



# 64<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL

## PRAGUE SPRING

### Press Release No. 1

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#### ***Prague Spring and the project Martinů Revisited***

Tomorrow and Friday night, the Czech Philharmonic will perform a concert version of fragments from the opera *Julietta* by Bohuslav Martinů under the baton of Sir Charles Mackerras with the participation of top singers from around the world with Magdalena Kožená in the leading role. After numerous preparatory events, this will bring the project Martinů Revisited into its realization phase. At the initiative of the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation and of the Bohuslav Martinů Institute, with the broad participation of Czech and foreign cultural institutions, on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the composer's death, increased attention will be paid to his work and to the worldwide context of his composing. Martinů's music will therefore rightfully become one of the programming priorities of the 2009 Prague Spring festival and of the following annual festival in 2010, when the cultural public will commemorate the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the composer's birth.

Dominant among the works by Martinů included in the festival's programming will be the composer's music for voice and instruments. In the course of this year's festival there will be successive performances of the song cycle *Niponari*, performances of the complete Polička cantatas (*Legend of the Smoke from Potato Fires*, *The Romance of the Dandelions*, *The Opening of the Springs* and *Mikeš of the Mountains*) and *The Wedding Shirt*, in 2010 *Czech Rhapsody* and a staged performance of the cantata *Bouquet of Flowers*. Besides a broad selection of chamber works, among the composer's orchestral compositions included in the festival program for 2009 will be the *Double Concerto for two string orchestras, piano and timpani*, H 271, performed by the Czech Philharmonic and Zdeněk Mácal, *Rhapsody*, H 171, with the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg and the conductor Emmanuel Krivin, *Sinfonietta La Jolla*, H 328, with the Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra of South Bohemia and Stanislav Vavřínek and the *Toccata e due canzoni*, H 311, with the Kammerorchester Basel, the ensemble to which Martinů dedicated the work and which gave its first performance under the baton of Paul Sacher in 1947.

In planning performances of works for soloist and orchestra, the festival's intention was arrange performances by foreign guest soloists. Performing the composer's *Violin Concerto No. 2*, H 293, will be Frank Peter Zimmermann together with the Norddeutscher Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester Hamburg and the conductor Christoph von Dohnányi, and performing the *Duo Concertant for two violins and orchestra*, H 264, will be the French violinist Régis Pasquier and Bohuslav Matoušek, the artists who have recorded the work for the Hyperion label.

Bohuslav Martinů the man and his works will also be commemorated in the programming of both year's festivals in relation to his teacher Albert Roussel and to Martinů's own pupils (for example, this is the concept for the programming of the concert of the Czech Nonet on 24 May in Vencovský Assembly Hall at the University of Economics), and music inspired by Martinů's works will also be included (e.g. *Variations on a Theme of*

*Bohuslav Martinů* by Zdeněk Zouhar and *Sonata No. 2 for violin “In Memory of Bohuslav Martinů”* by Jaroslav Doubrava).

Prague Spring will also participate in preparations for an international musicological conference on the composers works, organized by the Bohuslav Martinů Institute, to be held during the festival on 29 – 31 May 2009.

### ***Juan Diego Flórez and Anne-Sophie Mutter***

A star attraction for the upcoming Prague Spring will be the very first performance in the Czech Republic by currently the world’s most sought-after tenor, Juan Diego Flórez.

A native of Lima (Peru), Juan Diego Flórez, who celebrates his 35<sup>th</sup> birthday in a month, made his debut on the international scene in 1993 by standing in for the American tenor Bruce Forda as Corradino in Rossini’s opera *Matilde di Shabran* at the Rossini Opera Festival in the composer’s birthplace, Pesaro. That same year he appeared on the stage of Milan’s La Scala in Gluck’s *Armida*. In rapid sequence there followed Flórez’s appearances at the prestigious opera houses of Covent Garden (1997), the Vienna State Opera (1999) and the Metropolitan Opera in New York (2002). The management of Prague Spring has been working for six years to arrange the guest appearance of the singer, who has been an exclusive Decca artist since 2001 and has made appearances in the majority of the world’s hallowed concert venues. Negotiations with his management began even earlier. In concert on 15 May in the Rudolfinum, accompanying Juan Diego Flórez will be the Prague Philharmonia with the American conductor Christopher Franklin.

