VIVACE

Classical Music Review in Supraphon Recordings

AUTUMN/WINTER 2018

Dear friends,

I am writing the introductory lines of the new Vivace issue well into the Advent time. Although I could give a thorough account of all the albums Supraphon released in the autumn, my mind keeps returning to one of them in particular – and above all the man whose name it bears – Jiří Bělohlávek. His recording of Bohuslav Martinů's opera-pastoral What Men Live By, with the Czech Philharmonic, was released this October. Jiří Bělohlávek made it in world premiere four years ago, in the middle of December 2014, and he returned to Martinů's music a year later, when he recorded his Symphony No. 1, the other piece included on the CD. When looking at the CD's cover, I recollect the several inspiring encounters I had with the maestro, in the final years of his life (would that I had had more opportunities to see him), and the great projects Bělohlávek and I were giving thought to, plans that, regrettably, have not come to fruition. On the other hand, however, I feel happy and grateful that we have managed to complete the recording, and that we could be at its birth. I extend my thanks to all those who participated in it, either as artists, members of the production team or generous supporters. Martinů's opera What Men Live By is inextricably linked with Christmas, the Nativity and Christ's love of humans. Right now is thus the very best time to listen to it.

Jiří Bělohlávek was and his name will remain synonymous with the "new life" and the highly joyous historical period of our prime orchestra, as well as with the numerous young Czech musicians whom he, at the right moment, munificently aided on their journey to "the world". When I now view our autumn recordings, this virtually applies to all the artists featured on them: Jan Martiník (Schubert – Winterreise), Radek Baborák (Mozart), Ivo Kahánek and Jan Fišer (Kalabis), Dagmar Pecková (Nativitas)... That is the answer to the unasked question as to what legacy Jiří Bělohlávek left behind and what he lived by.

I feel obliged to mention yet another great international success gained by the Pavel Haas Quartet, currently one of the most internationally lauded chamber ensembles. Their recording of Dvořák's quintets (Piano Quintet in A major, Op. 81, with Boris Giltburg; String Quintet in E flat major, Op. 97, with Pavel Nikl) earned in October their sixth (!!!) Gramophone Award. A success that almost beggars belief. Yet upon listening to their latest album, you will most likely understand that the jury of the world's most prestigious classical music prize, simply could not have decided otherwise.

On behalf of Supraphon and myself, I wish you a peaceful Advent and a merry Christmas, in stillness and with music – that which you yourself choose to listen to at this festive time.

Matouš Vlčinský

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JIŘÍ BĚLOHLÁVEK'S FINAL WORD ON THE MUSIC OF BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ

Jiří Bělohlávek (1946–2017) was an important worldwide ambassador of Bohuslav Martinů's music. For the Supraphon label alone he recorded nearly forty of Martinů's symphonic compositions, concertos, and stage works, and many of these were world premiere recordings. Discover more about the world premiere recording of Bohuslav Martinů's one act opera-pastoral What Men Live by in an interview with the chief executive producer for classical music on the Supraphon label Matouš Vlčinský.

Supraphon is now coming out with previously unreleased recordings by Jiří Bělohlávek more than a year after his death...

I'm sorry the Maestro did not live to see the recording released and that it is his final word on the music of Bohuslav Martinů. Together, we had made big plans for a number of other recordings in the years to come, but these plans were never realised, unfortunately...

These plans involved other compositions by Bohuslav Martinů?

Yes. Jiří Bělohlávek loved Martinů's music, and he devoted himself to it exhaustively all his life. It is no exaggeration for us to say that among all conductors, whether from this country or abroad, it was above all Jiří Bělohlávek who blazed the trail for Bohuslav Martinů's music to reach concert stages. If you look at Bělohlávek's discography as a whole, Martinů's music unquestionably holds a place of distinction in it, and during the maestro's tenure as chief conductor of the Prague Symphony Orchestra, he recorded a remarkable number of Martinů's compositions for Supraphon, including many world premiere recordings. When listening to Bělohlávek's recordings, I get the impression that there was a fundamental resonance between the order and rhythmic structuring that are so characteristic of Martinů and Jiří Bělohlávek's inner world.

And what about the plans that were not realised?

With the Czech Philharmonic, we wanted to finish a complete set of the symphonies and to supplement it with more of Martinů's later symphonic compositions – his beautiful Parables, Estampes, Frescoes etc. Together with the third through the sixth symphonies, which had been recorded earlier, the complete set was to have been released on four CDs. Jiří Bělohlávek was very committed to completing this set, but he only managed to add a recording of the Symphony No. 1. We also wanted to supplement the opera What Men Live By with another short opera.

So the CD is the release of fragments from two more extensive unfinished projects...

That is sadly the case. Jiří Bělohlávek did not live to finish any more of them. Under normal conditions, it would not have occurred to me to combine an opera with a symphony on a CD, but the first time I listened to this CD compilation, I was surprised by how nicely the works go together.

