

VIVACE

*Classical Music Review
in Supraphon Recordings*

SUMMER 2022

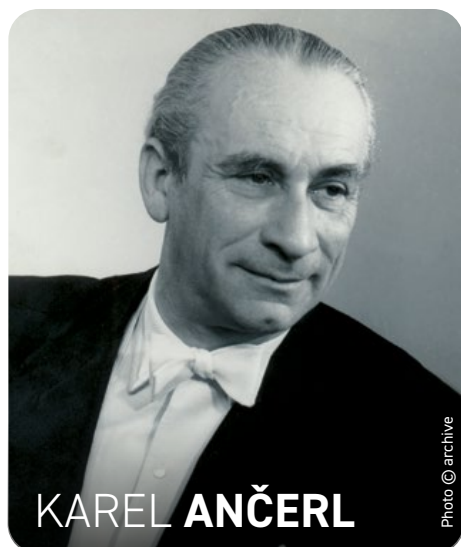




Photo © Vojtěch Havlík

Dear friends,

The set of 15 CDs containing previously unreleased live recordings made by Karel Ančerl has been for me personally the most significant project over the 16 years I have worked at Supraphon. To a large degree, the intention has been materialised owing to Czech Radio, which has maintained the recordings in its archives, as well as Petr Kadlec, who played a major role in the selection of the music and wrote a truly erudite text for the booklet, in which he familiarises the reader with the course of Ančerl's life – not only with regard to his professional career as a conductor. Petr Kadlec tells the story of a man whose fate was tragically afflicted by war (Ančerl was the only member of his family to have survived incarceration in a Nazi concentration camp), the totalitarian Communist regime in Czechoslovakia and the Warsaw Pact invasion of his country in August 1968, in consequence of which he felt compelled to leave his home and abandon unfinished work with the Czech Philharmonic. "This time I just cannot afford to make such an essential mistake as I did back in 1939, when I firmly believed that everything would turn out well and felt obliged to stay so as to help where I assumed I could help. I have learned a lesson, and I am convinced that in this situation I could not help anyone (...)." (from Ančerl's letter to Ivan Medek)

I believe that Ančerl's story should be recalled and retold. The same applies to the stories of Bohuslav Martinů and the "Theresienstadt composers". They must not be merely referred to as chapters in modern history. The shocking events of the past few months to the east of our border clearly remind us just how little suffices for us to experience war and the horror inflicted by dictators – something we were convinced our civilisation had moved beyond, something that should only have a place in the history books.

A similar theme is touched upon in an intriguing album made by the violinist Josef Špaček and the cellist Tomáš Jamník, bearing the indicative title *Paths*. The two musicians focus on the lives and creative paths of Martinů, Janáček, Schulhoff and Klein, the destinies

of three of whom were markedly, even fatally, influenced by World War II. The album is splendid and remarkable in all respects.

Over the past six months, Supraphon has released albums made by artists whose concert and studio performances can, in my opinion, be defined as impeccable (even though the respective musicians would humbly claim otherwise...), with the recordings reflecting *joie de vivre* and torrential emotion. The Pavel Haas Quartet, together with the violist Pavel Nikl and the pianist Boris Giltburg, made a dream come true by completing an album of Brahms's quintets, which freely links up to their highly critically acclaimed recording of Dvořák's quintets. (By the way, the Pavel Haas Quartet, this year celebrating their 20th anniversary, appeared on the cover of the June issue of the prestigious magazine *The Strad*.) The Belfiato Quintet's new CD, titled *Elements*, features a variegated selection of 20th-century virtuoso pieces (Nielsen, Hindemith, Barber, Tomasi, Pärt). And on their latest album, *Cachua Serranita*, Collegium Marianum take the listener to a space where the music of the indigenous peoples of Bolivia and Peru entirely naturally encounters Europe's late-Baroque music and Moravian folk songs. As incredible as it may seem, music evidently possesses the power to connect in harmony even the parts of the world most distant from each other. The album's common denominator is simply an unceasing passion for making music with others.

When it comes to accolades, several Supraphon recordings have recently garnered acclaim. The Karel Ančerl boxset has been lauded by the French critics (*Diapason d'Or*, *Choc de Classica*), while the Pavel Haas Quartet have again been praised in the UK (*Presto Classical Recording of the Week*). And – drum roll! – Kateřina Kněžíková's album *Phidylé* has received a BBC Music Magazine Award!

Dear friends, on behalf of Supraphon I wish you a wonderful and restful summer, a good deal of silence and beautiful music. As a Czech song has it: "May peace remain with this land!"

Matouš Vlčinský

KAREL ANČERL LIVE RECORDINGS

Karel Ančerl was one of the most distinguished conductors in post-war Europe. A survivor of Nazi concentration camps, as well as the openly anti-Jewish policy of Communist Czechoslovakia. An artist who through his limitless patience and diligence transformed the Czech Philharmonic into a world-class orchestra and brought them to the most prominent concert venues all over the globe.

