

Sunday, November 9, 2014, 3pm  
Zellerbach Hall

## Czech Philharmonic

Jiří Bělohlávek, *Chief Conductor & Music Director*

*featuring*

## Prague Philharmonic Choir

Lukáš Vasilek, *Principal Conductor & Choir Master*

*with*

Lucie Silkenová, *soprano*  
Dagmar Pecková, *mezzo-soprano*  
Jaroslav Březina, *tenor*  
Jan Martiník, *bass*

### PROGRAM

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904) Stabat Mater, Op. 58 (1876–1877)

- I. Stabat Mater dolorosa  
Andante con moto (*soloists and chorus*)
- II. Quis est homo, qui non fleret  
Andante sostenuto (*soloists*)
- III. Eja Mater, fons amoris  
Andante con moto (*chorus*)
- IV. Fac ut ardeat cor meum  
Largo (*bass and chorus*)
- V. Tui nati vulnerati  
Andante con moto, quasi allegretto (*chorus*)

- VI. Fac me vere tecum flere  
Andante con moto (*tenor and chorus*)
- VII. Virgo virginum praeclara  
Largo (*chorus*)
- VIII. Fac ut portem Christi mortem  
Larghetto (*soprano and tenor*)
- XI. Inflammatus et accensus  
Andante maestoso (*alto*)
- X. Quando corpus morietur  
Andante con moto (*soloists and chorus*)

*This performance is made possible, in part, by Patron Sponsors  
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**Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)**  
**Stabat Mater, Op. 58**

*Composed in 1876–1877. Premiered on December 23, 1880, in Prague, conducted by Adolf Čech.*

In his biography of Dvořák, John Clapham titled the chapter concerning 1876–1877, the time of the *Stabat Mater*, “A Genius Emerges.” Only three years before, Dvořák’s income from his compositions and as organist at St. Adalbert’s Church in Prague had been so meager that the city officials certified his poverty, thus making him eligible to submit his work for consideration to a committee in Vienna awarding grants to struggling artists. The members of the selection committee were a distinguished lot—Johann Herbeck, Director of the Court Opera; the renowned critic Eduard Hanslick; and that titan of Viennese music himself, Johannes Brahms. Their report noted that Dvořák possessed “genuine and original gifts,” and that his music displayed “an undoubted talent, but in a way which as yet remains formless and unbridled.” They deemed his work worthy of encouragement, however, and, on their recommendation, the Minister of Culture, Karl Stremayer, awarded the young musician 400 gulden, the highest stipend bestowed under the program. It represented Dvořák’s first recognition outside his homeland and his initial contact with Brahms and Hanslick, both of whom proved to be powerful influences on his career through their example, artistic guidance, and professional help. An excited burst of compositional activity followed during the months after Dvořák learned of his award, in February 1875: the G major String Quintet, *Moravian Duets* for Soprano and Tenor, B-flat Piano Trio, D major Piano Quartet, Fifth Symphony, and Serenade for Strings all appeared with inspired speed.

Dvořák’s rapidly accumulating good fortune of the mid-1870s was not unalloyed, however, since he suffered the death of a newborn daughter, Josefa, in September 1875, a distressing and painful experience for this

deeply pious man who was devoted to family life. During the following weeks, he found solace in the liturgical words describing the pity of the Mother of Christ at the cross, the *Stabat Mater*, and on February 16, 1876, he began a musical setting of the text for soloists, chorus, and orchestra to vent his grief. The *Stabat Mater*, Dvořák’s first important sacred work, was largely sketched by May 7th, when he had to put it aside to return to more pressing projects, including the *Moravian Duets* (which he needed to help secure a renewal of his Viennese stipend), the Piano Concerto, the comic opera *The Cunning Peasant*, and the *Symphonic Variations*. It was another tragedy in Dvořák’s life—a double one, this time—that compelled him to again take up his *Stabat Mater*, when the composer and his wife lost their two other children within the space of just three weeks: Ruzena, their eleven-month-old daughter, accidentally swallowed phosphorous and died on August 13, 1877; three-year-old Otakar succumbed to smallpox on September 8th. Dvořák, now childless, worked feverishly on the score of the *Stabat Mater*, and by November 13th he had rounded out the sketches of 18 months before and completed the orchestration.