Let's talk some more about the opera What Men Live by. Martinů completed it in 1952. How is it possible that the world premiere recording of this opera did not appear until 2018, more than sixty years later 60?

There are several reasons why this opera has not yet found a home on opera stages around the world. For one thing, it is rather short – 40 minutes – so in a live performance, it is necessary to add another operatic work. It is written for very specific chamber forces, neither very large nor very small. And the opera also lacks any virtuosic vocal writing, and none of the roles or even arias would be viable on their own. The opera takes its inspiration from Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy's tale Martin the Cobbler. At the heart of this touching, powerful story is the affirmation that no person is alone and that we can encounter God in other people and find the meaning of our own lives through service to others. Martinů himself referred to the work as an opera-pastoral, and as a whole, it resonates greatly with the message of Advent and Christmas. The opera's musical component is correspondingly very accessible for audiences, uncomplicated and beautiful.

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How did Jiří Bělohlávek arrive at this work? Was this one of his long-term plans?

I have been told that Maestro Bělohlávek was also hesitant at first and avoided this score for a number of years; it just did not interest him much. But once he had decided to give a concert performance of the opera, he fell totally in love with it. He even supposedly came up with the idea that the Czech Philharmonic should perform it every year during Advent. I think the depth of the subject matter resonated deeply with his knowledge and possibly even with the illness that further deepened certain aspects of his humanity during his final years. But that is just my own speculation.

How was the recording itself actually made?

The Czech Philharmonic performed the opera at three of its subscription concerts in December 2014, and this live recording was made from the concerts. One little curiosity about this production is the engagement of the Czech Philharmonic concertmaster Josef Špaček as the narrator. Thanks to having studied for several years at the Curtis Institute of Music and the Juilliard School in the United States, the young violinist speaks excellent English, and he took on the role of narrator as a great challenge.

There is also a Czech version of the opera What Men Live By, but you chose the English version for the recording...

Yes, mostly because that is the original version. Martinů wrote the opera in America, and it was clear to him that there was no chance of a performance of the work in any version other than that in English. He wrote the libretto in English himself based on the tale I already mentioned, and the Czech version was not written until later.

What are your expectations from this recording? Do you suppose it might awaken greater interest in live performances of the opera?

I believe that the recording could return the breath of life to this work and pave its way to opera houses around the world. I have been noticing over the last few years how there is a growing awareness of Bohuslav Martinů's music among listeners, critics, and presenters; in other words, the world is discovering the beauty and magic of his music. This is also shown by the international success of the recently issued Supraphon recordings of his compositions (The Epic of Gilgamesh, the Madrigals, the Cantatas of the Czech Highlands, the piano trios etc.). I think that What Men Live By will be a revelation to many listeners. And I think the recording of the First Symphony with Jiří Bělohlávek and the Czech Philharmonic is eagerly anticipated by many who know his older recordings of the other symphonies. Bělohlávek's tenure with the Czech Philharmonic during the last five years of his life was a very happy time for both parties, and in the orchestra's sound one now hears the new qualities that were developing during this period. This recording shall remain as living proof of what was a very special constellation of humanity and artistry.

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FRANZ SCHUBERT'S WINTERREISE
PERFORMED BY JAN MARTINÍK AND DAVID MAREČEK

A key work by Franz Schubert performed by the outstanding Czech bass Jan Martiník with the piano accompaniment provided by David Mareček, the current executive director of the Czech Philharmonic, was released by Supraphon in September 2018 on CD and in digital formats.

Photo © Václav Jirásek

Photo © Petra Hajská

The Austrian composer Franz Schubert wrote his song cycle Winterreise (Winter Journey) in 1827 a year before his death. Winterreise represents the pinnacle of Lieder creation of the early Romantic Era. Spanning an arch of 24 mostly balladic songs, the text of the cycle treats contrasting themes of love and betrayal against the background of a winter landscape and reminiscences about the beauty of nature during more pleasant seasons.

The bass Jan Martiník is one of those rare singers to possess a big, colourful voice as well as boundless sensitivity for the intimacy of Lieder. His laurels from competitions (2007 finalist at Placido Domingo's competition "Operalia", 2009 winner of the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Lieder Prize) and experiences on operatic stages (including appearances as a soloist at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden in Berlin) merely serve to confirm his extraordinary disposition. *"The search for one's 'own' Winterreise is a lifelong pilgrimage for every performer, a pilgrimage that transforms itself as one ages and gains experience and that basically never ends,"* said Jan Martiník, commenting on his approach to Schubert's music, and David Mareček added: *"The difficulty with Schubert lies in his simplicity. Schubert is capable of expressing the most powerful emotions by the simplest means. To find a balance between depth of feeling and purity of form, to build up a violent climax from absolute calm, to maintain tension over long passages, to find the right colouristic and dynamic proportions between the voice and the piano, to polish each song like a separate gemstone, and then to set it within a whole that lasts more than an hour. That's just a tiny part of the adventure that Schubert's Winterreise had in store for us, but rather than worries, the main thing we felt was eagerness to get as close to the heart of Schubert's music as we possibly could."*

