

The Dvořák Society

For Czech and Slovak Music

Founded 1974

Newsletter No. 152, November 2025



A dramatic moment in Dvořák's *Svatební košile* (*The Spectre's Bride*). From left to right Kateřina Kněžíková, Jakub Hrůša, Nicky Spence and Pavol Kubáň. See page 9 for the detailed review. Photo: ©2025 Tristram Kenton.

PRESIDENT: Jakub Hrůša

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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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Between The Deadlines

Notes from your Chairman

We have made significant progress in setting up a digital library of our publications. The early issues of the Journal have been scanned and posted to the DS website. The Journals for which we did not have PDFs are currently with the company contracted to digitise them, and these will be available to view or purchase a download from the website. Scans of our Newsletters from 1988 have been completed and are available for members to view on the website. Copies have also been made available to RILM in New York.

The highlight of my recent trip to Czechia was attending two events in Nelahozeves. For pictures, see page 24. On Sunday, 7th September, the usual official birthday celebrations for Dvořák were observed at the birthplace, curated by Eleonore Kinsky of the Lobkowicz Foundation. The ceremony opened around the statue of the composer, and a local choir sang music by Bendl and Dvořák, concluding with the laying of floral wreaths by William and Sandra Lobkowicz, the Director of the Czech Museum of Music (National Museum) and Markéta Hallová and Jitka Suková from our sister organisation in Prague, together with a representative from Dvořák Museum in Zlonice. This was followed by a concert in the birthplace given by the Kukal String Quartet, whom some of you will remember from the Leamington Festival 2024. They gave excellent accounts of Mozart's *Prussian Quartet*, K. 575 and Dvořák's *Slavonic Quartet*, Op. 51. (Hanslick heard the latter in 1880 and wrote favourable comments!) The day continued with a colloquium on the influential Prague-born music critic Eduard Hanslick (I did not attend, but our Vice-President David Beveridge was present).

This was also an opportunity to take some refreshments at the Station café or the newly refurbished restaurant opposite the castle.

A new guide of the birthplace has been published, and I also noticed that a new book entitled *Antonín*

Dvořák's Summer Retreat has been written by Ondřej Šupka, who was the compiler of the excellent website on [Dvořák](http://Dvorak.org). The book is available in Czech, and an abridged English version is also for sale.

In the afternoon, there was an open-air concert in the castle courtyard of music by Koželuh, Liehmann (Dvořák's music teacher in Zlonice) and Dvořák.

The following day, Monday, 8th September, Terry Heard, David Beveridge, and I attended the Grand Opening of the birth house. There were speeches by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and also by William Lobkowicz, followed by the traditional cutting of a ribbon. Small groups were then invited to tour the birth house, whilst others partook of a buffet lunch laid out in the castle rooms.

The composer himself would have approved of our means of travel. We took the train from Prague to Kralupy nad Vltavou. From there, we walked the Dvořák trail alongside the river Vltava to Nelahozeves (about 40 minutes).

In the afternoon, Kieszka and Gilles Parentau gave an open-air concert in an extraordinary rendering of a medley of famous tunes by Dvořák played on multiple keyboards and featuring very nifty footwork on the pedal board. This was followed by the Symphony Orchestra of the Prague Conservatoire playing Dvořák's *9th Symphony*, Op. 95.

Under the Scholarship scheme, two string players, Viktoriia Kovaka (viola) and Jan Petrov (cello) from Prague Conservatoire, attended the one-week Cadenza International Summer School held at the Purcell School from 19th – 25th July. I was fortunate to meet them both at Nelahozeves as they were playing in the orchestra, which performed in the castle courtyard as part of the grand opening ceremony. Jan, who was leading the cello section, is going on to study at the Musikhochschule in Leipzig. Viktoriia has a further two years of study at the Prague Conservatoire. From their accounts and also the reports received from the tutors, both scholars performed excellently in their chamber music sessions.

I was able to attend only one concert as part of this year's Dvořák Prague Festival. It took place in St Agnes Convent and was given the rather imaginative but slightly inaccurate and odd title in English *The Moldau and the Seine Dialogue*, given by the Bennewitz String Quartet with Petr Ries (double-bass) and the familiar pianist Martin Kasík with soprano Kateřina Kněžíková (who has performed at Glyndbourne and also most recently at the Gala Concert at Covent Garden, see page 9). The music, mainly vocal with strings/piano, was by Fauré, Chausson, Dvořák, Jongen, Lekeu, Saint-Saëns and Massenet. Martinů's *French String Quartet No. 1*, H. 117, was the odd one out. It was a delightful programme of rarely heard music but marred by completely inadequate programme notes, lacking song titles and texts. A real pity.

Finally, it has come to our notice of a recent initiative called the Czech Music Events Ltd, which features chamber music in London and Manchester, on 30th and 31st October, given by Pavel Fischer and Petr Prause. A concert by Gabriela Demeterová (violin) and Harvey Davies (piano) took place at the end of September; John Beale has included its details on our [Facebook](#) page. I intend to go to the concert in Manchester and try to find out further information on this initiative.

M. David Roberts

This is your editor writing

This is my fourteenth Newsletter. Today I will be brief, as in this Newsletter you will find several contributions from me.

There is one topic that I will cover in more detail in the next Newsletter, but you can already have a preview: We, that is Dvořák Society, are going digital! In the [Members' Section](#) of our website, you have access to all the published Newsletters and to most of the Journals! As I write these lines, volumes 16–22 are currently being scanned; by the time you read these lines, they should be on the website.

In the meantime, please investigate the updated [Cumulative Index](#) of DS Journals. I think that it is a real treasure trove of information! The update is almost finished...

In the last moment, I am squeezing in some exciting news: Yesterday, I was at the Royal Opera in Covent Garden. I took part in an *Insight* programme on Janáček's *The Makropulos Case*, which will be premiered by the time you get this Newsletter (see Events, page 21). Our president, Jakub Hruša, Nigel Semione and some guests introduced this opera. Recording of this inside is on [YouTube](#).

The next Newsletter's submission deadline is 1 January 2026. 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 back as a member Mr John Taylor of Stockport, who rejoins after a short absence. There have been no other membership changes.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Another year has passed and it is again time to remind you that **subscriptions for 2026 are due on 1st January**. We do not send individual reminders, so this notice is a request to all members to see that their subscriptions are paid promptly.

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

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

Payment methods, in order of preference (for processing time and cost to the Society):

1. By Banker's Order (for those with UK bank accounts). To set up a Banker's Order if you do not have one, please send the details to me, using the form which you can print from the Society's website, [Bankers-Order-Form.pdf](#), or obtain from me. If you already have a

Banker's Order, please check that it is for **the right amount**, and ask your bank to correct it if necessary.

2. By electronic bank transfer. The Society's banking details are in the table below. If possible, please add a note saying who the payment is from and send me an email to say that you have paid this way.

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

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

COMMUNICATION

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

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

Terry Heard, Membership Secretary
67 Lewisham Hill, London SE13 7PL
020 8852 9263 or 07586 351759
membership@dvorak-society.org

25 years ago

Dvořák Society Newsletter No. 53 appeared in October 2000 and was the seventh issue under my editorship.

The Newsletter started with congratulations to our President, Sir Charles Mackerras, on the occasion of his 75th birthday.

Vilém Tauský had celebrated his 90th birthday with a party at the Czech Embassy on 19th July, and this Newsletter included a photograph of Vilém together with Sir Charles and Lady Mackerras and our then Chairman Graham Melville-Mason. During the evening, the Ambassador, Pavel Seifter, had presented Vilém with the Jan Masaryk Gratias Agit award on behalf of the Czech State.

Several future concerts to celebrate Vilém Tauský's 90th birthday were planned for November.

Advance notice was given of a meeting at the Czech Embassy on 2nd November, when Petr Eben would be in conversation with Graham Melville-Mason.

And Richard Phillips gave notice of a special concert which would take place on Armistice Day, 11th November, in Draper's Hall in Coventry. The concert would be given in the presence of the Bishops of Coventry and of Dresden and the Lord Mayor of Coventry by the Martinů Quartet and baritone Nigel Cliffe. The programme would include Vilém Tauský's *Coventry: A Meditation for String Quartet*, George Butterworth's *Love blows as the wind blows*, Sylvie Bodorová's *Terezín Ghetto Requiem* and Beethoven's *String Quartet*, Op. 130.

Graham Melville-Mason reported that an honorary doctorate was to be conferred on our member composer Karel Husa by the Academy of Music in Prague (HAMU) on 20th October. Graham Melville-Mason would be present.

Richard Phillips gave advance notice of a long weekend of Czech Music in Leamington from 4th to 9th May 2001.

Graham Melville-Mason reviewed three recitals by the Duo Art Nouveau, which had taken place at the Czech Embassy during the summer months. The Duo was made up of two Dvořák Society members, Tomáš Tuláček and Geoffrey Chacaro. In the first recital, the Duo had brought together works by Josef Bohuslav Foerster, Karel Boleslav Jirák, František Drdla, and Vítězslav Novák, while the second recital, entitled 'Martinů and his contemporaries', had included works by Martinů, Janáček and Suchoň, while the third opened with Fibich's *Violin Sonatina in D minor*, followed by Petr Pokorný's *Music for the Celebration of Late Summer for solo violin*. Petr Pokorný had been present to introduce the British première of his *Franz Liszt is Sitting on the Veranda and Watching the Sky*, Op. 67, for piano. This was one of six pieces written by different Czech composers, being a reaction to a piece by Liszt suggested to them by their Moravian colleague, Pavel Novák. This was followed by a work by Novák himself: *Fantasia for violin and piano*. The second half of the concert featured Tomáš Svoboda's *Violin Sonata*, Op. 73, Miroslav Pudlák's *Encore for violin and piano* and concluded with Dvořák's *Sonatina in G*, Op. 100.

Greg Terian's Martinů Review was mainly concerned with giving notice of two main events: The

Bohuslav Martinů Festival, which was to take place in Prague during December, and the International Martinů Festival to be held in Basel in October.

Greg had invited Aleš Březina to write about his personal memories of Paul Sacher, who had died recently.

