

VIVACE

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in Supraphon Recordings*

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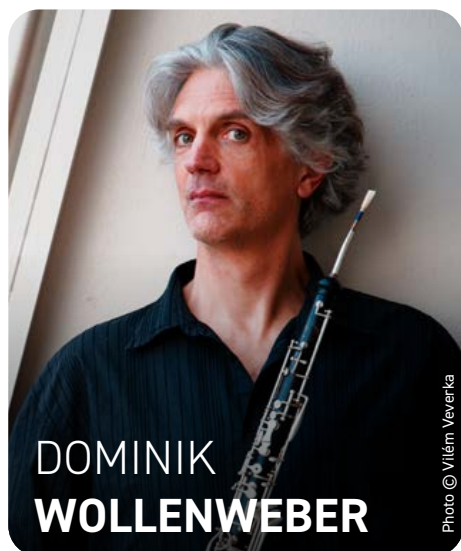




Photo © Vojtěch Havlík

Dear friends,

At the beginning of the new year, on behalf of Supraphon I would like to wish you sound health, and I hope you will spend 2022 in the company of good people and beautiful music. The start of every year is an occasion to glance back at the previous months and to pay attention to the albums Supraphon has recently released.

A few of them are compilations. Some listeners may not think highly of such projects and even frown at the idea. But not all compilations are equal. The 3-CD set titled *The Many Loves of Antonín Dvořák*, put together by Patrick Lambert, a connoisseur and lover of Czech music who worked for BBC Radio 3 as a classical music producer for 25 years, is by no means one of those soulless potpourris endlessly recycling the same tried-and-tested pieces. Applying great imagination and bringing to bear extensive knowledge of the Supraphon archive, Patrick Lambert selected long-unheard historical recordings, on which his generation of musicians and musicologists grew up. His rather audacious project was lauded by another British music connoisseur, Rob Cowan, who in the February issue of *Gramophone* named it *Editor's Choice / Reissue of the Month*. You can watch on YouTube an irresistibly enthusiastic video review by David Hurwitz (*Classics Today*).

Another Dvořák compilation has undoubtedly thrilled vinyl lovers. In collaboration with GZ Media, Supraphon released a triple album featuring benchmark recordings of mature Dvořák opuses (*Symphonies Nos. 8 and 9*, *Legends*, selected *Slavonic Dances*) made by Sir Charles Mackerras with the Czech Philharmonic and the Prague Symphony Orchestra. In terms of the recording and technical quality, as well as packaging, it is a veritable Rolls-Royce among compilations.

And thirdly: we may also refer to as a “repertoire compilation” the debut release of Dominik Wollenweber, bearing the indicative title *The Art of English Horn*. The globally celebrated cor anglais player and Berliner Philharmoniker soloist included on his album works by Bach, Dvořák, Sibelius, Françaix, Schubert and Wagner. Wollenweber is accompanied by the Berliner Philharmoniker Collegium and, in one case, by the Berliner Philharmoniker orchestra, conducted

by Sir Simon Rattle. Should you have any doubts as to juxtaposing the music of such diverse composers, I believe that they will be dispelled upon listening to the album.

Unlike the mentioned compilations, each of the other four autumn releases features pieces by a single composer and, what is more, contains world premiere recordings. Ivo Kahánek undertook the truly challenging task of recording on 4 CDs the most comprehensive set of Dvořák piano works. His album deservedly received a five-Tuning Fork rating from the prestigious *Diapason* magazine. The coveted recommendation was also afforded to the premiere recording of the Czech Baroque composer Šimon Brixl's sacred pieces made by *Hipocondria Ensemble*. Following a series of acclaimed albums of F. X. Richter's music, *Czech Ensemble Baroque* turned their attention to František Ignác Antonín Tůma, a Czech-born composer who gained esteem in Vienna. Both albums comprise engrossing music, which certainly deserves to be “dusted down” and resound centuries later. The conductor Tomáš Netopil and the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra made a new recording of late Bohuslav Martinů symphonic pieces, which, notwithstanding their exceptional beauty, have not been frequently performed at concerts. The album earned praise from *Sunday Times* critics (*Classical Album of the Week*), as well as from the aforementioned David Hurwitz of *Classics Today* (see his YouTube video review).