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RADEK BABORÁK MOZART'S MUSIC FOR HORN IS MAGNIFICIENT

For the new album, made with his Baborák Ensemble, the horn player and conductor Radek Baborák has adapted the sinfonia's unused movement to complete the missing parts of the unfinished horn concerto. Something that Mozart himself did on numerous occasions. In this manner, Baborák has created two "new horn concertos" from the preserved fragments. Splendidly fitting in the context of rediscovery is the fabulous Sinfonia concertante for four wind instruments and orchestra, K 297b. The new album features Baborák's arrangement for the original configuration scored by Mozart himself.

Mr. Baborák, how has your relation to Mozart evolved?

The very first small piece I played was the second movement from Mozart's Horn Concerto No. 3. I was nine or so years of age and I now I can refer to the moment as the beginning of my relation to Mozart's music for the horn. And owing to the fact that Mozart's concertos are part of the compulsory repertoire at competitions and auditions, over a certain period I actually performed them a lot. Yet when I was about 20, I started to play more pieces by Classical composers – Joseph Haydn, Antonio Rosetti, Jan Václav Stich-Punto, František Pokorný, Carl Stamitz, and others. After a certain time, however, I returned

to Mozart and realised how magnificent his music for the horn was. Making do with a modicum of notes, he was capable of discovering new characters and intriguing sounds in each instrument. His music harbours great imagination and a plethora of colours, which can be sensed from the score. I myself consider every tiny fragment of Mozart's pieces far more valuable than whole concertos by lesser-known composers.

You spent many years abroad, primarily in German-speaking countries. Does the approach to interpreting Mozart's music there anyhow differ from that in the Czech Republic?

As I perceive it, the difference in interpretation of music dating from the Classical period is very slight. The natures of individual nations naturally do indeed have a certain impact on the approach to music, so we can assume that, for instance, the Italians would perform Mozart's scores more vividly, the Germans more earthily, and the like. But when it comes to Classicist music, one can hear all the details, while its order, preciseness, articulation, intonation and phrasing must be uncompromisingly taken heed of by each and every performer. And despite its stylishness, Classicist music must remain zesty, humorous and joyous, replete with surprises and possessing a charge, which is afforded to it by the "pattering" of the ostinato. By their simple themes, the fast movements are actually reminiscent of rock and roll – a spread chord at the beginning and off it goes rushing!

Within your new album, you adapted the sinfonia's unused movement so as to complete the missing parts of the unfinished horn concerto. Can we assume that this was the commencement of your work as a composer?

In no case would I be able to complete Mozart's pieces, although a few composers and musicologists have taken on such tasks, with various degrees of success. It has not been a recent phenomenon only – some, the best known among them being Mr. Süssmayer, ventured to do so instantly after the maestro's death. In the first movement of his Concerto in E major, Mozart wrote about 60 through-composed bars, followed by 12 bars with a horn solo, and then it suddenly is all over. At the present time, a variety of "endings" are available. And it is the same in the case of other Mozart pieces of which only fragments have survived. I can apply my invention with cadenzas and I am pleased that the more I have played Mozart's music the easier the ideas have occurred to me, even though they may just be variations. I have modified one or two cadenzas for each CD or larger tours. Accordingly, my alterations of Mozart's music rested in my having completed his unfinished or lost pieces and singling out for them certain parts from his early works. When I was browsing through the complete edition of his symphonies, I came across a slow movement from one of them which Mozart did not deem to be excellent enough and duly replaced it with another. The publisher included it in the sheet music merely as a supplement. And these are precisely the passages – the additions to scores – I have been seeking. Perhaps their rebirth and re-instrumentation will not compromise Mozart's legacy, nor the palate of musicians, listeners and specialists.

In addition to the members of the Baborák Ensemble, the album features other superb wind instrumentalists. Could you tell us more about them?

Yes, gladly. I invited to work with us the oboist Clara Dent-Bogányi (a soloist of the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin), the flautist Walter Auer (a soloist of the Wiener Philharmoniker) and the bassoonist Bence Bogányi (a professor at the Hochschule für Musik in Hannover). All three of them are top-notch musicians, and friends of ours, not only because we like playing together, but also owing to our having similar opinions and taste. Another noted guest was the legendary hornist Radovan Vlatković, who since 2014 has been an honorary member of the Royal Academy of Music in London.

