

The Dvořák Society

For Czech and Slovak Music

Founded 1974

Newsletter No. 155, August 2026



Reduta, the home of the Slovak Philharmonic in Bratislava. This view from the balcony, taken on 16th April 2026, shows the hall to its restored original beauty. Photo: Alexander Trizuljak, courtesy of the Slovak Philharmonic. For a report on this concert, see page 9.

PRESIDENT: Jakub Hruša

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

Visit us online at www.dvorak-society.org and on Facebook, www.facebook.com/groups/294065791781477

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-societyv.org. **Dvořák Society's website:** www.dvorak-societyv.org

The Newsletter is produced with generous financial help from the Czech Foreign Ministry.

Registered Charity No. 267336.

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Between The Deadlines

Notes from your Chairman

The 2026 AGM was held via Zoom on **Saturday, 9th May at 2.30 pm**. A revised Constitution was passed by the meeting, and this is available for members to read on the Society's website and will be posted to the Society's entry on the Charity Commission's website. The meeting was poorly attended, and it was fortunate that the meeting was quorate (though only barely so) and therefore able to pass the revised constitution. The Minutes of the Meeting and all the Reports will be made available for the membership on the DS website.

After the AGM, Robert Rawson, Lecturer and musicologist based at the University of Canterbury, gave a fascinating presentation on the influence of Italian opera on Czech music, particularly in the 18th century. For those who missed the meeting, the presentation was recorded and will be available in the

Members' Area of the website, together with the PowerPoint slides.

It is disappointing for the Committee of Trustees that, after efforts are made to make meetings available to all, there is such a lack of interest in the ongoing activities of the Society and if not attendance at the AGM proper, any apparent take-up in hearing about Robert Rawson's research and the newly released recording.

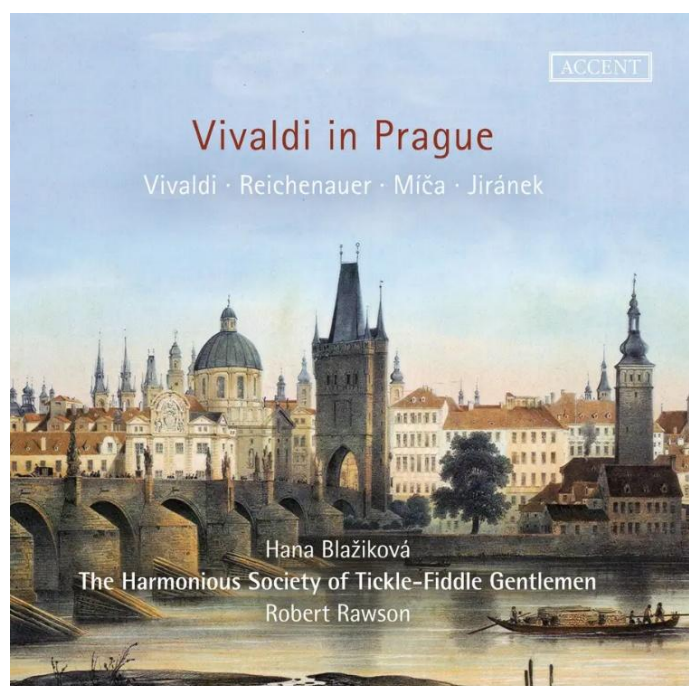
The Berlin Philharmonic, conducted by our President, presented an all-Czech programme (Martinů, Kapralová, Suk) on 6th June in Berlin. The next morning at 11 am, there was a performance of Kabeláč's *Third Symphony for organ, brass and timpani* with London-based organist Richard Gowers as soloist, playing other works for organ and brass. Here are the programme details: berliner-philharmoniker.de/en/concert/calendar/56436.

The Committee had agreed to provide some financial support to the Kabeláč Foundation towards a recording project involving our President, the Berlin Philharmonic and Richard Gowers. Unfortunately, contractual negotiations broke down, and the whole project had to be cancelled.

