

The Dvořák Society

For Czech and Slovak Music

Founded 1974

Newsletter No. 153, February 2026



BBC Concert Orchestra with the Prague Castle Guard and the Czech Police Band (back row, standing), conducted by Anna-Maria Helsing, performing Janáček's *Sinfonietta*, in Brno. This was part of the celebration of Charles Mackerras's 100th birthday. A review is on page 6. Photo: Moravian Autumn Festival.

PRESIDENT: Jakub Hruša

PATRON: Richard Phillips

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

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The **Dvořák Society Newsletter** is issued quarterly. The Editor welcomes articles, letters, and photographs on all aspects of Czech and Slovak music, but reserves the usual editorial prerogatives. Views expressed in individual articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society. Authors are encouraged to submit material to the editor electronically, but articles may also be submitted as a manuscript.

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

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Between The Deadlines

Notes from your Chairman

Firstly, I would like to wish all members “Šťastný nový rok”! I trust that some of you treated yourselves to a traditional performance of Jakub Jan Ryba’s *Christmas Mass* or even listened to *Christmas Music of Baroque Bohemia* so splendidly recorded by Musica Antiqua Praha under their director, Pavel Klikar, in 1993, but still sounding as fresh as ever. Maybe even some carp on Christmas Eve?

This first Newsletter of 2026 brings both good tidings as well as sad tidings. Since the last Newsletter, we have lost three prominent members of the Society. **Don Preddy**, who, for a short period in the early 2000s, was my predecessor as Honorary Secretary. **Peter Collier**, who members will recall joined us, together with his wife Pam, on a number of Society trips to Brno and also hosted Committee Meetings at their house in Monton, Greater Manchester and then treated us to concerts of baroque music in the hall of the local Unitarian Church. And finally, **Lewis Stevens**, who passed away in a hospital shortly before Christmas. Lewis will be remembered as the longtime editor of our Newsletter; he was eventually succeeded by the current editor, Tomy Duby. On behalf of the Society, I would like to extend our condolences to their respective families. Separate tributes will appear in due course.

A series of congratulations is in order – our President **Jakub Hrůša**, for being awarded the Conductor of the Year 2026 by [Musical America](#). Birthday wishes are due to the composer **Zdeněk Šesták** on reaching 100 on 10th December and, more recently, the bass singer **Richard Novák** on being 94 and still vocally active.

The long-awaited Occasional Publication *Dvořák and England* by **David Beveridge** is nearing its final editing and proofing stage, and hopefully should be with members before Easter. A **special notice** to members with regard to this publication is on page 24.

Members have already been notified of the sale of CDs featuring Czech and Slovak music, which are listed in the members’ area of the Society website. Many thanks are due to Committee member John Beale, who has kindly produced the catalogue.

Congratulations are due to member Tomáš Víšek on his latest recording of three Czech Piano Concertos – Kaprálová, Novák and Nečasová Nardelli, the latter name being completely unfamiliar to me. See page 17 for more details.

For those members eager to take advantage of live performances in the Czech Republic, advance notice of various music festivals has been announced, including those of Litomyšl (13 June – 4 July) and Brno (10th International Janáček Festival, 13 October – 17 November). In early 2026, Plzeň Opera is putting on the modern premiere of the opera *Tamerlane* by Mysliviček as well as two less familiar operas by Smetana – *The Kiss* and *The Devils’ Wall*. These are all listed on page 23 in the Diary.

A reminder that a new book entitled *Antonín Dvořák’s Summer Retreat* has been written by Ondřej Supka, and an abridged English version is for sale via the [e-shop](#), see page 18.

The Czech Centre’s 29th *Made in Prague Festival* events took place in November. Unfortunately, living in the West Midlands, I was unable to attend any of the events which celebrated the very best of Czech culture in film, theatre, music and visual arts. It included an exhibition devoted to **Leoš Janáček** – timed to coincide with the **Royal Opera House’s** first-ever staging of *The Makropulos Case* under Jakub Hrůša – and the final concert with **Pavel Šporcl** and members of the English Chamber Orchestra, a review is on page 10. There were also UK premieres of acclaimed Czech films. However, despite being out of London, I was able to watch three innovative classic Czech films shown in partnership with the British Film Institute (BFI) which were free to view via the BFI website. *The White Disease* (1937), based on Čapek’s play of the

same name, *The Riders of the Sky* (1968), a black and white film portraying wartime airmen, and a new wave “kitchen-sink” drama titled *Ecce Homo Homolka* (1969). Grateful as I am to the Czech Centre, it is frustrating that so little is done outside of London.

In co-operation with Boydell and Brewer, we are supporting the publication of a book on *Janáček's Sinfonietta* to be published early in 2026. Negotiations are ongoing with the publisher to be able to offer DS members a discount on the listed price. The book will be available for purchase as an e-book downloadable from the publisher's website. For details, see page 19.

Finally, we are seeking a new treasurer. Martin Israel, our current Treasurer, will be standing down at the next AGM. Please see the notice in the box on page 18 and our website for further details

M. David Roberts

This is your editor writing

This is my fifteenth Newsletter.

You will read elsewhere in this Newsletter that Lewis Stevens, the Society member who preceded me as the editor, died last December. As it happened, I had little interaction with him. He emailed me clear and detailed instructions on the Newsletter format, and his last one (#138, April 2022) to use as a template. I did so, and, surprise-surprise, I had no questions; everything was self-explanatory and made sense.

I plan to prepare a brief article appreciating Lewis for the next Newsletter. I do not think that I will be able to break his record of editing 57 Newsletters. To break it, I will be approaching 90, and who would want to read my grumblings and laugh at my old and constantly repeating jokes...

The next Newsletter's submission deadline is 1 April 2026. Please send me your reviews, contributions and comments. Without them, the Newsletter would be shorter and duller. My details are at the top of page 2...

Tomy Duby

Membership News

Membership

First, I must apologise to John Turner, whose renewal of membership was wrongly recorded in the previous Newsletter, where I named him as John Taylor – a regrettable senior moment on my part.

With sorrow, we record the deaths of four stalwart members. **Don Preddy**, who was the Society's Secretary from 2005 to 2008, died in March 2025. **Peter Collier** and **Euan Allen** died in November. Peter was known to many in the Manchester area for his skill as an organist and keyboard player and his enthusiasm for early music. He also participated in many Society activities and wrote reviews for the Newsletter. His wife Pamela remains a member. Euan supported the Society for over fifty years, right from its start: his membership number was 2. Recently, we have also lost **Lewis Stevens**, who died on 16 December. Lewis contributed enormously by editing 57 DS Newsletters from 2008 to 2022.

Subscriptions

By the time you receive this Newsletter, many of you will have paid for 2025. Thank you for this and for your continuing support. For those who have not yet got around to paying, please act on this reminder that **annual subscriptions were due on 1 January**. Details of subscription rates are in the previous Newsletter #152, and are available on our website www.dvorak-society.org.

A banker's order for the correct amount is certainly the easiest way for you to pay and for us to process. If you want to set one up, you can print the form from the Members' Section of our website or ask me to send you one. If you want to change the amount on a banker's order, please contact your bank. Many members now pay by electronic bank transfer, and this is a welcome trend. But sometimes the reference telling us the source of the transfer only allows for a limited number of characters, so if your account name has lengthy forenames, your surname, which is the crucial part, may not appear or may be truncated. Then we cannot tell who has paid, and such rare cases can take a long time to sort out. So if you pay by bank transfer, please also **notify me by email**.

Newsletters

Finally, a reminder that all our current and recent Newsletters can be read online at www.dvorak-society.org. If you have forgotten the password for access to the Members' Section, please ask me. Also, please let me know if you no longer want to receive printed copies of Newsletters; I will then let you know when a new issue is available on the website.

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25 years ago

Dvořák Society Newsletter No. 54 appeared in January 2001 and was the eighth issue under my editorship.

After wishing everyone a Happy New Year, Tony Pook, then Membership Secretary, outlined the benefits of the Gift Aid Scheme, which the Government had introduced in April 2000 to replace the old Deed of Covenant scheme. Members were urged to complete the new forms and submit them to Tony.

Sadly, the front page of the Newsletter included a short obituary for Ladislav Mokřý, who was known to many members who had visited Bratislava. He had guided us on our trip round Slovakia as recently as our Society trip of October 1999, and from him we had learnt a vast amount about all aspects of Slovak life.

Shawn Pullman, as Secretary of the Society, reported that the Annual Lunch at the Thistle Hotel in Victoria had been badly attended. In spite of this, it was hoped that a further Annual Lunch or Dinner would be announced in the next Newsletter.

Under the heading '*Coventry Remembers*', our Chairman, Graham Melville-Mason, reported on a concert held on Armistice Day, Sunday 11th November 2000, in the Drapers' Hall, one of the few buildings to survive the dreadful air raid, even more remarkable because the building stands beside the ruins of the old cathedral. British, Germans and Czechs came together to remember not only the raid on Coventry but also the devastation caused to Dresden. The Bishop of Coventry was joined by the Bishop of Dresden and other civic dignitaries for this special concert organised by Warwick Arts Society under the direction of our member Richard Phillips.

The programme was given by the Martinů Quartet with Nigel Cliffe opening with George Butterworth's beautiful setting of four poems by W E Henley from his cycle *Echoes*. Butterworth was killed at the Somme in 1916.

Vilém Tauský was present to hear his *Coventry: A Meditation for String Quartet*, written in the aftermath of the great raid on the city, when he and his Czech army colleagues (stationed in the near Leamington Spa) were sent to assist in the rescue of the injured and to clear up the initial debris. Nigel Cliffe then rejoined the Quartet to perform Sylvie Bodorová's *Terezín Ghetto Requiem*.

On 4 November 2000 three musical organisations joined forces to honour our Patron, Petr Eben. First Petr was presented with Honorary Membership of the Royal Academy of Music, then the Czech Ambassador, Dr Pavel Seifter, spoke in tribute. Our Chairman presented him with a volume *A Tribute to Petr Eben*, issued by the Society as an Occasional publication in time for his 70th birthday. He was then presented with an Honorary Fellowship of the Royal College of Organists.