Aleš had originally met Paul Sacher in Basel in 1989 because of his interest in his long relationship with Martinů, and, indeed, it was this interest which had prompted Aleš's move to Basel. A long and interesting article ends with the words: *He [Sacher] was a great man who enriched the lives of all who met him.*

Diana Hirst drew attention to a performance of *Brundibár* by Jeunesses Musicales International, conducted by Michel Tilkin at the Bloomsbury Theatre in London on 8th October. This was the last of an eight-nation European tour. On this occasion, the cellist Raphael Sommer, who as a six-year-old had sung the part of the bird in the original production in Terezín, would introduce the London audience to the opera.

Lorna Dobson reported that staff at the Czech Music Centre in Prague were working with Pavel Bílek of Široký Dvůr to set up their own CD purchasing programme via the Internet.

During September, the Prague Symphony Orchestra, with its conductor Jiří Bělohlávek, had been touring in Argentina and Brazil.

Twenty members of the Society had met at Burton Manor on the Wirral from 8th to 10th September to listen to Graham Melville-Mason's talks on Dvořák and his pupils. On Saturday, we learned about Vítězslav Novák and Josef Suk, Julius Fučík, Rudolf Karel, and Oskar Nedbal. We then followed Dvořák to America, where he taught Goldman, who went on to teach Gershwin and Copland. We also heard about Harry Burleigh (1866–1949), who introduced Dvořák to Negro Spirituals. A non-stop weekend of information and recorded music was lapped up by all who attended.

The ninth annual Scottish Dinner had been held at the Caledonian Club in Edinburgh on 16th September. Music before dinner had been arranged by Tim Paxton and featured the Terezín composers.

On 26th August, a number of members had gathered at the Czech and Slovak Club in West Hampstead to hear Míla Smetáčková's presentation on the work of the Czech Music Society in Prague and of Míla's 38 years of marriage to her late husband, the conductor Václav Smetáček.

The Dvořák Statue had at last been unveiled in Prague on 3rd June, and we could publish a photograph of it standing proudly facing the main entrance of the Rudolfinum.

Ray Latham reported on the Cheltenham International Festival 2000, which had taken place in July.

The Janáček String Quartets had been performed by both the Škampa Quartet and the Takács Quartet.

The Škampa Quartet had also performed at the Chester Summer Festival, and Richard Beith reported on their performance of Janáček's *String Quartet No. 1* and Dvořák's *American Quartet*.

This Newsletter included a long list of the compositions of Antonín Tučapský together with details of publishers from which they were available.

Peter Herbert, in his Peter's Pages, reported on a visit to the Edinburgh Festival where he had attended a lunchtime talk by Tim Paxton on The Music of Josef Suk and a performance of Suk's *Asrael Symphony* by the Czech Philharmonic conducted by our President, Sir Charles Mackerras.

And last but not least, there was my **25 years ago** column from **25 years ago**.

1975 had seen six issues of the Dvořák Society Journal, as it was then called. From April, the title had been Zpráva and the editor, Ian Trufitt, wrote:

"I believe that a greater sharing in the running of the Society is necessary for it to continue its rapid progress, and I hope that no one will refrain from offering their services ... The number of jobs that have to be done to ensure the smooth running of our organisation may surprise some people. For example, once approximately 2,700 sheets of paper have been hand-fed through our small duplicating machine, a whole day is needed to collate them into a Journal, staple them, type envelopes and put stamps on, insert them in the envelopes, seal them and post them. With a helper, that time would be halved, it would give someone a greater sense of participation, and it would have a social effect ... So my final message to you ... in the closing stages of my Secretaryship, is to participate, join in, devote yourself in some way to progressively continue a Society worthy to bear the great and respected name of Dvořák."

At last, I could report that the review of Czech Music, the Journal of the Dvořák Society for Czech and Slovak Music, Volume 21, would appear in the February issue of this Newsletter.

Annette Percy

In my role as the editor, I am checking the factual details. With the help of Microsoft's Copilot, I discovered that it was not a Goldman who studied with Dvořák, but Rubin Goldmark (1872–1936). He, while in 1891–2, teaching piano at the National Conservatory in New York, studied composition with AD. This information comes from the article in [Wikipedia](#) on Rubin Goldmark. And if the name Goldmark

sounds familiar, he is the nephew of the Hungarian Jewish composer Karl Goldmark.

Reflections: How I came to love Smetana

My occasional column by Nigel Simeone

As a teenager with a voracious appetite for unfamiliar music, my enthusiasm for Janáček was boundless – and Dvořák soon followed. But it took me a little longer to appreciate the wonders of Smetana. I had played *Vltava* during a youth orchestra course, and thoroughly enjoyed it – but it also left me wondering how this hugely enjoyable piece fitted with the idea of Smetana as a symbol of Czech national resurgence. During my time as an undergraduate, the light began to dawn thanks to the memorable 1976 production of *Dalibor* at English National Opera, with Anne Evans as Milada, John Mitchinson as Dalibor, and Charles Mackerras conducting. Here was a stirring and beautiful opera which made a deep impression in the theatre. Fortunately, the surviving BBC broadcast from the time is an eloquent reminder of just how good a performance it was.

At university, I managed to track down recordings of more Smetana operas, and the other tone poems (of which *Wallenstein's Camp* – *Valdštyňův tábor* has remained a particular favourite). *Libuše* (the old Supraphon recording conducted by Jaroslav Krombholc) was a great discovery: the splendour of the music was exciting, of course, but more important was coming to understand the depth of feeling that lay behind it. And what Smetana achieved in *Libuše* soon led me back to the glories of *Má vlast* – beyond my youthful affection for *Vltava* to something much more lasting: submitting to the astonishing impact of the whole cycle, from the Bard-like harps in *Vyšehrad* to the visionary fervour of *Tábor* and *Blaník*.

Four decades later, in 2015, I was invited to make a programme about *Má vlast* by the BBC producer Tom Alban for his Radio Four series *Tales from the Stave*, with my friend (and our president) Jakub Hruša. One morning in Prague, we met to pore over the autograph manuscripts of the whole cycle and to be greatly moved by what we saw. (That programme can still be found on BBC Sounds, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b0540trm>). Why was this such an emotional encounter? Aside from the thrill of leafing through the handwritten pages of Smetana's masterpiece, it was his marginal remarks which revealed so much about the personal trials he was going through while composing *Má vlast*. On the last page of *Vltava*, Smetana wrote that it was *finished on 8 December 1874 in 19 days (I am now completely deaf)*. This heartbreakingly matter-of-fact statement at the end of his most famous orchestral work put it in an intensely poignant biographical context – but in most published scores it is omitted.

I was reminded of this in the happiest way when I was sent a review copy of the facsimile of *Vltava*, which has recently been published by Bärenreiter in Prague. It's a very handsome volume with commentary by Hugh Macdonald and Olga Mojžíšová. Printed in several colours on beautiful paper, and bound in marbled boards, it's not cheap – but few facsimiles tell such a touching story, and it's wonderful to have such a marvellous reproduction of the manuscript which so moved us when we encountered it in 2015.

Smetana is a national emblem, and was a tragic figure in many ways, but he was also a marvellous entertainer. As I write this, I am looking forward with undisguised glee to the new production of *The Bartered Bride* at the Vienna State Opera in October 2025, conducted by Tomáš Hanus. Smetana once wrote that he wanted to *become a Mozart in composition and a Liszt in technique*. Admirable ambitions, but he became something more: one of the nineteenth century's great originals.



Events and Concert Performances

Talich Quartet at the Wigmore Hall, London, 29 June 2025

Shostakovich: *String Quartet No. 1 in C, Op. 49*

Dvořák: *Gypsy Songs, Op. 55*, arranged by Jiří Kabat

Janáček: from *Moravian Folk Poetry in Songs*

G Boulanger: *Avant de mourir (Before you die)*

Vasiliev: *Two guitars*

When I bought our tickets for this concert, I was not sure what to expect. I already saw the Talich Quartet once. That was about 20 years ago, while I was living in South Carolina. They played a late Beethoven quartet, and I remember being completely overwhelmed. It was long before I became a member of this Society and long before I started to appreciate string quartets at all. So, when I saw this concert advertised on our website, I told my wife of 55 years, Let's go! And we went. To be more precise, we took an early Sunday morning train.



Talich Quartet (from left) Radim Sedmidubský (viola), Jan Talich (violin) Michal Kaňka (cello) and Roman Patočka (violin). Source: talichquartet.com/media.

It started in an innocuous way. The members came out and played Shostakovich's *String Quartet No. 1*. Last year, we heard this quartet in Leamington Spa, played by the Brodsky Quartet, during a weekend when they performed the entire set.

Then the atmosphere changed. Jan Talich, the first violinist, introduced, in very good English, the rest of the programme. It had a common theme: folk music, mainly gypsy, that inspired composers. It started with the well-known *Gypsy Songs*, arranged for a string quartet by a friend of the quartet, Jiří Kabat. I liked this rendition: I think that it is better to listen to the pure music when one cannot understand the words. Janáček's *Songs* were a wonderful selection of very short pieces of different character, sometimes two contrasting ones joined together.

Georges Boulanger (1893–1958) was a Romanian violinist, composer and conductor. He came from a Romani family with a long tradition in music. *Avant de mourir* is a short composition, most probably you would recognise the tune. There are several different arrangements of it on YouTube, unfortunately, none for a string quartet. But it is not difficult to imagine that the string quartet arrangement does not fall behind the others.

For me, the highlight of the morning (the concert started at 11:30 am!) was the composition called *Two guitars* by the Russian composer Ivan Vasiliev (1810–1870). Interrogating Microsoft's Copilot gave me the information that was lacking on the downloadable one-page programme sheet, also distributed before the concert. There was a very difficult pizzicato solo, played by the second violinist, Roman Patočka.

I wonder whether Jiří Kabat arranged the other pieces for the string quartet, as originally, none were written for this ensemble; the programme notes do not say that. Extrapolating the English saying about the pudding, I have to conclude with a big Yes: a string quartet as good as Talich's can play anything, and it sounds wonderful!