The *Stabat Mater* was one of the two principal vehicles—the *Slavonic Dances*, published by Fritz Simrock at Brahms’s insistence in 1879, was the other—by which Dvořák established his international reputation. The work was successfully premiered in Prague on December 23, 1880 under the direction of Adolf Čech, one of the composer’s staunchest champions, and given its second performance, in Brno on April 2, 1882, by Leoš Janáček, whom Dvořák had met in 1876 and regularly accompanied on walking tours of southern Bohemia during the summers thereafter. Those performances, however, did little to prepare Dvořák for the unstinting acclaim that greeted the *Stabat Mater* in Britain following its premiere in London by Joseph Barnby on March 10, 1883. So great was the demand to hear this new choral masterpiece that Dvořák himself was brought to England the following

year to lead an orchestra of 150 and a chorus of 900 in its performance at the Albert Hall on March 13, 1884. “I had the most tremendous success,” he reported to Simrock. “Everywhere I appear, whether in the street or at home or even when I go to a shop to buy something, people crowd round me and ask for my autograph. There are pictures of me at all the booksellers, and people buy them just to have some memento.” He returned in September to conduct the *Stabat Mater* as part of the celebrations marking the 800th anniversary of the founding of Worcester Cathedral, and thereafter became a frequent and welcome visitor to the country. The *Stabat Mater*’s American premiere, conducted by Theodore Thomas at New York’s Steinway Hall on April 3, 1884, laid the foundation for Dvořák’s renown in this country, which culminated in his tenure as director of the National Conservatory in New York City from 1892 to 1895. When he was awarded a doctorate *honoris causa* by Cambridge University in June 1891, Dvořák conducted the *Stabat Mater* and the Symphony No. 8 in G major at the investiture ceremony. “It was all frighteningly solemn,” he recalled, “nothing but ceremonies and deans, all solemn-faced and apparently incapable of speaking anything but Latin. When it dawned upon me that they were talking about me, I felt as if I were drowning in hot water, so ashamed was I that I could not understand them.... However, when all is said and done, that *Stabat Mater* of mine is more than just Latin.”

The *Stabat Mater* is a 13th-century sequence (i.e., a sacred Latin poem with most of its lines paired in end-rhyme), usually attributed to the Franciscan monk Jacopone da Todi, which tells of the piteous anguish of the Mother of Christ as she stands before the Cross. Though regularly used for personal and communal devotions from the time of its creation, the *Stabat Mater* was not officially accepted

into the Roman Catholic liturgy until 1727. In addition to the setting by Dvořák, the text has also been treated by Josquin, Palestrina, Lasso, Pergolesi, Vivaldi, Haydn, Rossini, Schubert, Verdi, Poulenc, Dohnányi, Thomson, and others. Dvořák’s setting, spread across ten expansive movements, takes as its dominant mood the expression of the grief of the Mother for her lost Son, but tempers this melancholy emotion with passages of brighter countenance which suggest the optimism of the composer’s personal religious beliefs. Indeed, such balancing of emotions provides for the grand organizational plan that underlies the *Stabat Mater*: four movements (Nos. 1–4) of solemn grieving music, four (Nos. 5–8) of consolation, and two (Nos. 9 and 10) that round out the cycle by returning to the mood and even the music of the opening. This tripartite structure, affirmed by tonality (major in the central movements, minor at the beginning and end) and by vocal scoring (the brighter voices of soprano and tenor soloists in Nos. 6 and 8, the darker bass and alto in Nos. 4 and 9), arises from the flow of sentiment across the text, which focuses on the event of the Crucifixion in its opening stanzas, and Judgment Day and the death of the individual at its end, while seeking consolation in shared sorrow (“let me weep beside you”; “let me share His passion”) in its middle verses. Informing this sweeping architectonic design is Dvořák’s melodic abundance, harmonic richness, and darkly beautiful scoring expressed with his characteristic sincerity of utterance. The *Stabat Mater* is one of the great monuments of 19th-century vocal music—a work grand in scale yet intimately poignant in effect, a composition that transcends sectarian bounds to touch on the universal truths that bind us all in a common humanity.

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Antonín Dvořák  
Stabat Mater, Op. 58

**I. Stabat Mater dolorosa (soloists and chorus)**

Stabat Mater dolorosa  
juxta crucem lacrimosa  
dum pendebat Filius.

Cujus animam gementem,  
contristatam et dolentem,  
pertransivit gladius.

O quam tristis et afflicta  
fuit illa benedicta  
Mater Unigeniti!

Quæ mœrebat et dolebat  
Pia Mater, dum videbat  
Nati pœnas inclyti.

**II. Quis est homo, qui non fletet (soloists)**

Quis est homo qui non fletet  
Matrem Christi si videret  
in tanto supplicio?

Quis non posset contristari  
Christi Matrem contemplari  
dolentem cum Filio?

Pro peccatis suæ gentis  
vidit Jesum in tormentis,  
et flagellis subditum.

Vidit suum dulcem Natum  
morientem, desolatum,  
dum emisit spiritum.

**III. Eja Mater, fons amoris (chorus)**

Eja Mater, fons amoris,  
me sentire vim doloris  
fac, ut tecum lugeam.

**IV. Fac ut ardeat cor meum (bass and chorus)**

Fac ut ardeat cor meum  
in amando Christum Deum,  
ut sibi complaceam.

Sancta Mater, istud agas,  
crucifixi fige plagas  
cordi meo valide.

**I.**

The sorrowful Mother stood  
weeping by the cross  
where her Son was hanging.

Her spirit cried out,  
full of anguish and sorrow,  
as if pierced by a sword.