A British-Czech Celebration Concert had taken place at the Wigmore Hall on 6 November 2000 with Peter Fisher (violin) and Alvin Moisey (piano). The first piece in the programme was Vilém Tauský's *Suite for Violin and Piano*. This was followed by Elgar's *Sonata for Violin and Piano in E minor*, Karel Janovický's *Terzina for Violin and Piano* (1988), James Macmillan's *Kiss on Wood*, Josef Suk's *Four pieces for Violin and Piano* and lastly Jaroslav Vaněček's *Spanish Rhapsody for unaccompanied violin*.

Before the concert, two fascinating interviews took place in the Bechstein Room in front of a full audience. We were there to celebrate the 70th, 80th and 90th birthdays of three exiled Czech composers: Karel Janovický, Jaroslav Vaněček, and Vilém Tauský. Graham Melville-Mason, sitting between Karel and Vilém, drew from each of them reminiscences about their early lives and their work as composers. The interviews were filmed by Marian Werner.

Richard Phillips gave notice of the programme for Leamington Czech Music Festival, which was to take place from 4 to 9 of May.

Lorna Dobson, in her Lorna Corner, welcomed Tomáš Hanus as a Society member. Tomáš studied conducting under Jiří Bělohlávek and was to make his debut with the Südwestdeutsche Philharmonie Konstanz on 16 January. (Many of us who visited Brno were well acquainted with our member Anna Hanusová, mother of Tomáš.)

Julian and Jennifer Clapham and Ray Latham reported on events in October and November at the Waggon and Horses in Douling Beacon, Shepton Mallet. On both occasions, Fibich was included in the programme and at the November event, Graham Melville-Mason had introduced those present to Fibich, his life and his music.

Richard Beith reviewed a production of *Kat'a Kabanová* at the Royal Opera House on 29 November. Amanda Roocroft had played Kat'a, and the conductor had been Simone Young.

Richard Beith also wrote of a performance by the Krommer Wind Ensemble in St Mary's Centre in Chester, which had taken place on 28 October. The first half of the concert featured Vranický, Mašek and Triebensee while the second half was devoted to a performance of Beethoven's *Septet*, Op.20 in Jiří Družický's arrangement for nine wind players.

Philip Scowcroft reported on a programme featuring Družický, which had taken place in Doncaster in November. On this occasion, the Hallgate Chamber Orchestra had played his Concerto in C for oboe, eight timpani and orchestra.

I (Annette) had been present in the Smetana Hall in Prague for the first performance in the Czech Republic of Antonín Tučapský's *Te Deum Laudamus*. The concert on 16 October 2000 was performed by the Prague Mixed Choir and the Czech Radio Symphony Orchestra,

conducted by Vladimír Válek, and was received enthusiastically by the Prague audience.

Brno Philharmonic Choir had been one of four choirs chosen from the whole of Europe to sing for the Pope during the Millennium Year. The Choir and Orchestra had flown to Rome for the weekend of 20–22 October and had performed in the Vatican and in St Cecilia's Basilica.

And 50 years ago

The Dvořák Society Journal, Volume 1, No. 5, of February 1975, was in fact a Newsletter: 16 pages on quarto-size paper and obviously printed from stencils. The editor was Don Droughton Fehr, whose editorial gave prior notice of the very first Annual General Meeting on 26 April at the London Music Club in Holland Park.

News was given of a recent performance of Martinů's Field Mass in Japan, with Czech conductor Jiří Pinkas and the NHK Orchestra. The Japanese soloists and chorus sang in Czech. And in honour of the Year of Czech Music, The Bartered Bride was produced in the Mongolian capital, Ulan Bator, with Czech artists acting as advisors.

Ten people had booked for the Society Tour, which was to include the Prague Spring Festival. Dates were 28 May – 5 June, travel by air, cost per person £117 (single room supplement £1.80 per night). The itinerary included a half-day sightseeing tour of musical Prague, a full-day excursion to Karlový Vary and a Promenade concert at Prague Castle.

Music News from Prague announced the formation of the Dvořák Society of Great Britain, and Jarmil Burghauser wrote enthusiastically, accepting his appointment as Honorary Vice-President of the Society.

At last, I can report that, after a gap of three years, the review of Czech Music, the Journal of the Dvořák Society for Czech and Slovak Music, Volume 21, appeared in the early months of 2001.

This 308-page volume began with the obituaries of ten Czechs and one Slovak involved in the musical world, all but two of these written by Graham Melville-Mason. The obituaries covered the lives of Luboš Fišer, Jaroslav Jiránek, Karel Kaláš, Ladislav Mokřý, Zdeňka Pilková, Oleg Podgorný, Klement Slavický, Raphael Sommer, Ružena Suková and Vojtěch Tukáč.

Pages 37–78 contained a crucial article for all Dvořák Society members: Mark Todd's account of The Society's Early Years.

Other articles were as follows:

Sharon Choa: *Battling with the Piano, Three missing bars in the Largo of Martinů's Symphony No.4 (1945).*

Antonín Tučapský: *The Moravian Contribution to Czech Music.*

Karel Janovický: *On the Overgrown Trail of Janáček's Lyricist.*

Janice Stockigt: *Dvořák in Melbourne: 1885–1888.*

Zdeňka Pilková: *Czech and Moravian court and household orchestras from the 17th to 19th centuries.*

Eugene Gates and Karla Hartl: *Vítězslava Kaprálová: A remarkable voice in twentieth-century Czech music.*

Aleš Březina: *"A Fantastic Learning Experience" in composing for string orchestra: Martinů's interventions in Vítězslava Kaprálová's Partita (1938).*

Alena Němcová: *Vítězslava Kaprálová and Jan Novák: two of Martinů's Moravian pupils.*

Jaroslav Jiránek: *The dramatic style of Smetana's operas.*

Jan Ledec: Karel Husa: *An Eightieth Birthday Tribute.*

Janet Lunt: *A composer discovered: The Choral Music of Antonín Tučapský.*

Robert Hopkins: *The Forgotten Generation.*

Then follow several reviews of books, music and records.

Annette Percy

Letters to the Editor

From Marian Werner:

Our Chairman tells us that last September, he walked the Dvořák trail alongside the river Vltava to Nelahozeves (DS Newsletter #152, page 2). At the end of my audiobook of *KAREL from the other world*, I have added Smetana's *Vltava*, recorded by Václav Talich with the Czech Philharmonic in 1955. I am not on the internet, but the friend who made the recording has put it on CDs for me, and each time I listen, I have tears in my eyes. All who have been to Prague know the spell the Vltava casts there, all who know Czech history recognise the connection in the music with tumultuous events, all who have read about Smetana know his importance as a composer at a crucial point in Czech national life. That he was profoundly deaf when he wrote this exquisite paean makes it even more moving.

Marian Werner

From Michel Beckerman:

In case you missed the news about Michael, last April, I reported on our [website](#) about Michael's move to the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Recently, I was checking on him. It's a good sign that he has not lost his humour...

On October 26, 1893, Flora B. Arndt wrote to Dvořák: *"On this remote California shore close to the Mexican line*

so remote and isolated that perhaps the place has never been brought to your notice, we have a prosperous musical society..." I am now hard by that California shore, no longer so remote, and have become the leader of the "prosperous music society" which is the Herb Alpert School of Music at UCLA. It's been a big change (the move from the concrete canyons of New York to the lush canyons of Los Angeles is not to be sneezed at), but on the

whole, it's an incredibly exciting place. Stay tuned for more Czech-related events coming out of here. On a special note, Ben Hong, Associate Principal Cellist of the LA Philharmonic, plays the Strad which premiered Dvorak's *Cello Concerto*! Sending everyone warmest regards and an invitation to come and visit!

Michael Beckerman



Events and Concert Performances

Celebrating Sir Charles Mackerras in Brno, 12 and 13 October 2025

This year's Moravian Autumn Festival has celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Dvořák Society's former president, Charles Mackerras. The opening concert on 12 October was a notable occasion for several reasons. Before any music was played, the Sir Charles Mackerras Prize – awarded by the Leoš Janáček Foundation – was presented for only the second time. Given every ten years to a conductor under the age of forty with a strong interest in Czech music, the first winner in 2015 was Jakub Hrůša. This year, in Sir Charles's centenary year, the prize was awarded to Robert Kružík, music director of the Brno National Theatre since September 2025. The presentation was made by Cathy Mackerras, Sir Charles's daughter, on the stage of the Janáček Theatre.

The concert was given by the BBC Concert Orchestra, conducted by Anna-Maria Helsing, in a programme that was devised to reflect some of Mackerras's many specialities – played by the orchestra of which he had been chief conductor in the 1950s and with which he continued to work regularly in later life. After a stirring performance of the Czech National Anthem *Kde domov můj*, the orchestra gave a sparkling account of Walton's *Portsmouth Point* Overture: a work that had featured in Mackerras's first ever broadcast concert (given in Sydney in December 1946). Anna-Maria Helsing found a wonderful range of character and colour in Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, which completed the first half – a performance that drew a deservedly warm response from the full house. After the interval, we heard Doreen Carwithen's delightful overture (the opening titles) for the 1954 film *Men of Sherwood Forest*. This was followed by the suite from Mackerras's dazzlingly ingenious and constantly delightful Sullivan ballet, *Pineapple Poll*, played with tremendous zest.

The concert ended with an outstanding account of Janáček's *Sinfonietta*. The orchestra surpassed itself in terms of the quality and commitment of its playing, and

they were joined for the opening and closing fanfares by the magnificent Prague Castle Guard and Czech Police Band, resplendent in their blue uniforms. Helsing's pacing of the whole work was marvellously assured, and it was particularly pleasing – and appropriate – that the corrections first noted in the score by Mackerras himself (and incorporated into Jiří Zahrádka's 2017 edition) were all present and correct here. But much more important was the energy and verve of the performance: a really fine account which stirred the audience to maximum enthusiasm and a well-earned standing ovation for conductor, orchestra and *banda*. As Cathy Mackerras herself remarked during the presentation at the start of the concert, her father would have been immensely touched by the whole occasion – and I venture to say that he'd also have been thoroughly impressed with the Janáček performance given by Helsing and her forces. Bravos and bouquets are deserved all round for a concert that will live in the memory. Reviews by Czech critics (in KlassikaPlus.cz and [Opera PLUS.cz](http://OperaPLUS.cz), among others) were uniformly enthusiastic, praising the programme itself for some British works that are relatively rare visitors to Brno, as well as delighting in the fine account of the Janáček by a visiting orchestra.