Tomy Duby

**Trinity Camerata, Benedict Goodall (conductor).
St. Edburg's Church, Bicester,
Sunday, 13 July 2025, 4:00 pm.**

I will not be at all surprised if you have not heard of the Trinity Camerata Orchestra. It is a "small, high-quality amateur orchestra based in north Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire". It gives four concerts each year, one of which is a family concert. The members typically meet for six rehearsals before the concert. The uniting theme of the summer concert was Americana. It included Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*, Barber's *Adagio for Strings*, and the *Florida Suite* by F. Delius. The *New World Symphony* closed the concert.

To describe the impression Dvořák's symphony made on me, I have to go back more than sixty years, to the days when I discovered classical music. My parents had an old electric gramophone and an interesting collection of 78 r.p.m. classical records. This is where my classical music education started. I listened to them again and again. Among them was the *New World Symphony*. I no longer remember the orchestra or the conductor. All I remember from the first movement was a very dissonant chord somewhere near the middle. Later, when I learned about the sonata form, I discovered that this is where the *development starts*. Fast forward to this very hot Sunday afternoon. I did not hear this dissonant sound because the orchestra repeated the exposition, and thus delayed the development by about five minutes. Wow, I never heard that before, not even with the Czech Philharmonic! I could not wait to get home, download the score and check it for myself. And there it was, after the repetition sign, the dissonant augmented triad that I remember from my much younger years! It was immediately after the repetition sign...

The slow second movement was, of course, beautiful. What impressed me was not so much the perfectly performed *cor anglais* solo, but the pizzicato solo of the celli in the middle section: it sounded so beautiful. The finale showed us Benedict Goodall's perfect control of the orchestra. The tension was gradually rising until it reached an amazing climax at the closing bars. I am sure that all present in the church did not regret missing the Wimbledon men's finale...

I must repeat my old conclusion: we should not underestimate a concert played by amateur musicians, we never know what we will hear. It may only be the repetition of the exposition, which professional orchestras with their famous conductors constantly ignore or are forced to ignore...

Tomy Duby

Have you seen the *New World Symphony* at this year's Proms ([Thursday, 7 August 2025](#), The Royal Liverpool Orchestra conducted by Domingo Hindoyan)? The exposition was repeated!

Kryštof Kohout, violin, winner of the Guildhall Wigmore Hall Recital Prize 2025, and Edward Leung, piano, at Wigmore Hall, London on Sunday 27th July 2025



Kryštof Kohout. Photo: Olivia Da Costa,
www.krystofkohout.com/gallery

The young Czech violinist, Kryštof Kohout, chose for his Wigmore Hall recital music which he had said was inspired by the rich musical heritage of Central Europe and the various influences which met in that region. It was a programme full of contrasts.

The concert began with Bartók's *Sonata for Solo Violin*, which displayed a vast range of emotions and demanded virtuosity, ably demonstrated by the soloist, holding our attention throughout. The final piece was the *Sonata for Violin and Piano* by Richard Strauss, romantic and full of energy, displayed both by Kryštof and the pianist, Edward Leung. Listeners felt uplifted at the end of an unusual, demanding evening.

The two central pieces of the concert were first performances in the UK and were both Czech. *Romance élégiaque*, written in the 1920s by Váša Příhoda (1900–1960), reflected Czech folk idioms and was both virtuosic and lyrical. This composer is not widely known in the UK, but he was one of the early performers to record Dvořák's

Violin Concerto. The other work, *Hands*, by Luboš Fišer (1935–1999), was composed under the constraints of Communism in the 1960s. It was to be called *Crux*, representing the Stations of the Cross, but this was deemed unsuitable, and so it was renamed *Hands*, referring to a poem by Otokar Březina concerning labourers and other workers. To Fišer, it was a symbol of prayer and unity. It was a turbulent piece with a radiant climax.

Kryštof Kohout is not only a brilliant and thoughtful soloist, but also a founding member and leader of the Fibonacci Quartet, a talented ensemble founded at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. The quartet gave a vibrant and memorable concert at Buxton International Festival on Monday 21st July 2025 of Janáček's *String Quartet no. 2, 'Intimate Letters'* and Smetana's *String Quartet no.1 'From My Life'*. I believe that a similar concert was also performed elsewhere in the UK during the summer. I will certainly look out for opportunities to hear performances by Kryštof and the Fibonacci in future and encourage readers to do the same.

Susan Jenkinson

**Festival Music under the Diamond Vault
Kremnica, Slovakia, 13 June – 11 July 2025**

The medieval mining town of Kremnica is one of Slovakia's heritage sites. Among its most valuable buildings is the Count Comes's Mansion. Its oldest part dates back to the 13th century. However, the most representative part of the house is the eastern wing from the 15th century with its rare diamond vault. In the 19th century, the ancestors of violin virtuoso and professor at JAMU, Peter Michalica, became the owners of the house. He inherited it from his late mother in 1952 at the age of 6, but during the Stalinist communist era, he had to give it to the state shortly thereafter. Only in 2000 was the property completely returned to him. Peter and Irena Michalica decided to devote the east wing exclusively to culture and art and founded their own festival, which now has a 25-year tradition. For more than 20 years, international summer master classes for violinists have



Adriana Kučerová and Peter Michalica.

also been held here. The festival program is not limited to classical music; jazz and other musical genres are also performed. The combination of literature and music also has its place here. And so the festival, like other cultural activities, is accompanied by regular art exhibitions.

The opening evening in June featured a recital by the prominent Slovak writer and lyricist Boris Filan and his friend, singer and guitarist Pavol Hammel. Another concert took place in the Baroque Church of St. Francis, designed by architect Dionýsius Stanetti, which boasts excellent concert acoustics. It was filled with the sounds of the Žilina State Chamber Orchestra with the world-famous Prague conductor Leoš Svárovský. The soloists of the evening were Peter Michalica and his 15-year-old student Egon Hollý. This talented young violinist has won many awards, including first prize at the Funny Mendelssohn competition in London (2025). Together, they performed Bach's *Double Concerto in D minor*. The concert culminated in a thrilling performance of Beethoven's *7th Symphony*. The protagonist of the next concert was Peter's graduate Barbora Botošová and her band. The granddaughter of the famous gypsy violinist Ján Berky Mrenica is now mainly devoted to Roma music, but she also plays jazz, ethno, and klezmer music. Her spirited performance thrilled the audience.

In 1545, Queen Mary (1505–1558), Regent of Hungary, visited Kremnica. She stayed at Count Come's Mansion for several days. Every five years, the festival commemorates the anniversary of her stay with a concert featuring *Ave Maria* compositions. This was also the case on July 11 at the final concert. The wonderful soprano Adriana Kučerová, together with festival host Peter and pianist Viera Bartošová, performed compositions of the same name from Caccini to Piazzolla. Peter also celebrated his 80th birthday, as he was born in the Chamberlain's Mansion exactly 400 years after Queen Mary's stay.

Irena Michalicová

Translated from Slovak with [DeepL.com](https://www.DeepL.com) (free version)

Early Dvořák String Quartet Performed In Holywell Music Room, Oxford Members of the Adderbury Ensemble Sunday, 27 July 2025

While some of Dvořák's string quartets are frequently performed throughout the world, it is an event worth marking when the earlier ones are included in programmes. Anna Cashell, Chris Windass, Vanessa McNaught and Kath Sharman, a quartet drawn from members of the enterprising Adderbury Ensemble, based in Oxfordshire but performing internationally, presented a programme in the Holywell Music Room, starting with Beethoven's Op. 18 No. 5 and following on with Dvořák's *String Quartet No. 5 in F minor*, Op. 9, B 37 from 1873.



From left to right: Chris Windas (violin), Anna Cashell (violin), Kath Sharman (cello), and Vanessa McNaught (viola). Source: [adderbusensemble.com](https://www.adderbusensemble.com)

The group for whom Dvořák wrote the work declined to perform it as inappropriate to chamber music in style, but the Adderbury Ensemble had no such doubts when they looked at the score – not published until 1929. Their strong, expressive but unsentimental playing was well suited to all the different moods of the work, and the performance was rewarded with vigorous applause from the capacity audience. People expressed surprise to discover that the composer had written so many quartets before those they knew, and were interested to recognise in the second movement themes which they knew well from the later Romance for Violin and Orchestra.

Chris Windass, the second violin on this occasion, reported that they are looking at further less-known quartets by Dvořák and encouraged by what they saw and by the reception performances of *Quartet No. 5* have achieved, intend to introduce more Dvořák quartets to audiences in Oxfordshire and elsewhere.

Mark Todd

Jakub Hrůša and Friends in a Concert Royal Opera House, Saturday, 20 September 2025

Having started his tenure at Covent Garden with electrifying performances of Puccini's *Tosca* earlier in September, Jakub Hrůša followed this with a more unusual event: a Saturday evening concert in the Royal Opera House. 'Jakub Hrůša and Friends' turned out to be a memorable evening, and an ideal showcase for the Covent Garden chorus and orchestra, three outstanding soloists and Hrůša himself.

Surrounded by an elegant acoustic shell, the orchestra was on the stage (a little dimly lit from our seats in the stalls). The concert opened with the suite from Bartók's

Miraculous Mandarin. This brutal, rebarbative score is something of a Hrůša favourite (I heard him conduct it with the Philharmonia a few years ago). He brings to it an ideal combination of control and fire, relishing Bartók's ferocious dissonances and his dazzling, sometimes ghoulish orchestral writing, but never losing precision. The ROH orchestra responded in spectacular style: string playing of uncompromising conviction and some wonderfully characterful wind and brass solos. Altogether, a very exciting reading of a piece which – in less imaginative hands – can feel downright noisy. Here, it came across with a kind of blistering abandon.

The Bartók was a short first half – providing a scorching *hors d'oeuvre* for the main event after the interval: a rare performance of Dvořák's *Svatební košile*, known in English (very freely translated) as *The Spectre's Bride*. While it was a huge hit at the 1885 Birmingham Festival, performances in Britain in modern times have been few and far between – and, to be brutally honest, they have felt more dutiful than dramatic. But Hrůša's account was not only spectacularly successful but also – for me at least – a revelation. The narrative drive of the story came through with extraordinary immediacy, and countless details of Dvořák's wonderful orchestration emerged with an individuality and clarity that I've never heard so well realised before.

