

Musicians from Abroad and Their World Renowned Czech Counterparts to Pay Tribute to One of the Greatest Musical Geniuses during the Dvořák Prague Festival

Prague, 28 March 2017 – The Dvořák Prague International Music Festival has unveiled the program and began advance sale of tickets for the 10th anniversary season. The event, which bears the name of one of the greatest music composers, will showcase renowned soloists and some of the world's best orchestras and conductors during 7-23 September 2017. Apart from Antonín Dvořák's well- and lesser-known works, the festival will present the music of other composers from different eras. The event will feature star vocalists from the Metropolitan Opera and other prestigious establishments, such as Kristine Opolais, Piotr Beczala, René Pape, Michael Spyres, Adam Plachetka, and Jan Martiník. World-renowned orchestras performing at the festival will include the London Philharmonic Orchestra with chief conductor Vladimir Jurowski and the Essen Philharmonic with conductor Tomáš Netopil, who will also conduct the Vienna Symphony in the closing concert. An extraordinary experience will be a performance delivered by conductor Ingo Metzmacher and the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester, which will feature French piano virtuoso Jean-Yves Thibaudet. The program will include the festival's orchestra in residence, the Czech Philharmonic with conductor Jiří Bělohlávek, the Prague Philharmonia (PKF), and such leading vocal ensembles as the Prague Philharmonic Choir and the Czech Philharmonic Choir of Brno. For the first time in the event's history, this year's edition will present the Dvořák Prague Festival Orchestra with an international roster of musicians.

A dominant feature of this and next year's seasons will be the Dvořák Collection, a showcase program as part of which leading domestic and foreign orchestras will team up with extraordinary soloists and top-class vocal ensembles to deliver exclusive performances of all Dvořák's cantatas and oratorios – works that blend the sonic power of a vocal ensemble with the sound of a large orchestra and soloists. The opening concert will feature an extraordinary rendition of Dvořák's *Stabat Mater*. *"Including all Dvořák's cantatas and oratorios in the program is major accomplishment because until now, we have maintained a respectable distance from this part of the body of the composer's works. Our ambitions and the prominence of our rendition are underscored by interest expressed by the renowned Decca label in a recording of Dvořák's Requiem,"* explained Artistic Director Marek Vrabc.

This season of Dvořák Prague aims to bring attention to Czech musicians who are gaining fame on stages around the world, in the same way Dvořák once did. This intent will be fulfilled, among others, by the chamber music program meticulously crafted by Radek Baborák who will assume no fewer than three roles at the festival – curator, brilliant world-class French horn player, and director and *spiritus agens* of the chamber music series, a festival within the Festival. Thanks to the exceptional respect Baborák enjoys in the international music milieu, in prestigious orchestras, and among musicians, Dvořák Prague's chamber music program will once again showcase some of the world's most accomplished artists as well as the most successful Czech musicians who perform with renowned orchestras. The same can be said of the musicians who will perform together in the Dvořák Prague Festival Orchestra in this year's premiere of the ensemble.

This year's recital evening will feature another internationally renowned artist – the extraordinary Czech pianist and educator Ivan Klánský. As every year, the second Saturday will host the Dvořák *Matinée*, which will offer a unique, historically informed performance of the *New World Symphony* by the *Musica Florea Ensemble* led by Marek Štryncl. The morning program will be followed by the *Family Day* in the afternoon. The festival's overture, a program entitled '*On the Trail of Dvořák*',

will take music lovers on an excursion to the city of Kroměříž to follow the master's sojourn in Moravia.

As has been the tradition, the Rudolfinum will remain the festival's center stage. Apart from the Dvořák Hall, chamber music concerts will also be performed at the St. Agnes Convent. Advanced sale of tickets for all Dvořák Prague concerts begins on 28 March 2017. The complete program is available at www.dvorakovapraha.cz.

Long-term support provided by art patron Karel Komárek and the KKCG Investment Group has been instrumental in the success of the Dvořák Prague International Music Festival. *"The thing that pleases me most as regards Dvořák Prague is the positive response from listeners across generations. I'm happy that the festival has been able to attract young audiences to classical music. The event has brought to the Czech capital a number of famous artists whose distinctive interpretation of Dvořák's works has made us proud and respectful of what the composer achieved in his life. Personally, I'm glad to be able to see the artistic career of young talented musicians to whom the festival has opened the door to the world concert stages,"* revealed Karel Komárek.