The following afternoon, a small group of us met in Janáček's house (Smetanova 14) for a special ceremony in which Cathy Mackerras presented the Janáček Archive with a page of Janáček's autograph manuscript from an early version of *The Makropulos Affair*, which formerly had pride of place on Sir Charles's wall at his home in Hamilton Terrace. Jiří Zahrádka received this precious document on behalf of the Archive, where it can now be studied by scholars.

In the evening, celebrations moved to Kino CIT (next to the Old Town Hall) for a showing of the Czech TV documentary *Sir Charles, thank you, děkujeme...* first broadcast in 2010. It was marvellous to see this again, particularly as it features such fascinating interviews, not only with Sir Charles but also with my late-lamented friend John Tyrrell. After watching the documentary, there was a round-table discussion with the film's director,

Rudolf Chudoba, Cathy Mackerras, Jiří Zahrádka and the present author. Members of the audience also added valuable reminiscences of their own, particularly Marie Kučerová, director of the Brno Philharmonic, but previously a producer of music programmes for Czech TV, including this one.

The concert and the film/discussion evening were both underpinned by the tremendous affection in which Sir Charles is still held in Brno. On a personal note, among those present on both evenings was Alena Němcová, who had first invited me to the city in 1990 for a research trip which culminated in a magnificent performance of the *Sinfonietta* conducted by Mackerras with the Brno Philharmonic (the TV broadcast of which had been produced by Marie Kučerová). It is always lovely to see Alena: not only a great scholar in her own right but such a generous supporter of anyone interested in Czech music, and to see her flourishing in her 90s.

It was a privilege – and a tremendous pleasure – to be in Brno for these two days of celebrations.

Nigel Simeone

What a nice tribute to Charles Mackerras can be found [here](#)...

Janáček operas review

***The Makropulos Case*, Royal Opera House, 1 and 19 November 2025, and**

***The Cunning Little Vixen*, Britten Theatre, Royal College of Music, 29 November 2025**

Katie Mitchell was asked to direct *The Makropulos Case* at Covent Garden several years before Jakub Hrůša's appointment as Music Director. His arrival was a very happy alignment as the musical results were outstanding in every way. Hrůša has conducted *Makropulos* before, including Peter Stein's production at the Vienna State Opera in 2015. A decade later, his understanding of the score has grown in stature and insight and his reading – recalling the greatest versions of the past – promises much for the future of Janáček at Covent Garden. From the first notes of the Prelude, the orchestra was in incandescent form, the hieratic brass and timpani fanfares ringing across the theatre from a box in the grand tier. Hrůša's pacing of the whole opera was magnificent: maintaining intensity and momentum, but never hurrying for the sake of it, and always with a careful ear for balance between the stage and the pit (and special praise must go to Amélie Roussel whose playing of the viola d'amore was exceptional. It was a nice touch to give her a solo curtain call on the first night).

The cast was uniformly strong, led by the Lithuanian soprano Ausrine Stundyte as Emilia Marty. She captured Marty's cynical, world-weary outlook very well, and had the lyrical power to bring off the final scene with magnificent authority, soaring over the orchestra. The rest



Ausrine Stundyte (Emilia Marty), Daniel Matoušek (Janek) and Heather Engebretson (Krista) in Act Two of *The Makropulos Case* at the Royal Opera House. Photo: Camilla Greenwell.

of the cast was on a comparable level: Sean Pannikar was an ardent Albert Gregor, with fearless top notes. Henry Waddington did marvels as Dr Kolenatý (coping splendidly with his many lines of rapid-fire text, he is required to sing), and Peter Hoare was an excellent Vitek. As the black-hearted Baron Prus, the Danish bass-baritone Johan Reuter was the embodiment of sonorous malevolence. Alan Oke sang Hauk-Šendorf in the fine Welsh National Opera production a couple of years ago and reprised the role to most touching effect here. Heather Engebretson was a fine Krista, her role somewhat enhanced in this production (of which more in a moment). The smaller roles were all well taken, and Susan Bickley as the Stage Door keeper was a nice piece of luxury casting. It was notable that the greatest care had been taken over the sung Czech by the entire cast, expertly coached by Lada Valešová.

Katie Mitchell's production divided opinion sharply. My own view is that much of it worked well (others strongly disagreed). The first act – on a stage divided into smaller units for the hotel lobby (not a lawyer's office) and Marty's bedroom – was accompanied by a stream of text messages projected above the stage (and beneath the surtitles) which conveyed Mitchell's invented subplot – that Marty was in a relationship with Krista. Was it necessary to add this to an already wordy plot? No, but it shed fresh light on Marty's character. It was in Act Two that we had a couple of Mitchell's most effective touches: Marty sweeping off the stage resplendent in Wagnerian head-dress was a witty idea, and her treatment of Hauk was tender and poignant, revealing an otherwise unseen side of Marty's nature. The end of the same act brought a less welcome surprise: in this production, Janek did not die by his own hand, but was shot by Krista. Make of that what you will. The ransacking of Marty's belongings in Act Three was effectively staged, but Marty's expiring at the end was less telling – almost anti-climactic (in startling contrast to the music) – and the formula was not burned by

Krista but tucked inside her blouse. Performed without interval – an excellent idea from a musical point of view – the production was updated to the present day (not a problem).

The simple but attractive sets by Vicki Mortimer had a touch of Art Deco about them. One practical issue seems to have been overlooked: from many places in the house, it was impossible to see parts of the action on the compartmentalised set. It's odd to have ignored this since the problem extended far beyond the 'restricted view' seats.

In short, while this was a contentious production, it was one I found dramatically compelling. But the glory of the evening was the musical performance: a *Makropulos* which was as good as any you could hope to hear in any of the world's great opera houses, conducted and sung with magisterial conviction and emotional power.

The Cunning Little Vixen at the Royal College of Music was directed by Orpha Phelan with wit, imagination and tenderness: a staging which felt utterly true to the life-enhancing spirit of the work. In the intimate surroundings of the Britten Theatre, the young cast – singing Norman Tucker's English translation – was able to project over the orchestra without strain, and the student orchestra acquitted itself with distinction. The set (designed by Nate Gibson) was both ingenious and effective: piles of wooden chairs in various configurations serving as the farmyard, the badger's house, the inn and the forest. Helped by highly atmospheric lighting (Mark Jonathan), this production looked beautiful. With the movement animated by dancers from Ballet Rambert, the first act (much of which is ballet anyway) was captivating.

Many of the roles were double cast in this production but the night I went (29 November) the Vixen was sung by the young Australian soprano Bella Marslen, giving a performance of irrepressible energy, humour and assurance, vocally brilliant and with clear diction: this was a Vixen to cherish. Maryam Wocial was secure but less outgoing as the Fox – but their love scene was exquisite. Zhen Liu was the Forester ('Gamekeeper' here) who grew in stature as the evening progressed, his final scene nobly done. Alex Hardy was rich-toned and dramatically impressive as the Badger and Priest, as was Edvard Adde's touching depiction of the Schoolmaster. Alexander Semple was a fine Harašta, and Angelina Dorlin-Barlow was splendid as Lapák, the dog who composes sad songs. All the smaller roles were well taken. My only quibble was the use of adult students as the fox cubs: they sang very well, of course, but the sound and look felt wrong – and since the RCM has a flourishing Junior Department (with some outstanding singers), perhaps it was a missed trick not to use them.

Orpha Phelan's production was a joy – and there were many delightful details. Let me give one tiny example: the



Bella Marslen (as Vixen) and Finlay Berfius (Midge).
Photo Chris Christodoulou.

Forester took his dog Lapák with him for the first scene at Pásek's inn. What a delightful idea, and one that makes sense of the Forester's remark in the later inn scene that Lapák is now too old to come with him. That's just one very small instance of a staging that consistently illuminated this sublime opera. Musically, values were very high. The conductor was Michael Rosewell, the RCM's immensely experienced Director of Opera, who drew ravishing playing from the RCM Opera Orchestra and paced the whole work with great skill and sensitivity. Using Jiří Zahrádka's critical edition (good to see this credited in the programme), the musical text was impeccable too. The orchestral playing was really fine throughout, but I must single out some of the woodwind soloists (notably piccolo, cor anglais, bass clarinet, and bassoons) for special mention. This was a very distinguished production all round, and one can only wonder what Janáček would have made of hearing his opera sung and played by such gifted students. A heart-warming evening in every way, and *bravi* to all concerned.

Nigel Simeone

**Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra,
Tomáš Netopil (conductor)
Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford,
Thursday 23 October 2025**

It was exciting to learn that a Czech conductor was coming to visit with the local orchestra. Tomáš Netopil, conductor of the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, was known from several recent recordings of Czech music, both with his own orchestra and the Czech Philharmonic, but I had never attended any concert he had conducted, and

it would be interesting to see what effect he might have on the Oxford Philharmonics Orchestra.



Tomáš Netopil. Source: www.tomasnetopil.cz.

The programme involved two works by Dvořák – *Symphonic Variations* to open and *Symphony No. 7* to finish – sandwiching Weber's Bassoon Concerto, performed by the orchestra's lead bassoonist, Bence Bogányi. This had attracted a capacity audience to the Sheldonian Theatre – including the Newsletter's editor and his wife.

The conductor proved to be a fluent, perceptive and invigorating guide to his countryman's music, maintaining the flow of each section in *Variations* and each movement in the Symphony – an apt successor in the line of Czech conductors, including Karel Šejna whose recordings of these two works with the Czech Philharmonic were the way older members of the society will have first come to know them. Individual players, including the leader for the occasion Carmine Lauri and woodwind soloists, stood out appropriately, and the exciting final bars of the symphony, trenchantly delivered, raised an enthusiastic ovation.

Weber was, of course, not a Czech composer, but hearing the excellent performance by Bence Bogányi I couldn't help remembering that I first knew that Weber had written a bassoon concerto, and been able to listen to a recording of it, was over sixty years earlier in a record shop a stone's throw away from the Sheldonian. There, I had by chance come across Karel Bidlo's recording with the Czech Philharmonic. Bence and the orchestra combined in an enterprising encore after the concerto, Elgar's *Romance for Bassoon and Orchestra*.

We can hope that this is just the first of Tomáš Netopil's visits to Oxford and that future occasions will bring us more great Czech music and the chance of extending his already benign influence on the sound and precision of the orchestra.

Mark Todd

If you are not familiar with the *Symphonic Variations*, watch it on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ug8vXpYU8p4). There are two recordings with the score, one with Jiří Bělohlávek and the BBC orchestra, the other with Jakub Hrůša. Can you hear Dvořák's joy when he was working on this form? What struck me most was Variation 24: it uses exactly the same rhythm that is central to the *Spectre's Bride*. I have discovered and enjoyed two

compositions of AD in just over one month! And there are many more that I do not yet know at all...