The three soloists deserve the highest possible praise. Kateřina Kněžíková (in glorious voice as Glyndebourne's Kát'a earlier in the summer) soared effortlessly and very expressively – her radiant voice happily able to encompass the considerable demands (and wide range) that Dvořák's music requires. Nicky Spence (a late replacement for an indisposed Pavel Černoch) was eloquent and committed as the terrifyingly sinister bridegroom, and the Slovak bass Pavol Kubán was resonant and superbly communicative as the narrator. But another feature of this performance which rendered it exceptional was the contribution of the Royal Opera Chorus: not only were they attentive to every word (their Czech exceptionally clear and accurate thanks to

superb preparation by William Spaulding, and Lada Valešová's language coaching), but the sound they made had a dramatic character, a range of colour and an immediacy quite unlike that of a big amateur choir: this was genuinely thrilling choral singing. Overseeing all this with a characteristic combination of rhythmic energy, interpretative insight, and a masterly overview of the work was Jakub Hrůša, whose conducting was inspirational. How exciting, and how moving to hear this work coming across so powerfully. *The Spectre's Bride* is based on a grizzly folk tale by Karel Erben, as are Dvořák's late tone poems (and in this performance, hints and pre-echoes of those masterpieces came through as never before). The large audience reacted with tremendous – and richly deserved – enthusiasm. Let us hope there will be more of these one-off events. This was a triumphant evening for Hrůša and his forces – and for Dvořák.

Nigel Simeone

Jakub Hrůša and Friends in a Concert 2, Royal Opera House, London, 20 September 2025

My original plan was to write a second review of this concert for this Newsletter. But when I read Nigel's (see page above), I realised that it would be a very bad copy of his. So I change the focus of my review from an external one to an internal one, what Dvořák's *Svatební košile* (*The Spectre's Bride*), a composition I had never heard before, did to me.

When my good friend John Beale emailed me the latest gossip that the Royal Opera was preparing this concert, I immediately bought two tickets. I also decided to listen to it. On YouTube, I found a recording with the Czech Philharmonic conducted by Jaroslav Krombholc (youtu.be/BFuGupRokmY). It came with the full score (I do not read scores, but experience taught me how to follow them). After the first ten minutes (*Introduction* and *The Stroke of Midnight* sections), I had to stop: I was overwhelmed by the beauty. When, a few days later, I finished listening to *Svatební košile*, I knew that I had hit a personal musical jackpot. Why?!

It took me some time to realise that what I heard was a wonderful fusion of beautiful poetry very sensitively set to music – a real masterpiece by Erben and Dvořák. Furthermore, I grasped the motif of the *Introduction* and its transformation into the ticking clock in the following section. So, Dvořák is taking me on a musical journey! I never experienced this before on first hearing!

I wondered what the 400 amateur singers at the performance in Birmingham 140 years ago were thinking and feeling. I suppose that only a few understood Czech and thus lost part of the beauty of this musical fusion, but they got the flavour of the music. We know that the performance in Birmingham, sung in English and conducted by Dvořák himself, was a great success.



Jakub Hrůša at the Covent Garden concert.
Photo: ©2025 Tristram Kenton.

If you were not one of the lucky ones to be at the Royal Opera on that Saturday night, listen to a good recording of *The Spectre's Bride*. You will not be disappointed.

Just one sentence about the concert, stressing what Nigel said: The Royal Opera choir was excellent: we could understand every word and their *piano* was superb!

Here is a link to a [Czech-English version](#) of the poem by Karel Jaromír Erben.

Tomy Duby

The Hackney Festival Chorus with Lambeth Orchestra perform *The Spectre's Bride* on 7 December 2025. For more information, see Events, s page 21.

Brno Opera *Rusalka* live for OperaVision, 6th September 2025

I got to know Dvořák's music in my teens through various Czech music records that were in my parents' collection, including the *Sextet* Op. 48, *String Quintet* Op. 97, and particularly the wonderful *Cello Concerto*. At university in 1973, I bought a recording of *Rusalka* on 4 LPs. A recording from 1952 with Ludmila Červinková and Beno Blachut. I fell in love with the music and played the records frequently. I can still identify the breaks in the music from changing sides of the records. My first live *Rusalka* was at the ENO in 1986. Since then, I have seen many different productions of this opera and still enjoy going to Prague to see the current productions. I suppose I have seen the opera live over 25 times and never tire of doing so.

In 2024, I considered a visit to Brno to see *Rusalka* but, happily now, chose the National Theatre in Prague instead. I was suspicious of the scheduled timing of the performance, which was curious. Something was wrong. So, with this in mind, I was looking forward to seeing the live stream from Brno on OperaVision on 6th September 2025. The singing was ok, but I was disappointed. The set was a grey box with 3 platforms protruding from the sides and rear, featuring reeds pointing upwards. There were doors which allowed the singers to enter this grey water world. In Act 1, I didn't get the meaning of the domestic fish tank with pebbles into which Rusalka puts her hands while calling for Ježibaba. At the conclusion of the opera the Prince is supposed to die, but we didn't see that – after a while, he just exits stage right. The impact of the kiss was missed. The opportunity for some colour, red and white, in Act 2 was totally avoided. The scenery was grey, and the Act 2 dancers were also clothed in grey. Rusalka was in grey, the Prince was in grey, and yes, Ježibaba was also in grey. This depressing monochrome production just didn't do it for me. But never mind, I could listen to the music and enjoy that. However, this review of the opera is concerned with a more serious problem. Much of the music was missing. Cut!

As I listened, I noticed that Ježibaba's aria *Čury mury fuk* didn't happen. Something was very wrong. This bit of light relief and magic was missing. After the orgasmic final couple of minutes to end Act 1, Prince's *Vím, že jsi kouzlo*, there was no applause to return us to reality. Just silence – and somehow the audience knew. No interval here – but 19 seconds of silence while the dancers entered. Followed by a quaver diminished D chord at **20** (the numbers in bold face are rehearsal numbers). The flow of the music, so pointedly through-composed in the opera, was destroyed.

I watched the rest of the opera with amazement. So, determined to find out what was happening, a day or so later, I listened again but this time following my vocal score (Bärenreiter 1960 +2006). *Čury mury fuk* was completely cut **69-77** 50 bars.

Act 2. The opening scene featuring Hajný and Kuchtík didn't happen. No gamekeeper and cook at all. No light relief in the opera. Bars 1 to 380 were cut. The whole scene missing! Following this, 96 bars of the ballet music were cut (a favourite Dvořák melody of mine). Why? I later discovered that Rusalka lost 16 bars **63 – 64**.

In Act 3, 10 bars were disposed of, 180–190, from Rusalka's aria, *Mladosti své pozbavena*. Next, Rusalka and Ježibaba lost 20 bars **17 – 19**. There is a clue here – a very noticeable mistake by some instruments at bar 238. Predictably now, the Hajný and Kuchtík scene didn't exist with Ježibaba and Vodník also losing some bars **44 – 59**, 223 bars in total. Next the three water-sprites, and including Vodník, at **65** missed 120 bars. Finally, and unbelievably, Vodník's despairing 12 bars *Nadarmo v loktech zemře ti*, memorable for the falling chromatic scale on *Běda* were cut.

After doing some research and consulting with Tomy Duby I learned of the 'regietheatre' (regieopera) movement where a director imprints his own imagination on the opera. This can be significant like the Stefan Herheim's Brussels *Rusalka* set on a city street outside a bar seen on OperaVision a few years ago or even the 1976 centenary Ring at Bayreuth set in Paris after which many in the audience showed their displeasure with loud boos.

I saw Kušej's Munich *Rusalka* in October 2010 which was memorable for many reasons, including the actual butchering of an animal on stage, but I do not recall any cuts. I have found examples online of other *Rusalka* productions with cuts, but I am really pleased this is not in Prague at the National Theatre or the State Theatre.

Returning to Brno 2025, during the interval after Act 2 there is a 30-minute presentation featuring comments from the director (David Radok), conductor (Marko Ivanović), Rusalka (Linda Ballová), Prince (Peter Berger) and Ježibaba (Václava Krejčí Housková). There are 2 quotes from the conductor (in translation) which are telling: *Rusalka* is "*A perfect music drama*" (I agree) and "*We have helped ourselves with some cuts. But we are not*

entirely original with that, because someone has tried and made these cuts before. Of course, it was risky to interfere with such perfect scores but I think it can be interesting and surprising because it points out certain themes that are in *Rusalka* and that sometimes tend to disappear under the layer of other themes” The implication being that the gamekeeper scenes distract from the ‘themes’ of the main music drama is risible because that is exactly the point that Kvapil and Dvořák intended. It is part of their vision and balance in creating the whole opera. Why the ballet is cut is a mystery; there can be no logical reason other than shortening the opera. The same is true of the other cuts. I despair that David Radok and Marko Ivanović can butcher this opera so brutally.

I am writing this review in late September a few days before a visit to Prague to see *Rusalka*, and I am very much looking forward to the full opera.

John Beale

PS Finding the Brno Opera *Rusalka* is confusing. You will get the Brno Opera *Rusalka* if you go to the OperaVision website: www.operavision.eu (available until 6th March 2026). It is also on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...). However, if you search: ‘Brno Opera *Rusalka*’ you get: the opera, also a presentation *Meeting the Artists* (with English subtitles) and a longer ‘*A journey into Rusalka*’ (Czech only).

John and I reviewed *Rusalka* of the National Theatre in Prague in Newsletter #147, pages 9–10.