O how sad and distressed  
was that blessed Woman,  
Mother of the only-begotten Son!

How She grieved and suffered  
this Holy Mother, as she saw  
the agonies of her Son.

**II.**

What man would not weep  
to see the Mother of Christ  
in such torment?

Who would not be saddened  
seeing Christ's Mother  
grieving for her Son?

For the sins of the world,  
She saw Jesus in torment  
and beaten down with whips.

She saw her sweet Son  
dying in desolation,  
giving up His spirit.

**III.**

Ah Mother, fountain of grief,  
let me feel thy grief  
so that I can mourn with you.

**IV.**

Let my heart burn  
with the love of Christ, my God,  
so that I may please Him.

Holy Mother, grant this:  
fix the wounds of Him who is crucified  
firmly in my heart.

**V. Tui nati vulnerati (chorus)**

Tui Nati vulnerati,  
jam dignati pro me pati,  
pœnas mecum divide.

**VI. Fac me vere tecum flere (tenor and chorus)**

Fac me vere tecum flere,  
crucifixo condolere,  
donec ego vixero.

Juxta crucem tecum stare,  
te libenter sociare  
in planctu desidero.

**VII. Virgo virginum præclara (chorus)**

Virgo, virginum præclara,  
mihi jam non sis amara,  
fac me tecum plangere.

**VIII. Fac ut portem Christi mortem (soprano and tenor)**

Fac ut portem Christi mortem,  
passionis fac consortem  
et plagas recolare.

Fac me plagis vulnerari,  
cruce hac inebriari,  
ob amorem Filii.

**IX. Inflammatus et accensus (alto)**

Inflammatus et accensus,  
per te, Virgo, sim defenses  
in die judicii.

Fac me cruce custodiri,  
morte Christi præmuniri,  
confoveri gratia.

**X. Quando corpus morietur (soloists and chorus)**

Quando corpus morietur,  
fac ut animæ donetur  
paradisi gloria.  
Amen!

**V.**

With thy injured Son,  
who suffered so to save me,  
let me share His pains.

**VI.**

Let me weep beside you,  
mourning the crucified One,  
as long as I shall live.

To stand by the cross with you,  
and to willingly join you  
in weeping is my desire.

**VII.**

Virgin, most famed of all virgins,  
do not be severe with me now,  
let me weep with thee.

**VIII.**

Let me bear Christ's death,  
let me share His passion  
and remember His wounds.

Let me be wounded with His blows,  
inebriated with the cross  
and your Son's love.

**IX.**

All my heart, inflamed and burning,  
Saviour, now to Thee is turning;  
Shield me in the Judgment Day.

By Thy Cross may I be guarded,  
meritless, yet be rewarded  
through Thy grace, O living way.

**X.**

When my body dies  
let my soul be granted  
the glory of heaven.  
Amen!

## CZECH PHILHARMONIC

Jiří Bělohlávek, *Chief Conductor & Music Director*

## FIRST VIOLIN

Josef Špaček, Jr.\*  
Jan Fišer\*  
Miroslav Vilímeč  
Miluše Skoumalová  
Magdaléna Mašlaňová  
Jan Jouza  
Eduardo Garcia Salas  
Barbora Kolářová  
Zdeněk Starý  
Jindřich Vácha  
Milan Vavřínek  
Zdeněk Zelba  
Viktor Mazáček  
Pavel Nechvíle  
Marie Dvorská  
Luboš Dudek  
Bohumil Kotmel

## SECOND VIOLIN

František Havlín  
Václav Prudil  
Ondřej Skopový  
Jan Ludvík  
Marcel Kozánek  
Zuzana Hájková  
Petr Havlín  
Libor Vilímeč  
Jiří Ševčík  
Jan Jirů  
Pavel Herajm  
Jitka Kokšová  
Petra Brabcová  
Vítězslav Ochman

## VIOLA

Jaroslav Pondělíček  
Pavel Ciprys  
Dominik Trávníček  
Jaromír Páviček  
Petr Žďárek  
Jaroslav Kroft  
Jan Šimon  
Jan Mareček

## Jiří Řehák

Lukáš Valášek  
Jiří Poslední  
Ondřej Kameš

## CELLO

Václav Petr\*  
Josef Špaček Sr.  
Josef Dvořák  
František Lhotka  
Jakub Dvořák  
Tomáš Hostička  
Jan Holeňa  
Peter Mišejka  
Marek Novák  
Ivan Vokáč

## DOUBLE BASS

Jiří Hudec  
Petr Ries  
Jiří Valenta  
Ondřej Balcar  
Martin Hilský  
Jaromír Černík  
Jiří Vopálka  
Pavel Hudec

## FLUTE

Radomír Pivoda  
Jan Machat  
Petr Veverka  
Oto Reiprich

## OBOE

Ivan Sěquardt  
Jana Brožková  
Vojtěch Jouza  
Vladislav Borovka

## CLARINET

František Bláha  
Tomáš Kopáček  
Zdeněk Tesař  
Petr Sinkule

## BASSOON

Ondřej Roskovec  
Jaroslav Kubita  
Václav Vonášek  
Tomáš Františ

## HORN

Jan Vobořil  
Jiří Havlík  
Zdeněk Divoký  
Zdeněk Vašina  
Jindřich Kolář  
Kateřina Javůrková