Photo © Martin Kubica

DVOŘÁK PIANO QUARTET

"PURE" REPERTOIRE CHOICE PREVAILED

Photo © Petra Hajská

Although formed just a few years ago, the Dvořák Piano Quartet now rank among the major Czech chamber ensembles. The pianist Slávka Vernerová Pěchočová, the violinist Štěpán Pražák, the violist Petr Verner and the cellist Jan Žďánský have played music for a number of years, both separately and together. They began performing as the Dvořák Piano Quartet after having received approval for using the name of the world-renowned composer from his direct descendant, Mr. Antonín Dvořák III. The ensemble have linked up to the illustrious legacy of their great teachers – Ivan Moravec, Josef Vlach and Milan Škampa. Their debut album features piano quartets by Antonín Dvořák, splendidly presented in a traditional and sophisticated manner.

Mr. Verner, can you tell us whether you were always certain that you would opt for Dvořák's piano quartets to be featured on your debut Supraphon album?

By no means did we want to hasten our decision concerning the recording. When we began giving thought to our first CD, we were only sure that it would include the second of Dvořák's quartets, Op. 87, and initially we intended to add to it Johannes Brahms's famed quartet, Op. 25. Nonetheless, we changed our mind when we were further exploring Dvořák's first piano quartet, Op. 23, which so enthralled us that we fell for it. Ultimately, a "pure" repertoire choice prevailed. Yet at the time of our decision-making we of course had no inkling that the album would be released on Supraphon. We are really pleased that the label undertook the project.

What are Antonín Dvořák's quartets like?

Antonín Dvořák was maturing throughout his artistic career, constantly coming up with ever more wonderful, ever more inspired compositions. Following Opus 9, all his pieces are splendid. The reason why his earlier works have been – regrettably – less frequently performed is the fact that he wrote such an enormous amount of magnificent chamber music. Piano Quartet No. 1, Op. 23, which Dvořák composed in the wake of his gracious serenade for strings, already bears all the traits of his mastery. At the time, he was enjoying success at long last. Opus 23 teems with animation, youthful spirit and strength, yet when it comes to the atmosphere and form in terms of style, it starkly differs from Dvořák's far more frequently performed Opus 87, written concurrently with Symphony No. 8, just before he reached the creative apex. The two quartets are clearly and discernibly Dvořák's, albeit they are charmingly contrastive.

Is there a "leader" of your ensemble?

I personally think that piano quartets should be led by the pianist, who as though through a "Bluetooth" should be connected to the first violinist, who now and then must take the reins and be equally bold. In our conception, the pianist naturally plays the predominant role, which is possible owing to Slávka Vernerová, who in addition to perfectly mastering her instrument possesses the virtues of a thoughtful analytical musician with a refined taste. That, however, does not mean that all the other ensemble members are not afforded scope for voicing their own suggestions and inspirations. Our quartet is made up of four strong and experienced personalities.

Do you often play Dvořák's quartets at your concerts?

Yes, we have performed them very often. And I think that the two quartets can be played within a single concert. We have done so on several occasions, and I would like us to perform them next to each other more frequently. Given that Dvořák created the two pieces within an interval of many years, they are, as I have said, contrastive, and their juxtaposition could be quite intriguing for the audience.

What about your core repertoire? Which works have you performed most frequently?

We usually put programmes together in, say, the conventional way. The majority of our concerts start with music dating from the Classicist era (Mozart, Beethoven), following which we strive to present new works. To date, contemporary Czech composers have written half a dozen or so works for us. And we also like performing grand Romantic pieces, by Schumann, Brahms or Dvořák in particular. We have a penchant for novel, unusual projects. At the Prague Spring festival,

Photo © Petra Hajská

for instance, we played an unknown, yet wonderful Impressionistic quartet by the French composer Mel Bonis.

Could you introduce your colleagues in the ensemble?

Yes, with great pleasure. I would like to begin with the lady I have mentioned earlier – the pianist Slávka Vernerová-Pěchočová, a top-notch soloist and chamber musician, who has often been invited to work with renowned orchestras and ensembles. Her style has been influenced by her having taken lessons over the long term from the legendary pianist and educator Ivan Moravec, who thought highly of her, expressing so great a respect that I cannot even specify, although I heard him utter his sincere appreciation many times. Yet an extremely modest person as she is, Slávka would never and nowhere refer to having received such praise herself. Our cellist Jan Ždánský, a man of many talents and piercing intellect, has worked both in the Czech Republic and Austria. Besides being a brilliant player, he is an organiser and collector. In our quartet, he is a sort of supervisor of the musical order, which is a task of the utmost importance. Our first violinist is Štěpán Pražák. I got to know him years ago as a remarkable, emotionally pregnant first violinist of a string quartet. He and I share very similar artistic opinions, and I am happy that he is now a member of the Dvořák Piano Quartet, the ensemble that I dreamt up a long time ago and which I deem to be my "beloved child".

