Kabanová* this summer, opening on 3 August 2025, with principals including Kateřina Kněžíková, Nicky Spence, Susan Bickley and John Tomlinson, and conducted by Robin Ticciati. This strongly cast revival looks very promising.

All this prompts me to reflect on how far we have come. I first fell for Janáček's operas in 1971 when I saw *Vixen* at Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf during a school trip, soon followed by unforgettable performances of *Káťa*, *From the House of the Dead* and *Brouček* at ENO. In the years that followed, we also had the outstanding WNO series, but these were still comparatively rare events. Half a century on, to have four of the operas in the space of a year feels like a golden age for these great works.

Nigel Simeone

For the review of *Excursions of Mr. Brouček* at the Barbican, see page 7.



Events and Concert Performances

Martinů: *Hry o Marii*, National Theatre Brno, Janáček Theatre, 28 January 2025

Martinů's *Hry o Marii* – translated by the Brno National Theatre as *The Miracles of Mary* – made a deep impression when I first saw it there in 1990. More recently (in 2015), the Brno company staged a new production, directed by Jiří Heřman (seen originally in Prague in 2009) and conducted by Jakub Klecker.

In January 2025, I was fortunate enough to see a revival of this production, with Klecker once again conducting (extremely well) and Andrea Šíroká outstanding in the central role of Marie/Mariken. This opera is always a moving experience – part opera, part ritual, part pageant, and surely one of Martinů's most luminous scores. It was all the more successful thanks to Pavel Svoboda's beautiful and atmospheric sets. With its exceptional chorus, the Brno company is in a strong position to bring off this opera, particularly since it was augmented by the Brno Children's Choir and the young voices of the Czech Academic Choir. On several occasions, the whole theatre was engulfed in waves of choral sound, sung from all over the auditorium, with results that were overwhelmingly effective – and tremendously stirring. These vast choral forces finally coalesced in the closing scene when they were massed on or near the stage. All the solo parts were well taken, the orchestra was on impressively alert and sonorous form throughout, and the prolonged ovation at the end demonstrated just how warmly Brno's opera-goers reacted to this production, which played to a full house. With a performance and production as persuasive as this, it's hard to understand why this opera seldom travels outside the Czech Republic – and I count myself particularly lucky to have caught this revival.

Nigel Simeone

Leoš Janáček, *Excursions of Mr. Brouček to the Moon and the 15th Century*. London Symphony Orchestra, Simon Rattle (conducting), concert performance on 4 and 6 May 2025 at the Barbican, London

Janáček's music has been a core part of Sir Simon Rattle's repertoire for most of his long and distinguished career. He is currently well on his way towards performing all of the key operas with the London Symphony Orchestra, with *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *Káťa Kabanová* and *Jenůfa* already performed and released on CD on the orchestra's own *LSO Live* label. Now he comes to perhaps

the least well-known of the mature operas, *The Excursions of Mr. Brouček*.

This work occupied its composer on and off for a staggering length of time. It started in 1908, it was completed not far off ten years – and about as many librettists – later. No wonder that for the next four operas Janáček put the librettos together himself! The composer's style evolves between the two halves as well; much of the music of the trip to the moon, waltzy throughout, has echoes of *Jenůfa*, but also of the even more problematic *Osud*, while there is a spikiness to the Hussite Excursion that looks forward to the great operas that followed. Problematic too is the central character. He may well be seen as a bumbling figure of fun, and it is really not too hard to empathise with his Philistine reactions to the appalling luvvies that inhabit the moon. Still, he is far less likeable in Part Two, where he reveals himself more clearly as a frankly awful individual – self-centred cowardice is not exactly an appealing personality trait – and he is certainly no lovable Švejk, whose refusenik persona has some purpose behind it. Furthermore, not all of the alter egos work that well. Each real-world character has their moon/medieval counterpart, which is not much easier to keep track of in a concert performance, compared to a staged one. Nevertheless, as always with Janáček, there are some great themes, some wonderful orchestral sounds, and some searingly beautiful moments, such as the brief tender exchanges between Mazal and Málinka towards the end of Part One, and the stirring Hussite battle hymns in Part Two.

The singing was excellent. Peter Hoare had a swagger to his singing, bringing much character to the role, whilst also occasionally taking a sip from the obligatory "beer" bottle (I couldn't see which brand, I'll assume it was a



Peter Hoare (as Mr. Brouček). Photo: Mark Allan

decent Czech one), and was clearly the star of the show. But the other main singers, Lucy Crowe and Aleš Briscein were both strong presences in their multiple roles. I felt some of the supporting cast were occasionally a little overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the orchestral sound, but maybe that was just where we were sitting. The exception was the beautiful, crystal-clear voice of Doubravka Novotná, who really did stand out. As with all of Janáček's operas, the role of the chorus is highly prominent, and Tenebrae Vocal Ensemble of London were superb, especially in those noble Hussite chorales of Part Two. There are very few moments where the orchestra takes a back seat, and when the orchestra is as good as the LSO, this was, in a concert performance, a bit of an eye-opener, actually seeing the players, rather than having them hidden in the pit. I do feel that Sir Simon Rattle has had something of a new lease of life in the past few years, and, as one would expect, this was a precise, detailed performance, but with tangible joy, and a spontaneity and relentless momentum that made many of the flaws of this strange work just disappear.

I have to confess I am eagerly awaiting this appearing on CD, although I'm not sure how long we'll have to wait. *Věk Makropulos* (*The Case Makropulos*) is being given the same concert treatment this coming January.

Robert Pickett

The program notes, prepared by Nigel Simeone, are available on the [LSO website](#). The beer was a non-alcoholic Peroni.