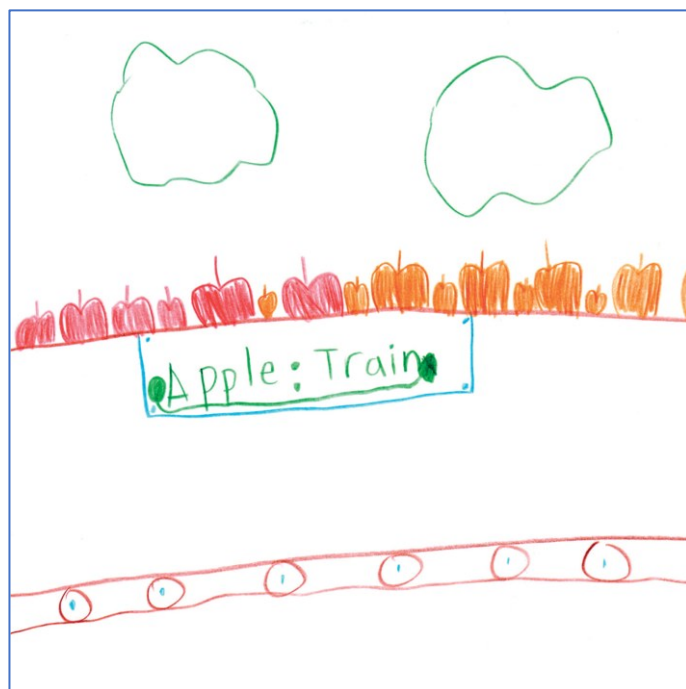
Reviews of CDs and DVDs and other publications

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.

***Apple Train* – Music of Sylvie Bodorová and Vítězslava Kaprálová**
Olga Jelinková (soprano), Timothy Cheek (piano), Sylvie Bodorová (triangle);
Jozef Gráf (tenor), Barbora Haasová (flute), 2 violins and cello (played by members of the Škampa Quartet).
Canticum Ostrava Alena Hron (conductor),
Choirmaster Juru Galatenko
Adam Plachetka (baritone) – song *Dopis*.
Arco Diva UP0256

This is an enterprising release which brings together works of two Czech women composers. It also serves as a platform for bringing several of world premieres to our ears. The programme is bookended by two works of Bodorová. The song cycle *Jabloňový vlak* (*Apple Train*) opens the CD, and the final work, a string quartet (*Silymabum*) closes the programme. In between are four early songs by Kaprálová, followed by two women’s *a cappella* choruses, a melodrama for reciter, violin and piano from 1939 and finally two more songs *V zemi české* (*In the Czech Land*) and *Dopis* (*Letter*).

The song cycle with “dance” entitled *Apple Train* consists of settings of 7 poems by Jan Skácel (1922–1989), dating from 2008–2009. There is a theme of water running through the cycle. *Apple Train*, imaginative as it is, is a slightly misleading title, as there is no such reference in the cycle. Apparently, there is a poem of that name by Skácel. The songs are very effective with atmospheric



Source: [Arco Diva](http://arco-diva.com)

accompaniments. Some are simple folk-like settings, whilst the seventh and final song is much more dramatic and impassioned. The composer makes her recording debut accompanying the cycle on triangle.

Leden (*January*) sung by Jozef Gráf accompanied by flute, 2 violins, and cello with piano, is an atmospheric setting of words by Vítězslav Nezval composed by Kaprálová when 18 years old. Rich in texture, it is a very

beautiful and expressive piece. The next two songs (*Two People Met Yesterday* and *One Day You Will Ask*) are two little miniatures from 1931 set to anonymous texts.

Written in 1936 the two choruses (*Little Star and Quail*) for women's voices bear witness to the Moravian folk poetry and also the excellence of the local choral tradition. Sung in Moravian dialect, the choruses are complex, in close chromatic harmonies and performed here with sparkling aplomb.

The Melodrama follows the Czech tradition of melodrama as previously expressed by Fibich, Foerster, Martinů and Smetana among others, *To Karel Čapek* was written in 1939 for a memorial event in Paris in tribute to the Czech writer (1890 – 1938). It was premiered by the composer with her cousin Věra Uhliřová playing the violin. I reserve judgment on this piece as I had just the bare outline of the text in the liner-notes. The full text is not provided either in Czech or with translation.

The final three songs by Kaprálová date from 1939/40 and include her final song (*Letter*), written specifically for a baritone voice. The first two (*Song of the Workers of the Land* and *In the Czech Land*) are fervent, hymn-like patriotic songs with relatively simple accompaniments and melodic lines.

Dopis (*Letter*) was written to a text by Petr Křiča five days after her marriage to Jiří Mucha and first performed by Otakar Kraus with the composer at the piano on 4th May 1940. Kaprálová, tragically died a very short while after this performance. The text takes the form of a letter written by a man to a woman following his being rejected by her.

The string quartet entitled *Silymabum* from 2020 provides a striking contrast to the rest of the CD. The appealing quartet is short, consisting of three movements, each a little over 2 minutes. The title refers to the milk thistle (*silybum marianum*), which contains an antioxidant and has been used as a traditional treatment for liver and gallbladder problems. The work is by way of a tribute to the healing properties of nature and its mysteries and surprises. The music is full of driving rhythms and modal melodies with an “eastern” atmosphere. The second movement gives the melodic interest to the violin whilst the other strings provide repetitive accompaniments. The third movement marked *frenetico* lives up to its name.

Overall, this is a very welcome CD, excellently performed and recorded, with a variety of music to suit all comers. It fills important gaps in the known Kaprálová catalogue.

The CD is only 55 minutes long, and it is a pity that not all the lyrics for the songs are provided.

David Roberts

Bohuslav Martinů, *String Quartets Nos. 5, 3, 7 and 2*. Pavel Haas Quartet, Supraphon SU 4368-2

It was with some trepidation that I agreed to review this new disc from the Pavel Haas Quartet; Martinů's *String Quartets* have never struck me as being amongst his finest compositions. I have listened to the cycles by the Panocha, Stamitz and Martinů Quartets, but they have seldom in my listening life made the shift from CD sleeve to player. Equally, it is rare that one has a chance to hear the music live when the senses of concentration are sharpened. However, I felt that if any quartet is likely to change my mind on these pieces, it is the excellent Pavel Haas Quartet. And let me say from the outset that their playing is magnificent throughout. So have they altered my opinions?

For some reason, the disc does not lay out the Quartets in chronological order (this is the reason I have listed them in the order above), and begins with the 5th quartet, written in 1938. This quartet has the same anguish and torment as the Concerto for Double String Orchestra from the same year. Driving rhythms, often at *forte*, propel the first movement along. When the first violin tries to break free with expressive harmonies, as in the middle of the first movement, the other instruments maintain the underlying rhythmic tension, which is unresolved at the end. The second movement is an *adagio* of some intensity, in contrast to the first movement, and in which the comparison with the Double Concerto is most obvious. The sense of lament for the Czech nation in the dark times of the Quartet's composition is evident. The third movement returns to the driving rhythms of the first movement. The final movement begins *lento* and quietly, but with deep foreboding led by the first violin. All movement seems to stop, before an *allegro* breaks out with what may be the signs of optimism for the future. There are even suggestions of a dance-like character at some points, but this mood does not last, and despair returns in the closing pages. This quartet is obviously a deeply felt composition at a troubled time, and it is often regarded as the composer's finest. However, I continue to have doubts about the quality of the musical material and whether it can bear the expressive weight which Martinů places on it.

The 3rd quartet is the most radical of all: experimental is a word that is often used for it. The outer movements are dominated by strong rhythmic phrases, one following rapidly on from the other, with little respite in between. The first movement also features much *pizzicato* and touching of the strings with the wood of the bow. The second movement is a yearning lament dominated by upward phrases until it reaches an uneasy and rather sudden close. The whole quartet is Martinů's shortest at 13 minutes and most dissonant.

The 7th quartet, the composer's last and most frequently performed, dates from 1947. He was then living in



Source: [Supraphon](#)

America with no hope of returning home soon. His homesickness is reflected in the music of this quartet, particularly in the *andante* second movement. It opens beautifully with a tender theme for all four instruments, and I was reminded more than once during this movement of the middle part of the finale of Dvořák's Op. 96 Quartet. Some delightful music in this movement. The monothematic first movement, in contrast, has a dance-like character with only occasional pauses for breath. The finale returns to the mood of the first movement, a galloping theme, alternating with another in high harmonics, before the gallop has the final word. There is a purer melodic line in this quartet than in the previous examples, which probably accounts for its comparative popularity. I thought that there was less distinction in the themes of the finale than in the first 2 movements, which I certainly enjoyed.

The 2nd quartet inhabits a different world still. A long sinewy theme gives way to a dance-like *allegro* with some quite joyous writing for the upper voices. This alternates with the opening theme as the music gets faster and faster, leading to a breathless ending. The playing of the Pavel Haas Quartet, especially here, is quite magnificent. The second movement begins darkly in the lower strings. The joyous opening has gone, and we are in a mood of torment and searching without relief throughout the movement. There is some impressive writing for the strings here. The finale returns to the mood of the opening movement. Little rhythmic cells of dance alternate with a longer theme recalling the Czech countryside. A slower middle section is dominated by first violin phrases before the dance returns to end the movement.

So, having heard this disc a few times, has my opinion of Martinů's string quartets changed? Despite the

magnificent playing, I have to conclude – not really! I certainly enjoyed individual movements of the 2nd and 7th quartets in particular. However, I too often got the feeling that Martinů did not have his heart in these works, and, as a result, they lack the inspiration of many of his other compositions, particularly the orchestral and choral works. However, I would urge others to give them a try – they may respond more positively than me and the works will certainly never receive better advocacy than from the Pavel Haas Quartet.

Gordon Watts

It's music, Jim... but not as we know it...

An introduction to the Czech composer Alois Hába

Doctor McCoy's famous quote from the TV and Film franchise, *Star Trek*, I feel, acts as a reasonable summation of a man who, if he figures at all on the radar of the average music lover, does so very much on its fringes.

Born in Vizovice in 1893, Hába was to live into his 81st year, dying in Prague as recently as 1973. He acquired his first musical skills in singing and playing the violin and the double bass in his father's folk band, which regularly performed at dances. His mother, meanwhile, was an excellent folksinger who taught Hába peasant songs from Moravian Wallachia, the intervals of which sometimes deviated from the semitone system, presumably where his interest in 'differing' tonal systems began.