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IVO KAHÁNEK TOGETHER WITH HIS COLLEAGUES HAVE RECORDED VIKTOR KALABIS'S SONATAS

Viktor Kalabis (1923–2006), one of the most distinguished figures of 20th-century Czech music, wrote dozens of opuses, mainly instrumental pieces, including for his wife, the world-renowned harpsichordist Zuzana Růžičková. As he himself put it, his aim was to create music rooted in his country, music for educated listeners. Although he also drew inspiration from 20th-century classics, Kalabis arrived at a synthetic style of his own, an alternative to the rational compositional techniques – a Neo-Romantic alternative, akin to Neo-Classicism. Besides the first ever album of Kalabis's complete piano oeuvre, Ivo Kahánek and other leading Czech instrumentalists have recorded the composer's three sonatas. The one for cello reflects the dramatic events in Czechoslovakia between June and September 1968: the months of euphoria of the Prague Spring, followed by disillusionment and resignation in the wake of the Warsaw Pact's invasion, which for two decades to come would numb all hopes of freedom. The clarinet sonata (1969) too clearly refers to the time of its coming into being: drama, grief and sorrow, escalated into harrowing helplessness. The elliptical and coherent violin sonata (1982) places emphasis on the instrument's typical ethos – melodiousness, bright sound and soulfulness. After 3 CDs featuring Kalabis's symphonies and concertos (Supraphon 2013), the present recording affords yet another insight into the composer's musical universe.

Mr. Kahánek, could you tell us when the idea of making an album of Viktor Kalabis's Sonatas for cello, clarinet and violin came about?

Not surprisingly, the idea of focusing on Kalabis's music occurred to Zuzana Růžičková, who, up until her husband's death, was an ardent promoter of his work. Her enthusiasm was contagious. She was the one who kindled my interest and subsequent deep immersion into Kalabis's music. I would like to add that next year I am scheduled to complete the very first complete recording of Kalabis's piano works (2 CDs, planned for release in 2019).

You have made the recording of Viktor Kalabis's Sonatas with the cellist Tomáš Jamník, the clarinettist Anna Paulová and the violinist Jan Fišer. For several years, you have worked with Jamník and Fišer within the Dvořák Trio. Has your being colleagues made the recording process easier?

Yes, it went very smoothly and pleasantly. As a trio, we like accentuating the solo aspects of performances, each of us has pursued his own separate projects, and sometimes only two us play together. When it comes to Anna Paulová, it was actually the very first time I worked with her, and we got along splendidly. Anna is a superb musician,