Another critically acclaimed Supraphon release is the soprano Kateřina Kněžíková's album *Phidylé*, which was nominated for the BBC Music Magazine Award in the Vocal category. Given the enormous competition in the soprano domain, it is a truly extraordinary success. Listeners have until 28 February to vote and thus decide whether Kateřina will receive the award.

Dear music-loving friends, this time I have only briefly summed up the recent Supraphon releases, even though I could have written much longer accounts. I believe that at least one of them will fill your with joy and well-being. More delicacies are now in the oven, and you will get to sample them over the next few months.

Matouš Vlčinský

IVO KAHÁNEK: I LIKE DVOŘÁK'S SINCERITY

Dvořák's works for solo piano are in the main an unexplored landscape even for many a pianist and musicologist. Such music is certainly worthy of a new complete album. The challenging task was undertaken by Ivo Kahánek, an artist whose recording of Dvořák's Piano Concerto made with the Bamberger Symphoniker conducted by Jakub Hrůša has deservedly gained critical acclaim and even won the coveted BBC Music Magazine Concerto Award. We talked with Ivo Kahánek shortly before the release of the album of Antonín Dvořák's complete piano works.

Ivo, how did you prepare for the months-long recording, what did you find the most difficult and what delighted you the most?

Preparations actually began back in the autumn of 2020, when I gave a concert featuring Dvořák's music at Dvořák Prague and was the patron of the marathon of Dvořák's pieces for solo piano within the same international festival. Yet I would only learn most of the repertoire in the spring of 2021, directly for the purpose of this recording. The most difficult thing to cope with was the time pressure, since due to the availability of the hall and the team, as well as to the fixed date of the album's launch (8 September 2021, marking the 180th anniversary of Dvořák's birthday, within Dvořák Prague at the Dvořák Hall), we had to record five hours of music within a mere three months. The most gratifying aspect was discovering some little-known gems among Dvořák's numerous piano works and having the opportunity to view the better-known pieces in a new way.

What do you like the most about Dvořák's music?

I really like Dvořák's sincerity and his innate Slavonic fervency. While Bedřich Smetana, for instance, deliberately built the foundations of Czech national music, Dvořák (also owing to Smetana) created the Czech sound absolutely effortlessly. And Dvořák's music often comes across as spontaneous as though someone from above dictated it to him...

The cover of the CD set of your recordings features a photograph of Dvořák's inkpot and the historical quill

with which he wrote down music. Do you cherish such memorable objects?

Yes, I do, very much. I believe that such objects – and musical instruments in particular – have the unique quality of retaining their owners' spiritual imprint in some form. We in the Czech Republic are indeed fortunate to be able to see things that once were among Dvořák's personal effects, or even touch the piano once played by Dvořák.

Is there anything you would like to say in connection with your new album?

First and foremost, I would like to extend my thanks to the Classical Music Academy, the Karel Komárek Family Foundation and the Ministry of Culture, without whose support the CD set could not have come to fruition. I also thank the recording team, the Supraphon label and the director of the Dvořák Prague festival, Jan Simon, owing to whom the challenging task has been completed with a smile. And, finally, I would like to stress the help of my partner Jarmila, who as a pianist was another pair of ears and bravely withstood endless rehearsals day and night for several months.

Could you reveal your concert plans?

The pandemic (now dying away, hopefully) has also considerably complicated the plans of the majority of artists for 2021 and 2022. As a result, I too had to reschedule and postpone many concerts to future seasons. Nonetheless, I firmly believe I will be able to give my planned performances at festivals in Norway, Austria and Italy, as well as a debut recital at the Konzerthaus in Berlin.