## TRUMPET

Jaroslav Halíř  
Ladislav Kozderka  
Zdeněk Šedivý  
Antonín Pecha

## TROMBONE

Břetislav Kotrba  
Robert Kozánek  
Lukáš Mořka  
Karel Kučera

## TUBA

Karel Malimánek

## HARP

Jana Boušková

## PERCUSSION

Petr Holub  
Michael Kroutil  
Pavel Polívka

## ORGAN

Kosinová Valtová

\* *Concertmaster/Principal*

## PRAGUE PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

Lukáš Vasilek, *Principal Conductor & Choir Master*

## SOPRANO

Lenka Bartošíková  
 Marie Bartošová  
 Gražyna Biernot  
 Hana Červenková  
 Eliška Demel Trnov  
 Martina Harváňková  
 Martina Kritznerová  
 Romana Letošníková  
 Marie Matějková  
 Denisa Myslivečková  
 Marie Němcová  
 Věra Příbylová  
 Andrea Soukupová  
 Jana Sováková  
 Dagmar Williams  
 Dana Zíková  
 Dagmar Výborná  
 Pavla Frassová

## ALTO

Zuzana Bártová  
 Daniela Demuthová  
 Jana Drábková  
 Jana Dvořáková  
 Agata Hauserová  
 Ludmila Hudečková  
 Lenka Jančíková  
 Magda Kaňková  
 Dagmar Novotná  
 Štěpánka Pýchová  
 Dana Sedmidubská  
 Romana Soukupová  
 Marie Šmaterová  
 Hana Vasiluková

## TENOR

Viktor Byčok  
 Tomáš Fiala  
 Michal Foršt  
 Tomáš Hinterholzinger  
 Zdeněk Kazda  
 Petr Klíma  
 Vladimír Okénko  
 Bronislav Palowski  
 Miloslav Pelikán  
 Zdeněk Polda  
 Alexander Sedláček  
 Bohumil Sládeček  
 Martin Slavík  
 Linhart Švancar

## BASS

Vladimír Hambálek  
 Tomáš Hanzl  
 Michael Havlíček  
 Josef Chaloupka  
 Karel Chaloupka  
 Michal Krůšek  
 Pavel Kudrna  
 Petr Kutina  
 Michael Mergl  
 Peter Poldauf  
 Vladislav Renza  
 Petr Svoboda  
 Miroslav Vácha

## PIANO

Lenka Navrátilová  
 Marcel Javorček

## MANAGING DIRECTOR

Eva Sedláková

## CHOIR MANAGER

Radim Dolanský



Václav Hrášek

FOR OVER A CENTURY, the Czech Philharmonic has represented the pinnacle of Czech cultural achievement, delighting audiences across the globe with its warm, vibrant sound. Today, the orchestra is enjoying a renewed reputation as one of the most exciting ensembles on the world stage, performing with artists including Hélène Grimaud, Lang Lang, Janine Jansen, Anne-Sophie Mutter, and Frank Peter Zimmermann, among many others. The Czech Philharmonic has also been joined by soloists Garrick Ohlsson, Mr. Zimmermann, and Alisa Weilerstein in recording Dvořák's complete symphonies and concertos, under the baton of Jiří Bělohlávek, the orchestra's chief conductor. The CD will be released in 2014 on the Decca label.

The Czech Philharmonic has a history of working with outstanding musicians. Dvořák himself conducted the orchestra in its debut performance on January 4, 1896, at the Rudolfinum in Prague, which is still home to its Prague concerts, and is now the center for

its Orchestral Academy. The Academy is just one of numerous successful education projects through which the Czech Philharmonic engages with new audiences, from young children to university students and adults seeking to learn more about classical music.

Other conductors in the orchestra's history include Gustav Mahler, who conducted the Czech Philharmonic for the world premiere of his Symphony No. 7, in Prague in 1908. The orchestra's international reputation grew under the direction of Václav Talich, the energetic leadership of Rafael Kubelík helped steer the Czech Philharmonic through the difficult wartime years, and in the postwar era of Karel Ančerl it embarked on its busy and varied touring schedule. Today, the orchestra performs in the world's most prestigious concert halls, including recent and forthcoming concerts at the Philharmonie in Berlin and Suntory Hall in Tokyo, as well as in Carnegie Hall in New York and the NCPA in Beijing. Scheduled international appearances in 2015 and 2016

include three concerts at the Musikverein in Vienna, one in London's Royal Festival Hall, and one in the Vienna Konzerthaus.

The Czech Philharmonic's 2014 festival appearances included concerts at the BBC Proms and the Edinburgh Festival. With Mr. Bělohlávek, the Czech Philharmonic has also undertaken successful tours in Australia, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, Spain, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom.