Supraphon released the major part of Ančerl's legacy, the complete studio recordings he made with the Czech Philharmonic, between 2002 and 2008 within the highly acclaimed 48-CD Ančerl Gold Edition. Yet the Czech Radio archives maintain numerous recordings of live Czech Philharmonic concerts Ančerl conducted, which complete the picture of the exceptional figure.

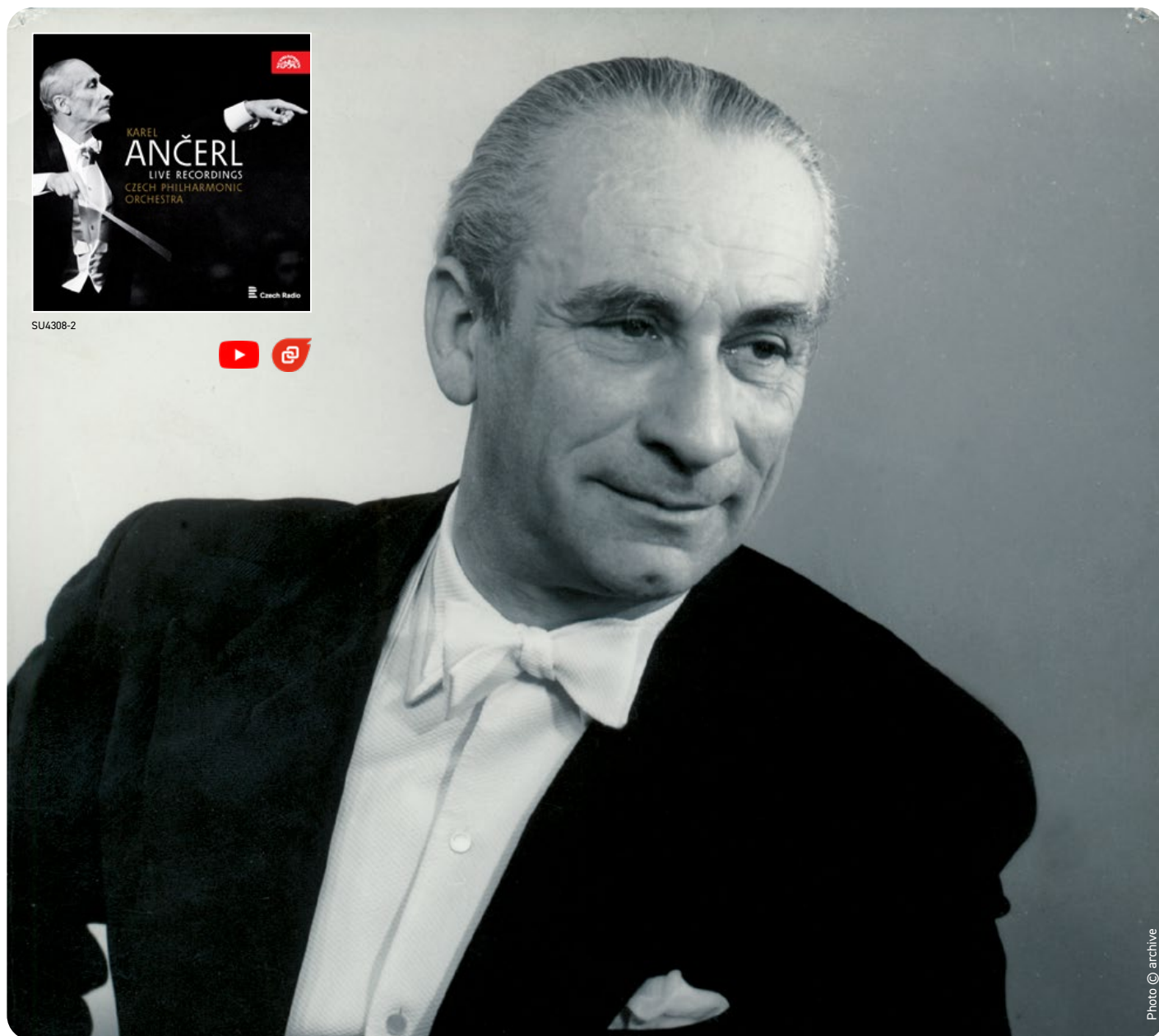
The present Supraphon compilation, comprising 15 CDs, includes works never recorded in a studio, a repertoire ranging from Mozart to Ančerl's contemporaries. It features gems by Dvořák (Symphonies Nos. 7 and 8, Biblical Songs) and Suk (Asrael, Ripening), by Ančerl's beloved Martinů (Symphony No. 1) and Kabeláč (Symphony No. 5), as well as splendid opuses by major 20th-century composers (Debussy, Ravel, Strauss, Prokofiev, etc.). The recording of a concert in May 1968 within the Prague Spring festival of Smetana's *My Country* is one of the last Ančerl made before moving to and settling in Toronto.