TOMÁŠ NETOPIL: I AM FASCINATED BY THE WIDE RANGE OF COMPOSITIONAL STYLES OF MARTINŮ'S LATE WORKS

The pieces Bohuslav Martinů composed between 1953 to 1958, towards the end of his life – *Les Fresques de Piero della Francesca*, *The Parables* and *Les Estampes* – are profound, extraordinary, truly mature gems. Their brilliance, however, is yet to be fully appreciated. The new recording made by the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra under the renowned conductor Tomáš Netopil affords hope that this will be set right. On the occasion of the release of this remarkable album, we asked the conductor Tomáš Netopil a few questions.

Maestro, how do you perceive Bohuslav Martinů's late works? Why should they be admired and presented to music lovers?

I am fascinated by the wide range of compositional styles Martinů applied in these diverse works dating from his late creative period. Following the Baroque-like Overture, the listener can immerse himself/herself in the symphonic sonic opulence of *Les Fresques*, in which intense expression is brought about by dividing the string component into fine microworlds, which further enhances the full-blooded orchestral sound. The symphonic prelude *The Rock* constitutes an essential piece in the mosaic of Bohuslav Martinů's late music. The end of it indicates a direct thematic inspiration for his next, more extensive opus – *The Parables*. And when it comes to *Les Estampes*, the final piece on the album, its tenderness and intimate nature reveal yet another facet of Bohuslav Martinů's compositional bounty, highlighting his great mastery.

How did the recording go?

The recording process was really intense, which was quite draining. A project of such great scope requires absolute concentration and discipline. Challenging indeed was the symphonic prelude *The Rock*, probably one of the least known Martinů works, which due to its technical and rhythmic difficulties demands enormous engagement. Yet I recall wonderful moments during the recording sessions, when the players had brought smiles on their faces, reflecting their sheer delight at the music.

What was collaborating with the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra like?

I have worked with them for many years, and on every occasion I have felt enormously satisfied and happy. I primarily admire the orchestra's immense flexibility, diligence, musicality and discipline, owing to which an extremely difficult task becomes a splendid memory.





DOMINIK WOLLENWEBER: I HEARD THE ENGLISH HORN'S ENGROSSING SOUND THROUGHOUT MY CHILDHOOD

As Dominik Wollenweber's father was an English horn player with the Bayerisches Staatsorchester, he heard the instrument's engrossing sound throughout his childhood. Yet he first played the traverse flute, before, at the age of 14, moving on to the oboe, which he studied with Hagen Wangenheim and later with Simon Dent at the Richard Strauss Conservatory in Munich. He established initial contacts with the Berliner Philharmoniker as a stipendiary of its Orchestra Academy in the early 1990s, when he took lessons from Hansjörg Schellenberger. At the time, Dominik Wollenweber became principal oboist of the European Union Youth Orchestra, led by the renowned conductor Claudio Abbado. After gaining this valuable experience, he won the audition for the vacated post of English horn player with the Berliner Philharmoniker. In addition to working with the orchestra and pursuing activities in the domain of chamber music, he has taught at the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler Berlin. The father of six children, he primarily spends his leisure time with his family.

In October 2021, Supraphon released Dominik Wollenweber's album *The Art of English Horn*, produced by a friend of his, the brilliant Czech oboist Vilém Veverka. It contains works by Johann Sebastian Bach, Antonín Dvořák, Franz Schubert, Jean Sibelius, Jean Françaix and Richard Wagner. The recordings also feature the pianist Anna Kirichenko, the Collegium der Berliner Philharmoniker and the celebrated Berliner Philharmoniker, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle.

Dominik, you studied the flute and oboe. Why did you finally opt for the English horn?