He initially studied at the teachers' training institute of Kroměříž, moving after graduation to Bílovice in Slovakia to take up a teaching post. Following the Great War, with the assistance of Vítězslav Novák, he entered the Conservatoire, where he learnt much from the older man in terms of creative discipline and technical prowess.

He went on to Vienna to engage in private study with Franz Schreker, an influence which can clearly be felt, for instance, in his *Overture for large orchestra Op. 5* – with its overtones not only of his teacher, but of Richard Strauss, Korngold, and even Max Steiner and other 'Hollywood' greats.

Although he had dabbled with quartertones as early as 1917 in his *Suite for String Orchestra*, Hába's compositions through much of the 1920s fall within what we may term, broadly, the 'accepted norms' of classical concert music. This changed toward the end of the decade when he began to embrace 'micro-tonality'. To quote Jiří Vysloužil, from Hába's entry in the New Grove,

Hába may justly be regarded as the originator of the use of quarter- and sixth-tones in Western art music.

Moreover, he pioneered the development of specific musical instruments to accommodate his ideas, including three types of quartertone pianos and a quarter and sixth

tone harmonium, as well as adapted clarinets, trumpets and guitars.

Undoubtedly, his most significant early step forward in microtonal method was the composition of a full-scale quartertone opera, *Matka* (*Mother*), lasting some 100 minutes, and embracing what we might term today a ‘rural kitchen sink’ drama:

In a poor part of Moravia, Křen owns a modest farm. His first wife worked to death by the ever-active farmer, soon moved on and remarried. His second wife, Maruša, isn't, however, satisfied with his work obsession and consequent lack of passion. With her maternal love, she eventually succeeds in breaking his defiant nature. She gives birth to children, observing how life is forever regenerating itself, in a similar way to that outlined in Christian teaching. She instils such beliefs into the whole family.

Recorded in Prague with National Theatre forces in late 1964, it must have provided considerable challenges for the musicians, the singers essentially singing ‘normally’, around which the instrumentalists weave a microtonal tapestry.

I grant that *Matka* is not an easy listen, but I think it is worth exploring, certainly if you are of an adventurous nature. Somehow, I found the presence of singers, and the fact that there was a ‘story’ being unveiled, kept my interest from flagging – much more so than in several of Hába's microtonal chamber or instrumental works I later tried.

What exactly is the effect of all this? Well, by adding these microtones 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 an aural picture 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.

Incidentally, exploring the [Discogs](#) website, it would seem that Hába's subsequent operas – *Nová země* (*The New Earth*, 1934–6), and *Příjd' království Tvé* (*Thy Kingdom Come*, 1937–42) – do not appear to have received widely available commercial recordings.

That said, I've also enjoyed *Cesta života* (*Way of Life*), a half-hour tone poem, again for a substantial orchestra, dating from the early 1930s. Interestingly, although it emerges after Hába's initial microtonal experiments, the expression here does not particularly reflect them. Rather, it embodies a vibrant mix of atonality, expressionism and the thrust of late romanticism. For different reasons to *Matka* it can, once again, be an uncomfortable aural experience, although if the listener can relate to the Second Viennese School, it shouldn't prove problematic.

However, arguably it is Hába's string quartets, not his operas, which form the substantial body of his work. Comprising sixteen in all, most embrace micro tonality, although the uncommitted listener would find much pleasure in discovering that the early first quartet contains passages of real beauty.

Moreover, it is worth reflecting that, as Ewa Chorościan points out, among Hába's 115 works published with opus number (and six works without), the microtonal work comprises only around 50% of his output.

Therefore, in short, here is a fascinating character and some fascinating scores, well worth exploring. Although only a few composers subsequently sought to follow his path, here nevertheless, Hába is a man of significance, who initiated a quite separate strand in the development of music in the Twentieth Century.

And, even if a significant quantity of it may not be readily appealing, there are works that I am sure the Newsletter listener could explore with pleasure: the first quartet, and the opulent *Overture Op. 5*, for instance, not to mention the corpus of piano music recently issued by Supraphon, featuring pianist Miroslav Beinbauer, (see my review in Newsletter 151, page 13).

Therefore, I say... take a chance. Explore, and I wish you good luck... good hunting... and good listening!

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Chorościan, Ewa, *Kwartalnik Młodych Muzykologów UJ* No. 38 (3/2018), pp. 47–78

Vysloužil, Jiří, Entry in the New Grove, MacMillan (2001) or online <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.12113>

(Anon) Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother_\(opera\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother_(opera))

Note: an interesting observation is that YouTube ‘columnist’ Dave Hurwitz (of [Classics Today.com](#)) and his friend Sören Meyer-Eller ‘collaborated’ on a visit to the Cannes Midem festival to persuade Supraphon to re-release a number of obscure works, including Hába's *Mother*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3KFo-pCTfM&t=354s>.

Recordings: The ‘bugbear’ here is the availability.

The piano collection by Miroslav Beinbauer is readily available as CDs and a download, since it was issued earlier this year (Supraphon SU43572 CD), see the Newsletter 151, page 13 for my review.

Otherwise, the *Overture for large orchestra Op. 5* can be found on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=k1aMfreYIs4.

A YouTube search will also reveal all the Hába Quartets, played by the eponymous Hába Quartet, issued on Neos, www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQu9WXY3zgU&list=PL4D14bmfCxVUDTf8MozQJeg0fGHrvUcQC.

NOTE: these are also still available as a physical product NEOS11001. Sadly, the Supraphon alternative set by the Novák Quartet recently appears to have been deleted.

Lastly, I luckily tracked down a brand new copy of the CD set of *Matka*, Supraphon 10 8258 – 2 612 (two discs) online. It is, however, also available via YouTube – but only in sections, https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=alois+haba+mother.

Finally, a search of the [Discogs](#) website revealed a wide range of Hába material, although a significant amount is on elderly Panton and Supraphon vinyl LPs.

Ian Bailey

Bohuslav Martinů, *The Complete Works for Cello and Piano*

Vilém Vlček (cello), Denis Linnik (piano)
SUPRAPHON – (2CDs) recorded in Basel, 2024/25

I would like to state at the outset that this is an impressive issue. From the first moment, one is immediately struck by the vigour and youthful energy of these newcomers who have created a brilliant Czech-Swiss partnership and taken a new approach to this fascinating music, capturing both its lyricism and its playfulness, relishing its quirky contrasts in mood and driving the music onwards with sharp accents that make it seem newly minted.

Martinů's works for cello and piano form an important strand in his chamber output, spanning his creative life from the early Paris years right up to the very end, and the major compositions – three full-scale Sonatas plus two contrasting sets of Variations – are today regarded internationally as representing a significant part of the cellists' concert repertoire. Over the years, Supraphon has served these pieces well, stretching back to shellac days when the *Second Sonata* (with *Pastoral No. 6* as a fill-up) was recorded by Bohuš Heran (May 1948), to the mono LP era when Josef Chuchro recorded the first two Sonatas (early 1960s), and František Smetana the *Third Sonata* (1956), followed by stereo recordings of all three Sonatas plus both Variations in highly authoritative interpretations by Saša Večtomov and Josef Páleníček (Spring 1968). Finally, with the advent of digital techniques, the first two Sonatas were recorded again by Chuchro together with the third (and on the original double LP album also the *Nocturnes*). Forty years on, a new recording is welcome indeed.

Because of the generally faster tempi adopted by these newcomers, the present release manages to squeeze all five major concert works onto a single CD, something that would have been impossible with the recordings by the Večtomov/Páleníček team (who take well over a minute longer in the outer movements of the *First Sonata*). The



Source: [Supraphon](#)

second CD, also well filled, brings us mainly first recordings of relatively minor, but nevertheless beautifully crafted compositions, commissioned by French publishers in the early 1930s: *Seven Arabesques* (*Rhythmic etudes*); *Suite miniature* (*Seven easy pieces*); *Pastorales* (*Six piece*) and *Nocturnes* (*Four etudes*), plus a jazzy encore piece *Arietta* and a recently discovered *Romance* originally for violin, but effectively transcribed for cello by Aleš Březina.

I chose to listen first to the *Third Sonata*, a piece that I have known ever since my student years and admired in the interpretation by František Smetana, who edited it for publication. I was immediately struck by the effortless technique of these young players, the way they seem to own the music, their ability to project its kaleidoscopic gamut of emotions, capture its sense of excitement, and, in the final movement, convey a sense of unbuttoned joy and exhilaration. They have the knack of bringing every movement to an effective conclusion. In his conversation with Alena Sojková in the CD booklet, Vlček explains that what unites him with his pianist partner is “the ambition to pass on music in its concrete, communicative form... We are united in our shared passion for making music less abstract and trying to make it really speak”. This aspiration characterises all the performances here.

To the *First Sonata*, they bring dramatic accents and powerful emotion, suggesting full awareness of the tragic circumstances in which it was composed – in Paris in the Spring of 1939, after Hitler's army had occupied Prague. The tone of defiance, even of heroism, belies the composer's self-deprecating caricatures as a timid little mouse. In stark contrast, the piano opening to the central movement brings a somewhat unsettled mood, desolate but courageously striving. Then, joined by the cello, the

music gropes its way to an angry climax heightened by wild “splashes” from the pianist. With their sharp attack and tremendous dynamism, these musicians bring an exhilarating fighting spirit to the agitated finale, which they build to a powerful close, relating the work to the famous *Double Concerto* from the same period. Their playing here demonstrates splendid rapport and superb technical accomplishment.

The *Variations on a Theme of Rossini* from 1942, which comes next on this CD, presents a welcome contrast. The witty inflections with which the players announce the theme vividly convey the optimistic American atmosphere in which the composer now found himself. Here, the little mouse becomes a cheeky Mickey Mouse, and one is reminded that the composer learned English by sitting in the cinema and watching Disney cartoons for hours on end. The sudden change of mood in the central variation, as if he were recalling his homesickness, is all the more poignant. This moment of nostalgia is soon interrupted by prominent pizzicatos on the cello, reflecting the composer’s determination to cheer himself up and find encouragement as the music returns to scurrying *Cat and Mouse* antics. By the end, these players have transformed the piece into a veritable *Hungarian Rhapsody*!