When the music world was celebrating the centenary of Karel Ančerl's birth, Ivan Medek, who worked closely with the conductor during his tenure at the helm of the Czech Philharmonic, recalled: "Whenever I listen to Ančerl's recordings, I am fascinated by their sound and perfection. I think they attest to an illustrious, perhaps the most illustrious, era of the Czech Philharmonic. Interestingly, Karel Ančerl's physical gestures at the podium never evoked a romantic approach, many people considered him to have primarily been a rhythmicist and a meticulous educator of the orchestra. Yet when I listened to his recording of Brahms's Symphony No. 1, I was surprised by his ample phrasing and by how much freedom the account contains."

Next year we will commemorate the 115th anniversary of the birth and the 50th anniversary of the death of Karel Ančerl. By releasing the Karel Ančerl Live Recordings set, Supraphon ushers in the anniversaries and, above all, extends the remarkable discography of the unforgettable artist.



SU4308-2



THE PAVEL HAAS QUARTET WITH BORIS GILTBURG AND PAVEL NIKL IMMERSE THEMSELVES IN THE MUSICAL UNIVERSE OF BRAHMS QUINTETS



SU4306-2



At the beginning of this year, BBC Music Magazine ranked the Pavel Haas Quartet among the ten greatest string quartets of all time, alongside ensembles of such renown as the Alban Berg Quartet, the Amadeus Quartet and the Borodin Quartet. With six Gramophone Awards, two BBC Music Magazine Awards and a Diapason d'Or de l'Année to their name, this year the PHQ are celebrating their 20th anniversary. This May, Supraphon released their ninth album. The eagerly awaited recording features Johannes Brahms's Piano Quintet in F minor, Op. 34, and String Quintet No. 2 in G major, Op. 111. As in the case of the CD containing Antonín Dvořák's quintets, which has received a Gramophone Chamber Award, the Pavel Haas Quartet invited special guests – the pianist Boris Giltburg and the violist Pavel Nikl, a former member of the ensemble. We talked with the musicians about the new album.

Can Brahms's and Dvořák's quintets be compared?

Peter Jarůšek: Comparing them is quite difficult, but I will try to give a simple answer. In terms of performance, both composers' quintets are immensely challenging. It is not easy to attain a natural sound and to comply with all the details of the score, so you have to give the matter a lot of thought. When it comes to Dvořák, I myself feel at home, and we let ourselves be led by the music. As regards Brahms's quintets, you have to "sweat it out", they are more exacting. You acutely sense the Wertherian sorrow.

Pavel Nikl: The two composers are truly singular, and I deem our decision to make "sister" albums a very good one. Brahms's pieces are highly elaborate and more complex, particularly with regard to the structure of the notation. Sometimes it is quite hard to pinpoint that which is really essential, as everything in the score seems to be of great significance. Yet if you succeed in doing so, and I hope we have succeeded, Brahms's quintets come across as very well-arranged, occasionally monumental even. On the other hand,

Dvořák's "lightness" and nimble inventiveness is disarming indeed. By and large, Dvořák's music is closer to the Czech heart, so we don't have to make that much effort to take our bearings in the structure of his score. Yet I find combining the two composers' music a very good idea, since they supplement each other so splendidly.

Boris, how do you perceive Brahms's Quintet in F minor?

Brahms's piano quintet was one of the very first chamber pieces I performed. I fell in love with it upon the first listen, and I have been fond of the piece ever since. During the preparations for the recording with the Pavel Haas Quartet, I discovered a lot of details I hadn't been aware of previously. It was as though I was hearing the quintet totally anew. And this came about due to the Pavel Haas Quartet's art. Owing to their approach, filled with a great love of music, their absolute respect for the score – regarding the notes and the overall spirit of the piece. Being in the studio and recording with them seemed



Photo © Marco Borggreve

absolutely natural, like a smooth continuation of our joint endeavours to come to know the Brahms quintet's musical universe.

Veronika, do the Pavel Haas Quartet still regard Boris Giltburg and Pavel Nikl as guests?

We definitely don't consider Pavel a guest, he is like our brother coming home. And when it comes to Boris, we have had an exceptional relationship over the long term. Our collaboration actually grows more profound year by year. It's a great pleasure to work with him.

Boris, what do you treasure most about working with the Pavel Haas Quartet?

In addition to being extraordinary musicians, they are my best musical friends. When playing with them, I feel their enormous enthusiasm and engagement. We share an interest in and love of music, as well as the great joy of simply being together.

Performing chamber music involves intimate cooperation, and finding the right musical partner is similar to finding the right life partner. If I had to mention a few aspects of our collaboration, I would highlight the unique level of attention paid to detail at every single rehearsal. Nothing is left to chance, and it may well be that we

are never definitively satisfied with anything. We meticulously mull everything and there is always a clear reason why we perform something the way we do. And when we are on the stage, we convey to the audience our immense excitement arising from creating live music! Such moments, when I perform with the Pavel Haas Quartet at a concert hall, are indeed among the apices of my musical life.