Ján Cikker Prize award to Janáček Quartet, Zrkadlová sieň Primaciálneho paláca (The Mirror Hall of the Primate's Palace), Bratislava, 9 May 2025

We were lucky to be in Bratislava while this festive event took place. This year's prize winner was the Janáček Quartet from Brno.

The evening program combined music and spoken word by Peter Michalica, the Ján Cikker Foundation Chairman and violin professor at Janáček Academy of Performing Arts, JAMU. It started with Bach's *Double Concerto for two Violins* performed by Mr. Michalica and Miloš Vacek, the first violinist of the Janáček Quartet, and a colleague at JAMU. The Slovak Chamber Orchestra joined the string quartet in Elgar's *Introduction and Allegro*, Op. 47 for the second piece. Two pieces for the string quartet followed: the first movement of Janáček's *Second String Quartet* and Ján Cikker's *Scherzo*, (from 1930), an early composition (he was then 19!), originally written for a string orchestra. I enjoyed its freshness and the simplicity of structure that I could grasp on first hearing. You can judge for yourself: there is a [YouTube](#) recording from 1990 by the Slovak Chamber Orchestra.



Members of the Janáček Quartet (from left to right): Miloš Vacek (first violin), Richard Kružík (second violin), Jan Řezníček (viola) and Lukáš Polák (cello).

Photo: Igor Rešovský.

Do not be surprised if you hear the influence of Dvořák: Vítězslav Novák was a student of Dvořák, and Cikker was a student of Novák.

The concert closed with the last movement of Dvořák's *American String Quartet* in the version for string orchestra played by both teams. As Mr. Michalica mentioned, even in the darkest days of the long Communist regime, the party and the government did not remove the adjective *American* from the title. As an encore, we were treated to the familiar *Humoreska*, in which, according to a hardly translatable pun of Ewald Danel, the artistic director of the Slovak Chamber Orchestra, Dvořák foreshadowed Slovakia (*HumoreSKa*, SK being the country code for Slovakia!).

I cannot help but mention the words of Mr. Michalica when he introduced Elgar's *Introduction and Allegro*. It was selected for two reasons: it is a unique composition for string quartet and string orchestra, and it shows musicians (and music lovers) that some wonderful music was written in a country far away from Slovakia. He then reversed the geographical direction and praised the role of our Society in propagating Czech and Slovak music to British audiences.

The day before the concert, I visited the Ján Cikker Museum (as I mentioned in Newsletter #149, page 10, it is two trolley-bus stops above the Bratislava Castle) and had an illuminating discussion with Mr. and Mrs. Michalica (she is the curator of the Museum) on how to better to spread Slovak music in the UK. This will take some time...

Tomy Duby



**Bohuslav Martinů: *Julietta*,
J. K. Tyl Theatre, Plzeň, Friday, 4 April 2025**

Martinů's opera *Julietta* is one of my favourites in the entire Czech repertoire, and to my mind contains some of his very finest music (a distinction it perhaps shares with his *Mirandolina*). I grew fond of the opera in the late 1990s, having been kindly lent the classic 1965 Supraphon recording by the late Vilém Tauský (featuring Maria Tauberová and Ivo Židek as Julietta and Michel, and conducted by Jaroslav Krombholc). Shortly thereafter, I was fortunate enough to experience the opera in the flesh and was completely bowled over by David Pountney's production (with designs by Stefanos Lazaridis) for Opera North, conducted by the late Stuart Bedford in 1998. I made a point of attending it several times at the Grand Theatre in Leeds. That production then very briefly came to Prague, where it was performed with the same soloists but with the Chorus and Orchestra of the National Theatre in Prague. The present production in Plzeň was thus a most eagerly awaited opportunity to attend a performance of the work after an all too lengthy gap of a quarter of a century.

Given that the Pountney production had made such a strong impression on me, it was inevitable that I would be inclined to make comparisons between them. Here, one missed the sloping stage amidst assorted deckchairs at the seaside in the older production. The new one (directed by Martin Otava, with sets by Daniel Dvořák) was more high-tech, making use of electronic displays of various sorts, and sometimes with splendidly thought-out details – for instance, smoke emerging from the chimneys of the virtual ship on a large monitor display – all highly appropriate for an opera that has been described as “a Magritte in sound”. Some of the visual touches were initially surprising but became meaningful in retrospect. For instance, the significance of the violoncellos oddly suspended from the ceiling became apparent only towards the end, with its extensive cello passages – the effect now amplified by the shadowy figure of a female cellist projected onto the background. I did not find the transparent plastic piano convincing, however. Movement in general was not the strongest point of the production, and the female semichorus was somewhat static: the delightful “Kapitán” chorus (celebrating the fact of Michel's having just been nominated a captain, on the grounds of his ability to recollect a small toy duck he had as a child – an outstanding accomplishment in this odd town with its rather eerie collective amnesia!) had been rather more flamboyantly effective in the Pountney production. However, every new production ought to be taken on its own terms, and, all things considered, this new production was very much in harmony with the score and served to accentuate it in an effective manner.

The entire opera was very well sung indeed. The main hero, Michel (a demanding tenor role) was reliably undertaken by Richard Samek. The tenor Jan Maria Hájek assumed the triple roles of Inspector, Postman and Clerk,

whilst the young mezzo-soprano Kateřina Vogelová assumed the triple roles of Little Arab, Young Sailor and Errand Boy. The veteran bass Jevhen Šokalo (who was such an admirable Boris Godunov in Liberec and Görlitz some years ago) assumed the triple roles of Man In The Window, Old Man “Youth” and Convict, with aplomb. The Palmist (Fortune teller) was Jana Foff Tetourová (whom I knew as a fine Carmen in Liberec, in a wonderful production with the late František Babický, directed by Václav Věžník). All performed idiomatically, and the singing and acting were excellent.