Steven Isserlis (cello) and Connie Shih (piano) Wigmore Hall, London, Saturday 29 November 2025

This recital by cellist Steven Isserlis (a Dvořák Society Vice-President) and pianist Connie Shih was aptly titled "Czech Gems", an example of adventurous programming which deservedly drew a large audience through the Saturday evening Oxford Street crowds to the beautiful haven of the Wigmore Hall.

Their first piece was probably being heard here for the first time. The virtuoso cellist Jan Stiasny (Šťastný) was born in Prague c. 1764 into a musical family. He played in the Prague theatre orchestra before moving to Germany, and probably also to Paris and London. His *Theme and Variations*, Op. 11 No. 2, from around 1820, gives the cellist plenty of challenges – a good warm-up piece, though not of great individuality. Dvořák's *Romantic Pieces*, Op. 75, B. 150, started life as a trio for two violins and viola (B. 75a), which the composer arranged for piano and violin; they were performed here with the violin part adapted for cello by Steven Isserlis. The four simple movements stick in the memory, particularly the beautiful tune of the first and the hypnotic three-note motif of the last.

To conclude the first half came the *Cello Sonata in E*, Op. 121, by Ignaz Moscheles. He was born in Prague in 1794 and studied piano there, moved to Vienna in 1808 and then to London, Berlin (there he taught Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn), back to London (appointed 'pianist to Prince Albert'), where this sonata was written, and finally to Leipzig, where he died aged 75. It is clear in this sonata that Moscheles was primarily a pianist. The cello has its moments, but often acts as backing for the brilliant piano writing. The third movement is an attractive andantino "in the Bohemian style", and the fourth rises to an exciting conclusion, which was acclaimed with cheers.

Josef Suk's *Ballade and Serenade*, Op. 3, were written in 1890 and revised in 1898, the year in which he married Dvořák's daughter Otilie at a joyful joint celebration of both their nuptials and her parents' silver wedding. On hearing this tender performance, it seemed to me (without any evidence) that in the rhapsodic but solemn *Ballade*, the cello might represent the serious young Suk, who in the *Serenade* is joined by the cheery piano of Otilie, with the two contrasting characters gradually coming together.

Janáček's *Pohádka (Fairy Tale)*, revised 1923, invites similar speculation, as the narrative, said to be based on a poem by Zhukovsky, is not spelt out. The three movements follow the familiar arc of young love overcoming challenges to reach general rejoicing. The final work on

the programme was Martinů's *Cello Sonata No. 1* of 1939. Written in Paris a few weeks after the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia, this is a darkly impressive piece. The opening *poco allegro*, a sort of Danse Macabre, is followed by an incessantly searching *lento*, and a strongly accented final *allegro con brio* conveying the relentless militancy of its time – this brought a tumultuous finish to a great evening.

Well, not quite. After receiving their richly deserved ovations, Steven spoke briefly about the marvels of Czech music, and then the duo treated us to the balm of his arrangement of Smetana's main *Vltava* theme.

Throughout the whole programme, Steven Isserlis and Connie Shih were so accomplished both technically and in their partnership that one could be totally absorbed in the music without a thought for the difficulties of producing it – complete musicianship.

Terry Heard

**Pavel Šporcl (violin) and members of the English Chamber Orchestra: *Strings of Brilliance*
The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Holborn Viaduct, London EC1A 2DG, on Sunday 30th November 2025.**

The talented Czech violinist Pavel Šporcl is well-known for his blue violin and his versatility for playing not only classical music, but also gypsy music and rock music. However, it was as a classical musician that he performed to an appreciative audience at the conclusion of London's 2025 Made in Prague Festival, organised by the Czech Centre, in the beautiful Church of the Holy Sepulchre in London. His fellow performers were seven excellent string players from the English Chamber Orchestra (ECO).

The concert began with Pavel's very expressive performance of Dvořák's *Romance*, followed by the *Mazurek*, both sensitively accompanied by the ensemble from the ECO. Pavel's singing tone and the sparkling nature of the music captivated the audience in these two pieces. They were followed by his own virtuoso variations for solo violin of the melody of *Where is my Homeland?* (The Czech National Anthem). This composition was really amazing with pizzicato and arco playing at the same time, double, if not triple stopping, as well as a radiant melodic line.

Finally, Pavel was joined by the seven ladies from the ECO whom he led in a brilliant performance of Felix Mendelssohn's famous *Octet in E flat major, op. 20*. The title of the whole concert, *Strings of Brilliance*, certainly applied to all players, whose parts blended together perfectly. They all seemed very relaxed, and yet the music was played with precision as well as feeling.

Before the concert, I spoke to Pavel about his blue violin and the wide variety of music he played. The violin was made for him in 2005 by the Czech expert, Jan



Photo: [Pavel Šporcl website](#)

Špidlen, with whom he had a conversation about a possible colour, finally choosing a blue dye to match his eyes! The scroll of the instrument is unusual in that it is not solid; you can see through it. This makes it rather light in weight, and so a small lead weight has been added. You can read all about it on [Rebel with the Blue Violin](#).

Pavel plays gypsy music with a group called Gypsy Way and has also branched into rock music and jazz. He is eager to bring classical music to a wider audience and frequently organises sessions to introduce children to music. For Czech television, he has created a series about the legacy of Czech violinists such as Jan Kubelík, who incidentally played for Queen Victoria, Otakar Ševčík, well known to many of us for his exercises, Ferdinand Laub and František Ondříček. Do listen and watch this on [České houslové legendy - iVysílání | Česká televize](#), even if you do not understand Czech, as the music is most enlightening.

It was a pleasure to interview Pavel, who was informative, sociable and relaxed. If you look at his website, you will see that he has a very busy diary. The day before this concert, he had been playing gypsy music at an Advent concert in Olomouc, and two days later, he was in a rock and jazz ensemble in Otrovické. Here in London, we enjoyed a highly professional, spirited classical concert. Many thanks to Pavel and the ECO Ensemble for a memorable conclusion to the 2025 Made In Prague Festival.

Susan Jenkinson

Dvořák: *The Spectre's Bride*. Hackney Festival Chorus, soloists, and the Lambeth Orchestra at St John of Jerusalem Church, London E9 7EY on 7 December 2025

In the November issue of the Dvořák Society Newsletter #152, pp. 9–11, there are two reviews of the concert by Jakub Hrůša and Friends at the Royal Opera House on 20 September 2025. The second half of the evening was a full-scale performance in Czech of

Dvořák's *The Spectre's Bride* (*Svatební košile – Wedding Shirts*) based on a poem by Karel Jaromír Erben. Both reviewers, Nigel Simeone and Tomy Duby, very much enjoyed it. Nigel mentioned that '*While it was a huge hit in the 1885 Birmingham Triennial Festival, performances in Britain in modern times have been few and far between...*'

However, perhaps surprisingly, as it was not long before Christmas, there was a performance in English of this work in Hackney, London E9, by the Hackney Festival Chorus. Years ago, Terry Heard, the Society's Membership Secretary, with the help of the late Karel Janovický, had produced a new English text. He had paid careful attention to retaining the original meaning of the text and preserving the rhythm of Dvořák's word setting. He also reduced the original orchestration from over 100 instruments to about 25. Also, there were no trumpets, trombones, or tuba, for example, among the players from the Lambeth Orchestra. The reduced orchestra was appropriate to the sound of the choir, which was smaller than the one in Birmingham (400!) or at the Royal Opera House. Terry's version was first performed by The Blackheath Choir and a small orchestra in south-east London in July 2017. (I even played with a little trepidation in the viola section at that performance. Now in Hackney, I could relax!)

The Hackney Festival Chorus had clearly been carefully rehearsed by the conductor, John Andrews, and sang with enthusiasm, accompanied with precision and expression by members of The Lambeth Orchestra, led by Alan Thorogood. The soloists, Emma Dogliani (soprano – the bride), John Upperton (tenor – bridegroom/spectre) and James Cleverton (bass – narrator) all had resonant voices and confidently delivered the text of this unusual ghostly story by Karel Erben.

The programme brochure provided full details of the plot, as well as the complete English text. Unfortunately, the large audience in the very large church of St John of

Jerusalem was plunged into darkness as soon as the music began, and so it was not possible to follow the text provided. There was also some noise from the heating, which dimmed the sound the musicians were so expressively producing, even if you were sitting fairly near the front in the audience. I do not know what the result was for those listeners right at the back, but there was rapturous, well-deserved applause for the performers.

Hopefully, there will be more performances of *The Spectre's Bride* in the not-too-distant future. If you or your choral society is interested in Terry Heard's new English version with reduced orchestra, do get in touch with him at membership@dvorak-society.org

Susan Jenkinson

Janáček and his Operas, an exhibition of pictures on the public-facing wall of the Czech Embassy in London, until 15 January 2026.

The Czech Centre, in collaboration with the Moravian Museum and the National Theatre, both in Brno, utilised the Czech Embassy's long fence facing Notting Hill Gate, W8 4QY, to display panels dedicated to [Janáček and his operas](#). I visited this exhibition on a cold, overcast day after Christmas.

Each opera had its dedicated panel with a picture from the staging at the National Theatre Brno, and some historical background (in English). Two panels covered *Janáček and Brno*, and *Janáček and England*. And the final two covered symbolically, at least, the two *Makropulos Case* productions in London; the LSO with Simon Rattle will be covered in the next Newsletter. I have no idea how many people stopped by and looked at this exhibition. More important was that Czech music had its presence in London also in 2025.

There was one thing that I missed: a single mention of Kamila Stösslová.

Tomy Duby



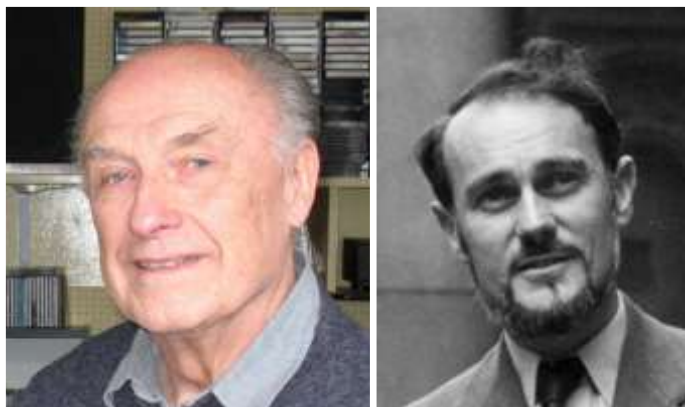
Reviews of CDs and DVDs and other publications

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.