Pavel, what does returning to the Pavel Haas Quartet mean to you?

Although life circumstances made me give up my role as a permanent member, I have never actually left the quartet completely. Whenever possible, we have continued to work together. Our friendship and wonderful collaboration always evokes the feeling that I am coming home ... All our reunions are about musical and human understanding, and joint discovery of beauty in music.

Could you reveal what would you like to record next?

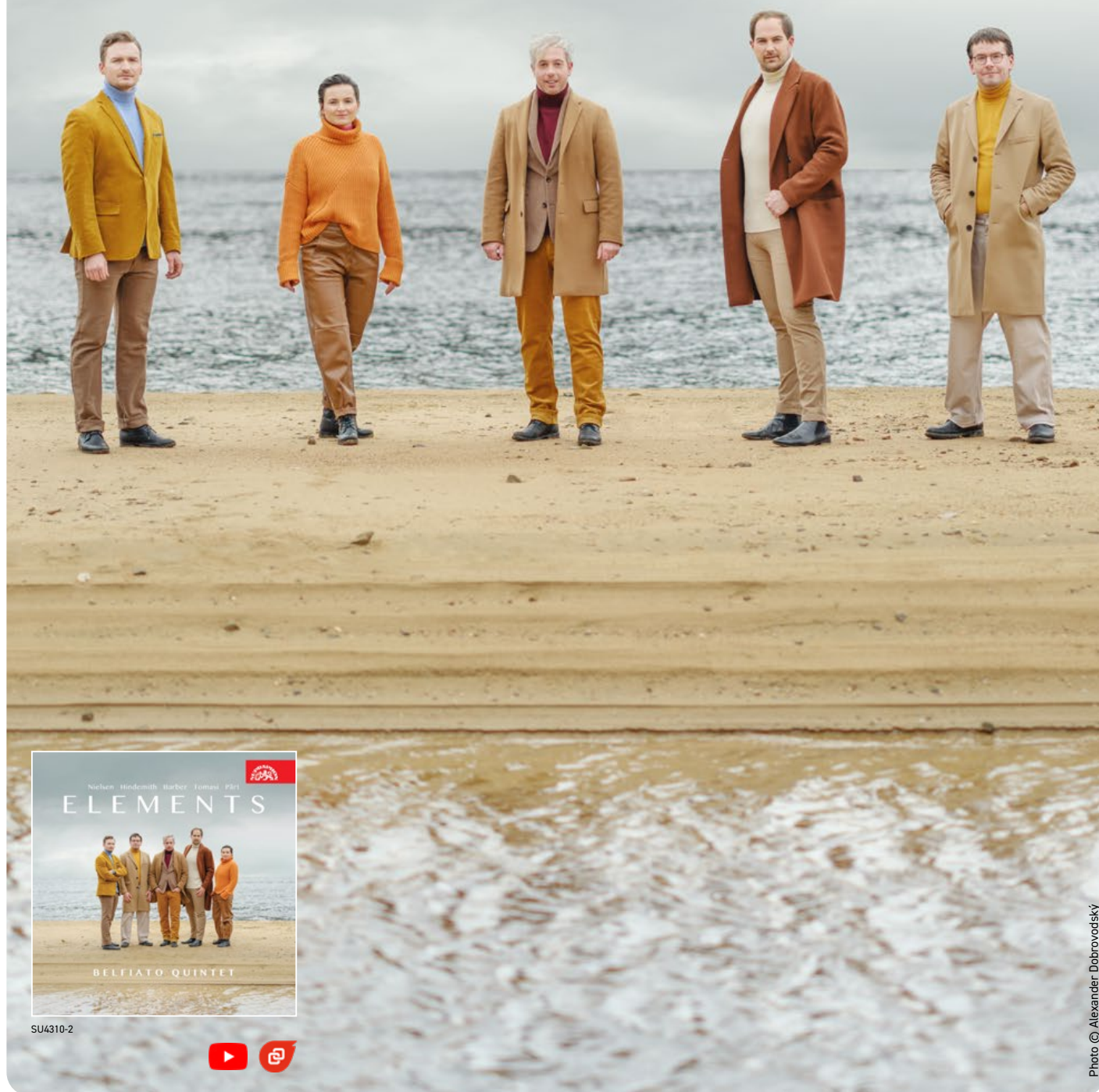
Peter Jarůšek: Everyone has been asking this question recently. We don't want to speak too soon, but I can say that we would like to focus on Bohuslav Martinů's music.



PAVEL HAAS QUARTET:
Veronika Jarůšková – 1st violin,
Marek Zwiebel – 2nd violin,
Luosha Fang – viola,
Peter Jarůšek – cello

BELFIATO QUINTET

FROM CZECH MUSIC TO THE GLOBAL 20th-CENTURY QUINTET REPERTOIRE



The Belfiato Quintet members are known for sharing identical views, zest and enthusiasm for the music they perform. This year the ensemble are celebrating their 17th anniversary, which they mark with a new album. The works featured on *Elements* are staples of their repertoire and, above all, close to their hearts. The recording is the first on which the Belfiato Quintet present global music. We talked about the Belfiato Quintet's new album, their third, with the flautist Oto Reiprich.