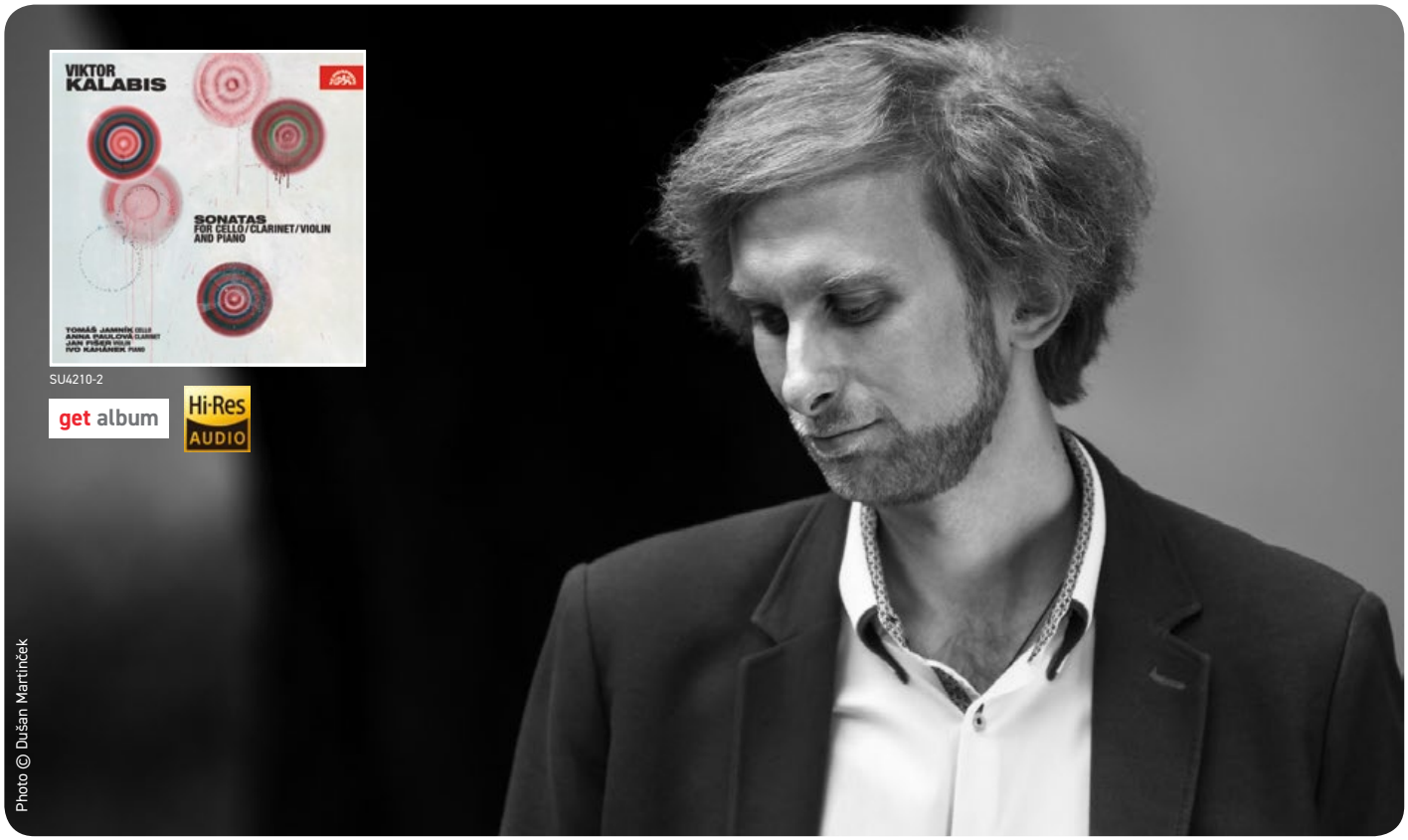


Photo © Dušan Martinček

a graduate of the Music Academy in Prague, and as I know all her teachers, the recording sessions proceeded in an almost familial atmosphere.

How was the album's repertoire compiled?

Professor Růžičková suggested it, and we gladly accepted her proposals. And not only because the works on the album are representative.

How often has Kalabis's music been performed at concerts?

I would say that his works have been rarely performed worldwide, although a little bit more frequently in the Czech Republic. I think it is good that we strive to promote 20th-century Czech composers' music at home, yet I must admit that it has not become as established as the music of, for instance, Janáček and Martinů.

How challenging are Kalabis's works to perform? Those for the piano, as well as for the instruments heard on your new album?

As a pianist, I am not competent to assess how demanding the other instruments' parts are. Nevertheless, given that we prepared for the recording together, I would say that they are just as difficult as the piano part, which now and then is written in an unexpected manner and generally not taking into consideration the pianist and his/her hands. Kalabis was one of those composers who do not constrain their conceptions by the traditional laws of the piano technique, hence his music is in places extremely difficult to perform.

You have mentioned Zuzana Růžičková, who supported young musicians and liked discussing music with them. Was she present at any of your recording sessions?

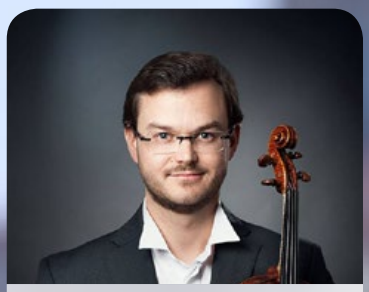
Yes, Professor Růžičková was at the first two recording sessions. She voiced very specific, to-the-point remarks, which was truly inspiring and valuable.

Will you perform the pieces featured on your new album at concerts?

Since I have learned the pieces, it is highly likely that I will include them in some of my concerts.

Where did you record the album and who formed the recording team?

The recording sessions took place at the Martinů Hall at the Music Academy in Prague, which is a milieu familiar to all of us. What is more, Kalabis would often go there too, so I can say there was a certain spiritual link with him. The recording team was really great. We were lucky, as it is of great significance in the case of such long-term



Jan Fischer

Anna Paulová

Tomáš Jamník

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DAGMAR PECKOVÁ
ABOUT HER NEW CHRISTMAS ALBUM

The globally renowned mezzo-soprano Dagmar Pecková in collaboration with Jaroslav Krček and Musica Bohemica released a new Christmas album titled Nativitas which is made up of Czech and Moravian carols, Christmas songs from Czech Baroque hymnbooks and old carols of European nations.

Mrs. Pecková, could you tell us how you put together the final selection?

The final selection of the pieces on the album is the result of agreement between Jaroslav Krček and me. I really wanted the disc to feature as many European carols and possible, in different languages. Hence, the tracklist even contains Flemish and Dutch carols, as well as a Swedish song, representing the Nordic Protestant tradition. The music was treated and arranged by Mr. Krček. As I perceive it, our collaboration was swift, fruitful and efficient alike.

How did you arrive at the decision to work with Jaroslav Krček?