I began playing the traverse flute at the age of nine. I had quite a bad stutter, and music-making had a therapeutic purpose. Playing the flute, during which air flows continuously without any pressure and you don't have to make much effort, helps alleviate the condition. When I was 14, I moved on to the oboe. And when it comes to the English horn, the main reason for taking it up was winning the audition for a post with the Berliner Philharmoniker. I also have a natural penchant for the instrument because my father was a cor anglais player and I grew up with its sound.

Could you give a brief summary of your new album, to be released on Supraphon?

I would really like to present the English horn as a solo instrument,

and to convince music lovers that it should no longer be deemed just a part of the orchestra. The English horn can generate a variety of tone shades. It may sound humorous, as in Jean Françaix's quartet; it can be virtuoso, as in Bach's concerto; and it also has the naturally pensive, melancholy colour. I think that the diversity of the music featured makes the album *The Art of English Horn* special indeed, with the mixture of dramatic colours having the potential to captivate the listener. Or at least I hope so. I wouldn't want to single out any of the pieces I have recorded. I love every one of them.

You have been with the splendid Berliner Philharmoniker for almost three decades. What does it mean to you?

Being part of the orchestra, which aims to be the world's best, is a source of pride and delight. I have felt honoured virtually every day over the past three decades. With regard to being allowed to work independently and to take independent decisions, each and every member bears special responsibility, which players with other orchestras, in which all decisions come from above, do not have. Every one of us is aware of being part of a whole and is responsible for our projects and concerts succeeding. Owing to the energy released as a result, the everyday work with the Berliner Philharmoniker is creative and intense, and there's never a dull moment.

JAN HÁDEK: BRIXI'S SPLENDID MELODIC INVENTION AND SINCERITY

Founded in 2000, Hipocondria Ensemble have under the artistic guidance of the violinist Jan Hádek mainly focused on informed performance of 17th- and 18th-century music. They have given numerous concerts at home and abroad, and made recordings of works by, mainly Czech, 18th-century composers, including Josef Antonín Plánický, Bohuslav Matěj Černohorský, František Ignác Tůma, Jiří Antonín Benda and Josef Antonín Štěpán. Over the past two decades, Hipocondria Ensemble have ranked among the leading Czech chamber formations specialising in early music. In August 2021, Supraphon released their new album featuring Šimon Brixí's *Missa ex D, Arietta De gloriosissima resurrectione Domini nostri Jesu Christi, Litaniae de venerabili sacramento, Alma redemptoris mater, Domine ad adjuvandum me festina* and *Magnificat*. Hipocondria Ensemble and the outstanding soloists – the soprano Hana Blažíková and the bass Jaromír Nosek – have brought back to life Šimon Brixí's overlooked works. Their present album contains world premiere recordings. The *Magnificat* was recorded on period instruments for the first time. The album is a new instalment in Supraphon's highly rated *Music from Eighteenth-Century Prague* series. It was instigated and generously funded by Mrs. Klára Kroftová and Mr. David Krofta. Prior to the release, we talked to Jan Hádek, the artistic director of Hipocondria Ensemble.

Mr. Hádek, when did you first come across Šimon Brixí's music?

I first encountered Šimon Brixí's music in the early 1990s, when as a violinist I participated in a performance of his *Magnificat* in D major.

How difficult was it to put together the album's repertoire?

The recording was instigated by David Krofta, a friend of mine whom I have known since primary school. He told me that he would like to support an album featuring some beautiful, not previously recorded music. Putting together the album's repertoire took us more than two years. My initial idea was to record the *Magnificat* by Šimon Brixí and pieces by his son František Xaver. After consultations with and with the aid of the musicologist Marc Niubó, I began seeking suitable works, yet this approach soon proved to be unfruitful.