And for those who are interested, Jakub Hruša will conduct a Proms concert on 1st September of music by Kapralová and Janáček. For more information, see page 21.

However, in the meantime, an interesting initiative has emerged from the pianist Giorgio Koukl. Some members will be familiar with his recordings of Martinů on Naxos, to which the Society contributed financially to ensure that the series was completed. Giorgio has been researching the music of Josef Procházka (1874–1956), one of Dvořák's pupils. Procházka, who is previously unrecorded, spent time in Ljubljana, Slovenia, where Giorgio has uncovered some of his manuscripts. We hope to support him on this exciting project.

In this issue, we give a warm welcome to Sophie Redfern, the new editor of the Journal, who, from 1st



Source: Harmonia Mundi.



Jaroslava (Jarka) Lambert. Photo: Patrick Lambert.

June, takes over from Patrick Devine, see page 6. Volume 32 of the Journal will be published in mid-summer. We owe Patrick a huge thank you for his editorship over the past 10 years and for maintaining such a high standard both in content and in the sheer range of topics.

We are pleased to support two more Czech string players for this year's Cadenza Summer School. It took place from 18th to 23rd July again at the Purcell School. They are Anežka Kroupová (viola) and Ana Nekvasilová (cello). Reports from the Summer School will appear in the next Newsletter.

We were saddened to hear of the death of Jaroslava (Jarka) Lambert on 12th May after a long struggle with heart failure. We extend our condolences to Patrick and his family. The funeral was on 6th July at 1 pm at St Marylebone Crematorium.

Society Member, Tomaš Víšek, who is the solo pianist in the CD *Unreleased* [Arco Diva UP 0240-2131] from 2022, has now produced a musical album of the same pieces entitled *Forgotten Piano Pieces* published by Český rozhlas in 2026. [ISMN 979-0-666061-1570-6], 58 pages. The album includes an introduction and comprehensive editorial notes.

Further details can be found on his website, www.tomasvissek.cz/en.

Finally, we are still seeking a new treasurer. Martin Israel has stood down as a Trustee at the last AGM. He has kindly agreed to a holding position for six months whilst we get a replacement. Please see the notice in the box on page 20 for further details. Adverts for the vacancy are on our website, Facebook page and also the Honorary Treasurers Forum. Please spread the word of the vacancy. We are desperate to find a new Treasurer and fulfil this important function for the ongoing benefit of the Society.

M. David Roberts

This is your editor writing

This is my sixteenth Newsletter. A lot has happened in the last three months. We (that is, of course, my wife Tania and I) were in Bratislava for ten days. I report on a concert of the Slovak Philharmonic on page 9. The music of Cikker's *Selanka* still haunts me. The two events at the cinema of the Czech Embassy are worth mentioning. The first one introduced *Sinfonietta*, the latest book by Nigel Simeone, Jiří Zahrádka, and Jakub Hruša. You can read about it on the page 8.

The second one was on a much more personal and emotional level: the opening night of the 2026 Prague Spring Festival. It is reviewed on page 9. That we, that is, Tania and I, who were in 1970 given a 15-month prison sentence *in absentia* for illegally leaving Czechoslovakia a year earlier, were welcomed to this event, symbolically represents some of the positive changes brought by the Velvet Revolution of 1989.

The next Newsletter's submission deadline is 1 October 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

We are sorry to report the death in April of Trevor Lawson, and send condolences to his wife Chrissie, who was also a member.

On 12th May Jaroslava (Jarka) Lambert died after a long illness. Jarka, the wife of our eminent member Patrick Lambert, will be remembered with affection by the many members who enjoyed her company at Leamington and other events. The Dvořák Society was represented at her funeral. Patrick remains a member.

Website Password

A password is needed to gain access to the Members' Section of the Society's website (www.dvorak-society.org). This password was changed at the end of May. The new password has been sent by email to all members for whom I have an email address. If you want to know what the new password is, please contact me.

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

25 years ago

Dvořák Society Newsletter No. 56 appeared in July 2001 and was the tenth issue under my editorship.