The refreshing new approach that these two players bring to the music is perhaps best demonstrated in the *Second Sonata*, which Martinů dedicated to his Czech-American friend Frank Rybka. Progressing from a powerful piano opening, their interpretation captures all the drama and lyricism of this fascinating score, as well as expressing the quieter, dreamy moments. They never allow any suggestion of note spinning; the music is always purposeful. The central movement, with its solemn, mysterious atmosphere, underpinned by characteristic major-minor harmonies, is transformed into a poignant song of sustained intensity, replete with Martinů’s special brand of “Moravianisms”, while the joyful finale, with its almost Dumka-like alternations of mood, is brought off with total conviction.

This first CD ends with the *Variations on a Slovak Folk Song* (1959), Martinů’s very last chamber work. Here, the partnership of a Czech cellist and a Swiss pianist proves ideal, the cellist being closer to the Slav elements, while the pianist brings an international view, relishing Martinů’s novel approach to diatonic harmony. They are musicians with very different personalities who nevertheless meld together to fine effect, and in the brilliant conclusion show complete identification with the spirit of Slovak folk music. A great piece!

The second CD, devoted to miscellaneous sets of smaller pieces, is more rewarding than one might expect. The cellist himself comments in the booklet interview: “I am really glad we studied the lesser-known pieces because we learned a lot from them”. Likewise, the listener can learn a lot. Martinů sees to it that the compositions are well

contrasted. The *Nocturnes* are not quite what one would expect from the title; only the third piece could vaguely be described as nocturnal - in the Debussian sense. Martinů was no slouch when it came to fulfilling commissions, and each of the highly inventive *Seven Arabesques* (another Debussian title!) has its own distinctive, sometimes jazzy character; the composer’s lovable personality always shines through. This also applies to the seven pieces that make up the *Suite miniature*, only one of which is over two minutes in duration. The delightful third number was Vlček’s introduction to Martinů’s music at the tender age of 5 or 6. I found the six *Pastorales* especially rewarding, the slower numbers 3 *Adagio* and 5 *Largo* touching in their subtle restraint and understated feeling.

The entire production of this most recommendable release is first class. The recording made in the Grosser Saal, Musik-Akademie, Basel, is perfectly balanced with a wide dynamic range, and the booklet contains not only an interview with the cellist but also an informative and perceptive note by Giseler Schubert. Definitely a best buy!

PS. Before dispatching this review to the editor, I felt that, for comparison purposes, I should refresh my memories of the Večtomov/Páleníček version of these Sonatas. Recorded in the halcyon days of Dubček’s Prague Spring, before the Russian tanks had rolled in, their interpretations seem to come from another world with Slav melancholy to the fore. Their concentration on broad lyricism and rich tone makes these works scarcely recognisable as being the same music. But this is not a criticism – the beauty of Bohuslav Martinů’s compositions is that they can be approached from many different angles, as indeed he himself had approached the world during his childhood from high up in the Polička church tower.

Patrick Lambert

A Few More Surprises

John Turner, Lesley-Jane Rogers, Stephen Bettany
Prima Facie PFCD246

Our member John Turner, the doyen of British recorder players (or, as he would say, recorderists), presents here an intriguing compilation of 20 short works, all of them new to me. The recorder (sopranino, descant or treble) is in all of these, sometimes alone, sometimes with the soprano Lesley-Jane Rogers, and sometimes with the pianist Stephen Bettany, but never with all three. Members may recall the *Rainsongs* CD of works by Karel Janovický made with Dvořák Society support in 2016 which also featured John and Lesley-Jane and was reviewed in Newsletter 121, October 2017.

Here there are works by 16 different composers, all but one of them British and most writing within the last 50 years; they include Lesley-Jane’s *Deux Bouches*, an

attractive vocalise for soprano and treble recorder written for John's 80th birthday celebration, and John's own *Wedding Notes* for solo recorder, a witty and cheerful set of variations on Wagner's *Wedding March* written for the marriage of friends last year. The other British composers are Anthony Hedges, Howard Ferguson, Robin Stevens, David Blake, Stephen Banfield, Douglas Steele, John Stanley (edited and arranged by Gerald Finzi), Peter Dickinson, John Golland, Matyas Seiber (Hungarian by birth, but later a British citizen), Max Paddison, Michael Baron and Gerald Hendrie. The ample notes provide information on all these, with many of whom John Turner has or had a personal connection. The works span a remarkable range of contemporary recorder music. All receive strong and well-recorded performances, though one would probably not want to listen to the whole CD at one sitting. Items I particularly like include *Variations on Bobby Shafto* (Stevens), *Capriccio* and *Three Miniatures* (Banfield), *Homage to Poulenc* (Dickinson), *Pastorale* (Seiber) and *Cassoulet Rag* (Hendrie).

The single non-British composer represented is likely to be the one of most interest to our members: Vítěslava Kaprálová. Among the manuscripts found after her early death were two of a proposed set of three short pieces for descant recorder and piano, *Tales of a Small Flute* (*Povídky malé flětny*), intended, it is believed, for her husband Jiří Mucha, who played the recorder, and here recorded for the first time. These tiny compositions last

less than two minutes in total, but their beautiful simplicity makes an immediate impact. How tragic that she did not survive to write more.

Terry Heard



Source: [PROPERMUSIC](https://www.propermusic.com/)

Recent CDs on Czech and Slovak Labels

New Recordings on Non-Czech/Slovak Labels

This list covers releases of Czech/Slovak music issued on CD and DVD during the period approximately from August to October 2025.

AVI

AVI4867795 Dvořák: *Violin Concerto/String Serenade* (Antje Weithaas/Camerata Bern)

Capriccio (Naxos)

C5522 Kabelác: *Complete Chamber Music* (3CDs) (Webber/Vogler/Janoušková/Mayer/Schoch/Wagner/Dohr/Kolinsky)

C5546 Kabelác: *Symphony No 2/Overtures Nos. 1 and 2* (ORF Vienna Symphony Orchestra/Hrůša)

Chandos (Naxos)

CHAN20338 'Sparks from Ashes': Songs by Dvořák/Kaprálová/Křičká and Bartók (Nicky Spence/Dylan Perez)

CPO (Naxos)

555433-2 Vaňhal: *Symphonies in G min, A and A min* (Munich Radio Orchestra/Repušić)

555364-32 Gyrowetz (Jírovec): *Sinfonia Concertante/Piano Concerto/Symphony in A* (Trevelyan/London Mozart Players/Griffiths)

Indesens

IC093 Vaňhal: *Violin Sonatas, Op. 30* (Marco Pedrina/Matteo Bogazzi)

MDG

10223712 Hummel/Bertini: *Piano Quintet/Grand Sextet* (Sestetto Classico)

Nimbus (Naxos)

NI7734 Korngold: *Piano Sonatas 1 and 2/Die Tote Stadt Fantasie/Fairy Tale Pictures/Das Wunder der Heliane Intermezzo/Karikaturen/Waltzes* (Martin Jones)

Pentatone

PTCS187414 Dvořák: *Slavonic Dances, Opp. 46 and 72* (CPO/Rattle)

Somm (Naxos)

SOMMCD0712 Hummel/Schubert: *Piano Quintet/Trout Quintet* (I Musicante Chamber Ensemble/Bosch/Donohoe)

Sterling (Naxos)

CDA1789 Janáček: *Jenůfa (Live)* (2CDs) (Soloists/Royal Swedish Orchestra and Choir/Čech)

SWR (Naxos)

SWR19162CD Dvořák: *Symphony No. 9/Serenade for Wind Instruments* (Deutsche Radio Philharmonie/Inkinen)

New Recordings on Czech/Slovak Labels

This list covers releases of Czech/Slovak music issued on CD and DVD during the period approximately from August to October 2025. I am relying largely on the Široký dvůr web-site for information on smaller labels.

Other Labels

PTCS187129 Debussy/Messiaen: *L'extase: Songs* (Magdalena Kožená/Mitsuko Uchida)

Supraphon

SU4367-2 Novák, V.: *Complete String Quartets* (Stamic Quartet)

SU4368-2 Martinů: *String Quartets Nos. 2, 3, 5 and 7* (Pavel Haas Quartet)

SU4369-2 Husa: *Five Poems, Recollections and Serenade for Wind Quintet* (Belfiato Quintet)

SU4371-2 Martinů/Stravinsky: *Violin Concertos Nos 1 and 2/Divertimento* (Špaček/Prague RSO/Popelka)

Bill Marsden

Recent Publications**Bärenreiter**

[BA 11737-90](#)

V. Blodek

Concerto for Flute and Orchestra in D major (Flute & Piano)

[H 8062](#)

V. Kalabis

Duettini for Violin and Violoncello Op.67

[BA 10416](#)

A. Dvořák

Symphony No.6 in D major, Op. 60. Urtext, full score

[BA 10416-65](#)

A. Dvořák

Symphony No.6 in D major, Op. 60. Urtext, wind set

[BA 10416](#)

A. Dvořák

Symphony No.6 in D major, Op. 60. Urtext, strings



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.

The final of the **Emmy Destinn Young Singers Competition** will take place at Velehrad (39 Lonsdale Road, Barnes, London SW13 9JP), on Sunday, 23 November 2025 at 5 pm.