As the quest continued, other options suggested themselves, including music by Giovanni Battista Bassani, Antonio Lotti, etc. But, for various reasons, these variants did not appear ideal either. After

some time, I returned to Šimon Brixí and began pondering whether the small volume of his works that have survived could make up a presentable selection for an album. I was choosing from approximately two dozen sacred works, located in various places, some of which I had to rule out due to their being unavailable. And other pieces had to be crossed off the list too after during their transcribing we found out that they were arrangements dating from the second half of the 18th century, containing changes in voice leading and instrumentation, as well as numerous errors. Six compositions were ultimately identified as suitable for recording. In hindsight, I don't regret all the work and deliberations, since we have succeeded in choosing really beautiful, exquisite pieces which deserve to be performed again.

How did the recording go?

The recording process was, of course, affected by concerns pertaining to the coronavirus pandemic. If someone had fallen ill, the project's materialisation would have had to be rescheduled, which would have brought numerous problems. I think it was a minor miracle that



Hana Blažíková



Photo © Ilona Sochorová



Photo © Ilona Sochorová

everything went smoothly, without complications. It was a great joy and delight to work with such brilliant singers and instrumentalists. The atmosphere at the recording sessions was amicable. I would also like to express my gratitude for the immense enthusiasm and devotion of all those participating in the project.

Could you compare Brixi's music with Zelenka's?

In his time, Šimon Brixi was a highly respected composer and his music, although not published, was frequently performed. We know that Jan Dismas Zelenka had in his possession copies of Brixi's scores, while Brixi was familiar with Zelenka's works. Both of them were

influenced by Italian music and both of them primarily wrote sacred pieces. Just as in the case of Zelenka, we cherish Brixi's singular compositional style, splendid and ample melodic invention, the sincerity and the contemplative nature of his music.

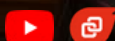
What do you consider to be the album's significance within the international context?

I firmly believe that Šimon Brixi's music deserves attention and that it occupies a firm position in 18th-century European music. So I hope that our album will revive interest in the oeuvre of this distinguished, yet overlooked Czech Baroque composer.



Photo © Martin Kubica

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ROMAN VÁLEK: TŮMA IS UNRIVALLED IN SETTING OF MUSICAL SUBJECTS

František Ignác Antonín Tůma was one of the Czech composers to have considerably influenced 18th-century European music. Along with J. D. Zelenka and G. T. Muffat, he has been named among the finest pupils of Johann Joseph Fux, and, just like Zelenka, he rubbed shoulders with the political and social elite of his time. Linking up to the then receding Late Baroque, he embraced the novel idiom of the nascent Classicism, adapting to the new requirements of the time, with his music blending Baroque fervency with elements of Romantic sentiment. Tůma was highly esteemed in Vienna, and his sacred music even served as a model for younger composers, including Joseph Haydn and W. A. Mozart. Following four acclaimed recordings of F. X. Richter's works, Czech Ensemble Baroque, conducted by Roman Válek and playing period instruments, have this time turned their attention to František Ignác Antonín Tůma. In October 2021, Supraphon released their remarkable album featuring Tůma's Requiem and Missa della morte in C. We talked to Roman Válek, artistic director and conductor of Czech Ensemble Baroque.

How did you get to know František Ignác Antonín Tůma's music?

Due to traditional opinions, for a long time I had Tůma pigeonholed as an early-Classical composer. When preparing Stabat Mater, referred to as one of the few sacred pieces, I visited the RISM database of music sources, which presented nine versions of this church form. That stimulated my passion for exploration, and what I discovered truly astonished me. We can deem Tůma's most significant period to have been from 1741 to 1750, when he served as Kapellmeister of the music ensemble set up by Charles VI's widow, Empress Elisabeth Christine, in Vienna. Owing to the spiritual themes he focused on, his style was akin to that of J. S. Bach. Tůma had an unconventional approach to harmony and was a master of counterpoint. So I decided to show him to listeners in his true light.

What was the most difficult aspect of recording Tůma's Requiem, and what surprised you most?

We had to bear in mind that we were reconstructing music that is based on the sound of the church organ. So we had to find a compromise between colla parte and solo instruments, and to render

faithfully the coro favoriti versus tutti structure. That was a really tough nut to crack.