No less attractive is the return of the Queen of the Violin, Anne-Sophie Mutter, eleven long years after her last appearance at Prague Spring in 1997, when she performed the Beethoven *Violin Concerto* with the London Symphony Orchestra. The artist will appear on 1 June 2009 in Smetana Hall with the Dresden Philharmonic, which will be conducted by another extraordinary personality of the music world – Kurt Masur. In the jubilee year of the bicentennial of the birth of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, the choice fell to his *Violin Concerto in E Minor*, which is one of the five most famous concertos for that instrument.

During the more than thirty years of her stellar career, which Anne-Sophie Mutter launched under the patronage of the legendary Herbert von Karajan, she has appeared at concerts and festivals around the world, and her fascinating playing has inspired leading composers to create a number of new compositions (most recently, she gave the premiere last year of the new violin concerto by Sofia Gubaidulina), and she has won many prestigious awards. This year she was honored with the international Ernst von Siemens Musikpreis, known as the “Nobel Prize for Music,” taking her place in the prestigious ranks of winners alongside Britten, Messiaen, Rostropovich and Abbado.

### ***The Lord of the Rings***

A project going beyond the traditional pattern for festival concerts will take place on 28 May at the Congress Center with the Czech premiere of the full-length *The Lord of the Rings Symphony*, which the American composer Howard Shore wrote using motifs from his music to accompany the 2001 film saga with the same title by the director Peter Jackson, based on the literary works of J. R. R. Tolkien. The scores have won Howard Shore three Oscars for the best film music, the same number of Grammy Awards for the best recorded

soundtracks and yet another Grammy Award for the song *Into The West* from the third film of the trilogy, *The Return of the King*. The composer conducted the world premiere of the concert version of this music in Wellington (New Zealand) in the autumn of 2003, and in the years since then it has been performed more than one hundred times around the world, from London's Royal Albert Hall to the Kremlin Palace in Moscow.

The magnificent six-movement musical fantasy, inspired by the world of Tolkien's tales, calls for a large symphony orchestra supplemented with the sounds of exotic instruments, vocal solos, mixed chorus and children's choir. The work has the ambition of existing independently from its film origin. The composer claims the worldwide heritage of programme music, and it is of interest that in this connection the composer makes reference on his website to Bedřich Smetana, among others. The work will be heard in Prague with Marcus Huber conducting the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Prague Philharmonic Choir and the Kühn Children's Choir. Accompanying the musical mega-production will be projected images. Without a doubt, the event will be attractive for parents with children.

## ***Special Prague Spring concerts***

### ***1. Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester***

A major project taking place entirely outside of the framework of the festival is a concert by the most important international orchestra of young musicians – the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester, which will take place on 19 April 2009 in Smetana Hall at the Municipal House. Heard at this truly special concert will be the Symphony No. 3 in D Minor by Gustav Mahler. Preparing and conducting the performance will be Ingo Metzmacher, and appearing in the solo part will be the mezzo-soprano Jane Irwin. Also participating will be the women of the Prague Philharmonic Choir and the Kühn Children's Choir.

The Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester was founded in 1986 by the famed Italian conductor Claudio Abbado as Europe's first international youth orchestra, and from the very beginning this facilitated cooperation among young musicians from both sides of the iron curtain. This anticipated, in a sense, the shared realm of the European Union, as all of the countries that the orchestra was cooperating with have successively become EU member states. It is symbolic that a performance by this ensemble, operating under the patronage of the European Council, is taking place in Prague after many years just at the time of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The concert of the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester ties in with many years of tradition of performances by that ensemble in Prague (a total of seven times in 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002). Continuing the series of illustrious conductors with which the GMJO has appeared in this country in previous years (Claudio Abbado, Neeme Järvi, Bernard Haitink, Iván Fischer, Franz Welser-Möst), leading the orchestra will be a conductor of no less importance, Ingo Metzmacher (among the orchestras he has conducted are the San Francisco Symphony, Vienna Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, operas in Salzburg, Hamburg, Paris, Los Angeles and elsewhere; planned for the 2009 season is his debut at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden in London).