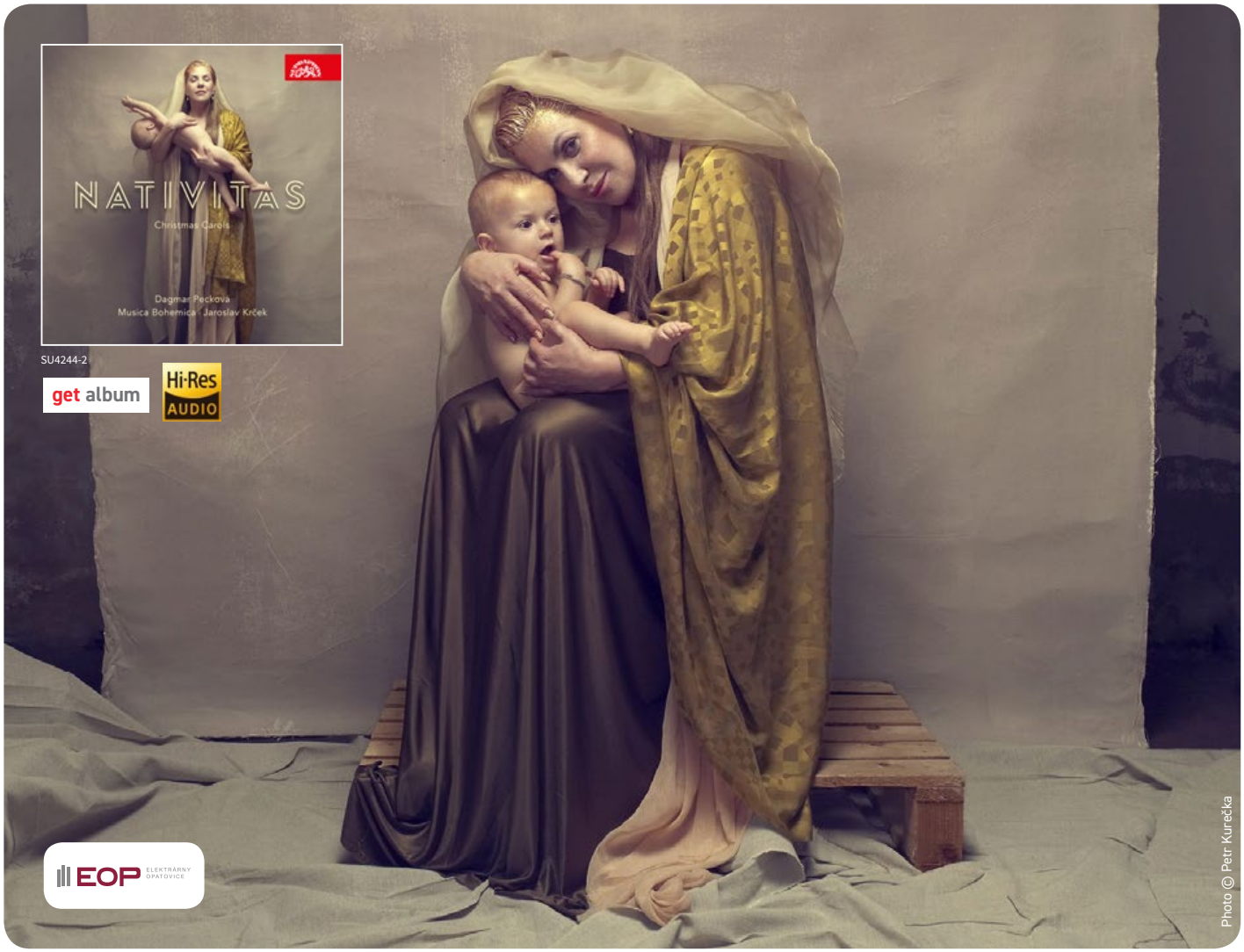
Shortly before Christmas 2016, Spirituál kvintet invited me to their Advent concert at the Municipal House in Prague. Jaroslav Krček and Musica Bohemica appeared as their guests. I came to the concert straight from a rehearsal and was very tired. Yet as soon as Musica Bohemica began playing, I felt revitalised. I was so impressed by their splendid performance that afterwards I went to see Jaroslav Krček at the dressing room and directly told him that I wished to make a Christmas album with him.

Could you present to us the other guest musicians featured on the album?

Besides Jaroslav Krček's Musica Bohemica, Karel Jakubů (a member of the ensemble), Filip Dámec, as well as Krček himself, sing along with me. In addition, I also invited the excellent Gentleman Singers.

What type of music did you use to listen to as a child and later on as an adult during Christmas?

When I was a child, there were not many possibilities to listen to music from a player, so my family just got together by the piano and sang carols, as a trio, for instance. Yet I must admit that I have already been listening to the new album, which delights me. Nevertheless, this actually is an extraordinary case, as I have seldom been inclined to speak of my work positively and I hardly ever have been able to listen to my own recordings. The album has always delighted me in that it contains Baroque music that passes over to folk and general exhilaration.