What do you value the most in his music?

Tůma is unrivalled in setting of musical subjects. He always strove for the melody to express precisely the content of texts. Eschewing the established clichés, which often resulted from the Fux tradition in Vienna, he was capable of making use of a smaller ensemble to produce magnificent music.

Will you be performing Tůma's Requiem in concert?

Every project, with "Tůma" being no exception, has a concert phase, which is logically preceded by recording. The question is how long it will take the promoters of music events to begin giving appropriate acknowledgement to F. I. A. Tůma's legacy, as well as that of F. X. Richter's, for instance, and directly ask for their works to be performed. Regrettably, to date they have only shown an interest in Jan Dismas Zelenka, while overlooking other similarly significant composers.



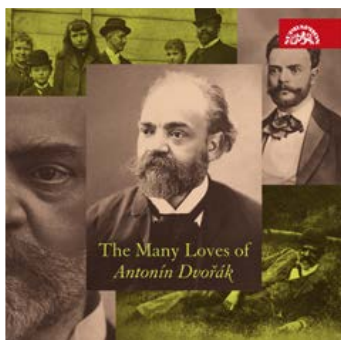
Tereza a Roman Váleks

THE MANY LOVES OF ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

To mark the 180th anniversary of Antonín Dvořák's birth, Supraphon has released a special 3-CD set. The album's repertoire was compiled by Patrick Lambert, a former long-time music editor and BBC Radio 3 producer, a great lover and connoisseur of Czech music.

Presenting a wide selection of the composer's chamber, orchestral and vocal works, it contains recordings made by superb musicians in the second half of the 20th century that are still exemplary and unrivalled in many a respect. Dvořák is paid tribute to by renowned Czech Philharmonic conductors (Talich, Ančerl, Neumann, Bělohlávek, Sawallisch, Mackerras, and others), instrumentalists (Rostropovich, May, Suk and Panenka), singers (Soukupová, Beňačková, Urbanová, Blachut, Novák), choirmasters (Jan and Pavel Kühn), as well as the Prague, Dvořák, Smetana and Panocha Quartets. Patrick Lambert

focused on the themes to which Antonín Dvořák had a strong, passionate affinity: the Nation and Homeland, the Slavonic Soul, Nature, God and Religion, Family and Humour. Besides widely known opuses (yet in lesser-known recordings), the album features many beautiful Dvořák pieces are not performed overly often, including the cycles *In Nature's Realm*, *Love Songs* and *Poetic Moods*, the *Serenade for Wind Instruments*, and scenes from the operas *Dimitrij* and *The Jacobin*. As Patrick Lambert puts it: *"The new album is for everyone who wants to revel in the sheer diversity and profundity of Dvořák's music."*



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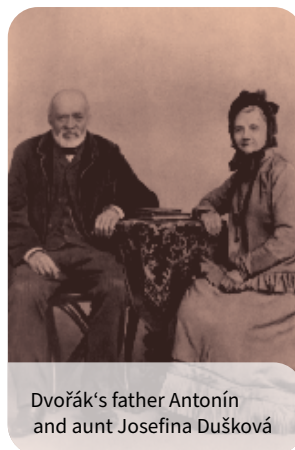
The British music writer, broadcaster and lecturer **Patrick Lambert** (b. 1943) worked for BBC Radio 3 as a classical music producer for 25 years. A connoisseur and lover of Czech music – the door to his London study bears the inscription “Český ráj” (Czech Paradise) – he has devised numerous radio programmes dedicated to Czech composers (Dvořák, Janáček, Suk, Martinů) and conductors (Talich, Kubelík, Ančerl, Šejna, etc.). In 1983, he received the Sony Radio Award for Best Classical Music Programme. Patrick Lambert has written copiously on music, given specialist and popularisation lectures, and took part in pre-performance. In 2015 his acclaimed monograph *Martinů in His Time – The Recorded Legacy* was published. He has compiled double-CD sets featuring recordings by Václav Talich, Rafael Kubelík and Karel Ančerl for the IMG Artists series “Great Conductors of the 20th Century”. Patrick Lambert has written notes for dozens of albums released by BBC Legends, Decca, Deutsche Grammophon, Dutton, Hyperion, LSO LIVE, Mercury, Nimbus, Philips, Supraphon, Testament and Warner Classics.