The show's star was undoubtedly Julietta herself, whose part was admirably sung by the soprano Soňa Godarská – recipient of the 2025 Thalia Theatre Prize. Her singing was musicianly and appropriately lyrical, displaying a fine and flexible voice that she was able to colour in a highly affecting way as part of her characterisation of the heroine and her fleeting moods – for Julietta was no less prone to amnesia than her fellow denizens of the town. Towards the end of the opera especially (scene VIII of the final act), the effect of her singing was extraordinarily moving and emotionally overpowering – an impression enhanced by a sort of electronic surround-sound effect that created the illusion that Julietta was haunting the entire length of the auditorium, in a somewhat otherworldly manner. One could immediately empathise with Michel, who, having resolved to leave his dream world, now found himself



Julietta (Soňa Godarská) and Michel (Richard Samek).

quite unable to do so, overwhelmed as he was by Julietta's irresistibly alluring and heart wrenching appeals.

I am delighted to note that the performance was conducted by Jiří Štrunc, a fellow conducting pupil of Alan Hazeldine's at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and a native of Plzeň. Štrunc was supportive of his singers, and there was good balance between voices and orchestra. Tempi were all eminently sensible, and for the most part quite similar to those of Krombholz; the programme booklet (which, by the way, includes an excellent essay by Charles University Orchestra alumnus, Vojtěch Frank, discussing Prague as a European "metropolis of surrealism") cited 155 minutes for the performance, including a fifteen-minute interval – as against the Supraphon recording, totalling 144 minutes. It is also worth drawing attention to the particularly fine piano playing of Maxim Averkiev – an instrument that is given particular prominence in the score.

Haig Utidjian

René Magritte (1898–1967) was a Belgian surrealist artist.

Ó, byl to sen! (O, it was a Dream) – Antonín Dvořák Museum, Prague, Monday, 19 May 2025

I was extremely moved by an achingly poignant musical-poetic evening held at the Antonín Dvořák Museum in Prague, marking 120 years from the death of Dvořák's daughter, Otilie Suková-Dvořáková and 90 years from that of Josef Suk, her husband and Dvořák's pupil. The programme gave pride of place to Otilie, whose enchanting writings – drawn from her childhood diary entries, her letters and poetry, even a recipe for pea soup (!), and her Last Will, were juxtaposed with the newspaper announcements that bore the news of the passing of her father and (just over a year later) of her own. The readings were interlaced with vocal music by Suk and Dvořák, and with Suk's lovely cycle of pieces for piano *O matince* (*About Mother*, Op. 28, which many readers will know thanks to Margaret Fingerhut's exquisite recording on Chandos, [CAN9026](#)). A couple of Otilie's own compositions were also included in the programme, which was beautifully realised by a splendid ensemble of young and gifted performers, comprising the sopranos Natálie Šmausová and Bronislava Smržová, the mezzo-soprano Kristýna Kukalová, the pianists Katelyn Bouska and Filip Martinka, and the reciter, Hana Šimková. The Antonín Dvořák Museum and the Lieder Society (www.lieder-society.cz) ought to be congratulated for a truly inspiring and profoundly moving evening.

Haig Utidjian



Front row: Natálie Šmausová, Kristýna Kukalová, Katelyn Bouska; second row: Filip Martinka, Bronislava Smržová, Monika Jägerová (founder of the Lieder Society), and Hana Šimková.

Photo: Petr Zewlakk Vrabec.

Teo Gertler at the Slovak Embassy in London

On 23rd April, the prodigious young Slovak violinist Teo Gertler gave a solo recital organised by the Slovak Institute in London. Teo Gertler, now aged 17, has already been astonishing audiences and gaining prizes worldwide for ten years, as a quick search on YouTube will verify. This recital was in the main hall of the Slovak Embassy, a lofty and rather bleak brutalist space which has surprisingly good acoustics.

Teo's playing was full-bodied and confident, producing a gorgeous tone from the 1681 Guarneri violin, which a generous patron has loaned him. He gave concise and helpful introductions to the four items of his programme: the adagio and fugue of J. S. Bach's *Sonata No.1*, two of Paganini's *Caprices* (including the ubiquitous No.24), one of Ysaÿe's sonatas (I failed to catch which), and finally the *Variations on 'The Last Rose of Summer'* by Ernst. This last item was particularly striking, using every trick in the violinist's book. Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst (1812–65) was born in Brno; he rivalled and then succeeded Paganini as a virtuoso. This was amazing playing, though, as with other firework displays, ten minutes was enough.

It was a privilege to hear this enormously talented young musician, and I shall certainly look out for opportunities to enjoy him play again, preferably with others in what for me might be a more rewarding repertoire.

Terry Heard



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.

False Treble Clef in Dvořák's Cello Parts: 1875–1893 only

The romantic repertoire presents cellists with a *now universally-hated* (Jonathan Del Mar) notational difficulty: the so-called *false treble clef*, i.e. the historical use of the treble clef in cello parts, writing the instrument's part an octave higher. Cellists associate this convention mainly with Antonín Dvořák, although he was by no means the only composer to use the false treble clef.

As Dvořák himself wrote in a letter to Simrock dated 3 October 1894, he learned the false treble clef from Beethoven. This could be indicated by its rare use in Dvořák's early *String Quintet in A minor*, Op. 1, from 1861, whose structure is linked in the literature to Beethoven's Septet. However, according to my findings, this was an exception, as Dvořák did not use the false treble clef again until 1875; on the contrary, when necessary, he chose the "true" treble clef, i.e. non-transposing notation corresponding to the actual pitch. At the same time, Dvořák – and this is true of his entire career – also commonly used the tenor clef.