Karel Janovický: *Utmost Sail* A Science Fiction opera

My late father, the Czech composer and broadcaster, Karel Janovický – born Bohuš František Šimsa in Pilsen in 1930, but better known under the pseudonym he adopted in the 1950s to protect his parents, whom he had

left behind in Communist Czechoslovakia when he skipped the border during the Cold War – died in January 2024. He left behind a four-storey Victorian terrace in North London, crammed with music, books, and papers, including 250 or so classical compositions and a not inconsiderable personal archive.



Karel Janovický (left, photo: family archive) and Karel Brušák (photo: www.politickeprocesy.cz).

It was in his papers that I found a booklet with the libretto of his one-act opera, *The Utmost Sail*, which he wrote in 1958 to an English-language text by another Czech émigré, Karel Brušák. The booklet is mimeographed, fanzine-style, so it is not a professional publication; but to anyone familiar with the history of fanzines or SF (Science Fiction) fandom, the format will be immediately recognisable, and I assume this is something that he or Brušák must have had printed for the benefit of future producers and performers at around the same time they were finishing the work itself.

I had been long aware that my father had written an opera, and back in my teenage years, when I was at the height of my initial involvement with science fiction, he had even told me it was set on a spaceship. However, in the way children have of ignoring their parents, I had never actually seen a copy or read the text. And while I have still not seen a performance, the libretto can stand on its own as an interesting example of mid-20th-century European SF theatre.

So how did this peculiar artefact come to be? From my father's side, the motivation was primarily musical. After emigrating from Czechoslovakia by illegally crossing the line of the future border fence on foot at night (a family history fictionalised in my story, "Queen of Šumava"), and a sojourn in various refugee camps in Bavaria, he came to Britain on a music scholarship in 1951. By the mid-1950s he was established as a freelance pianist, music teacher, and composer with occasional gigs at the BBC World Service as part of his performance circuit.

Karel Brušák (1913-2004) was an émigré of an earlier generation. Having completed a Master's degree at Charles University in Prague in 1937, with a thesis under the supervision of Jan Mukařovský of the famous Prague Linguistic Circle, he was in Paris, continuing his studies, when war broke out. Following an adventurous escape from occupied France via Gibraltar, he ended up in Britain, where he worked in civil defence (specifically as one of those ARP wardens so lovingly mocked by classic TV sitcoms), alongside more substantial engagements with the



The Utmost Sail: first page of the vocal score. Source: family archive.

Czechoslovak Government-in-exile and the BBC. After the War, he became a key employee of the BBC World Service, and that was where the two men met (Slobodová 2009, 219-221; Pynsent 2004).

My father, in a memoir written after Brušák's death, describes it thus:

The Czechoslovak Section of the BBC World Service – devoted routinely and almost exclusively to current affairs – used to let its hair down at Christmas by putting on a Nativity play written and produced more often than not by Karel Brušák. The beginnings of my own broadcasting career date from one such occasion. It was, I think, a week or two before Christmas 1955. I had been brought in to play the piano, but an unforeseen shortage of shepherds discovered during rehearsal led to me being asked additionally to voice one. Further jobs followed (Janovický 2004).

The specific impulse that led to them attempting an opera was a competition that had been announced by the Italian music publisher, Ricordi:

When the Italian publisher Ricordi posted up a competition for a one-act opera to be delivered in 1958, I had no difficulty in persuading [Brušák] to write a libretto for me. He chose a science fiction subject: an idealistic scientist sends a four-man spaceship he

calls Messenger into the cosmos; soldiers try too late to have the mission aborted; the crew watch helplessly from space as Earth is consumed in a nuclear holocaust...

There are two scenes, one on Earth, the other on board the spaceship; the stage set is identical: a control room (Janovický 2004).

Given the limitations imposed by the one-act structure and the single set, the writers were not able to incorporate a lot of action; instead, they used their two groups of players (on deck and at mission control) to relate the wider story of the controversial launch and its repercussions second-hand. This tendency to *describe* what is going on in the outside world, rather than making any attempt to *show* it, is reinforced by the fact that Brušák's interest is evidently philosophical, not technological. He wants to consider the implications of humanity breaking free of Earth, the planet on which it has its roots, rather than the mechanics of any such action. In both scenes, Brušák thus interpolates the kind of discursive interventions on science and philosophy that are characteristic of so much Central European SF writing of the mid-20th Century – the “philodump”, if you like – rather than following on-stage character interactions of heroics. (Think Lem, or Nesvadba, or further East, the Brothers Strugatsky.) Indeed, Brušák's characters are never named, just given symbolic roles – “Captain”, “Scientist”, etc. – so their identities are defined entirely by their functions, not their personal characteristics.

The two scenes of the bare-bones plot are then used to present two different examples of social breakdown. On Earth, the chief scientist strives to defend the noble aims of his visionary, well-intentioned project, even as a party of rogue military officers takes over the control room and declares that the peaceful rocket programme is dead, while the monitors in the background start to show traces of other, more lethal launches. Meanwhile, in space, the astronauts try to fill the endless hours by debating the point and purpose of their mission, but their underlying unease and rising personal tensions eventually lead to violence. In both locations, the inability of (at least some of) Brušák's protagonists to maintain their sense of a separate identity in the face of epoch-making events ends in destruction and death. This is humanity's Achilles heel, suggests Brušák. “[Brušák's] choice of the subject was weirdly prophetic, for as we were feverishly working on the opera, the first Sputnik flew on 4 October 1957,” commented my father (Janovický 2004).

In its overall tone and structure, the libretto of *The Utmost Sail* is nothing like the genre SF with which modern audiences are familiar. One can see that Brušák's sources were not the genre writers of the 1940s and '50s, who had been trying to imagine what real-world space flight might actually be like, based on contemporary science, but the more speculative genre-adjacent writers of an earlier generation. (The title of the opera is taken from the last act of Shakespeare's *Othello*, ca. 1603: “Here is

my journey's end, here is my butt,/And very sea-mark of my utmost sail”; and the text also incorporates a quotation from William Wordsworth's “Peter Bell”, 1819, which shows how far outside the genre Brušák went for his points of reference.) Space flight, for Brušák, is not a technological proposition, but a thought experiment, and his rockets and control panels are set dressing. He is thinking about the psychological impact of radical scientific change on human society and psychology, what would today be called a “paradigm shift,” not the nuts and bolts; he is clearly more than a little sceptical about the ability of individuals to absorb change that happens too quickly. To paraphrase: if you move fast, you break things.

Possibly because of its theatrical structure, the most obvious antecedents that springs to mind for the way the libretto is written are the SF plays of Karel Čapek (1890–1938), in particular *R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots)*, (written 1920, first performed 1921), which dramatises the effects of another world-changing technological innovation on humanity. The parallels are evident in the way Brušák's text uses its SF elements as a hook on which to hang more general philosophical considerations; in its basic insight that the collision of runaway technology with the self-interest of human elites can be disastrous; but also in the way the restrictions of the physical set led both writers to tell so much of their story off stage, narrating outside events by passing them through the closed circle of the somewhat clinical command and control centres they both chose as their focus, rather than the wide-screen dramatics that would have been possible in cinema. Interestingly, Čapek himself wrote an early essay on the differences between theatre and film for the dramatic artist, which pointed out this precise difference in the opportunities offered by the visual image and the spoken word (Čapek 1927, 111–113).

Brušák was not a big fan of Čapek's work. In fact, it is a matter of record that he considered Čapek a “bad writer” (Slobodová 2009, 225, translation mine) and from my own limited social contacts with him in the 1980s, this is also something I heard him say myself. Nonetheless, when it came to writing an SF play, his solutions to depicting a sweeping SF scenario in the limited space of the theatre are quite similar to Čapek's. It is impossible now to be sure how deliberate this was, but Brušák was enormously well read and was also of the generation that would have had the opportunity to see at least some of Čapek's plays in their original Prague productions. (Not *R.U.R.*, which would have had its premiere when Brušák was seven, but quite possibly the later SF plays, like *The White Plague* [1937], and any number of revivals.) One assumes Brušák must have been aware of this similarity and perhaps enjoyed a sense of amusement that his text had ended up paralleling the work of a writer, of whom he disapproved, though it is notable he did not follow Čapek

in tacking on the crowd-pleasing, saccharine happy end that so undermines *R.U.R.*

Unfortunately, Brušák and my father did not succeed in the Ricordi competition, and the opera was never published: “We didn’t get the first prize, but it was quite an exciting project” (Vaughan 2007). However, a Czech translation of the libretto did eventually appear in a posthumous collection of Brušák’s poetry and prose (Brušák 2009), and a limited number of the fanzine-style edition of the English text is still in circulation. Unlike my father’s chamber music, which is performed periodically in both the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom, the opera remains unproduced, presumably because of the expense and the investment of time that would be required... Which surely must present an opportunity to some enterprising opera company.

In later life, my father became a full-time BBC World Service producer, rising eventually to be the head of their Czechoslovak Section, while continuing to write music. Brušák was hired by the University of Cambridge to teach Czech and Slovak in 1962, and remained in that role till 1999, thereby becoming one of the founders of contemporary Czech and Slovak studies in the UK. His pupils included Prof. Robert Pynsent, later at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies in London, and Prof. James Naughton of Oxford (Pynsent 2004). He collaborated with my father on one further song cycle in 1981.

A scan of the full score of the opera is available on request.

Cyril Simsa

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Sparks from Ashes

Nicky Spence, Dylan Perez
Chandos CHAN 20338

The Czech repertoire has contributed much to the Scottish tenor Nicky Spence’s high reputation. His performances in five of Janáček’s mature operas have been acclaimed, and in 2020, his recording of *The Diary of One Who Disappeared* won *BBC Music Magazine* and *Gramophone* awards. Here, with his equally skilful pianist partner Dylan Perez, he explores less familiar Czech and Slovak songs in a varied 85-minute recital. The recording quality is excellent, except for a few occasions when the singer sounds a bit muffled for a few seconds – perhaps he turned away from the microphone. I am not in a position to judge Spence’s Czech or Slovak enunciation, but to me it sounded entirely convincing. There are full English translations and interesting background notes by Jan Smaczny.