The Czech Philharmonic is privileged to welcome many distinguished guest conductors, including recent and forthcoming collaborations with, among others, Herbert Blomstedt, Semyon Bychkov, Christoph Eschenbach, Valery Gergiev, Robin Ticciati, and David Zinman.

The Czech Philharmonic has received numerous awards and nominations, including ten Grands Prix du Disque de l'Académie Charles-Cros, five Grand Prix du Disque de l'Académie française, several Cannes Classical Awards, a position in *Gramophone's* Top 20 Best Orchestras in the World (2008), as well as nominations for Grammy and Gramophone Awards.

In a fitting tribute to its first conductor, the Czech Philharmonic has made nine new television programs, each of which features a full performance of one of Dvořák's nine symphonies. The shows will be broadcast by Czech Television in 2014 and distributed internationally by UNITEL. The orchestra is also producing a Czech Television documentary (in association with Rhombus Media) about Dvořák, Mr. Bělohlávek, and the current work of the Czech Philharmonic itself. The documentary is directed by Barbara Willis Sweete, who has worked with the Metropolitan Opera in New York, among others, on several films.

Further exciting projects include the launch of a competition for composers, the winner of which will have his or her work performed by the Czech Philharmonic, and another competition for aspiring Czech soloists, the winner of which will perform with the orchestra. In seeking to foster new talent,

the Czech Philharmonic continues its journey into the future, a future which looks brighter than ever.

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The Prague Philharmonic Choir, led by principal conductor Lukáš Vasilek, is a professional choral ensemble of almost 70 members which has been performing and recording all over the world for 79 years. It collaborates with renowned orchestras and conductors of the international music scene, and is considered one of the most popular choirs in Europe.

It began performing in January 1935, under the leadership of its founder, Jan Kühn, as the Prague Radiojournal Choir, later the Czech Choir. Originally an amateur body, it gradually became professional and, in 1951, it was affiliated with the Czech Philharmonic, which it remained a part of until 1990. The choir is currently an independent ensemble. Principal conductors since the 1960s have included Josef Veselka, Lubomír Mátl, Pavel Kühn, Jaroslav Brych, and Jan Rozehnal. Since 2007, the post of principal conductor has been held by Lukáš Vasilek.

The Prague Philharmonic Choir regularly collaborates with leading Czech and international orchestras, including the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Prague Symphony Orchestra, PKF—Prague Philharmonia, Berlin Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Israel Philharmonic, Staatskapelle Dresden, Staatskapelle Berlin, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, and many others. During its long history, the Prague Philharmonic

Choir has achieved exceptional musical quality, based on its cooperation with outstanding conductors such as Sir Charles Mackerras, Riccardo Muti, Pierre Boulez, Seiji Ozawa, Zubin Mehta, Kurt Masur, Sir Simon Rattle, Michael Tilson Thomas, Christoph Eschenbach, Christopher Hogwood, Ingo Metzmacher, Fabio Luisi, Manfred Honeck, and Jiří Bělohlávek. It also collaborates with the upcoming generation of conductors, including Czech conductors Jakub Hrůša and Tomáš Netopil.

The Prague Philharmonic Choir has a wide repertoire that is focused primarily on a *cap-pella*, cantata, and oratorio works from classicism to the present. Recently it has also been invited, in various chamber forms, to perform Renaissance and Baroque music. An important part of the Choir's repertoire is opera, both in concert and incidental forms. In addition, the Prague Philharmonic Choir is considered an exemplary performer of Czech music (e.g., Dvořák, Janáček, and Martinů) and music by Russian composers (e.g., Rachmaninoff and Shostakovich). It is in demand to perform this kind of music thanks largely to its distinctive colourful sound and the well-suited language skills of its singers.

The Prague Philharmonic Choir performs almost 90 concerts a year, most of which take place abroad. During its long history, it has performed at many venues around the world, including La Scala in Milan, the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, the Royal Theater in Madrid, the Monte Carlo Opera, Theatre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, the Zurich Opera, and the Semper Opera House in Dresden. This year, the Prague Philharmonic Choir can be heard in concerts in Paris, Berlin, Munich, Bad Kissingen, Lugano, Torino, Reggio, Mexico, Washington, New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.

Since 2010, the Prague Philharmonic Choir has been the choir in residence of the prestigious Opera Festival in Bregenz, where it has performed, over the years, with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra at the lakeside scene, not only in *Aida*, *André Chénier*, and *The Magic*

*Flute*, but also in its own concerts, or at the world premières of *Passenger* by Mieczysław Weinberg, *Miss Fortune* by Judith Weir, *Solaris* by Detlev Glanert, and *The Merchant of Venice* by André Tchaikowsky. The last work received the prestigious International Opera Award 2014.