In the courtyard of Dvořák's “home” in New York. Anna Dvořáková, son Antonín, Sadie Siebert and her mother, the sister of the owner of the house (seated), Josef J. Kovařík, Dvořák's daughter Otilie, Antonín Dvořák 1893)



Antonín Dvořák as a child



Dvořák's father Antonín and aunt Josefina Dušková



Dvořák in 1868

MACKERRAS'S TAKE ON MATURE DVOŘÁK ON VINYL FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME

For Antonín Dvořák's 180th birthday in September 2021, Supraphon released a real treat for those who love his music and for admirers of the unique legacy of the conductor Sir Charles Mackerras – for the first time on vinyl, a three-record album of acclaimed recordings of Dvořák's Symphonies Nos. 8 and 9, Legends, and Slavonic Dances wonderfully performed by the Czech Philharmonic and the Prague Symphony Orchestra made between 1999 and 2005 under the baton of the unforgettable Sir Charles Mackerras, a great admirer and promoter of Czech music who was awarded the Artis Bohemiae Amicis medal in 2010.

"I am a great fan of Dvořák's music, because it always seemed to me that apart from Mozart Dvořák is the greatest composer ... He wrote symphonies, he wrote tone poems, he wrote operas, he wrote chamber music, he wrote songs, he wrote religious music, everything ... He's just the greatest composer, except for Mozart perhaps." Sir Charles Mackerras not only loved Dvořák and Czech music. As a globally renowned "non-Czech" conductor, he rendered it a great service. Among the numerous splendid recordings of Antonín Dvořák's mature symphonic works, those made by Mackerras are the most fitting for a vinyl release: technically impeccable, they feature so authentic a "Czech" sound and

spirit as to make many a Dvořák compatriot envious ... The album serves to prove how much young Mackerras learned in Prague from his teacher, Maestro Václav Talich. Sir Charles's accounts of Symphonies Nos 8 and 9 are torrentially vivid, as performed by the superb Prague Symphony Orchestra under his baton. The selected Slavonic Dances and Legends (Cannes Classical Award 2003) breathe with nobleness and fervour, the quintessential attributes of the Czech Philharmonic. Making use of state-of-the-art technology and presented in an elegant box, the three vinyl records contain true gems of the Dvořák discography of one of the world's most celebrated conductors.



SU4301-1



THE PAVEL HAAS QUARTET

TO RELEASE A NEW ALBUM FEATURING QUINTETS BY JOHANNES BRAHMS

The Pavel Haas Quartet with their new member Luosha Fang (viola) recorded their new, highly anticipated album by the end of the last year. The new album will be featuring String Quintet No. 2 in G major, Op. 111 and Piano Quintet in F minor, Op. 34 by Johannes Brahms and the recording sessions took place in Studio Domovina, Prague where the Quartet recorded most of their previous albums (for example Bedřich Smetana – String Quartet No. 1 in E minor “From my Life” and String Quartet No. 2 in D minor / Gramophone Chamber Award 2015, BBC Music Magazine Chamber Award 2015).

Same as in case of the Gramophone Chamber Award 2018 winning album Antonín Dvořák – Quintets Op. 81&97, the Pavel Haas Quartet recorded the new album with special guests Pavel Nikl (viola, exPHQ member) and Boris Giltburg (piano). The new album is supposed to be released in May 2022.

– Discography
– www.pavelhaasquartet.com



Photo © Lukáš Kaderáček

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