The performance of the Symphony No. 3 by Gustav Mahler (1860 – 1911) by the orchestra bearing the composer's name will also be an official prologue to the large-scale celebrations of the double anniversaries of Gustav Mahler in 2010 and 2011, participating in

which will be Prague's most important concert organizers, led by Prague Spring, the Czech Philharmonic and the Prague Symphony Orchestra, Czech Radio, the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, the National Museum with the Czech Museum of Music, the City of Jihlava, Vysočina Region, the Gustav Mahler Society MAHLER 2000, BVA International and several other organizations from around the Czech Republic, along with broad, diverse cooperation from abroad.

The concert by the GMJO will take place in cooperation with Czech Radio, the Czech Philharmonic, the Municipal House, the Austrian Cultural Forum, BVA International and other partners. The concert is a separate contribution of the Prague Spring organization as a cultural institution towards the cultural events held within the framework of the Czech Presidency of the European Union.

## ***2. Prague International Marathon and Prague Spring***

Among the novelties for next year's festival will be the first participation of Prague Spring in a top Prague sporting event held every year since 1995 during the first half of the festival month of May, the Prague International Marathon, which fills the downtown area of our capital city with thousands of distance runners on the 42-kilometer race course. The event is regarded as one of the world's ten most prestigious marathons. Just as Prague Spring is frequented by the greatest stars of the music world, the Prague International Marathon boasts the participation of the world's greatest runners.

Although by closing of certain parts of the city to traffic the organizers of the marathon have made things quite difficult for the festival in the past, friendly relations among the organizations have developed over the years, and the result is the decision to join forces next year and to hold jointly at the finish line of the race at Old Town Square a classic early-evening open-air promenade concert. Because the date of next year's marathon falls already on 10 May, this musical production will be an unusual prologue to Prague Spring. Prepared for the long-distance runners, their fans and music lovers alike is a performance by the Band of the Castle Guards and Police of the Czech Republic conducted by Lt. Col. Václav Blahunek, featuring compositions by Johann Strauss Sr., John Philip Sousa, Josef Suk (the famous "Olympic" march *Toward a New Life*), Julius Fučík, Aram Khachaturian, Václav Vačkář and other classics of wind music.

## ***2009 Prague Spring International Music Competition***

Until 15 December 2008, applications will be accepted for entering the 61<sup>st</sup> Prague Spring International Music Competition. Chosen for 2009 were the fields of flute and bassoon. The important post of chairman of the flute jury goes to Michel Debost (USA), and the chairman for the bassoonists will be František Herman (Czech Republic). Besides the winner's right to an appearance at Prague Spring, contest laureates also receive money and other prizes from various companies and institutions and many more opportunities to perform. Detailed information and application forms are available in the relevant area of our website at

[www.festival.cz](http://www.festival.cz). The competition will take place from 7 to 15 May 2009. In accordance with tradition, the competition will be held under the patronage of the mayor of the City of Prague, Dr. Pavel Bém, MD.

For the competition winners, certainly the main goal is the opportunity of performing the following year at Prague Spring. We would remind you that appearing in concert on 18 May 2009 at the Czech National Bank will be the winner of last year's competition – the outstanding clarinetist Florent Charpentier. Two days later on 20 May 2009 in the same hall will be another concert by a winner of last year's, competition, the oboist Ivan Podyomov.

### *Our guest: Pavel Černý*

Our guest at today's press conference is the winner of the 1994 Prague Spring organ competition, Pavel Černý. A graduate of the Prague Conservatory and the Prague Academy of Performing Arts and a student of Prof. Jan Hora and Associate Prof. Jaroslav Tůma, he gives many concerts and is also active as the organist at the Church of St. Ludmila. Besides those activities, he is also the organologist for the Archdiocese of Prague.