This changed in the spring of 1875 with the *Piano Trio in B-flat major*, Op. 21. The printed edition, published by Schlesinger in 1880, actually dispenses with the tenor clef entirely, and the cello part uses only the bass clef and the false treble clef. So its "return" to Dvořák's cello parts is quite striking. The situation is more complicated in the manuscripts: in the first two movements of an early version of the trio, stored in the Austrian National Library, Dvořák freely alternates between tenor and false treble clef (with the tenor predominating), while the tenor clef features proportionately less in the scherzo and is entirely absent from the finale; conversely, in the last two movements the false treble clef figures in over 40 per cent of the bars. The tenor clef is still present in the autograph of the definitive version, stored in the Czech National Library, but during revision, Dvořák made every effort to suppress it – by rewriting it or even repeatedly instructing the copyist to replace it with the (false) treble clef.

The question remains as to what prompted this conscious return to a convention that was already somewhat outdated at the time. Regarding the above-mentioned *Trio*, Hans-Joachim Hinrichsen sees this work as representing a stylistic turning point in Dvořák's creative output and analytically links it to Schubert. It is therefore possible that the false treble clef returned to

Dvořák's notation as a result of his study of Schubert's scores.

In his later works, Dvořák does not strive for consistent use of one or other of the clefs, but freely alternates between the tenor and false treble clefs (as he did before the revision of the definitive version of *Trio in B-flat major*), which are de facto interchangeable: in the stave, they appear "side by side" as if separated by a musical interval of a second. The false treble clef thus introduces inconsistency and confusion into Dvořák's notation. Sometimes Dvořák uses the tenor and false treble clefs in different movements; in six compositions (the *Slavonic Rhapsody in G minor*, Op. 45/2, the *Scherzo capriccioso*, Op. 66, the *Symphony No. 7 in E minor*, Op. 97, the *Piano Quintet in A major*, Op. 81, the *Carnival Overture*, Op. 82, and the *String Quintet in E-flat major*, Op. 97), he alternates between the two clefs within a single movement. In total, the false treble clef appears in 27 symphonic or chamber compositions from 1875 to 1893 (I have not examined its occurrence in his operas), while the "true" treble clef does not appear at all in this period, with the exception of the solo *Polonaise in A major for cello and Piano*, B 94.

Undoubtedly, the reason why Dvořák abandoned this convention after eighteen years is related to the confusion surrounding the *Rondo in G minor for cello and piano*, Op. 94 and the cello arrangement of *Silent Woods*, Op. 68/5, which Simrock was preparing for publication in versions with piano and orchestra. Simrock quite rightly described Dvořák's solo parts of the *Rondo* and *Silent Woods*, which used a false treble clef, as unusable, but sent a correction that introduced further errors into the scores. Dvořák responded with the above-mentioned letter of 3 October 1894, which shows that he was well aware of both clef options (transposing and non-transposing): *I repeat once again that my part was correct – marking the treble clef an octave higher throughout, but sounding an octave lower, as I learned from Beethoven. The new theory says that the treble clef sounds in the same position as written, but then it should be played that way throughout – and not like this one time and like that another time. (Emphasis: Dvořák.)*

Dvořák suggested correcting the errors by means of an octave sign, i.e. solving the situation in the old-fashioned way, as he was accustomed to doing. However, the mistakes were not completely eliminated in either the *Rondo* or *Silent Woods*. It is very fortunate that this

situation did not discourage Dvořák, and in November 1894, he began composing the most beautiful cello concerto of all time.

The return of the non-transposing treble clef to Dvořák's cello parts dates, surprisingly enough, to the *New World Symphony* (Op. 95 from 1893), i.e. even before the aforementioned rift. Dvořák used it here in the final chord of the second movement. He definitively returned to the "true" treble clef in his *Cello Concerto in B minor*, Op. 104 and apart from the solo repertoire, in the orchestral version of his *Suite in A major*, Op. 98b (the clef being often mistaken in recordings, but it is enough to compare the score with the original version for piano, Op. 98), and he used it again in his last two string quartets and in *The Noon Witch*, Op. 108.

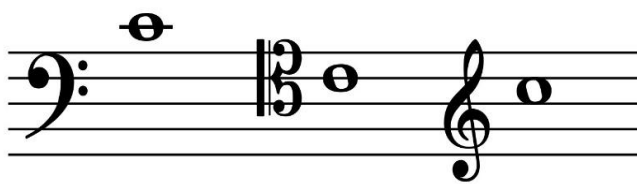
In conclusion, it can be said that the false treble clef is an interesting topic for researchers – as is anything related to Dvořák – a topic that offers a fresh perspective on the development of the composer's notation as such, and may contribute in a small way to a deeper understanding of the changes in Dvořák's style. However, the false treble clef is no longer of any significance for performance practice today. For this reason, over the past decade at Bärenreiter, we have been replacing it with the tenor clef.

Jonáš Hájek, Bärenreiter Praha

Translated from Czech by Gerald Turner

This primarily informative article is based on a study I (JH) wrote for a *Festschrift* to mark the 75th birthday of Jarmila Gabrielová (in course of publication).

The following note sounds as middle C in the bass clef (left), tenor clef (middle), and false treble clef (right).



There is a good reason why this rather technical review appears in this Newsletter. In Newsletter #144, pages 5–6, Susan Jenkinson and I challenged Jonáš Hájek to find out more about this notation. Jonáš's study gives a definite answer about our beloved Antonín...



Jan Dismas Zelenka: *Sacred Choral Works* (3 CDs).

**Marburger Bachchor, Capella Piccola,
Hessisches Bach-Collegium, Barockorchester
Metamorphosis Köln
Hänsler (Naxos) HC24063**

These 3 CDs, recorded between 1992 and 1995, were released as a set by Hänsler Classic in 2025. For lovers of Baroque choral music, they are a real joy and make Zelenka's music that much more accessible.