First in this Newsletter was a column from Graham Melville-Mason congratulating Karel Husa on his 80th birthday. Karel Husa celebrated his birthday on 7th August 2001, but there had been special concerts to mark his contribution to Czech music in October last year in Prague. Jiří Bělohlávek conducted the Prague Symphony Orchestra in the Czech première of his *Symphony No. 1*, written in 1953 before his departure to the United States, and there were a number of informal meetings with the composer at the Martinů Foundation and at Žižkov. Czech Radio had dedicated its *Musica Moderna* week to his music, and the highlight of the celebrations had been a ceremony at HAMU when he had been awarded an Honorary Doctorate. In a very moving speech of acceptance, he had referred to our then Vice President Jan Hanuš, who had alone supported him in the difficult early years of his exile. Karel Husa had returned to Prague for performances of two of his works in the Prague Spring Festival. On 17th May, Serge Baudo had conducted the Prague Symphony Orchestra in his *Concerto for Orchestra* and on 31st May, the Prague Chamber

Orchestra, led by Ondřej Kukal, played his *Portrét for String Orchestra*.

Aleš Březina was to present the English version of a new film about Martinů in America at the Czech Centre in London on 6th September, and there was still time to book for the Society's weekend at Burton Manor from 7th to 9th September, when Graham Melville-Mason would be telling members about Bohemian Contemporaries of Mozart.

Shawn Pullman, as Secretary, reported in his column on the AGM which had been held on 28th April at the Czech and Slovak Club in West Hampstead. A good number of members had attended the business meeting in the morning, enjoyed a traditional lunch, and then stayed to support a Bring and Buy Sale in the afternoon.

Shawn also reported on the Leamington Czech Music Festival, where it had been great to see so many old friends and members. The two days had been demanding with four concerts on each day, but well worth the effort. Richard Phillips of Warwick Arts was to be congratulated on his skills in planning and securing sponsorship to make it all happen.

Shawn was able to give more information about the 2002 Society Trip, which was to commence with a flight from Stansted to Prague on Saturday, 4th May. The party would then transfer directly by coach for a few days in Bratislava. The group would then return to Brno to sample Moravian delights before travelling to Prague in time to attend the opening concert of the Prague Spring Festival on Saturday, 12th May. There would be excursions from Prague and evening concerts where possible. The group would take the return flight on Sunday, 19th May.

Our Chairman, Graham Melville-Mason, reported that Dvořák's opera *Rusalka* had reached her Centenary, having first been performed at the National Theatre in Prague on 31st March 1901. To mark this event, the Dvořák Memorial at the Kaunic Chateau in Vysoká had opened a finely designed and presented exhibition of documents, photographs, stage designs and costumes of the original production from the archives of the National Theatre and the Dvořák family.

The Emmy Destinn Foundation announced an Opera Gala Benefit Concert in honour of Emmy Destinn (1878–1930) to be held on Saturday, 29th September, at 7.30 pm in the Linbury Studio, Covent Garden Opera House. This evening of Czech Opera would be devoting the entire programme of works by Czech composers to the young stars of the future. Those performing would be Yvette Bonner (soprano), Andrew Reece (tenor), Kimberley Myers (soprano), Andrea Kalivodová (mezzo) and Barry Martin (bass), with Lada Valešová (piano).

There were to be five performances of *Rusalka* in the Roxburgh Theatre within the National Trust Landscape Gardens at Stowe in August. The opera would be

performed by Stowe Opera, conducted by Robert Secret, and would be sung in Czech.

Greg Terian started his Martinů Review with this information about the Leamington Festival: 'Our Chairman opened the Festival on Friday, 4th May with a wide-ranging talk on the evolution of the string quartet and its place in Czech musical life. After a formal inauguration by the Czech Ambassador, the opening recital was given by the Martinů Quartet from Prague, joined by Douglas Paterson. In an imaginative piece of programme planning, the familiar Smetana *First Quartet* and the Dvořák *Quintet*, Op. 97 were joined by the rarely heard Martinů *String Quartet*, H. 164 of 1927.'