The earliest works here are Dvořák’s *Cypresses* (*Cypřiše*, B 11), the set of 18 songs which he poured out at the rate of one a day from 10 to 27 July 1865. The 23-year-old Dvořák was then in love with one of his piano pupils, Josefina Čermáková, who did not return his affections; he later married her sister Anna. Most of the poems, by Gustav Pflieger-Moravský, reflect his infatuation: moments of brief bliss followed by rejection and parting. Given the similarity of many of the poems, Dvořák’s settings are surprisingly varied, with some decidedly ahead of the salon music of the time. These *Cypresses* clearly meant a lot to Dvořák, who returned to them again and again, reusing some in his operas *King and Charcoal Burner* and *Vanda*, making string quartet arrangements of twelve of them, and reworking eight as the set of *Love Songs* (*Písňe milostné*, B 160) as late as 1888. In their original form, they were not published until 2007; this convincing performance is to be heartily welcomed.

Vítězslava Kaprálová also experienced youthful passions. She was just 18 when, in 1933, she completed *Sparks from Ashes* (*Jiskry z popele*, Op. 5), a set of four songs setting poems by Bohdan Jelínek, which she dedicated to her fellow student Otakar Vach, “my only love” (which of course he was not to be). To judge by the



Source: [Chandos](#)

first three songs this was a passionate relationship, though the bleak winter mood of the last, captured by both performers with beautiful control, suggests a sad end. The opening item of this recital is another Kaprálová piece, written in 1937: *Waving Farewell (Sbohem a šataček*, Op. 14). This large-scale sustained farewell “on separation from the most beautiful city of Prague”, written just before the composer departed to study in Paris, makes touching repeated use of a falling phrase *sbohem* (farewell).

It is a considerable contrast to go from Prague to the fields of Slovakia. In 1924, Béla Bartók published five *Village Scenes*, BB 87a, using Slovakian folk songs he had collected in 1915. Three of these focus on wedding customs, preceded by full-throated encouragement to the haymakers, and followed by a raucous *Lad's Dance* which both singer and pianist deliver with unbridled gusto.

Last come the *Three Fables (Tři bajky*, Op.21) by Jaroslav Křička (1882-1969). This composer's large output (including 19 operas) is unknown to me, but from this example, I should like to hear more. There is again a romantic context: these settings were completed in 1917 and dedicated to the woman he was to marry the next year. But this time things are much more cheerful. The fables (two Czech in origin, and one Russian) concern disobedient kid goats, a hen's bizarre efforts to get water to her cockerel, and the on/off relationship between a heron and a crane. None of them ends happily, but the settings are lively and direct, matching the simplicity of the verses. Nicky Spence and Dylan Perez make the most of many opportunities for characterisation, and clearly enjoy themselves; so I think will any listener.

This generous recital combines a varied, unusual repertoire with first-rate performances by two

distinguished musicians at the top of their form. I recommend it highly.

Terry Heard

The Best of Martin Jones – Discover Erich Korngold

NIMBUS CD – NI 7743

CONTENTS: *Grosse Fantasie* from *Die Tote Stadt*, *Sonata no 1 in D minor*, *Four waltzes for piano* (1911), *Don Quixote* – six character pieces after Cervantes, *Märchenbilder (Fairy Tale pieces)*, Op. 3, *Zwischenspiel Intermezzo* from *Das Wunder der Heliane*, *Vier kleine Karikaturen für Kinder*, Op. 19, *Sonata No. 2*. Op. 2.

The rather involved title refers to a series of CDs issued by Nimbus of Martin Jones, who has become, in most respects, their ‘house pianist’. During his long association with the company, Jones has undertaken a number of surveys, often complete, of less well-known areas of the repertoire, consisting of between two and a half dozen discs.

To entice prospective purchasers, who might be wary of committing to a ‘set’, Nimbus have begun to issue several surveys selecting highlights from these issues. So far, these have covered such varied material as Falla, Francaix, Granados, Guastavino, Szymanowski... and now Erich Korngold.

Jones’ four-disc, five-hour survey of Korngold originally appeared in 2003 and was widely praised... rightly so.



Photo: [Waystone](#)

As well as being beautifully engineered, in Nimbus' own concert hall at Wyastone Leys, Jones really does have an uncanny knack of 'getting under the skin' of the composers he selects. The latest issue is no exception. Take, for example, the beautiful little waltz, *Gisi*, in which the pianist immediately 'gets' the glittering, whirling world of fin-de-siècle ballrooms with, naturally, another great melody from Korngold.

Or the gentle 'send-ups' of the little caricatures; Schoenbergian cuckoos, Stravinskyian lullabies, angular Bartokian observations ("Nothing gained" – presumably reflecting Korngold's opinion on the Hungarian's music!), or the earnest (po-faced?) perambulations in the style of Hindemith.

And then there are the 'little sonatas', the second especially endowed with a stunning, sweeping melody... all nine minutes of it.

A couple of pieces date from the mid 1920's, but many are pre- or barely pubescent items, the first sonata written between the ages of eight and nine (!), yet still displaying the highly chromatic (even tortuous) phrasing, dissonant chord clusters, piquant harmony and...always....attractive melody so redolent of Korngold throughout his career.

As I listen, the beautiful melody that adorns the second sonata is dying down into a serene distance – and I can only urge you – if you're in the least inclined toward Korngold, and haven't already taken the plunge with the larger box... don't hesitate!!

Ian Bailey

NOTE: I should add the following:

a) *The Grosse Fantasie* from *Die Tote Stadt* is actually an arrangement by Ferdinand Rebay, an Austrian singer, writer, and minor composer, who was a partner with [Adolf Robitschek](#) in the Vienna publishing firm Rebay & Robitschek. He also produced an earlier piano reduction on themes from Korngold's *Violanta*.

b) As far as I can see, the larger box, Nimbus NI 5705-8, has unfortunately disappeared from the catalogue as a physical item. It is, however, still available as a download from the usual reputable sources.

Janáček: *The Makropulos Affair*; *Diary of One Who Disappeared*

Marie Collier/Gregory Dempsey/Raimund Herinx/Eric Shilling

Sadler's Wells Opera/Charles Mackerras

London Premiere, February 1964;

Richard Lewis/Maureen Forrester/Ernest Lush (Diary) July 1956

SOMM Ariadne 5044-2

This is a recording of Janáček's penultimate opera, taken from the London premiere in February 1964, with an older BBC broadcast of his unique song cycle based on the



Photo: [SOMM recordings](#)

then-anonymous poems of Josef Kalda (a Moravian writer and poet, 1871–1921) published in *Lidové Noviny*. It was released as a tribute to Sir Charles Mackerras on the 100th anniversary of his birth.

Obviously, this two-CD (and download) is going to be of great value to anyone interested in the history of Janáček performances outside of Czechoslovakia. SOMM have provided us with no libretto, nor any plot summary, but with a fascinating and informative booklet (prepared by Nigel Simeone!), which is more than enough for anyone who already knows the opera. However, I have to confess that I felt a little conflicted when asked to put together a review, as the drawbacks are – on the surface – quite significant. It's in mono for a start, and having been taken from a radio broadcast, the sound quality is not exactly state-of-the-art. Worse still (for me anyway!), it is sung in English; I know this shouldn't matter, especially for Janáček and his speech rhythms and intonations, but it is a drawback. Furthermore, I have to confess that *The Makropulos Affair* is not my favourite among the Janáček operas; it's the toughest of the mature works to really get into, and doesn't give me those lump-in-the-throat emotional moments that the others deliver.

And yet what we have here is an important historical recording that very much highlights the originality of its composer. While he always had his champions in the UK, from Rosa Newmarch onwards, nobody did more than Mackerras to establish Janáček's music here, and this is a key moment. As a performance, it is utterly committed, with no weak links among the singers, and a lovely yet vulnerable performance from Marie Collier in the title role. Her character is framed by a group of very strong male roles, especially as they all gang up on her in the final act like a pack of hyenas. And I am sure that the London

audience at the time would have much appreciated Dr Kolenatý's machine-gun summary (in English!) of the case itself in Act One. Eric Shilling is superb in this role, and this was the moment which helped me get over my language aversion. Mackerras takes much the same driven, dramatic approach to the music as he did in his 1978 recording for Decca, and his overview didn't seem to change all that much between the two. That later – supreme – commercial recording does have a better orchestral contribution, and of course, far better sound quality, although this one has clearly been lovingly remastered.

Richard Lewis is in fine voice in the *Diary of One Who Disappeared*, as is a very young Maureen Forrester, but here I found the “wrong” language issue more

insurmountable, which made this fill-up less appealing, I'm afraid. This is despite a very sympathetic translation, despite wonderful accompaniment from Ernest Lush, and despite the very clean sound quality (from 1956, but it sounds more recent than the opera does).

I now have three versions of Makropulos in my collection, and while this one will never surpass the Decca recording, it says more to me than the Chandos version from 2006. And yes, I did get those elusive lump-in-the-throat moments here – as an example, Collier's final monologue is very moving indeed. So this is a release of historical interest first and foremost, but also a permanent document of a very fine, moving performance, which anyone who truly loves this composer really ought to hear.

Robert Pickett

Recent CDs on Czech and Slovak Labels

New Recordings on Czech/Slovak Labels

This list covers releases of Czech/Slovak music issued on CD and DVD during the period approximately from November 2025 to January 2026. I am relying largely on the Široký dvůr website for information on smaller labels.

