

The Dvořák Society

For Czech and Slovak Music
Founded 1974

Newsletter No. 154, May 2026



Commented [TD1]: 1.Imported the article of Jan Smaczny. Added comment about Patrick Lambert.
2.Added David Robert's column. To make room for it I split Ian Bailey's article into two.

Commented [TD2R1]: Implemented corrections by Terry and Gordon.

Commented [TD3R1]: Implementing corrections by John



Volunteers' orchestra taking the final bow at the close of Dvořákathon on 1 March 2026. It was a musical marathon of all nine of Dvořák's symphonies performed in one day. For more information, see the reviews on page 10. The conductors are Paul Ingram (left) and Craig Lawton. Photo: Tomy Duby.

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 1st January, April, July and October, respectively.

Editor: Tomy Duby, tel.: +44 7878 190 244, e-mail: newsletter@dvorak-society.org. Dvořák Society's website: www.dvorak-society.org

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Between The Deadlines

Notes from your Chairman

At the end of January, we received the sad news of the death of our Patron, Richard Eskricke Phillips, MBE. Richard, with his long association with Leamington Music, was a passionate supporter of Czech musicians and Czech music, and he will be sadly missed. Tomy Duby and I were able to be present at the Service of Thanksgiving at The Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick, on Monday, 2nd March and meet Veronica and members of the family at Northgate at the end of the Service. In a packed church, there were tributes from friends, Richard's brother and Helen Beecroft, plus a musical tribute from the Coull Quartet with Raphael Wallfisch (cello) playing the Adagio from Schubert's *String Quintet*, D956. Other musical items were performed by the choir.

I have to report, rather belatedly, the death last year of Honorary Member Alena Veselá at the splendid age of 101. In Newsletter #143 (August 2023, page 1), we reported on the celebrations of her 100th birthday when she played an organ piece, with an assistant who kindly helped with the pedals. Members will recall meeting her during Society trips to Brno and her seemingly boundless energy.

Sylvie Bodorová's piece *Psalms and Exhortations*, which the Society commissioned for our 50th anniversary and first heard at Leamington Festival in 2024, has received its Prague premiere on April 16th at the New Town Hall. Vilém Veverka will again be the oboe soloist, this time with the Apex String Quartet.

Thanks to the London-based organist Richard Gowers, we have been made aware of a concert to be given by the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by our President in an all-Czech programme (Martinů, Kaprálová and Suk) on 6th June. This is followed on the next morning at 11 am with Richard playing the organ in Kabeláč's Third Symphony for organ, brass and timpani alongside other works for organ and

brass. (For more information about this concert, see page 24. There is a review of Kabeláč's symphonic music on page 17.)

Janáček's Sinfonietta by Nigel Simeone and Jiří Zahrádka has now been published. Boydell and Brewer are offering DS members a discount on the listed price. The book is also available as an e-book downloadable from the publisher's website. The Membership Secretary has circulated the details of the offer together with the special code to be inserted when ordering from the website. A limited number of softback copies are available for purchase from the e-shop on the DS website.

Janáček also featured in an event organised by the Czech Centre on 23rd April entitled *Fanfares for Leoš Janáček*, with our President as a special guest together with the authors Nigel Simeone and Jiří Zahrádka.

Another valuable publication issued by the Moravian Museum is *Káťa Kabanová and The Cunning Little Vixen*, the third volume in the series on Janáček's Operas written by the musicologist Jiří Zahrádka. All the volumes issued so far have been lavishly produced with copious illustrations and music examples, and are a testament to the author's extensive research and knowledge. Copies will be available from the e-shop. The first two volumes in the series are available to order via the e-shop.

On 22nd March, the RNCM performed Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*. This was in a reduced orchestration by Jonathan Lyness with the English translation by David Poutney. Unfortunately, due to a clash of events, I was unable to attend. Did any member go? It would be useful to receive feedback.

By the time this Newsletter comes out, we will be approaching our Annual General Meeting, which will be held via Zoom on Saturday, 9th May at 2.30 pm. Full particulars will be circulated by the Membership Secretary. Please note that a revised Constitution has been drafted, and this will be available to members before the AGM. Please take time to read, as this will

be an item on the Agenda and will require approval from the members present at the AGM.

After the AGM, Robert Rawson, Lecturer and musicologist based at the University of Canterbury, will give a presentation on the influence of Italian opera on Czech music, particularly in the 18th century. He will make references to his forthcoming CD *Vivaldi and Prague*.

Our Occasional Publication No. 11 *Dvořák and England*, by David Beveridge, is currently being printed and will be distributed in April. See the panel on page 24.

Volume 32 of the Journal will be available by early Summer. This is Patrick Devine's last issue as editor, as he has decided to hand over the reins to someone else. We are in the process of looking for a successor.

Quite unexpectedly, through a chance conversation, I was able to hear a rare live performance of Dvořák's *Piano Concerto* on 25th March given in the original version by Shrewsbury Symphony Orchestra with Galin Ganchev as the assured soloist. The enterprising programme also included Bacewicz's *Overture for Orchestra* and the *Fifth Symphony* of Shostakovich. I am told that they will include a work by Kaprálová in their November concert.

Finally, we are still 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 21 for further details. Adverts for the vacancy have also been placed with the BCSA and the Honorary Treasurers Forum.

M. David Roberts

This is your editor writing

This is my sixteenth Newsletter. This time, I have plenty to write about since our beloved AD almost took over my (musical) life.

In January, I gave a 90-minute-long presentation of Dvořák's music to my Exploring Classical Music u3a (University of the Third Age) group. Preparing it was a fascinating experience. I started with the list of AD's composition by genre. My major issue was what *not* to include.