Supraphon seemed set to produce the first recording of Martinů's *Suite Concertante*. An album entitled *Homage to Dushkin* would also include his *First Violin Concerto*, a work commissioned by Samuel Dushkin. The works were recorded during May with the Czech Philharmonic under Christopher Hogwood, Bohuslav Matoušek being the soloist.

Magdalena Kožená was to make three appearances at the year's Verbier Festival with songs by Janáček and Martinů.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra was to include the Martinů *Sixth Symphony* in its concerts at the Edinburgh Festival and the Proms.

Mark Todd gave an extensive report on the Leamington Festival, and this was accompanied by several photographs showing Jiří Štilec and Sylvie Bodorová taken after the world première of her piano trio, Vilém Tauský, back in Leamington and with Brenda Rayson, Lenka Škorníčková with Jitka Drobliková, Pavel Šporcl (with Petr Jiříkovský in the background), and Petr Jiříkovský with the Juventus Wind Quartet. Other photos showed 'Society members taking a short break in their Leamington marathon.' And Shawn Pullman and Pat and Peter Herbert were photographed with Jiří Štilec and Sylvie Bodorová in Jephson Gardens.

Richard Phillips, as Director, had spoken about the importance of Dvořák Society members in contributing to the Festival's success. More than 50 members were in attendance this year.

Greg Terian had already reported on the performance of the Martinů Quartet. Their concert had set the scene for several Czech and British ensembles, with members of these working together in some cases. The Schubert Ensemble of London had included Pavel Novák's *Marian Variations*. The Trio Lubomír Havlák, Jan Jiša and Jitka Vlasánková played works by Schulhoff and Klein. Victoria Soames, Jane Salmon and William Howard played a clarinet trio by Škroup. The Juventus Quintet, in two concerts, included wind ensemble works by Haas, Klein and the contemporary composer Luděk Vlach. The Pirasti Trio included a Fibich *Trio*. Petr Jiříkovský and the Janáček Quartet played Suk's *Piano Quintet*. William

Howard joined the Martinů Quartet in playing Dvořák's early *A major Quintet*, Op. 5.

Sylvie Bodorová had two works performed at the Festival, *La Speranza* originally premiered at the Warwick Festival in 1993 and a new Piano Trio *Megiddo*, here given its world première by the Schubert Ensemble.

Graham Melville-Mason gave the opening talk at the Festival. On another occasion, he also prompted Vilém Tauský to talk about his early years as a conductor in Brno, the events which led to him coming to Leamington and the highlights of his subsequent career.

During the weekend, Richard Beith gave a talk on the Czech Army in Leamington and led a walk around the town to see the memorials to the Army's presence in the town.

Mark Todd and Paul Binding reported on a concert given by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Jiří Bělohlávek, which had taken place on 29th May. The concert had commenced with an Orchestral Suite compiled by František Jílek from Janáček's *House of the Dead*. This was followed by Dvořák's *Cello Concerto* and Janáček's *Taras Bulba*.

Patrick Lambert reported on a concert at St Luke's Church in West Norwood at which Jana Nováková (violin) had performed with the Lambeth Orchestra, conducted by Christopher Fifield. The programme had been as follows: Christopher Wood *Triptych* (première), Dvořák *Violin Concerto in A minor*, and Bruch *Symphony No. 1 in G minor*. Having been thrilled by Jana Nováková's performance at the Czech Embassy in March, Patrick had found his way to South London to hear her again, and so had Karel Janovický and Alex Melville-Mason (Alex was Graham's wife). The highlight of the concert was undoubtedly the Dvořák *Violin Concerto*, the young soloist having been billed as the Winner of the Talent of the Year 2000 in Prague. Jana was at that time studying under Professor Felix Andrievsky at the Royal College of Music.