THREE VINYL RECORDS FROM SUPRAPHON

This autumn, Supraphon delighted those revelling in the ongoing vinyl boom. In late October, the label released two titles from the discography of the Pavel Haas Quartet, currently the most internationally acclaimed chamber ensemble: the albums of Antonín Dvořák's Quintets and String Quartets, both of them winners of the Gramophone Award, the world's most prestigious classical music accolade.

Another musical treat Supraphon has released on vinyl is the legendary recording of Bedřich Smetana's My Country, made in 1990 by Rafael Kubelík conducting the Czech Philharmonic. A triumph of truth and hope – that is how we could define the extraordinary moment experienced by the orchestra and the audience (including President Václav Havel) on the evening of 12 May 1990 at the packed Smetana Hall of the Municipal House of Prague. Thanks to the Supraphon recording team, the moment of overwhelming joy at the return of freedom can still be recalled by thousands of listeners enchanted by the legendary recording's magic – and now also those with a penchant for the rich vinyl sound.

The LP recordings have been produced in high audio quality (DMM, 180g virgin vinyl), and have also been furnished with an exquisite layout and sleeve.

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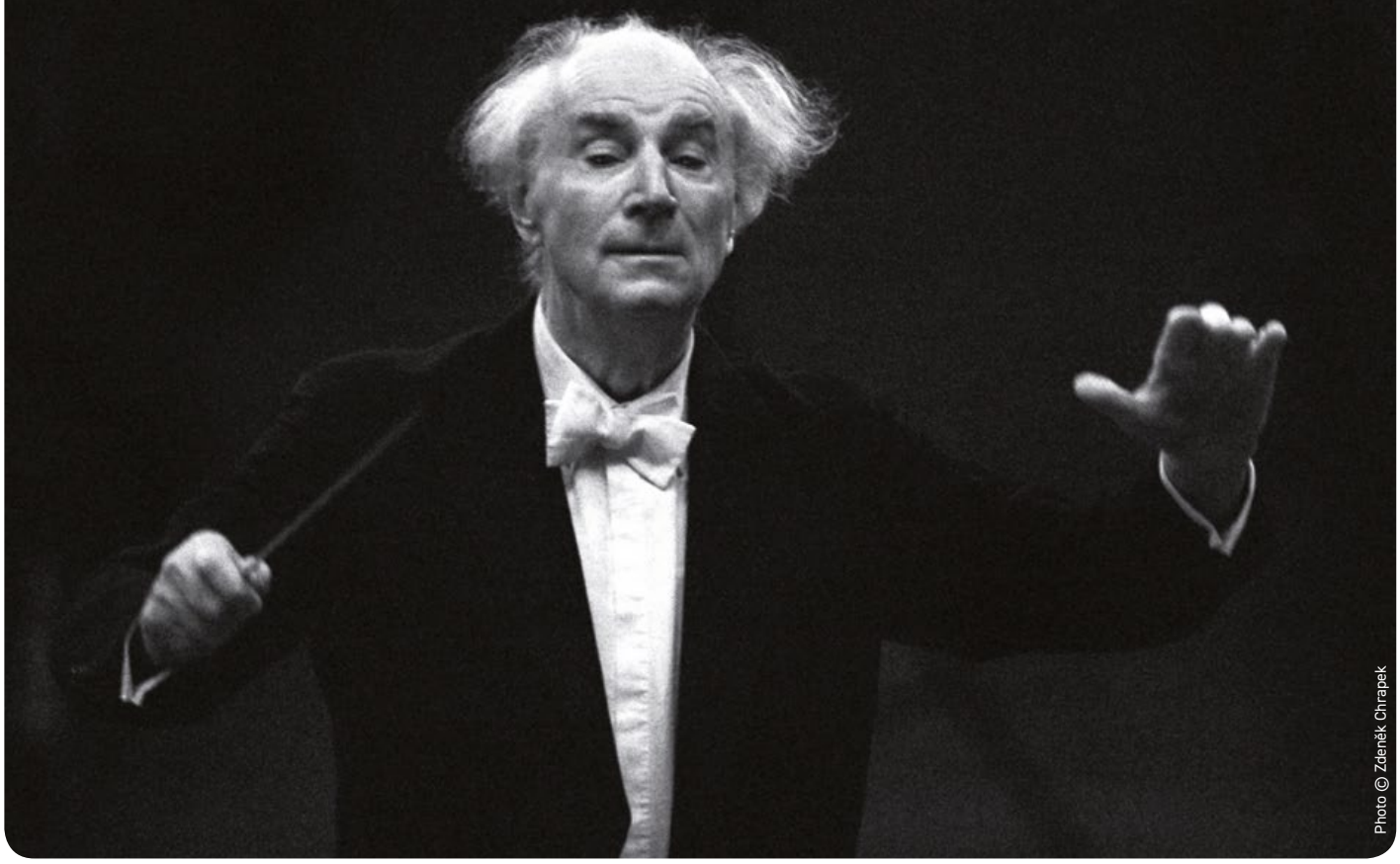

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