The first recording by the Prague Philharmonic Choir was made in 1952 (Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra and Václav Talich). Since then, it has produced more than 100 titles. Its successful recent recordings include compositions on the *Souvenirs* album by soprano Anna Netrebko and the opera *La Lodoiska* by G. S. Mayr. In spring 2014, the Choir recorded Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra for Sony. The most recent CD, released in 2012, featured choral compositions by Leonard Bernstein, Zoltán Kodály, and Leoš Janáček, and received excellent reviews.

The Prague Philharmonic Choir organizes its own choral concerts in the Rudolfinum's Dvořák Hall and in the former Church of Saints Simon and Jude. The dramaturgy of these concerts is focused on modern choral works, particularly on compositions from the 20th century and works by contemporary composers. At its last concert, in June 2014, the Choir performed four of Martinů's *Cantatas of the Highlands* by in their entirety in Dvořák Hall.

In the last two seasons, the Choir has performed educational concerts in collaboration with primary schools, and concerts for parents with children. For three years, it has organized the Choral Singing Academy, which focuses on students of singing attending conservatories and music colleges. Students who successfully complete the demanding audition will have the opportunity to become acquainted with the repertoire and work of a professional choir during the season.



**Jiří Bělohlávek** was born in Prague in 1946. His love of music became apparent at an early age, and following studies in cello and conducting, he was invited to become assistant conductor to Sergiu Celibidache in 1968.

*Václav Jirásek*

Mr. Bělohlávek won the Czech Young Conductors' Competition in 1970 and reached the final of the Herbert von Karajan Conducting Competition in 1971.

In 1977, Mr. Bělohlávek began to serve as Chief Conductor of the Prague Symphony Orchestra, a position he held until 1990, when he was appointed Chief Conductor of the Czech Philharmonic. In 1994, he founded the Prague Philharmonia, an orchestra he then led as Chief Conductor and Music Director until 2005, when he was appointed its Conductor Laureate.

After serving as its Principal Guest Conductor between 1995 and 2000, Mr. Bělohlávek was appointed Chief Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra in 2006. He conducted the orchestra at the Last Night of the Proms in 2007, becoming the first artist whose principal language is not English to undertake this important role. He performed at the Last Night of the Proms again in 2010 and 2012.

Mr. Bělohlávek has also regularly conducted the Berlin Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, New York Philharmonic, Staatskapelle Dresden, and San Francisco Symphony, among others. He was recently appointed Principal Guest Conductor of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra.

Mr. Bělohlávek has worked in the world of opera throughout his career, with regular appearances at the world's main opera houses, including Berlin, Covent Garden, Glyndebourne, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, Opéra Bastille, and Teatro Real. Recent and forthcoming highlights include new productions

of Dvořák's *Rusalka* at the Vienna Staatsoper (2014), Tchaikovsky's *The Queen of Spades* at the Zürich Opera House (2014), and Janáček's *Jenůfa* at San Francisco Opera (2016).

Jiří Bělohlávek has an extensive discography, including a complete Dvořák symphony cycle recently released by Decca, and is the first conductor since Herbert von Karajan to receive the Gramophone Award for *Orchestral Recording* two years running. In 2012, Queen Elizabeth II appointed Mr. Bělohlávek an honorary CBE for services to music.

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**Lukáš Vasilek** has been the principal conductor of the Prague Philharmonic Choir since 2007. In addition to the preparation and management of individual concerts, he prepares the ensemble for participation in large cantata, oratorio, and opera projects, cooperating with the world's leading conductors (e.g., Daniel Barenboim, Jiří Bělohlávek, Christoph Eschenbach, Manfred Honeck, Zubin Mehta) and orchestras (e.g., Berlin Philharmonic, Czech Philharmonic, Israel Philharmonic, Staatskapelle Dresden, Vienna Symphony).

Since 2010, he has regularly performed with the choir at the Bregenzer Festspiele opera festival. The performances of the Prague Philharmonic Choir under his leadership are captured on many CDs issued by the Deutsche Grammophon, Naxos, Neos, Oehms Classics, Supraphon, and other labels.

Mr. Vasilek graduated in conducting from the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague and in musicology from the Faculty of Arts of Charles University. From 1998 to 2009, he was conductor of the Foerster Chamber Choir, achieving victory in the international choir competitions in Klaipėda (2003) and Vienna (2006). In 2005, he received the "Junior Conductor" award from the Czech Choral Union for his achievements with the ensemble. At the same time, he was also the second choirmaster of the National Theater opera

ensemble in Prague, with which he prepared several operas. In 2010, he created a jazz vocal ensemble to work with Bobby McFerrin at his concerts in the Czech Republic. In the same year he also established the Martinů Voices chamber choir, focusing mainly on performance of choral works of the 20th and 21st centuries. The ensemble performs under his leadership at leading music festivals (such as the Prague Spring) and records CDs for major companies (e.g., Supraphon). Mr. Vasilek has also performed with several Czech symphony orchestras (Hradec Králové Philharmonic Orchestra, South Czech Philharmonic, Pilsen Philharmonic Orchestra, and North Czech Philharmonic).