Jan Dismas Zelenka was born in Louňovice (just east of Říčany) in 1679 and died in Leipzig in 1745. His considerable output was composed for the court in Dresden, where he was a member of the court orchestra, then court composer and conductor. It is only in the latter part of the 20th century that his compositions have enjoyed greater attention.

Over the three discs, we hear the sheer inventiveness of his music played with Baroque sensitivity and sensible tempi. CD2 has the *Missa Sanctissimae Trinitatis*, ZWV 17, and CD3 the *Missa Votiva*, ZWV18, in their entirety with the usual five movements: *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei*. (ZWV stands for Zelenka Werke Verzeichnis.)

CD1 has less well known works. *Psalm 109*, *Dixit Dominus* ZWV 68, *Litaniae Lauretanae*, ZWV 151, and the *Magnificat*, ZWV 108.

The ZWV 151 Litany of Loreto is particularly poignant with close harmony and suspensions adding to the supplicatory mood. The fugal writing at speed is also effective. The final *Agnus Dei* ends on a triumphant crescendo.

On the second CD we hear the nineteen movements of the *Missa Sanctissimae Trinitatis*. Even though this is a very thorough account of the words of the mass, there is hardly a superfluous note. So very satisfying, if not breaking new ground. The *Missa Votiva* on the third CD is another matter altogether. To me, this is Zelenka at his best, with beautiful *obbligato* melodies weaving among the choral text. The instrumental introduction to the *Gloria* has a glorious bounce which is picked up by the sopranos and then the entire chorus. The Marburger and Hessisches Bach-Collegium are to be congratulated for the ease and agility of their singing.

Thomas Kohlhase, in his short programme notes, is right to note that "the Catholic Church music in Dresden, with Zelenka as one of its main representatives, is once again enjoying greater attention".

To anyone new to Zelenka's choral output, these CDs are a welcome introduction; to Zelenka fans, they represent a very useful box set. Highly recommended.

David Banister

I wanted to add a portrait of Zelenka to the list of Czech composers on page 1. But

I could not find one: there are no confirmed portraits or authentic images of Zelenka, according to Microsoft's Copilot. Artificial Intel-ligence is thus of no help, either...

**Alois Hába, *The Complete Piano Works*
Miroslav Beinbauer (piano)
SUPRAPHON – SU43572 CD (reviewed as
a Hi-Res FLAC/ALAC/WAV lossless download)**

Born in Vizovice, Hába's parents often performed in local music ensembles and clearly instilled in the boys (Alois, 1893–1973 and his younger brother, Karol, 1898–1972, also a composer) a significant interest in music. After a stint at the Kroměříž Teacher Training Institute and a period of self-tuition, Alois moved to Prague, where he joined the Conservatoire and came under the influence of Vítězslav Novák. At this stage, he was very much working within the accepted norms of classical concert music, but if his name is known at all to readers of the Newsletter, it's probably as an 'experimenter', particularly in the field of microtones or microintervals.

By adding these to the standard harmonic intervals of the tempered scale of European music, Hába hoped thus to enrich the existing sound. The use of quarter, fifth and sixth tones results in sounds that I can best describe as either akin to an apparently out-of-tune 'pub' piano in a bar or club, or as instruments constantly retuning or 'tuning up' during the course of the musical narrative. The musical line thus seems to emerge rather queasily, engendering a sensation not unlike an aural seasickness.

But caution needs to be exercised ... on two counts: (1) My inadequate description might indicate 'unpleasant' results to standard western concert ears, but in fact, I find the outcome more interesting and challenging than off-putting, albeit so far, I've experienced it mainly in small doses. (2) Hába only really began his commitment to microtones in the mid to late 1920s, and so *the content of the current review CDs is largely unaffected by such experiments.*

Miroslav Beinbauer (born in 1993), the pianist on the present issue, was actually introduced to Hába's sound world through the 1942 microtone opera *Thy Kingdom Come*, and initially explored his microtonal piano music via a historic instrument in the Museum of Czech Music in Prague – i.e. Hába's sixth tone harmonium. Keen to explore further, he discovered much more of Hába's music, from student days and his early career, largely untouched by microtonal experiments, and which wasn't necessarily readily available. The *Sonata in Eb minor* on Disc 1, for instance, came to light only as a manuscript in Hába's estate.



Source: [Supraphon](#)

Strong as Novák's influence had been, later studies with Franz Schreker (1878–1934) found Hába striving to *find the path from non-traditional training*. The additional confidence he gained from studying with Schreker meant that he acknowledged the contemporary *Three Fugues for Piano* and *Variations on a Canon by Robert Schumann* as his first *relatively independent creations*.

These and companion works on Disc 1 would strike the listener as broadly orientated within a recognisable 'Fin de Siècle' / early 20th century style of classical music. True, there are nods now and again to emerging atonalism, but they seem to be more like 'passing breezes' or half-remembered scraps of mindscape.

By disc 2, some of Hába's lighter style emerges, with music one could imagine being played in the background of a Prague bar or club of the 1920s... or indeed at a contemporary cabaret or revue, with elements of grotesquerie, masquerade, and sometimes whiffs of jazz.

Try, for instance, the waltz of the *Romance*, *Waltz* (1921), the *Shimmy Blues* or *Tango* (from *Four Modern Dances* (1926)), or indeed *Shimmy-Fox* of the same year. Influences here of contemporaries, such as Erwin Schulhoff, rub shoulders with those from the USA. Indeed, I was reminded, at times, of the accompaniments to silent films, and at others felt sure I detected a scent or two of Scott Joplin.

Beinbauer's enthusiasm, meanwhile, shines through this set from start to finish, and he is more than ably assisted by his Supraphon engineers. Recording in the Ostrava Studios of Czech Radio, they produce quite a stunning piano sound. If this were not enough, there are splendid notes provided by Vlasta Reitterová. So important when dealing with an unusual repertoire.