UK

Date	Programme	Performers and Location
London		
1 to 30 Nov. 2025	<i>Janáček: The Makropulos Case</i> (Exhibition)	Foyer, Linbury Studio, Royal Opera House, London
1 Nov 25 to 15 Jan 26	<i>Leoš Janáček and his operas</i> (Exhibition)	Public space outside of the Czech Embassy, 26 - 30 Kensington Palace Gardens London W8 4QY

Date	Programme	Performers and Location
4, 10 Nov 25 7.30 pm, 7, 12, 19 & 21 Nov 8.00 pm	Janáček: <i>The Makropulos Case</i>	Royal Opera and Balett, Covent Garden Jakub Hruška (cond) https://www.rbo.org.uk/tickets-and-events/the-makropulos-case-katie-mitchell-dates?page=1
8 November 2025, 7.30 pm	Concert of Czech Republic's brightest young pianists	Royal Academy of Music, Marylebone Road, London NW1 5HT Free entry, registration essential
15 Nov 2025 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Requiem</i>	Wimbledon Choral and City of London Sinfonia www.wimbledon-choral.org.uk/tickets
23 Nov 2025 5.00 pm	Final of the Emmy Destinn Young Singers Competition	Velehrad (39 Lonsdale Road, Barnes, London SW13 9JP) https://www.destinn.com/
29 Nov 2025 7:30 pm	Stiasny: <i>Theme and Variations</i> Op. 11, No. 2 Dvořák: <i>4 Romantic Pieces</i> Op. 75 (arranged by Steven Isserlis) Moscheles: <i>Cello Sonata in E</i> , Op. 121	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Steven Isserlis (cello) & Connie Shih (piano) https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/whats-on/202511291930 Suk: <i>Ballade in D minor</i> Op. 3 No. 1, <i>Serenade in A</i> , Op.3 No. 2 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</i> , Op. 16	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Quatuor Agate https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60722
30 November 25 10.30 am then 3.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 8 (rehearsal then concert)</i>	Royal Festival Hall. Southbank Centre, Belvedere Rd, London SE1 8XX 020 3879 9555 Philharmonia. Open Rehearsal - concert tickets.philharmonia.co.uk/events/136223/136233/price-selection
30 November 2025 7.00 pm	Dvořák, Mendelssohn & Paganini	Pavel Šproncl and English Chamber Orchestra. Holy Sepulchre Church, London EC1A 2DQ, https://london.czechcentres.cz
4 December 2025, 7.30 pm	Korngold: <i>Piano Quintet in E</i> , Op. 15	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Belcea Quartet, https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60734
7 December 25, 11.30 am	Janáček: <i>Pohádka</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Jonathan Swensen (cello), Marianna Shirinyan (piano) https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60738
7 December 25, 7.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Spectre's Bride</i>	Hackney Festival Chorus with Lambeth Orchestra St John of Jerusalem Church, Lauriston Road, E9 7EY https://www.festivalchorushackney.org.uk/
13, 15 January 26, 7.00 pm	Janáček: <i>The Makropulos Affair</i>	Barbican London, EC2Y 8DS 020 7870 2500 London Symphony Orchestra https://www.lso.co.uk/whats-on/?date=2026-01-13
22 January 26 7.30 pm	Janáček: <i>String Quartet No. 1 'The Kreutzer Sonata'</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Jerusalem Quartet https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/
27. January 26 1.00 pm	Voices of Terezín Ullman, Taube, Haas, Leo Strauss, Ilse Weber	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Simon Wallfisch (baritone); Joseph Middleton (piano) https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/whats-on/202601271300
1 February 26 11.30 am	Kaufmann: <i>String Quartet No. 11, Sonatina No. 12 for violin and piano, Septet</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St. London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 ARC Ensemble https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/
4 February 26 7.30 pm	Martinů: <i>Violin Concerto No. 2</i> Janáček: <i>Taras Bulba</i>	Southbank Centre, Belvedere Rd, London SE1 8XX 020 3879 9555 London Philharmonic Orchestra https://lpo.org.uk/event/bohemian-rhapsodies/
South West		
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

Date	Programme	Performers and Location
		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		
11 December 2025 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Cypresses (selection)</i>	Pittville Pump Room, East Approach Dr. GL52 3JE. Cheltenham Cheltenham Music Society www.cheltenhamtownhall.org.uk 01242 528764
25 February 2026, 2.15 pm	Korngold: <i>Violin Concerto</i>	Symphony Hall Broad St, Birmingham B1 2EA 0121 780 3333 CBSO, www.cbso.co.uk
North West		
6 Nov 25 7.30 pm, 9 Nov 4.00 pm	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/
13 December 2025 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Serenade for Strings, Op. 22</i> Dvořák: <i>Czech Suite, Op. 39</i>	The Kings School Alderley Rd, Prestbury. SK 10 3SP Northern Chamber Orchestra 0161 706 1990 www.ncorch.co.uk/concerts
14 January 26 1.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Slavonic Dances (selection)</i>	Kendal Town Hall, Highgate LA9 4DL www.Kendalmiddayconcertclub.org tickets at the venue
15 January 26 7.30 pm	Korngold: <i>Schauspiel-Ouverture (Dramatic Overture)</i>	The Bridgewater Hall Lower Mosley St M2 3WS 0161 907 9000 Anna Lapwood organ www.halle.co.uk

International

Czech Republic		
Opera of the National Theatre Prague, Národní 2, 110 00 Nové Město www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en		
2, 12 December 2025 7.00 pm 28 Dec. 6.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/rusalka-146378962
23 Nov. 5.00 pm 4, 11, 14 Dec. 2025, 7.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Secret</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/tajemstvi-146378963
13 December 2025, 6.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/the-bartered-bride-3266368?t=2025-12-13-18-00
1 January 26 5.00 pm 14 Jan. 7.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/the-bartered-bride-3266368
10, 16 January 2026, 7.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/rusalka-146378962
17, 26 February 2026, 7.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/rusalka-146378962
19 February 26 7.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/the-bartered-bride-3266368
State Opera Prague, Wilsonova 4, 110 00 Vinohrady, www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en		
8 Nov. 6.00 pm 27 Nov. 7.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/rusalka-61064-1693572 5 December 5.00 pm, 12 December 7.00 pm, 26 December 6.00 pm

Brno Opera , Rooseveltova 31, 602 00 Brno-střed www.ndbrno.cz		
19 December 25 7.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i>	https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/programme/?searchText=&days=&month=12&years=2025
3 January 2026 5.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i>	https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/program/prodana-nevesta-4/
Until 6 March 2026	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://operavision.eu/performance/rusalka-3 OperaVision live recording
Ostrava Opera, Antonín Dvořák Theatre Ostrava www.ndm.cz		
14 Dec. 5.00 pm 17 Dec. 6.30 pm	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i>	https://www.ndm.cz/cz/opera/predstaveni/6177-prodana-nevesta/2025-12-14/79589/
28 December 25 4.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://www.ndm.cz/cz/opera/predstaveni/5666-rusalka/2025-12-28/79592/
29 January 2026 6.30 pm	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i>	https://www.ndm.cz/cz/opera/predstaveni/6177-prodana-nevesta/2026-01-29/79627/
Plzeň Opera J.K. Tyl Theatre Smetanovy sady 16, 301 00 Plzeň, www.djkt.eu/en/opera		
3 December 25 7.00pm	Smetana: <i>The Devil's Wall</i>	https://www.djkt.eu/repertoar/certova-stena-2024
19 Dec 11.00am 16 Dec 7.00 pm 27 Dec 4.00 pm	Ryba: <i>Czech Christmas Mass</i>	https://www.djkt.eu/repertoar/ceska-mse-vanocni-2021
Slovakia		
Slovak National Opera, Bratislava https://snd.sk		
17 March 2026 11.00 am 19 Mar. 7.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://snd.sk/program/2025-2026/03
24 Mar 26 11.00 am 25 Mar. 26 7.00 pm	Suchoň: <i>Svätopluk</i>	https://snd.sk/program/2025-2026/03
Austria		
30.11.25, 19.00 3, 6 Dec. 25	Janáček: <i>The Makropulos Case</i>	Vienna State Opera, Opernring, Vienna https://www.wiener-staatsoper.at/en/calendar/detail/vec-makropulos/2025-11-30/
8, 10, 13, 15 January 2026	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	Vienna State Opera, Opernring, Vienna https://www.wiener-staatsoper.at/en/calendar/search/2025-26/?searchTerm=rusalka
23, 26, 29, 31 March 2026	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i>	Vienna State Opera, Opernring, Vienna https://www.wiener-staatsoper.at/en/calendar/detail/die-verkaufte-braut

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.

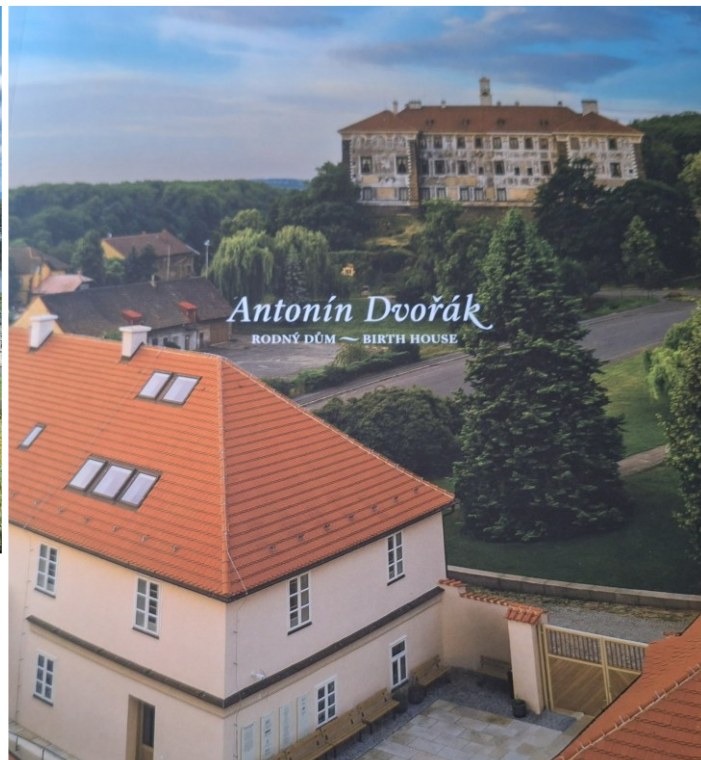
The newsletter is published in February, May, August and November. The deadlines are 1st January, April, July and October, respectively.

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>

Pictures from the Nelahozeves Celebration

Photos by David Roberts



Aerial view of Dvořák's birth house (top left). Another view of the birth house with the Nelahozeves Castle in the background (top right). Terry Heard and David Beveridge waiting for refreshment (middle left). AD's birthday celebration (middle right, 7 September 2025). Birth house opening (bottom left, 8 September). Having a refreshment with a matching plate (bottom right).