**Lucie Silkenová** (*soprano*) was born in Prague. She was a member of the Kühn Children's Choir (1989–1997), studied at the musically orientated Jan Neruda High School, and, after seven years' cooperation with Ivan Kusanjer, opera soloist of the National Theatre in

Prague, she graduated from the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague in 2010. She has also honed her vocal technique at master classes in England, Spain, Germany, and Austria, with Anatolli Goussev, Gery Grice, Rotraud Hansmann, Margreet Honig, Tom Krause, Georg Nigl, Margot Nollen, Alexander Olivier, Tomas Paul, and Marta Scheffel.

Ms. Silkenová has won several important prizes at international voice competitions, including first prize at the 2008 Concours International d'Encouragement Musical in Lyon and second prize in the opera category at the 2009 Antonín Dvořák International Vocal Competition in Karlovy Vary, along with several theater awards (National Theatre Prague, State Opera Prague, State Theater in Košice).

Opera-goers have had the chance to hear her in many roles, including Cleopatra (*Julius Caesar*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*),

Corilla (*Viva la Mamma*), Rosina (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Gilda (*Rigoletto*), and Lisa (*The Land of Smiles*). She made her début with the National Theatre in Prague in 2010 and became a resident guest with the company. Her début role at the Prague State Opera was Gilda. She is a guest singer at the F. X. Šalda Theatre in Liberec, the J. K. Tyl Theatre in Plzeň, and the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre in Ostrava and participates with the Prague Chamber Opera on international tours (Japan, Spain, France, Germany, and Switzerland).

Ms. Silkenová has made many concert appearances with BBC Symphony Orchestra, Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo, Prague Symphony Orchestra, Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, Hradec Králové Symphony Orchestra, Bohuslav Martinů Symphony Orchestra in Zlín, Moravian Philharmonic in Olomouc, and North Bohemian Philharmonic in Teplice, among others. She has collaborated with numerous renowned conductors, including Jiří Bělohlávek, John Fiore, Robert Jindra, Jiří Kout, Ondrej Lenárd, Tomáš Netopil, Jac van Steen, and Osmo Vänskä. She has performed at such international festivals as Prague Spring International Music Festival, International Opera Festival Smetana's Litomyšl, and Festival Mahler Jihlava. Her recordings appear on the Navora, ArcoDiva and Czech Radio labels.



*Alena Maljková*

**Dagmar Pecková** (*mezzo-soprano*) is one of the leading Czech mezzo-sopranos of our time. Last season, she impressed audiences and critics with her interpretation of the *Biblical Songs* by Dvořák, which she has presented at the Oberösterreichische Stiftskonzerte and during a tour with the Vienna Philharmonic in Vienna, Essen, and Linz. She was invited back by the Vienna Philharmonic to give concerts in the Great Hall of the Musikverein Vienna, in Katowice, and in Bratislava in autumn 2014.

At the beginning of the 2014–2015 season, Ms. Pecková sang the alto part in Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Liège under Christian Arming. She was also invited by Jiří Bělohlávek to interpret Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* with the Czech Philharmonic. With the Württemberg Philharmonic, she performs Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky*.

As an internationally sought-after soloist, Ms. Pecková worked with the Vienna Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, DSO Berlin, the Staatskapelles of Berlin and Dresden, Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, Bamberg Symphony, the orchestras of the WDR, SWR, MDR, and NDR, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Zurich Tonhalle, Orchestre de Paris, Netherlands Philharmonic, London Symphony, Philharmonia Orchestra, BBC Symphony, Czech Philharmonic, and NHK Symphony, and with such conductors as Vladimir Ashkenazy, Jiří Bělohlávek, Neeme Järvi, Semyon Bychkov, Philippe Herreweghe, Michel Corboz, Christoph von Dohnányi, Christoph Eschenbach, Vladimir Fedoseyev, Marek Janowski, Fabio Luisi, Jun Märkl, Kent Nagano, Renato Palumbo, Marc Piollet, and Wolfgang Sawallisch.

In 2012, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio-France engaged her for the concert performance of Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten*. In addition, Ms. Pecková performed works by Jean Sibelius and Richard Wagner, including an adaptation of Kundry in Wagner's *Parsifal*, at the 2013 Beethoven Festival Bonn. Beside concert performances, another focus of Ms. Pecková's musical activities is opera. Her roles include Herodias (*Salome*, in Dresden, and Kassel), Brangäne (*Tristan und Isolde*, in Salzburg, London, and Braunschweig), Kabanicha (*Káta Kabanová*, in Lisbon), Ortrud (*Lohengrin*, in Braunschweig), Foreign Princess (*Rusalka*, in Prague), and Baba the Turk (*The Rake's Progress*, in Brussels).