Peter Herbert, in his Peter's Pages, reports on the Farewell Dinner for Petr Altrichter organised by Lorna Dobson at the Devonshire House Hotel in Liverpool on 9th May. Around 30 members gathered to wish Petr a fond farewell following his too short a time with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic. Petr's last two concerts with the Orchestra had taken place on 6th and 7th June. Rodion Shchedrin's *Carmen Suite* had been given a stunningly good performance. This had been followed by Rachmaninov's *Paganini Variations*. After the interval, we heard Dvořák's *New World Symphony*. 'This was not just another *New World* performance. It was a reminder of what we are going to miss in the Northwest of England.'

and 50 years ago

Dvořák Society Journal (Zpráva), Volume 3, No. 1 of June 1976, contained the Second Annual Report of the Society. An article entitled 'A Classic Interpretation of

Dvořák on Record' by Mark Todd reviewed the 52 entries of recordings of Dvořák's works in the 1976 edition of *The Art of Record Buying*. Other articles were on 'Dvořák's Last Two Quartets' by John Beale, and an Evening of Recorded Music at Holland Park in conjunction with the Strauss Society.

The Koenig Ensemble was to give a concert of music by Janáček at the Wigmore Hall on 2nd July to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of his first London Concert in 1926. (Tickets were priced at £1.50, £1.10, 75p and 50p, but there was a small discount for members. Programmes were 10p each.)

Supraphon was congratulated on its 30th birthday.

Annette Percy

A Welcome from the New Journal Editor

On 1 June, I officially became Editor of the Society's *Journal of Czech and Slovak Music*. It is a role I'm delighted to take on, and in doing so, I follow Patrick Devine, who has steered the Journal with integrity, rigour, and good humour for the past decade. I am grateful to him for handing over a publication in such fine shape, and I very much look forward to reading and enjoying his final volume in due course.

I come to the post as a musicologist specialising in twentieth-century music. I am currently a visiting research fellow at King's College London and a lecturer at the University of Nottingham, having previously taught at Edinburgh, King's, and Sheffield, among others. Alongside my academic appointments, I maintain an active freelance career as a writer and speaker on music, preparing programme notes, giving talks, and presenting events for organisations including the BBC, Royal Opera House, and Wigmore Hall. I am also a series editor for the new Boydell Press series *Twentieth-Century Music*. The first volume, *Janáček's Sinfonietta* by Nigel Simeone and Jiří Zahrádka, was published earlier this year with support from the Society, and some members may even have attended its recent launch at the Czech Embassy.

As a researcher, my own work has largely looked across the Atlantic. My first book, *Bernstein and Robbins: The Early Ballets* (University of Rochester Press, 2021), was named a *CHOICE* Outstanding Academic Title and was published in paperback in 2023. Czech music, however, has long been a personal passion. What began with the orchestral music of Smetana and Dvořák as a student double bassist has grown into a wider interest in Czech and Slovak repertoire, history, and culture. Time spent in Prague and Brno deepened that further, and I have no doubt I will continue to expand my knowledge through working with contributors to the Journal.



Sophie Redfern, our new Journal editor.

The remit of the Journal is to publish substantial scholarly articles by leading authorities, with book reviews also a feature. There are no formal restrictions on time period or subject matter: contributions may address any aspect of Czech and Slovak music or culture. The Journal also has a history of publishing English translations of significant and previously inaccessible scholarship that first appeared in other languages, particularly Czech, Slovak, and German. Looking to the future, I would like to encourage new or previous contributors to get in touch with ideas for articles or to discuss projects that may be a good fit for publication. My hope is that the Journal will continue to provide a welcoming forum that reflects the breadth and vitality of research on Czech and Slovak music.

Sophie Redfern

Editor, *Journal of Czech and Slovak Music*

Email: sm.redfern@googlemail.com

Tribute to Richard Phillips

At the end of January, we received the sad news of the death of our Patron, Richard Eskricke Phillips, MBE. A Service of Thanksgiving was held at the Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick, on Monday, 2nd March 2026, in which live music played an inevitable and significant part.