Three weeks later, to start a new u3a group, this one dedicated to operas, I delivered another talk linked to Dvořák: I introduced the group to Rusalka. What a

nice kick-off! Please get in touch with me if you are interested in learning more about these groups or u3a.

And if this was not enough, Terry Heard, John Beale and I spent an exceptional Sunday at the University of Southampton listening to all nine symphonies of Dvořák in one day. A detailed review starts on page 10.

There is one additional good reason to mention our President, Jakub Hrůša: On 18th March, Jakub received the international Artist of the Year award in Bamberg, Bavaria, along with the Bavarian Order of Merit.

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

Tomy Duby

Membership News

Membership

Since our last Newsletter report, we have been saddened to hear of the deaths of two members: Professor Robin Weiss, who died in February, and Professor Alena Veselá, who died in May 2025, aged 101. Alena Veselá, a distinguished organist and former Rector of the Janáček Academy in Brno, was an Honorary Member and Vice-President of the Dvořák Society. Her centenary celebration was featured in Newsletter #143 (August 2023).

Payment Details

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

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Some overseas members have hit problems when trying to pay subscriptions by bank transfer using SWIFTBIC (or SWIFT/BIC or BICSWIFT as it seems to be variously called). The number of characters needed for a SWIFTBIC code varies by country, from 8 to 11. The Dvořák Society's code BUKBGB22 has 8 characters. If your local bank requires more characters, simply add on enough X's at the end to reach that number. For example, if a bank requires 11 characters, make the code BUKBGB22XXX.

Website Password Change

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

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

25 years ago

Dvořák Society Newsletter No. 55 appeared in April 2001 and was the ninth issue under my editorship.

First in this Newsletter was the announcement of the Annual General Meeting, which was to be held at the Czech and Slovak Club in West Hampstead at 11.30 am on Saturday, 28th April. Members were invited to stay for a traditional Czech lunch after the meeting, and there was to be a Social Gathering and Bring and Buy Sale in aid of the Scholarship Fund at 3.00 pm.

In this issue, Graham Melville-Mason started a new column: Music News from Slovakia. We expressed our thanks to the Slovak Ambassador František Dlhopolček and his Cultural Attaché for help in establishing our contacts in Slovakia. Members were invited to the annual concert of students from Slovak conservatoires, which was to take place at the Slovak Embassy at 7 pm on 24th April. The concert was organised by the Anglo-Czechoslovak-Trust, an organisation which selected the best students from Slovakia and the Czech Republic to compete with British colleagues in different musical categories.

Notice was given of three concerts by Duo Art Nouveau (Tomáš Tuláček and Geoffrey Chacaro) at the Czech Embassy: *Zdeněk Fibich and his Contemporaries*, *In the Shadow of the Swastika*, and *In the Shadow of the Hammer and Sickle*.

Shawn Pullman, as Secretary, reported in his column that leaflets about the forthcoming Festival of Czech Music in Leamington, to be held from 4th to 9th May, had

been circulated to members and that he hoped that this would be well supported.

Plans were still being formulated for a Society Trip to take place in the spring of 2002.

Jack Wilkinson was retiring as Sales Manager of the Society, and a new Sales Manager was being sought.

Graham Melville-Mason's column, *Music News from Slovakia*, announced that "after a period of less contact with Bratislava during the reorganisation of the administration of music in Slovakia, we are again in touch with Olga Smetanová and our friends at the Music Centre and the Slovak Music Foundation. The new *Hudobné centrum* (*Music Centre*) is based in the old Slovkoncert Offices in Michalská, where Olga Smetanová is the director. The Music Information Centre activities have been transferred to the same site."

Greg Terian, in his *Martinů Review*, reported on the Martinů Festival, which had taken place in Prague in December 2000. The highlight of the Festival had been David Pountney's new production of *The Soldier and the Dancer* at the State Opera. During the Festival, Graham Melville-Mason had delivered a paper on the composer's use of the orchestra in his operas. Also during the Festival, the International Bohuslav Martinů Society was formally inaugurated by its founder, Karel Van Eycken. While the new Society had its official seat in Brussels, it was fully supported by the Martinů Institute staff in Prague.

Lorna Dobson, in her *Lorna Corner*, gave us an update on the career of Brno-born Tomáš Hanus, who had recently conducted the Prague Chamber Philharmonic and was to conduct the Czech Philharmonic in April and the Janáček Chamber Orchestra as part of the Prague Spring Festival. Lorna had been renewing contact with our members from Singapore, especially Mr Voon Shih Hui, who was at this time studying at Bristol University.

Mark Todd reported on a Study Day at the Barbican, which had taken place on 4th March before the first concert of the Bohemian Spring series featuring the London Symphony Orchestra. Mark had joined about 120 participants who had been allowed to attend the rehearsal for the evening performance of Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* with soloists, orchestra and London Symphony Orchestra Chorus conducted by Jiří Bělohlávek. During the afternoon, there had been a discussion chaired by Ian Horsbrugh, principal of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, with a panel of scholars, Jan Smaczny, Geoffrey Chew and the conductor Jiří Bělohlávek, responding to questions from the floor. The topics had been wide-ranging. From 3.00 pm to 4.15 pm, Jan had given a talk illustrated with recorded music examples entitled *A family affair on the traditions of the Czech National Revival* and after tea and biscuits, he had introduced a performance of Janáček's *Intimate Letters* by a quartet made up of members of the LSO. He had then given a pre-concert talk on Dvořák's *Stabat Mater*.