Why is *Elements* important for your ensemble?

We primarily deem it important with regard to the selected repertoire. Our first album captures our accounts of works by the Czech composers Haas, Foerster and Janáček, while the second pays tribute to Antonín Rejcha, considered the “father of the wind quintet”. The new album moves us to the global 20th-century quintet repertoire. At the same time, it can be referred to as our ensemble's “Best Of”, as we have a specific relation to each of the pieces. This time, we paid special attention to the sound. We and the sound engineer Jakub Hadraba checked the acoustics of the Dvořák Hall of the Rudolfinum in several places – on the stage, as well as in the auditorium.

Why did you invite Radek Baborák to oversee the recording?

Just like everything pertaining to the album, there is a story behind this collaboration. We actually formed our ensemble because we so admired the legendary Afflatus Quintet. We simply aspired to play like them. All our members were fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to study with the Afflatus Quintet. The bassoonist Ondřej Roskovec even used to lead our quintet. We have ultimately become friends, which we treasure, and that is how we came to know Radek

Baborák. So, when we thought of inviting someone to oversee and motivate us during the recording, he was the one who immediately occurred to all of us.

What was his role in the process?

Our aim was to make the album as good as it could possibly be, so we thought Radek Baborák would be the ideal person to get the best out of us. Now and then you get bogged down in something, and also over time may cease perceiving all the details, or listen to yourself less. We did not make any major changes, rather consulted Radek Baborák about a few aspects, such as dynamic and tempo nuances.

Will you be performing the pieces featured on your new album at concerts too?

All the pieces on the new album have been staples of our concert repertoire for years. And nothing will change in this respect. In relation to the release, we have even prepared a tour, within which we intend to perform at alternative venues, presenting the music to young audiences. We will soon be giving concerts in Hamburg and Žilina, Slovakia. Subsequently, we will appear at a festival in Ankara. And we are currently also preparing our own concert series.



BELFIATO QUINTET:

Oto Reiprich – flute,
Jan Souček – oboe,
Jiří Javůrek – clarinet,
Jan Hudeček – bassoon,
Kateřina Javůrková – horn

COLLEGIUM MARIANUM

CACHUA SERRANITA CONNECTS THE OLD AND NEW WORLDS

Since their formation 25 years ago, Collegium Marianum have performed 17th- and 18th-century music, primarily that of Czech and other Central European composers. Led by Jana Semerádová, the Prague-based ensemble have enjoyed acclaim on the part of domestic and foreign critics, and have been regularly invited to appear at major international festivals and prestigious concert venues worldwide. Over the past 15 years, Collegium Marianum have worked with the Supraphon label, which to date has released eight well-received albums of theirs, including within the revelatory Music of Eighteenth-Century Prague series. We talked about the new album, titled Cachua Serranita, that was released in February, with Jana Semerádová, the artistic director of Collegium Marianum.

How did you arrive at the idea of recording Cachua Serranita, an album featuring such an extraordinary repertoire?

Paradoxically, I was led to South American sources by a Czech composer who never left his native land, Jan Josef Ignác Brentner. His music, highly popular in his time, has been performed by our ensemble since the very beginning, and was featured on our first albums and concert programmes. The fate of Brentner's sacred pieces, which Jesuit missionaries brought across the ocean to what is today Bolivia, inspired and led me to the "far side of the world", where I discovered music that sounds similar to European Baroque works. My endeavour to connect the two distant parts of the world came to fruition when I put together musicians playing several instruments and singing, musicians possessing extraordinary improvisation skills, who are familiar with folk and ethnic music. The instruments include flutes, violins, violas, charango, violone and a small cimbalom.

What was the most interesting aspect of making the recording?

Our main aim was to capture the joy of improvisation, the thrill of coming up with new ideas. I think we have succeeded in this respect. We really enjoyed the audacious combination of Baroque instruments, the cimbalom and charango, which gave rise to further possibilities of improvisation.

What is it like to immerse oneself in Peruvian folk songs?

I myself consider it a form of musical therapy. All I have to do is listen to the melody brilliantly whistled by the violinist Jurko Sycha, and then I am borne on a zephyr that takes me all the way to the Andes...

Have you ever been to South America?

Unfortunately not. For a long time, I have really wanted to visit Bolivia and Peru, and our new album, Cachua Serranita, is a bit like a boarding pass... Jurko Sycha was in the Andes, from where he brought back a charango, as well as wonderful melodies that he has splendidly arranged and shared with us on the recording.

What significant performances are Collegium Marianum now preparing?

This year, we will organise the 22nd edition of the Baroque Soirées concert series and repeat the acclaimed performance of Acis and Galatea with puppets at the festival in Regensburg. In May we will appear at the Prague Spring within the Visions and Dreams project, premiering compositions written for our ensemble. And in the summer and autumn, we are scheduled to give beautiful concerts with the Italian soprano Roberta Mameli.