Animal Music

ANI 2452 Krása/Ančerl/Schulhoff: *Works for String Quartet* (Krása Quartet)

Arta

F102982 Benda/Dusík/Koželuh/Štěpán: *18th Century Bohemian Keyboard Sonatas* (Mrázková)

F103002 Zach/Vaňhal: *Requiem/Kyrie and Gloria* (Musica Florea/Collegium Floreum/Štrýncl)

Nibiru

0178-2 Zelenka: *Missa Circumcisionis* (Ensemble Inégal/Viktora)

Other Labels

ACC24416 Zelenka: *Missa Circumcisionis/Missa Corporis Domini* (Collegium 1704/Luks)

TV3-3354 Kaprálová/Novák/Nečasová Nardelli: *Piano Concertos in D min and A min/Anna Karenina – Concerto-Phantasy for Piano Strings and Percussion* (Víšek/Various Orchestras/Turnovský/Vronský/Šedivý)

Supraphon

SU4373-2 Haas/Novák/Shostakovich/Vasks: *Wind Quintet Op. 10/Concertino for Wind Quintet/String Quartet Op. 110/Wind Quintet No. 2* (Alinde Quartet)

SU4359-2 Reicha/Beethoven: *Piano Concerto in E flat/Emperor Concerto* (Bartoš, Prague RSO/VPO/Popelka)

SU4369-2 Husa: *Music for Wind Quintet* (Zukal/Belfiato Quintet; Prague Philharmonia/Villaume)

SU4366-2 Suk/Nedbal/Fučík/Novák/Kocian, 'Forgotten Composers', 'The Many Pupils of Antonín Dvořák' (3CDs) (Various soloists/Conductors include Talich/Šejna/Pešek)

New Recordings on Non-Czech/Slovak Labels

This list covers new releases and reissues of Czech/Slovak music on CD and DVD through the period approximately from November 2025 to January 2026.

BIS (Naxos)

BIS2722 Korngold/Křenek/Schreker: *Sinfonietta/Potpourri/Die Gezeichneten* (Orchestre National Pays de la Loire/Goetzl)

BR Klassik (Naxos)

ACC30646 Dvořák/Glazunov/Strauss: *A Hero's Song/To the Memory of a Hero/Ein Heldenleben* (Bamberg SO/Hrůša)

Calliope Indesense (Naxos)

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

CPO (Naxos)

555688-2 Dvořák: *Piano Trios Nos. 3 and 4* (Trio Orelon)

555722-2 Stamitz (Stamic): *Clarinet Concerto Nos. 7, 9, 10 and 11* (Mayer/Kurpfälzisches Kammerorchester)

Cypres

CYP1691 Dvořák/Dabič: *String Quartet* Op. 106; *Anzhamanak* (Akhtamar Quartet)

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

MSO 0004 Dvořák: *Symphonies Nos. 2 and 8* (2 SACDs)(Melbourne Symphony Orchestra/Martin)

Naxos (Naxos)

8.574654 Foerster: *Symphony No. 2; Cyrano de Bergerac* (Hradec Králové Philharmonic Orchestra/Štilec)

Prospero

ROSP0114 Moscheles/Fröhlich/Schubert: *Grande Sonata Symphonique No. 2/Works for Two Pianos* (Piano Duo Soós-Haag)

SOMM (Naxos)

Ariadne 5044-2 Janáček: *The Makropoulos Affair/The Diary of One who Disappeared* (2CDs) (Soloists/Sadler's Wells Opera/Mackerras/Forrester/Lush) (Sung in English)

Bill Marsden

Vacancy for Honorary Treasurer

After five years, our current treasurer, Martin Israel, will be stepping down at the next AGM in 2026. We are seeking someone to fill this important and fulfilling role. As a member of the National Committee, you will play a part in moving a progressive and internationally important renowned Society in its 52nd year and beyond. Please contact the Chairman, David Roberts, by email with expressions of interest or for further details of the role and responsibilities (chairman@dvorak-society.org). Martin Israel is available for a non-committal conversation (treasurer@dvorak-society.org).



Dvořák Society's Sale

New book: 24 pages booklet about Dvořák's Summer Retreat in Vysoká. Prepared by Ondřej Šupka Includes period photographs. Available on the [DS e-shop](#). £5.00 plus p&p.

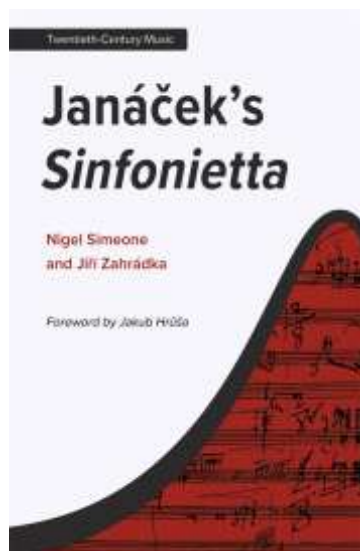


Preview of 2026 Publications

Bärenreiter

BA11595	Janáček: <i>Sonata for Violoncello and Piano</i>
BA11751-90	Martinů: <i>Rhapsody-Concerto for Viola and Orchestra</i> , H337
H08061	Kabeláč: <i>Sonata for Horn and Piano</i> , Op. 2
BA11584	Dvořák: <i>Easy Piano Pieces and Dances</i>
BA11515	Dvořák: <i>Songs I for High Voice</i>
BA11516	Dvořák: <i>Songs I for Low Voice</i>

Boydell and Brewer



The Dvořák Society contributed financially to the production of the book on Janáček's *Sinfonietta*, and we are in contact with the publisher to see what special offer can be made to DS members.

In the meantime, there is a 40% discount available on the Janáček book for a first purchase if one signs up to the Newsletter. It seems that there is 35% discount on the new book on Smetana.

Prices for the Janáček, which is due to be published in February, are as follows:

Hb £85 – available to pre-order

Pb £24.99 – available to pre-order

e-book (epub or pdf) £19.00 – available to backorder.

[Janáček's Sinfonietta](#),

[Bedřich Smetana](#)

Event Diary

Compiled by John Beale.

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

UK

Date	Programme	Performers and Location
London		
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/
18 Feb 2026 7.30 pm	Janáček: <i>The Cunning Little Vixen: Prelude & Pantomime</i>	Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace, London SW1X 9DQ, 020 7730 4500 Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava https://cadoganhall.com/whats-on/zios-2025-26-czech-janacek-philharmonic/

Date	Programme	Performers and Location
23 Feb 2026 1.10 pm	Smetana: String Quartet No. 2 in D minor Dvořák: String Quartet in A-flat, Op. 105	Pražák Quartet, The Hearn Recital Room, Blackheath Halls, 020 8463 0100, boxoffice@blackheathhalls.com https://www.blackheathhalls.com/whats-on/lunchtime-recital-prazak-quartet/
1 March 2026 11.30 am	Janáček: <i>String Quartet No. 1 'Kreutzer Sonata'</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St., London W1U 2BP, 020 7935 2141 Doric String Quartet https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60893
1 March 2026 7.30 pm	Suk: <i>Meditation on an old Bohemian Chorale (St Wenceslas)</i> Op. 35a Janáček: <i>String Quartet No. 2, 'Intimate Letters'</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St., London W1U 2BP, 020 7935 2141 Pavel Haas Quartet https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60895 Dvořák: <i>String Quintet in E flat, Op. 97</i>
15 March 2026 11.30 am	Dvořák: <i>String Quartet in G, Op. 106</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St., London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Brentano String Quartet https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60921
19 March 2026 7.30 pm	Janáček: <i>On an Overgrown Path (selection)</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St., London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Jonathan Biss Piano https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60933
22 March 2026 11.30 am	Dvořák: <i>Piano Trio in E minor Op. 90 'Dumky'</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St., London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Philippe Cassard (piano), Anne Gastinel (cello), David Grimal (violin) https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60939
23 March 2026 1.00 pm	Janáček: <i>Piano Sonata 1. X. 1905 ('From the Street')</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St., London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Pavel Kolesnikov and Samson Tsoy https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/booking/60942
25 March 2026 6.30 pm 26 March 2026 7.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Symphony 9 'From the New World'</i>	Barbican Centre London, EC2Y 8DS, 020 7870 2500 London Symphony Orchestra 25 - https://tickets.barbican.org.uk/choose-seats/2748601 26 - https://tickets.barbican.org.uk/choose-seats/2748801
10 April 2026 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>In Nature's Realm</i>	Royal Festival Centre, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Rd, London SE1 8XX 020 3879 9555, London Philharmonic Orchestra https://ticketing.lpo.org.uk/134784/134813
15 April 2026 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 7</i>	Queen Elizabeth Hall Southbank Centre, Belvedere Rd, London SE1 8XX 020 3879 9555 London Philharmonic Orchestra https://ticketing.lpo.org.uk/134785/134814
16 April 2026 7.00 pm	Korngold: <i>Violin Concerto</i>	Barbican London, EC2Y 8DS 020 7870 2500 London Symphony Orchestra https://tickets.barbican.org.uk/choose-seats/2749401
26 April 2026 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>4 Romantic Pieces for violin and piano Op. 75</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St., London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Randall Goosby (violin) Zhu Wang (piano) https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/whats-on/202604261930
10 May 2026 11.30 am	Janáček: <i>String Quartet No. 2 'Intimate Letters'</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St., London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Fibonacci Quartet https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/whats-on/202605101130
23 May 2026 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Cypresses B152 (a selection)</i> <i>String Quartet No. 12 in F Op. 96 'American'</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St., London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Pavel Haas Quartet; Boris Giltburg (piano) https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/whats-on/202605231930
25 May 2026 1.00 pm	Schulhoff: <i>5 Pieces for String Quartet</i>	Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore St., London W1U 2BP 020 7935 2141 Leonkoro Quartet, Modigliani Quartet https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/whats-on/202605251300