In the weeks ahead, I hope to be exploring more of Hába's oeuvre, not least the opera *Mother* the string quartets, and indeed ... the challenge of microtonal composition.

Meanwhile, I will return, I am sure, to the present fascinating and outstanding issue with increasing pleasure. My congratulations to all concerned.

Ian Bailey

Vítězslav Novák: *Complete String Quartets* Stamic Quartet Supraphon SU4367-2

Novák's String Quartets have been unfairly neglected compared with the great offerings of other Czech composers. Amazingly, this is the first time that they have all featured on one disc together. This in itself would be a cause for celebration, but the disc is especially welcome as it features the Stamic Quartet, one of the finest Czech quartets of the recorded era.

The first quartet (Op. 22) was composed in 1899 in what the booklet describes as Novák's folklore period. It is in the sunny key of G major, and barely a cloud passes over it throughout its 30 minutes. The monothematic first movement takes us immediately to the Moravian countryside where the composer loved to walk. The writing is simple and very attractive. The short second movement is a dance evoking Moravian folk bands. The third and final movement is, according to Novák, "an expression of lamentation over the opposition of Slovakia". It begins with a mournful theme in the cello, again folk-like, but this quickly develops a dance-like character. These two elements alternate throughout the movement, but the overall impression left on me was not lamentation but revelling in the countryside and its people. If I could make one criticism of this attractive quartet, it is that its themes are never properly developed, as with the great quartet writers. However, I enjoyed reacquainting myself with the work.

The second quartet in D major, Op. 35, was written in 1905. I remember attending a performance of this quartet at Leamington Festival a few years ago, given by the Graffe Quartet and it made a deep impression on me. I was glad to hear it again and discover that my feelings then were repeated with this recording. The quartet is in two movements, the first of which is a hymn-like fugue. The composer stated that it was inspired by "nature the comforter" and "a flight from life into the realm of dreams". The writing is impressive throughout. The second movement has a greater variety of tempi, often fast and expressive, until the subject of the first movement

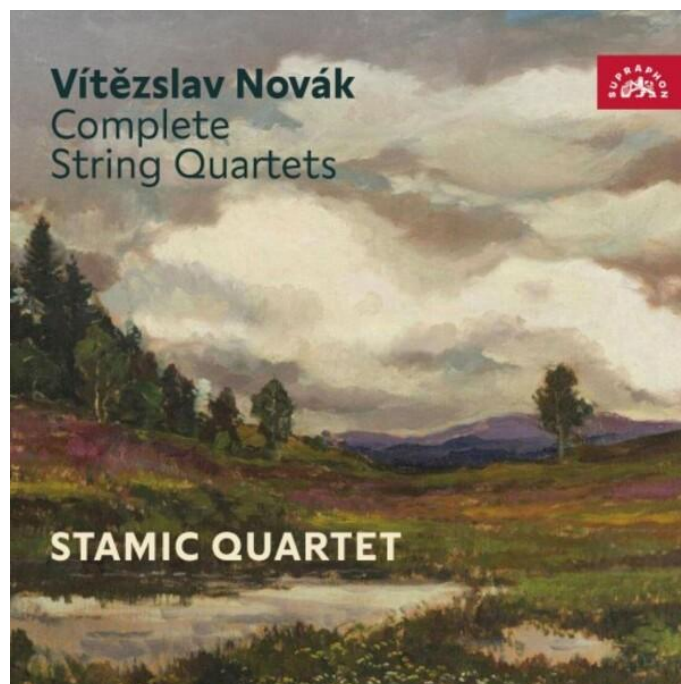
fugue reappears at the end. The movement depicts the composer's life in the city, before he once again lets his mind escape to the countryside of the opening movement. I hope others respond to this quartet as positively. It should certainly be heard far more often than it is.

The third quartet in G major, Op. 66, was completed in 1938 after an extended period of composition. Again, it has two movements. The first features once more fugal writing, both fast and slow. The movement is essentially monothematic, with the theme undergoing a variety of tempo and pitch changes. In my ears, the spirit of a country dance is never too far away. The second movement starts in dissonance. It is as if the jollities of the first movement have suddenly been banished, and the cold reality of the times has struck home. The deeply expressive music seems to be searching for a way out of the gloom with ever-increasing urgency. It fails, there is silence, and the struggle is taken up again by the cello, joined then by the other instruments. Eventually, the music calms, but there is no easy resolution by the end. This is only the second recording of this powerful quartet, and I hope other ensembles discover it as a result.

I greatly enjoyed all the works on this important disc. As I mentioned earlier, the Stamic Quartet are ideal interpreters of this music.

Gordon Watts

I wonder what Novák meant when he wrote "an expression of lamentation over the opposition of Slovakia".



Source: [Supraphon](#)

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 May to August 2025. I am relying largely on the Široký dvůr web-site for information on smaller labels.

Czech Radio

CR1259-2 Teml: *String Quartets* (Sedláček Quartet)

Other Labels

S005131 Pokorný/Rössler-Rosetti/Vaňhal/Dittersdorf: *Concertos for Wind Instruments* (Various Soloists/Benda Chamber Orchestra/Havlík)

S006181 Fiala/Habermann/Vaňhal: *Double Concertos of Czech Classical Composers* (Various Soloists/Benda Chamber Orchestra/Pavlíková)

Supraphon

SU4354-2 Zelenka/Tartini: *Lamentation/Confitebor/Salve Regina/Flute Concerto* (Šelc/Collegium Marianum/Semeráldová)

SU4357-2 Hába: *Complete Piano Works (2CDs)* (Miroslav Beinbauer)

SU4361-2 Fišer/Martinů/Suk: *Violin Sonata/Czech Rhapsody/Violin Sonata/Four Pieces for Violin* (Daniel Matejca/Jan Schulmeister)

SU4364-2 Martinů: *Complete Works for Cello and Piano (2CDs)* (Vilem Vlček/Dennis Linnik)

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 May to August 1925.