The clearly dominant feature of this and next year's seasons of Dvořák Prague will be the Dvořák Collection, an extensive program that will follow in the footsteps of Dvořák's symphonies and symphonic poems and present all the composer's cantatas and oratorios. The comprehensive program will present not only such famous works as **Stabat Mater**, **Requiem**, and **Te Deum**, but also lesser-known compositions, such as the hymn Heirs of the White Mountain and the cantata American Flag. *"We have stayed at a respectable distance from this part of the body of Dvořák's works. Cantatas and oratorios are very demanding to perform, and it took us a long time to find a proper way of rehearsing them for the format of the festival,"* added Artistic Director of Dvořák Prague Marek Vrabec. This year's season will witness an extraordinary rendition of Dvořák's famous Stabat Mater, which will feature vocalists from the Metropolitan Opera and from other world renowned stages and opera houses, including Latvian soprano **Kristine Opolais**, Slovak mezzosoprano **Jana Kurucová**, Polish tenor **Piotr Beczala**, and German bass **René Pape**. They will be accompanied by the **Czech Philharmonic Choir of Brno** and the **Prague Philharmonia** directed by chief conductor **Emmanuel Villaum**. Another exceptional concert will see a performance of Dvořák's Requiem featuring Dutch mezzosoprano **Christianne Stotijn**, American tenor **Michael Spyres**, and world renowned Czech bass **Jan Martiník**. The vocalist for the soprano part will be announced shortly. The soloists will be backed by the Czech Philharmonic with conductor Jiří Bělohlávek and the Prague Philharmonic Choir. A recording of Requiem performed during Dvořák Prague will be released on the Decca label.

World-class orchestras will be represented by the **London Philharmonic Orchestra** with chief conductor **Vladimir Jurowsky**. The ensemble, which has recently rose to prominence thanks to recording film music for the Lord of the Rings trilogy, is one of the world's most accomplished orchestras whose history dates back to as early as 1932. Although the **Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester** was established much later, in 1986, the ensemble was the initiative of the famous conductor Claudio Abbado. Directed by conductor **Ingo Metzmacher**, the orchestra will charm the audience by its virtuosity as well as youthful energy and enthusiasm. For the first time, Tomáš Netopil will present in Prague its orchestra, the **Essen Philharmonic**, which he has conducted since 2013. The closing concert will feature the **Vienna Symphony** under the direction of **Tomáš Netopil** in a performance of works of two friends in both artistic and personal life, Johannes Brahms and Antonín Dvořák. The closing concert will also conclude this season's Dvořák Collection, where the orchestra will be joined by Simona Šaturová and Adam Plachetka, two of the Czech vocalists who are rapidly gaining fame on the world's stages, and by the Prague Philharmonic Choir in a rendition of Dvořák's Te Deum.

Acting in the capacity of curator of the chamber music series, **Radek Baborák** will show that apart from being a world-class French horn player and an extraordinary conductor, he is a man with a broad creative talent and innovative ideas. On five evenings dedicated to chamber music, the festival will present a number of outstanding international musicians alongside Czech artists who are members of the world's leading orchestras, such as the Berlin Philharmonic, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Staatskapelle Berlin, and the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra. *"I was very pleased to receive an offer from the Dvořák Prague Festival to become the curator of the chamber music series. My invitation has been accepted by a number of extraordinary instrumentalists whose performances adorn the world's stages. Many of them perform as soloists with the best orchestras and under prominent conductors. I'm confident that working in the chamber music format will be highly inspiring and will provide all of us with a mutually enriching experience,"* explained Baborák. Exceptional musical encounters will take place during performances of works written by Dvořák and other composers, ranging from Baroque to the present, in many cases featuring interesting arrangements and unique orchestration. For instance, the program will feature a premiere of a contemporary adaptation of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* by composer Tomáš Ille and works by composers and musicians with Jewish roots, such as Hans Krása and Alexander Zemlinsky. The closing concert of the chamber music series will for the first time present the Dvořák Prague Festival Orchestra, which consists of members of Czech Sinfonietta, Czech musicians who perform with world-renowned ensembles abroad, the first players in instrument families of famous foreign orchestras, and soloists.

The **recital** of this year's edition of Dvořák Prague will showcase the unmistakable poetic style of one of the best Czech pianists, **Ivan Klánský**, in a performance of pieces written by two great composers of piano music, Ludwig van Beethoven and Frédéric Chopin. The **Debut Day** will be dedicated to four exceptionally successful musicians from the youngest generation, organist **Pavel Svoboda**, violinist **Olga Šroubková**, French horn player **Kateřina Javůrková**, and tenor **Petr Nekoranec**, all of whom have earned prizes in prestigious international performance competitions held this year and last year. The Dvořák Matinée on Saturday will present an authentic rendition of the New World Symphony by Marek Štryncl and his ensemble **Musica Florea** as well as the hymn Heirs of the White Mountain, where the vocal part will be performed by the **Collegium Floreum** choir. This year's edition of the On the Trail of Dvořák series will take music lovers to Kroměříž four days before the official beginning of the festival. At the same venue as Dvořák did in 1886, in the Municipal Cellar top Room, Kroměříž's own Tomáš Netopil will present a unique rendition of Dvořák's Stabat Mater featuring the original arrangement with piano.

Tickets for all festival concerts can be purchased online starting today at www.dvorakovapraha.cz, in the Dvořák Prague Ticket Center at Palackého Street 1, and in the Ticketpro sales network. Apart from loyalty discounts, the festival offers reduced prices for students, teachers, and senior citizens, membership in the Youth Club, and a host of other benefits.

Dvořák Prague

Marek Vrabec, Artistic Director

The Dvořák Prague Festival is held under the auspices of Adriana Krnáčová, Mayor of Prague. The opening concert will be held under the auspices of Daniel Herman, Minister of Culture of the Czech Republic. The Dvořák Collection series will be held under the auspices of Cardinal Dominik Duka O.P., Archbishop of Prague.

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