SU4309-2

COLLEGIUM MARIANUM:

Jana Semerádová – flutes, artistic director,
Vojtěch Semerád – Baroque violin and viola, percussion, vocals,
Jiří Sycha – Baroque violin, charango, vocals,
Marcel Comendant – cimbalom, percussion,
Ján Prievozník – G violone



JOSEF ŠPAČEK & TOMÁŠ JAMNÍK

A PRISM THROUGH THEY VIEW THE MUSIC BY FOUR CZECH COMPOSERS

Paths – crossing and diverging, those we choose ourselves and those that are predestined and inevitable: through this prism the violinist Josef Špaček and the cellist Tomáš Jamník view the music by four Czech composers written within a mere 35 years of the 20th century. The album *Paths* is a statement of the two superlative artists. A virtuoso, profound and engrossing recording. We talked with Tomáš Jamník shortly before the album's release.

Tomáš, the repertoire you and Josef Špaček selected for the album *Paths* reflects the 20th-century reality. Why do you find the music intriguing?

First and foremost, we opted for music of Czech provenience, scored for violin and cello. The first line – Bohuslav Martinů – was clear from the very beginning. It encompasses pieces that are generally known and have been performed worldwide, works we ourselves are familiar with. The second line meanders around Leoš Janáček. Both Jewish composers, Gideon Klein and Ervín Schulhoff, had an affinity to Janáček, though each in his own way. We thus decided to have Janáček's String Quartet No. 1, "Kreutzer Sonata", arranged for violin and cello specially for this album.

***Paths* is also your account of today's world – what would you like to draw the listener's attention to?**

We did not title the album *Paths* randomly. We were interested in the sources that inspired the composers and found out that they often were places. We compiled a list of all the places Janáček, Klein, Martinů and Schulhoff visited, and made a special map, which is attached to the CD. The listener can thus identify the four artists'

paths. Perhaps our greatest revelation was Gideon Klein, who was murdered by the Nazis at the tender age of 24. Fortunately, we have available a diary in which he recorded in detail the trip to Italy he made before fate turned against him. What the four composers had in common is that, notwithstanding the misfortune that afflicted their lives, they imbued their music with a bit of optimism too.

What was the most difficult aspect when recording the album?

The recording took place at the Niměřice chateau, whose owners are great culture enthusiasts. We were grateful for the absolute quiet there. We explored thoroughly every one of the pieces whose manuscripts we had available. Oddly enough, the most time-consuming work was with the piece that has been performed most frequently of the five included on the album – Bohuslav Martinů's first duo. Its one and only existing edition contains a great quantity of errors, such as absent dynamics in the cello and absent bars in the cadenza. Our aim was to give the listener the opportunity to hear the piece precisely as Martinů intended it to sound.



DVOŘÁK PIANO QUARTET

DISCOVER THE BEAUTY AND SORROW OF THE SOUL IN SCHUMANN'S CHAMBER MUSIC

Robert Schumann's music has always astonished listeners with its range and profundity. The Dvořák Piano Quartet's new album spans the entire arch of the composer's work: the beginning, the peak and the end. Just like all other Schumann works, the pieces it contains show how immense beauty is often close to pain and suffering. We talked about the album featuring Robert Schumann's Piano Quartets Nos. 1 and 2 with the violist Petr Verner.



Why did you opt for Robert Schumann works?

After making our Dvořák album, we mulled our next recording project for a relatively long time. We considered several options. Just as perhaps every ensemble, we desired to focus on the global repertoire pieces we cherish most. On the other hand, we bore in mind that in today's oversaturated world it would be better to come up with something different, novel. We love discovering and exploring lesser-known or entirely unknown compositions, some of which are included in our long-term plans. And we ultimately decided to record these Robert Schumann pieces, thus taking into account both aspects. Music lovers in general are currently either only vaguely familiar with his Piano Quartet No. 1, or do not know it at all. Schumann wrote it at the age of 18, and it was his very first extensive work. Yet it was not performed during his lifetime and would be lost for many decades. The material has only been available since 2010, more than two centuries after Schumann's death. There are few recordings of this beautiful, engrossing quartet. It is truly astounding that such a splendid Schumann piece is virtually unknown.

What else does your new album contain?

The album also features Piano Quartet No. 2, Op. 47, a highly popular, frequently performed and recorded masterpiece, as well as the Märchenerzählungen, Op. 132, Schumann's very last chamber work. The latter has almost exclusively been recorded with the clarinet, while the version with the violin, authorised by Schumann in the manuscript, has perhaps only been recorded once.

Your album spans the entire arch of Schumann's oeuvre.

We can view it from several angles. Generally speaking, interpretation of every piece develops with exploration and performance. Sometimes it evolves for the better, sometimes you must purge it of certain "stage" deposits and put it back to the better state it was in the past. It is a never-ending process, which is good, since it adds meaning to our work, as well as making us endeavour to seek and improve constantly.