Pavel Černý's festival recital in the newly restored Church of St. Cyril and St. Methodius in Karlín on Saturday, 30 May is conceived as a commemoration of the jubilee year of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy who, together with his contemporaries, rediscovered the works of J. S. Bach and who was an excellent organist in his own right and a key composer of organ literature during the romantic era. The inclusion of the *Fantasy and Fugue on the death of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy* by the former organist at the Lesser Town St. Nicholas Church and director of the Prague organ school, Karel Pitsch, will also commemorate Mendelssohn's influence on the Czech organ tradition.

### *Festival partners in 2009*

Again this year, the tradition will remain unbroken – **the President of the Republic Václav Klaus** has been made the patron of the entire 64<sup>th</sup> annual festival.

In 2009 Prague Spring will again take place in cooperation with the **Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic**. Remaining as a partner of the entire festival is the **City of Prague** and the mayor of Prague, Dr. Pavel Bém, MD, will continue as the chairman of the administrative council (another council member is the Czech minister of culture, Václav Jehlička) and as the patron of the festival competition. Cooperation with the culture ministry and the City of Prague enables the festival to further its goals beyond the scope of usual promotion and to become an important component of Czech events promoted abroad. We should at least mention the festival's participation at the MIDEM music market in Cannes (France), the presentations as a part of Prague Days in various cities (e.g. in 2007 in Moscow,

in January 2009 in Bratislava) etc. The entire 2009 Prague Spring festival has been made an Official Event to accompany the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU – **EU2000.CZ**

For the second year now, we are taking advantage of the potential of long-term contracts entered into with two of our important partners:

The bank **Česká spořitelna, a. s.**, which has been the festival's general partner since 2001, will remain a partner of Prague Spring on the basis of an agreement for 2009 and 2010. This fact makes it easier for the festival to prepare and realize reliably its organizationally demanding programmes.

The same situation applies to cooperation with our chief media partner **Czech Television**. We are just completing the project Stars of Prague Spring 2006-2008, which summarizes the most interesting moments of the last three annual festivals. It was created thanks to cooperation with Czech Television, and the stimulus for its preparation was an order from another important partner of the festival, the company **RWE Transgas**. That firm is remaining as an official festival partner for the fifteenth year. We appreciate their excellent cooperation as well as their understanding of our secondary activities.

**Czech Radio** has been a media partner of the festival without interruption since 1946. We expect that the 2009 festival will again be broadcast or recorded plentifully, mainly through the station Czech Radio 3 - Vltava, which uses the honorary title "*The Official Radio Station of Prague Spring.*"

Remaining as our long-term concert partners are the construction specialists **Subterra, a.s.** and now for the third time **Pražská teplotárenská, a.s.** A new concert partner will be the company **Veolia Voda**.

We are very pleased that we may continue to rely on our other long-term supporters, namely **Mercedes-Benz Česká republika, s.r.o.** – the provider of the "Official Cars" of the festival, and the **Hotel InterContinental Prague** as the "Official Hotel of the Festival" (it provides accommodations to many of our artists and allows us to hold press conferences and other events).

The newspaper **Mladá fronta DNES**, a member of the media group **MAFRA, a.s.**, is remaining as our partner, and after the positive experiences from last year's festival, we are also continuing the cooperation with that company's news portal **iDNES.cz**. Also belonging to the same media group is **Radio Classic FM**. In all of those media, the Prague Spring campaign is now getting started.

During all of the coming half year, festival preparations and events will be followed in the music journals **Harmonie** and **Hudební rozhledy**. Of the foreign music magazines in which references to Prague Spring are now appearing, we would mention in particular the leading British music journal Gramophone, the catalogue Pollstar, the British International Music Yearbook and Musical America, among others.

You can familiarize yourself with the other companies and institutions cooperating with Prague Spring on our website.

Prague Spring wishes to thank all of its partners for their cooperation and support. The festival is convinced that this cooperation is beneficial for its partners as well.