As Kabanicha she excelled in the 2012–2013 season in the opening production of *Káta Kabanová* at the Theater Basel. At the Opéra de Monte-Carlo, she appeared as Brangäne in a concert performance of the second act

of *Tristan und Isolde* at the Auditorium Rainier III. At the Accademia di Santa Cecilia Roma, she sang Wellgunde in concert performances of *Das Rheingold*, conducted by Kirill Petrenko. With Mr. Petrenko, she also gave her role début as Waltraute in a concert performance of *Götterdämmerung* with the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale RAI Torino.

Supraphon and Teldec have released numerous CDs featuring Ms. Pecková. She will record excerpts from operas by Mariotte, Massenet, Berlioz, Strauss, Wagner, and Stravinsky for a new CD project.

Born in Chrudim, near Prague, Ms. Pecková is a graduate of Prague Conservatory. She has been successful in a number of important contests, receiving first prizes at the Prague Spring Festival and in the Dvořák Competition. After a first-season engagement at the Sächsische Staatsoper Dresden, Ms. Pecková was a member of the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin for many years.



**Jaroslav Březina (tenor)** studied at the Prague Conservatory under Zdeněk Jankovský and further honed his technique with Václav Zitek. During his studies, he became a member of the vocal ensemble Dobrý večer kvintet. His concert activity is extensive, primarily in performances of the Baroque and Classical repertoires. He has appeared on concert stages in Japan, Austria, Norway, Italy (performances of Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* in Rome and Pisa), Germany, France, and Spain. He has collaborated with numerous conductors, including Jiří Bělohlávek, Sir Charles Mackerras, Oliver Dohnányi, Serge Baudo, Gerd Albrecht, and Tomáš Netopil.

Since 1993, Mr. Březina has been a soloist of Prague's National Theatre Opera, where he has created numerous roles from both Czech and international repertoires, including Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), Tito (*La clemenza di Tito*), Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*), Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*), Count Almaviva

(*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Benvolio (*Roméo et Juliette*), Dancairo (*Carmen*), Fenton (*Falstaff*), Beppe (*Pagliacci*), Tinca (*Il tabarro*), Zinovy Borisovich (*Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*), Vašek and Jeník (*The Bartered Bride*), Jirka (*The Devil and Kate*), Yannakos and Panait (*The Greek Passion*), Maškaron (*The Miracles of Mary*), Kudryash (*Katya Kabanova*), Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*), Pedrillo (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), Jiří (*The Jacobin*), The Spirit of the Masque (*Gloriana*), Alfredo (*La traviata*), and Schoolmaster/Mosquito (*The Cunning Little Vixen*). He is featured on CD recordings of Zelenka's coronation opera *Sub olea pacis et palma virtutis* (which won a Cannes Classical Award in 2002), Janáček's *Šárka*, and Dvořák's *The Stubborn Lovers*, all for Supraphon Music Publishing. He performed Janáček's *The Diary of One Who Disappeared* at the Teatro Real in Madrid, at the Moravian Autumn and Janáček Hukvaldy festivals, during the Czech Philharmonic's concert season, and at Prague's National Theatre from 1998 to 2001. He has also appeared on Czech television in a production of Martinů's opera *The Voice of the Forest*.



**Jan Martiník (bass)** was born in 1983 in Ostrava, where he studied at Janáček Conservatory with Eliška Pappová.

In 2003 he won the Antonín Dvořák International Vocal Competition in Karlovy Vary, and in 2004 won second prize in the Mikuláš Schneider-Trnavský International Vocal Competition. Mr. Martiník is laureate of the International Competition Jelena Obratsova, where he won the special prize for the best Tchaikovsky romance. In 2007 he was a finalist in Plácido Domingo's Operalia competition, and in 2009 the Song Prize-winner of the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World.

Mr. Martiník has also appeared in several roles at the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre in Ostrava, including Pistola (*Falstaff*), Leporello (*Don Giovanni*), and Truffaldino (*Ariadne auf Naxos*).

At the National Theatre in Prague, he sang Masetto (*Don Giovanni*), Larkens and José Castro (*La fanciulla del West*), and Leporello (*Don Giovanni*).

In 2008, Mr. Martiník performed Don Prudenziio (*Il viaggio a Reims*) at the Accademia Rossiniana in Pesaro, Italy; appeared as Dottore Grenvil (*La traviata*) at Theater Erfurt; gave a recital in the Prague Spring Festival; and sang the bass part in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with Collegium 1704 in Brno. At Theater Košice, he sang the role of Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*.

From 2008–2011, Mr. Martiník was a member of Komische Oper Berlin, where he sang Sarastro, Colline (*La bohème*), Surin (*Pique Dame*), and Nachtwächter (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*). In 2012, he appeared at the Novosibirsk Theatre, where he sang the bass part of the Verdi Requiem.

From 2012–2013, Mr. Martiník was a member of Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Berlin, where he performed such roles as Colline, Sarastro, Eremit (*Der Freischütz*) and Father Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*).

In concerts the young bass has worked with the Czech Philharmonic, BBC Symphony, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Staatskapelle Dresden, the BBC Proms Orchestra, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the King's Consort, and Collegium 1704.

#### Tour Direction

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