A recording captures the moment and does not evolve anywhere. It entails great responsibility. A different philosophy. Mustering up the courage and self-confidence, and finding the motivation to record the momentary interpretation of a work is always rather challenging for musicians. In such situations, we are suddenly similar to painters, who present a finished, final form. Everything else is up to the imagination and state of mind of the person perceiving it.

But that which is difficult may also be viewed differently.

A recording is not just down to the musicians, the result is significantly influenced by the team working on it. You need a brilliant sound engineer using state-of-the-art technology, an emphatic music producer, a superb tuner, inspiring acoustics. In this case, we were really fortunate in this respect, everyone around us was simply amazing. On the other hand, the album was recorded during the Covid pandemic, which made things more complicated in that all those involved had to be healthy at the particular time, so as to be able to get together at once. I must admit that it was difficult to synchronise all these factors and make the process as smooth as possible.

Will the music from the new album be part of your concert repertoire?

Following the long pandemic pause, we were naturally immensely eager to perform before audiences. We have planned many concerts, with the programme primarily including the music from the new album, at home and abroad alike. But the situation has become complicated again. The war raging in Ukraine and its probable consequences will undoubtedly lead to great attenuation of live culture. Reports of cancelled concerts have already been arriving. Inter arma silent leges. For the time being, we are scheduled to present our new album at a concert on 9 June 2022 at the New Town Hall in Prague. A series of concerts should be rounded off with a performance of the two Schumann piano quartets at a Czech Chamber Music Society evening at the Dvořák Hall of the Rudolfinum on 12 December 2022.

DVOŘÁK PIANO QUARTET:

Slávka Vernerová – piano,
Štěpán Pražák – violin,
Petr Verner – viola,
Jan Ždánský – cello



Photo © Petra Hajská

LISELOTTE ROKYTA

A LIFE DEDICATED TO THE PAN FLUTE



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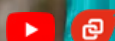


Photo © Ivan Korič

The Pan flute, one of mankind's oldest instruments, is documented in many cultures of antiquity. It is now known in its perfected form mainly from its use in Romanian folk music. Romania was also the home of the virtuosos who made the instrument famous in late 20th century: Damian Luca, Radu Simion, Nicolae Pîrveu, Simion Stanciu, and Gheorghe Zamfir. Liselotte Rokyta studied under four of the "big five", and she learned much about authentic Pan flute playing directly from folk musicians in Romania during several trips there. The album *Syrinx*, which was released in April, demonstrates that the Pan flute undeniably also has a place of its own in the world of classical music. Before the album's release, we had a conversation with Ms. Liselotte Rokyta.

What led you to the Pan flute?

I grew up in the Netherlands, where the Pan flute was a rather unusual instrument at the time. When I was little, I heard Gheorghe Zamfir play on television, and I was so enchanted by the sound of the Pan flute that I was burning with enthusiasm! I wanted to learn to play it so much, but it took a long time before I could actually get an instrument. Studying the Pan flute at the schools of the arts in Hilversum and then in Amsterdam was a dream come true.

Your new recording demonstrates that the Pan flute undeniably has a place of its own in the world of classical music.

I have been a concert Pan flute player for a long time, but I am still the only professional Pan flute player in the Czech Republic. And the Pan flute has long belonged to Classical music – it is nothing new, although it is still quite an exotic instrument to many people. I mostly play classical and Romanian folk music accompanied by organ, piano, chamber orchestra, or a cimbalom ensemble.

Was it difficult or easy to choose the right pieces for the album *Syrinx*?

When Covid arrived, the world changed; instead of giving concerts abroad, I was at home, so I suddenly had no reason to play or practise. To avoid losing all my motivation, I began studying solo repertoire for Pan flute. There were enough pieces that I had long wanted to play but hadn't had the time. Then the opportunity came to record for Czech Radio in Ostrava, and the idea emerged of doing an album for Supraphon as well. To the repertoire for solo Pan flute, I added compositions for Pan flute and piano (with the pianist Eliška Novotná) to make the album more varied.



Liselotte with Gheorghe Zamfir

Photo © archive LR

We have seen the photograph of you with Gheorghe Zamfir. What was it like meeting him?

I have met with Gheorghe Zamfir several times over the years. The very first time was at a masterclass in the Netherlands in 1994. In Switzerland in 2010 and 2011 we both taught at a summer masterclass, and he even accompanied me at the piano when we played a special concert that evening. Zamfir is a great musician, and I admire him very much. His entire life is literally dedicated to the Pan flute. I remember how he complimented me when I played his composition *Hora Batuta* from the album *Hora românilor & țiganiada*. He listened attentively, then he came up to me and said: "Liselotte, you play like a man; you're wonderful!"