Audite

97838 Dvořák: *String Quartet Op. 96/String Quintet Op. 97/Humoresques Op. 101* (Mandelring Quartet/Roland Glassi)

Channel

CC548525 Biber: *Six Violin Sonatas* (Rachel Podger/Brecon Baroque)

CPO (Naxos)

CPO5553642 Gyrowetz (Jírovec): *Sinfonia Concertante/Piano Concerto/ Symphony in A* (TrevLondon Mozart Players/Griffiths)

CPO5554332 Vaňhal: *Symphonies in G min, A and A min* (Munich Radio Orchestra/Ivan Repušić)

Delphian

DCD34334 Biber: *Complete Violin Sonatas - 1681* (Bojan Čičić/The Illyria Consort)

Dynamic (Naxos)

CDS8033 Gassmann: *Gli Uccellatori (The Bird Catchers) (2CDs)* (Soloists/Orch.ICO Della Magna Grecia/Pagano)

Etcetera

KTC1839 Biber/Buxtehude: *Rosary Sonatas and other works for Violin and Organ* (Maduka Nakamaru/Wouter Dekoninck)

Hanssler (Naxos)

HC24063 Zelenka: *Sacred Choral Works (3CDs)* (Marburger Bach Choir/Hessisches Bach Collegium/Baroque Orch. Metamorphosis /Kain)

Hyperion

CDA68474 Kalabis: *Duettina/Chamber Music and Diptych for Strings* (Kremer/Kremerata Baltica)

LPO

LPO-0133 Dvořák/Schumann: *Symphony No. 7/Symphony No.2* (LPO/Gardner)

LSO Live

LSO0897 Janáček: *Jenůfa* (2SACDs) Soloists/LSO and Chorus/Rattle)

Prospero

PROSP0072 Dvořák: *Water Goblin/Noon Witch/Golden Spinning Wheel* (Basle SO/Bolton)

PRROSP53868 Moscheles: *Grande Sonata Symphonique No. 2* (Piano Duo Soós-Haag)

Bill Marsden

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**

Event Diary

Compiled by John Beale.

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

UK

Date	Programme	Performers and Location
London		
7 Aug 2025 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 9 in E minor, 'From the New World'</i>	Royal Albert Hall Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AP Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra https://www.royalalberthall.com/tickets/proms/bbc-proms-2025/dvoraks-new-world-symphony
26 Aug 2025 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Violin Concerto in A minor</i>	Royal Albert Hall Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AP Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra https://tickets.royalalberthall.com/syos2/performance/94494
29 Aug 2025 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 6 in D major</i>	Royal Albert Hall Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AP Melbourne Symphony Orchestra https://tickets.royalalberthall.com/syos2/performance/94475
21 Sept.2025 11.30 am	Martinů: <i>Piano Trio No.2 Dminor</i> Dvořák: <i>Piano Trio No.3 Fminor Op65</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Trio Gaspard https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60601
1 Oct. 2025 7.30 pm	Martinů: <i>String Quartet No. 3</i> Korngold: <i>String Quartet No. 2 in E flat, Op. 26</i> Dvořák: <i>String Quartet in A flat, Op. 105</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Pavel Haas Quartet https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60621
2 Oct 2025 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>String Sextet in A, Op. 48</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 IMS Prussia Cove https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60623
12 Oct 2025 11.30 am	Janáček: <i>String Quartet No. 2 'Intimate Letters'</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Signum Quartet https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60637
23 Oct 2025 7.30 pm	Janáček: <i>String Quartet No. 2 'Intimate Letters'</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Castalian String Quartet https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60656
29 Oct 2025 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 9 (From the New World)</i>	Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Rd, London SE1 8XX 020 3879 9555 London Philharmonic Orchestra https://lpo.org.uk/event/new-world-symphony/
23 Nov 2025 11.30 am	Suk: <i>4 pieces for violin and piano, Op. 17</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Jonian Ilias Kadesha violin; Noam Greenberg https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60711
24 Nov 2025 1.00pm	Dvořák: <i>Love Songs, Op. 83</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Katharina Konradi soprano; Joseph Middleton piano https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60715
29 Nov 2025 7.30 pm	Stiastry: <i>Theme and Variations</i> Dvořák: <i>4 Romantic Pieces, Op. 75 (arranged by Steven Isserlis)</i> Moscheles: <i>Cello Sonata in E, Op. 121</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Steven Isserlis cello; Connie Shih piano https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60721

Date	Programme	Performers and Location
	Suk: <i>Ballade in D minor Op. 3 No. 1</i> <i>Serenade in A, Op. 3 No. 2</i> Janáček: <i>Pohádka</i> Martinů: <i>Cello Sonata No. 1</i>	
30 Nov 2025 11.30 am	Korngold: <i>String Quartet No. 1 in A, Op. 16</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Quatuor Agate https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60722
South East		
3 6 9 12 14 17 20 23 August 3.50 pm	Janáček: <i>Káťa Kabanová</i>	New Rd, Lewes BN8 5UU Glyndebourne opera 01273 812321 https://www.glyndebourne.com/events/kata-kabanova/
South West		
9 Sept 2025 7.30 pm?	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride Overture</i> Dvořák: <i>Cello Concerto</i>	Exeter University Great Hall, University of Exeter, Stocker Road, Exeter EX4 4PY Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra https://bsolive.com/book-online/203202/
15 Oct 2025 7.30 pm	Suk: <i>Meditation on St Wenceslas</i>	Lighthouse 21 Kingland Rd, Poole BH15 1UG 01202 280 000 Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra https://bsolive.com/book-online/198201/
26 Nov 2025 7.30 pm	Korngold: <i>Violin Concerto</i> Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 6</i>	Lighthouse 21 Kingland Rd, Poole BH15 1UG 01202 280 000 Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra https://bsolive.com/book-online/198801/
27 Nov 2025 7.30 pm	Korngold: <i>Violin Concerto</i> Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 6</i>	Exeter University Great Hall University of Exeter, Stocker Road, Exeter EX4 4PY Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra https://bsolive.com/book-online/201802/
West Midlands		
15 Oct 2025 7.30 pm	Janáček: <i>Lachian Dances</i> Dvořák: <i>Symphony No 7</i>	Symphony Hall Broad St, Birmingham B1 2EA 0121 780 3333 Brno Philharmonic Orchestra https://bmusic.co.uk/events/bc-2025-26-brno-philharmonic-dennis-russell-davies-freddy-kempf#booking-info
North West		
6 Nov 2025 7.30 pm 9 Nov 4.00pm	Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 5</i>	The Bridgewater Hall Lower Mosley St M2 3WS 0161 907 9000 Halle Orchestra https://halle.co.uk/event/elder-conducts-dvorak/