### ***The new Prague Spring website***

We are pleased to be able to introduce you to the new Prague Spring website. It has been developed and is being built with an emphasis on clarity and easy access to the large quantity of information and reporting that appears on the festival website. The site will simplify orientation in the festival's rich programming, in part by structuring and categorizing

programmes according to various criteria depending on the preferences of audience members. Over time, more functions will be put into operation, making the site more convenient for all users.

Currently underway is the updating of the festival's electronic archives, which should be put into operation as a database during the coming year. Until then, visitors and researchers can still use the existing concert archives, which will continue to be accessible.

We believe that visitors will appreciate the modern appearance of the website and will have more reasons to visit it repeatedly.

### *Opinions of Prague Spring audience members*

During the 63<sup>rd</sup> annual festival, Prague Spring commissioned the Institute of Finance and Administration to conduct a survey of concert audience members. 158 interviewers asked a total of 877 respondents approximately 20 questions concerning the structure of audience members, opinions on programming, motivation for ticket purchases to individual concerts, comments on prices and general knowledge of the financing of the entire project. We will, of course, provide details of the survey results to those who are interested, but we can say that the results are very favorable for Prague Spring. Another survey has now begun, this time concerning the perception of the Prague Spring international music festival on the part of the public at large in Prague and selected towns in Central Bohemia.

### *Ticket sales*

Ticket sales for the 64<sup>th</sup> annual Prague Spring festival begin on Friday, 12 December at all Ticketpro outlets and at the Rudolfinum Prague Spring ticket office. Tickets may also be reserved and purchased at the website [www.ticketpro.cz](http://www.ticketpro.cz).

The ordering and reserving of tickets through the Ticketpro sales network will remain unchanged. Ticketpro has greatly expanded its sales network, with terminals now located at more than 230 sites in Prague and in all regions of Bohemia and Moravia. Thanks to international network connections, tickets are also being sold in other countries including Slovakia, Poland, Hungary and Germany.

The main Prague Spring ticket office will again be at the Rudolfinum, and it is also a part of the Ticketpro sales network. For a detailed listing of sales venues, visit [www.festival.cz](http://www.festival.cz) or [www.ticketpro.cz](http://www.ticketpro.cz).

Our guests are already aware of the possibilities for obtaining tickets to Prague Spring concerts, but we would like to review those possibilities briefly: direct sale at all Ticketpro outlets, ticket reservations and sales on line at [www.ticketpro.cz](http://www.ticketpro.cz) with the possibility of choosing from among available seats in the hall, E-Ticket services (print out tickets on your own printer) and purchasing M-Tickets using a mobile phone.

And just like every year, we are introducing an innovation: a new system of discounts concerning mainly the youngest and oldest audience members:

■ **CHILDREN'S DISCOUNT** – children under age 15 receive a discount of **20%** on all Prague Spring concerts.

■ **STUDENT DISCOUNT** – students receive a **20%** discount on all Prague Spring concerts **except for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> categories at the Municipal House and the Rudolfinum.**

■ **SENIOR DISCOUNT** – seniors over age 60 will receive a **20%** discount on all Prague Spring concerts **except for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> categories at the Municipal House and the Rudolfinum.**

■ **LAST MINUTE DISCOUNTS** are special discounts announced for the sale of remaining tickets during the festival, available to those registered at [lastminute@festival.cz](mailto:lastminute@festival.cz).

The 50% discount for ZTP and ZTP+P disability ID cardholders will continue to be offered with no change from past years.

The public may continue to turn to the Prague Spring business department with requests for information about programming, sales locations and how to buy tickets.

The 64<sup>th</sup> annual Prague Spring festival will offer more than 60 performances and social events including the two concerts for the finals and both first rounds of the International Music Competition in the fields of bassoon and flute. Around 36,000 tickets will be available (about 15% more seats will be designated for special orders connected with the festival's duty of providing specific services to the festival's artists, partners and supporters, government officials, the office of the president, the diplomatic corps, the press etc.).

We wish you a blessed Christmas season and all the best in the New Year of 2009.

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