Photo © Vojtěch Havlík

MARIE PODVALOVÁ THE COMPLETE STUDIO RECORDINGS OF THE LEGENDARY CZECH OPERA SINGER

Supraphon released in June the complete studio recordings made between 1939 and 1950 by the celebrated Czech soprano Marie Podvalová, a long-time soloist of Prague's National Theatre Opera. The double album marks the 30th anniversary of the diva's death.

Marie Podvalová lived through all the significant periods of 20th-century Czech history. Born in Austria-Hungary, she grew up in Czechoslovakia, matured as an artist in the Nazi-occupied Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, experienced the apex of her career in the Communist-ruled Czechoslovakia, and towards the end of her life witnessed the Velvet Revolution. Regrettably, the totalitarian Nazi and Communist regimes did not allow her to travel freely and pursue an artistic career on an international scale.

"Memories of the soprano Marie Podvalová resonate very powerfully to this day in the minds of older generations of visitors to the National Theatre. Her career came to a conclusion in 1973, and the numbers of those who remember her live performances are rapidly dwindling. All that one can do is bear truthful witness to the times and the society that had a fundamental influence on shaping the personality of this legendary singer," said Miloš Guth, Podvalová's distant relative, who is responsible for the digital reconstruction of her

archival recordings and owing to whom decades later we can listen to the magnificent voice of one of the greatest Czech singers.

Supraphon is for the first time releasing the complete studio recordings Marie Podvalová made between 1939 and 1950. She dazzled in the part of Bedřich Smetana's *Libuše*, which she created in 1938 under the guidance of the conductor Václav Talich, as well as in the roles of Milada in *Dalibor* and Anežka in *Two Widows*. She also appeared in Dvořák operas, performing to acclaim the title character in *Armida*, the Foreign Princess in *Rusalka* and Julie in *The Jacobin*, and in Janáček works, primarily excelling as Kostelníčka in *Jenůfa*. The present double album includes three songs from the collection *Věvec ze zpěvů vlasteneckých* (A Garland of Patriotic Songs, 1835–1844), which she performs accompanied on the piano by the composer J. B. Foerster. Moreover, it contains Marie Podvalová's final, previously unreleased, studio recording, with the soprano singing Beatrix in a scene from Zdeněk Fibich's opera *The Bride of Messina*.



Marie Podvalová with Gabriela Preissová in 1941

SHIZUKA ISHIKAWA

UNFORGETTABLY INSPIRING MOMENTS WITH MYSLIVEČEK'S MUSIC

In July 2022, Supraphon will re-release the complete set of recordings of Josef Mysliveček's violin concertos as performed by Shizuka Ishikawa and the Dvořák Chamber Orchestra. The Japanese virtuoso violinist recorded the works between 1983 and 1986 at the Dvořák Hall of the Rudolfinum in Prague under the baton of the legendary Czech conductor Libor Pešek.



Shizuka Ishikawa moved to Prague from Tokyo after meeting Marie Hlouňová, a Prague Conservatory teacher, with whom she began to study in 1970 following her being granted a scholarship from Czechoslovak Radio. Later on, she received prizes at the Henryk Wieniawski International Violin Competition in Poznań (1972), the Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition in Brussels (1976) and the Fritz Kreisler International Violin Competition in Vienna (1979). At the age of 19 she first performed as a soloist with the Czech Philharmonic, and at the age of 21 she debuted at the Prague Spring festival. Shizuka Ishikawa toured Japan with the Czech Philharmonic. As a soloist of the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra and the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, she gave concerts in a number of European cities, and appeared at festivals in Warsaw, Budapest and Helsinki. In the late 1970s, she began making recordings for Czech Radio and Supraphon, primarily with the Czech and Brno Philharmonics, Dvořák Chamber Orchestra, Prague Chamber Orchestra, Capella Istropolitana and the Württemberg Philharmonic. Czech music constitutes a significant part of her repertoire. Since 1997, she has been a member of the Kubelík Trio, with whom she has regularly performed worldwide. We talked to Shizuka Ishikawa before the re-release of the complete set of recordings of Josef Mysliveček's violin concertos.

How do you recall recording Josef Mysliveček's music?

I am still very happy that I made the recordings, as I was afforded the opportunity to become acquainted with and thoroughly learn Josef Mysliveček's violin concertos. Regrettably, they are not part of the staple violin repertoire. And it is a pity that the sheet music has not been published and that the pieces have scarcely been performed at concerts. I still vividly remember the splendid collaboration with František Xaver Thuri, who within a mere few weeks wrote virtuosic cadenzas for all the concertos. Josef Mysliveček's musical style blends Czech precision and Italian colour with virtuosic elements.

What was it like working with the conductor Libor Pešek?

Working with Maestro Libor Pešek was truly exciting. It was good that prior to the start of the recording I performed under his baton at several concerts, which was always pleasantly thrilling. I can say that thanks to Mysliveček's music I experienced unforgettable moments teeming with inspiration. And I think that even today, years later, this is palpable in the Supraphon recordings. No wonder then that they are being re-released.

What do you like best about the Czech Republic?

The beautiful nature and, of course, Czech music across the centuries.