Date	Programme	Performers and Location
South East		
13 Feb 2026 7.30 pm	Janáček: <i>Prelude & Pantomime, from The Cunning Little Vixen</i> Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 9</i>	G Live, London Rd, Guildford GU1 2AA 0343 310 0055 Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava https://trafalgartickets.com/g-live-guildford/en-GB/event/classical-opera/dvorak-symphony-no-9-tickets
South West		
14 Feb 2026 7.00 pm	Janáček: <i>Prelude & Pantomime, from The Cunning Little Vixen</i> Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 9</i>	Bristol Beacon, Trenchard St, Bristol BS1 5AR 0117 203 4040 Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava https://bristolbeacon.org/whats-on/czech-janacek-philharmonic-raiskin/book/591401/
15 April 2026 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 8 in G</i>	Lighthouse 21 Kingland Road, Poole BH15 1UG Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, bsolive.com/book-online
16 April 2026 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 8 in G</i>	Exeter University Great Hall University of Exeter, Stocker Road, Exeter EX4 4PY, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra https://bsolive.com/events/harmony-of-balance-exeter/
Wales		
8 May 2026 7.30 pm	Janáček: <i>String Quartet No. 2 'Intimate Letters'</i>	St Michaels & All Angels Church, Cwmdru nr. Crickhowell Powys NP8 1RU Fibonacci String Quartet, www.info@cwmdrumusic.org
West Midlands		
12 Feb 2026 7.30 pm	Janáček: <i>Prelude & Pantomime, from The Cunning Little Vixen</i>	Symphony Hall, Broad St, Birmingham B1 2EA 0121 780 3333 Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava https://bmusic.co.uk/book/instance/2050136
17 Feb 2026 7.30 pm	Janáček: <i>Prelude & Pantomime, from The Cunning Little Vixen</i> Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 9 "New World"</i>	Cheltenham Town Hall, Imperial Square, Cheltenham GL50 1QA 01242 528764 Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava https://cheltenhamtownhall.org.uk/event/czech-janacek-philharmonic-orchestra/
25 Feb 2026 2.15 pm	Korngold: <i>Violin Concerto</i>	Symphony Hall Broad St, Birmingham B1 2EA 0121 780 3333 CBSO, www.cbso.co.uk
8 March 2026 3.00 pm	Suk: <i>Piano Quartet in A minor Op. 1</i> Martinů: <i>Three madrigals for violin and viola H313</i>	Royal Spa Centre, Newbold Terrace CV32 4HN 01926 774395 Ensemble 360 www.leamingtonmusic.org
15 March 2026 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Cypresses (selection)</i> Janáček: <i>String Quartet No.2 'Intimate Letters'</i>	Malvern Theatres, Grange Road WR14 3HB Castalian Quartet www.malvern-concert-club.co.uk
25 March 26 7.30 pm	Janáček: <i>In the Mists</i>	Pittville Pump Room, East Approach Dr. Cheltenham GL52 3JE 01242 528764 Clare Hammond – piano, cheltenhamtownhall.org.uk
16 April 2026 2.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Slavonic Dance No. 2 (arranged)</i>	CBSO Centre, Berkley St, Birmingham B1 2LF https://account.cbso.co.uk/2564/2620
2 May 2026 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Piano Trio No. 4 in E minor, Op. 90 'Dumky'</i>	Royal Pump Rooms, The Parade CV32 4AA, Leamington Spa, Guarneri Piano Trio, 01926 334418, https://www.leamingtonmusic.org/event/guarneri-piano-trio-saturday-2-may/
14 May 2026 2.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>String Quartet No.12 in F, 'American'</i>	CBSO Centre, Berkley St, Birmingham B1 2LF https://account.cbso.co.uk/2564/2622
East Midlands		

Date	Programme	Performers and Location
6 May 26 7.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Vanda Overture</i>	De Montford Hall, Granville Rd, Leicester LE1 7RU 0116 233 3111 Philharmonia Orchestra, demontfordhall.co.uk
North West		
14 May, 7.30 pm 17 May, 4.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 8</i>	The Bridgewater Hall Lower Mosley St M2 3WS 0161 907 9000 www.halle.co.uk
19 May 2026 2.30 pm	Korngold: <i>String Quartet No.2 in E♭ major, Op. 26</i>	Tung Auditorium, 60 Oxford St, Liverpool L7 3NY Chaos String Quartet, https://chaosquartet.com/
19 June 6.30 pm 21 June 2.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i> . Concert performance in Czech	Philharmonic Hall, Hope St, Liverpool L1 9BP 0151 709 3789 Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, www.liverpoolphil.com
Yorkshire and the Humber		
15 Feb 2026 3.00 pm	Janáček: <i>Prelude & Pantomime, from The Cunning Little Vixen</i> Dvořák: <i>Symphony No. 9</i>	St Georges Hall, Bridge St, Bradford BD1 1JT Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava https://www.bradford-theatres.co.uk/whats-on/czech-janacek-philharmonic-orchestra
19 Feb 2026 7.00 pm	Janáček: <i>Prelude & Pantomime, from The Cunning Little Vixen</i>	Sheffield City Hall, Barker's Pool, Sheffield City Centre, Sheffield S1 2JA, Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava, https://www.sheffieldcityhall.co.uk/event/sheffield-international-concert-season-2025-26-czech-janacek/18/
North East		
22 May 2026 7.30 pm	Dvořák: <i>Romance for Violin and Orchestra</i>	The Glasshouse, St Mary's Square, Gateshead NE8 2JR 0191 443 4661 Royal Northern Sinfonia, ticketing.theglasshouseicm.org
Scotland		
16 April 2026 7.30 pm	Kaprálová: <i>Suite en Miniature Op.1</i> Martinů: <i>Violin Concerto #2</i> Martinů: <i>La revue de cuisine</i> Dvořák: <i>Czech Suite</i>	The Queen's Hall, 85-89 Clerk St, Edinburgh EH8 9JG 0131 668 2019 Scottish Chamber Orchestra https://www.thequeenshall.net/book/256402
17 April 2026 7.30 pm	Kaprálová: <i>Suite en Miniature Op.1</i> Martinů: <i>Violin Concerto #2</i> Martinů: <i>La revue de cuisine</i> Dvořák: <i>Czech Suite</i>	City Halls, Glasgow, 100 Candleriggs, Glasgow G1 1NQ 0141 353 8000 Scottish Chamber Orchestra https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/event/1/sco-202526-bohemian-rhapsodies-a-celebration-of-czech-music
Northern Ireland		
6 Feb 2026 7.45 pm	Dvořák: <i>Cello Concerto</i>	34 Bedford Street, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT2 7F 028 9033 4455, https://www.ulsterhall.co.uk/what-s-on/far-from-home/
28 March 2026 7.45 pm	Smetana: <i>Vltava</i>	34 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7F 028 9033 4455 https://www.ulsterhall.co.uk/what-s-on/of-rivers-and-mountains/

International

Date	Programme	Performers and Location
Czech Republic		
Opera of the National Theatre Prague, Národní 2, 110 00 Nové Město www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en		

Date	Programme	Performers and Location
19 Feb, 7.00 pm 4, 27 March 26 7.00 pm 4 April, 6.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/the-bartered-bride-3266368
17, 26 Feb 26 7.00 pm 19, 31 Mar 26 7.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/rusalka-146378962 5 April, 5.00 pm 26 April, 6.00pm 30 May, 7.00pm
5 May 6.00 pm 10, 17 May 26 2.00 pm	Václav Trojan: <i>Carousel</i> An opera for children, young and old.	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/a-carousel-Ufm5hyo6S4mX1K0M2bqxkg 9 June, 6.00 pm, 28 June, 2.00 pm
8 May 2026 7.00 pm	Smetana: <i>Libuše</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/libuse-opera-1520281
State Opera Prague , Wilsonova 4, 110 00 Vinohrady, www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en		
8 Mar 6.00 pm 14 Mar 7.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/show/rusalka-61064-1693572 1 May 6.00 pm, 20 May 7.00 pm
Brno Opera , Rooseveltova 31, 602 00 Brno-střed www.ndbrno.cz		
3 March 2026 7.00 pm	Janáček: <i>Káťa Kabanová</i>	https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/programme/?searchText=&days=&month=3&years=2026
Until 6 March 2026	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://operavision.eu/performance/rusalka-3 OperaVision live recording
6 Mar, 7.00 pm 6 April, 6.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Devil's Wall</i>	https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/programme/?searchText=&days=&month=3&years=2026
26 March 2026 7.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>The Jacobin</i>	https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/programme/?searchText=&days=&month=3&years=2026
29 March 2026 26 Apr, 6.00 pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/programme/?searchText=&days=&month=3&years=2026
25 April 2026 6.00 pm	Janáček: <i>Osud</i>	https://www.ndbrno.cz/en/programme/?searchText=&days=&month=4&years=2026
Ostrava Opera, Antonín Dvořák Theatre Ostrava www.ndm.cz		
15 March 2026 4.00 pm	Janáček: <i>The Cunning Little Vixen</i>	https://www.ndm.cz/cz/opera/program/ 20 Mar, 6.30 pm; 11, 23 April 2026 6.30 pm
Plzeň Opera J.K. Tyl Theatre Smetanovy sady 16, 301 00 Plzeň, www.djkt.eu/en/opera		
5 25 Feb 2026 20 27 March 26 7.00 pm	Mysliveček: <i>Tamerlane</i>	https://www.djkt.eu/program?filter[soubor]=opera
10 Feb, 7.00 pm 21 Mar, 2.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Devil's Wall</i>	https://www.djkt.eu/en/repertoire/devils-wall-2024
11 Feb, 7.00 pm 19 Mar, 7.00 pm 29 Mar, 2.00 pm	Smetana: <i>The Kiss</i>	https://www.djkt.eu/en/repertoire/the-kiss-2024
Slovakia		
Slovak National Theatre Opera Bratislava SND New Building Pribinová 17, 819 01 Bratislava www.snd.sk		
17 March 2026 11.00 am	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	https://snd.sk/en/program-opera/2025-2026/03 18 Mar, 7.00 pm; 12, 14 May 2026, 7.00 pm
24 Mar 11.00am 25 Mar, 7.00 pm	Suchoň: <i>Svätopluk</i>	https://snd.sk/en/program-opera/2025-2026/03

Date	Programme	Performers and Location
Austria		
23 26 29 31 March 2026	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i>	Vienna State Opera, Opernring, Vienna www.wiener-staatsoper.at/en/calendar/detail/die-verkaufte-braut
France		
2 5 8 11 14 17 20 May 7.30pm	Dvořák: <i>Rusalka</i>	Place de l'Opéra, 75009 Paris. 8 Rue Scribe, 75009 Paris. https://www.operadeparis.fr/en/ticketing#rusalka-calendar
USA		
11 February 2026 7.00 pm	The Music of Erich Schulhoff	Society for the History of Czechoslovak Jews, Bohemia National Hall, shcsj.us20.list-manage.com
19 February 2026 7.00 pm	Tribute to Rudolf Firkušný	Bohemia National Hall, https://www.dvoraknyc.org

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 for submissions are 1 January, April, July and October, respectively.

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

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

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

***Dvořák and England* by David Beveridge**

Advance Notice

The next Occasional Publication will be a much larger book than previous publications, with at least double the number of pages and containing copious footnotes. Because of this, we intend to publish the title in **two versions**:

1. The printed version will be available to all members **without footnotes or the numbers referring to them**.
2. The full text with the footnotes will only be available in digital form via the members' area on the Society's website.

Therefore, **we will contact all Society members by email** and will ask them to let us know if they wish to opt out of the printed version. In the absence of any response, we will automatically send a printed copy. All members are entitled to receive a printed copy and have access to the digital version as part of their membership.

Non-members of the Society will be able to acquire either versions of this book through the e-shop.