International

Czech Republic		
8 Sept 2025 8.00 pm	My choice of concert: <i>A Tribute to the Songs of Antonín Dvořák</i>	The Dvořák Prague Festival this year runs from 5–23 Sept 2025 https://www.dvorakovapraha.cz/en/program/program-2025 Kateřina Kněžíková. NB. Dress code applies to concerts
Opera of the National Theatre Prague, Národní 2, 110 00 Nové Město www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en		
30 Aug 2025 7.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/the-bartered-bride-3266368?t=2025-08-30-19-00
31 Aug 2025 7.00 pm	Janáček: <i>Káťa Kabanová</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/katya-kabanova-3266350?t=2025-08-31-19-00

2 5 12 Sept 25 7.00pm 28 Sept 5.00pm 2 18 Nov 5.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/the-bartered-bride-3266368?t=2025-09-12-19-00
9 13 Sept 2025 7.00pm	Janáček: <i>Káťa Kabanová</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/katya-kabanova-3266350?t=2025-08-31-19-00
18 24 Sept 25 2 Oct 7.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/rusalka-146378962?t=2025-09-18-19-00
28 Oct 2025 5.00 pm	Smetana: <i>Libuše</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/libuse-opera-1520281?t=2025-10-28-17-00
23 Nov 25 5.00pm 30 Nov 7.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Secret</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/programme?d=2025-09-01
State Opera Prague , Wilsonova 4, 110 00 Vinohrady, www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en		
31 Aug 2025 5.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/rusalka-61064-1693572?t=2025-08-31-17-00
4 Sept 2025 7.00 pm 21 27 Sept 6.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/rusalka-61064-1693572?t=2025-09-21-18-00
29 Oct 2025 7.00pm (6.00?)	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/rusalka-61064-1693572?t=2025-09-21-18-00
8 Nov 6.00 pm 27 Nov 2025 7.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/rusalka-61064-1693572?t=2025-11-08-18-00
Brno Opera , Rooseveltova 31, 602 00 Brno-střed www.ndbrno.cz		
31 Aug 2025 7.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i>	Špilberk 210/1, 662 24 Brno, Czechia. Špilberk Castle (Bad weather – moves to Janáček Theatre) https://www.ndbrno.cz/program/prodana-nevesta-8/
6 Sept 2025 5 Oct 7.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://www.ndbrno.cz/program/rusalka-2/ https://www.ndbrno.cz/program/rusalka/
Plzeň Opera J.K. Tyl Theatre Smetanovy sady 16, 301 00 Plzeň, www.djkt.eu/en/opera		
25 Sept 2025 7.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Devil's Wall</i>	https://www.djkt.eu/repertoar/certova-stena-2024
26 Sept 2025 7.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Kiss</i>	https://www.djkt.eu/repertoar/hubicka-2024
4 Oct 2025 7.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Devil's Wall</i>	https://www.djkt.eu/repertoar/certova-stena-2024
9 Oct 2025 11.00 am	Martinů: <i>Špalíček ('Small') ballet</i>	https://www.djkt.eu/repertoar/spalicek-2024
11 Oct 2025 7.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Kiss</i>	https://www.djkt.eu/repertoar/hubicka-2024
28 Oct 2025 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 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

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>

Remembering Václav Talich (1883 – 1961)

It being the forty-third year of the Festival Talichův Beroun (Talich's Beroun Festival), once again I was honoured by the City of Beroun's Municipality by an invitation to perform at a moving inaugural ceremony held at Václav Talich's grave at the main cemetery of that city – a duty with which I have been entrusted for well over fifteen years now (missing only one year – due to the pandemic). The performers were, as always, the City of Beroun Chorus "Slavos" (founded in 1861 and itself boasting an historic association with Bedřich Smetana). On this occasion, they were reinforced by volunteers from the Charles University Chorus in Prague, who gladly came along. The present and former Mayors of the city, members of the Festival board, and members of the Talich family were in attendance. The musical programme started with Smetana's fine chorus, *Věno* (Dowry) (in an arrangement for mixed choir by Milan Pospíšil), continuing with prayers by Smetana and by Komitas as flowers were deposited at the grave. The closing item was Štěpán Charvát's choral arrangement of Dvořák's *Hospodin jest můj pastýř* (The Lord is my Shepherd) from the *Biblical Songs*.

The city authorities are proud of Beroun's association with Václav Talich, who chose to spend his later years at his villa on the outskirts of the city. It is very much my hope that this worthy tradition will yet continue for many more years to come.



Photo above: Haig Utodjian, below: Jakub Toman.

Haig Utidjian



Composers on page 1: Dvořák, Bodorová, Janáček, Cikker, Weinberger, A. Hába, Smetana

