CARNEGIE HALL
presents

Sunday, October 28, 2018 at 2 PM
Isaac Stern Auditorium / Ronald O. Perelman Stage

# Czech Philharmonic

**Semyon Bychkov**, Chief Conductor and Music Director
**Christiane Karg**, Soprano
**Elisabeth Kulman**, Mezzo-Soprano
**Prague Philharmonic Choir**
**Lukáš Vasilek**, Principal Conductor

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GUSTAV MAHLER
(1860–1911)

Symphony No. 2 in C Minor, "Resurrection"
(1888–1894, rev. 1903)

Allegro maestoso
Andante moderato
In ruhig fließender Bewegung—
"Urlicht"—
Im Tempo des Scherzos

This afternoon's program will be performed without intermission.

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# At a Glance

Mahler's "Resurrection" is one of the most stunning and cathartic symphonies in the repertoire. Once denounced as overblown and unlistenable, it is now a beloved part of modern culture and is often played during troubled times. Mahler envisioned it as a metaphysical musing on life, death, and resurrection—not in a doctrinal sense, but in the individual's struggle for hope and meaning. It presents a tension between nostalgia for a vanishing Romantic universe (represented by the retrospective second and fourth movements) and a new world of turbulence and irony. Along with other Mahler symphonies (notably the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh), it forecasts the postmodern volatility of contemporary music and its constant switching from light to dark, open-hearted lyricism to stinging irony. The first movement is a gripping funeral march with contrasting elements, its dark drama played out on a large scale. The next three are shorter, including a charming *ländler*, a sardonic scherzo, and an eloquent song, "Primal Light." The choral finale is even more epic than the first movement; a "colossal" structure (in Mahler's words), it recapitulates themes from the earlier movements, brings in a chorus and soloists, and builds to a sonorous ending replete with bells, gongs, organ, and voices.

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# Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Czech Independence

On October 28, 2018, the Czech Republic celebrates 100 years of independence. The significance of its liberation from the Austrian Empire's domination is a source of inspiration not only to its own people, but to all nations that have experienced political, economic, and cultural repression. The courage and determination shown by the Czech people in the fight to preserve their national identity is a reminder that nothing and no one can ever conquer the human spirit when it refuses to surrender.

In the last 100 years, the Czech people have lived the entire gamut of different conditions: from the pride and prosperity that came with independence to the Western betrayal inflicted by the Munich Agreement, from destruction in World War II to decades of Soviet domination. Fifty years ago, on August 21, 1968, when the Soviets rolled their tanks all the way to the streets of Prague, they proved yet again that the strong have no shame and stop at nothing to bring down those who are unable to defend themselves. Yet, in spite of the adversity, and quite possibly because of it, the nation lived to welcome the Velvet Revolution of 1989 and once again become a free and independent member of the world community—this time, hopefully, forever.

The Czech Philharmonic shared its country's destiny and with equal determination preserved the uniqueness of the Czech musical tradition that it offers to the world. It was true 100 years ago; it remains true today. How fitting it is, then, that in the very year that the Czech nation celebrates the centennial of its independence, its beloved orchestra performs Mahler's Symphony No. 2, "Resurrection," in Prague and New York, and brings Smetana and Dvořák to London and various US cities. Born in Bohemia, Mahler tells us that we are here for a reason and that nothing ever dies. The Czech Republic and its philharmonic orchestra are the living proof of this idea.

—Semyon Bychkov

# The Program

**GUSTAV MAHLER** (1860–1911)
**Symphony No. 2 in C Minor, "Resurrection"**

### A Symphony for Troubled Times

Mahler's "Resurrection" is one of the most massive and cathartic symphonies in the repertoire. Once regarded as unlistenable and unplayable, it has become an emblem for rising from despair during seemingly hopeless times. It was played in New Orleans at the opening of the Mahalia Jackson Theater for the Performing Arts after Hurricane Katrina and performed by the New York Philharmonic two days after the assassination of John F. Kennedy—its first performance on television and the first time a work by Mahler was played for a state occasion. Ignoring management requests to use a standard memorial piece, such as the Verdi Requiem or the Funeral March from Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony, Leonard Bernstein (a fervid Mahler champion) insisted that the philharmonic perform the "Resurrection" Symphony in tribute to President Kennedy, citing "its visionary concept of hope and triumph over worldly pain ... This will be our reply to violence: to make music more intensely, more beautifully, more devotedly than ever before."

The sheer size of the forces—10 trumpets, 10 horns, two harps, organ, two vocal soloists, a large mixed chorus, and *fernorchester* ("distant orchestra")—is overwhelming. So is the distance traveled from death and darkness to life and blinding light, from the terrifying assault of cellos and basses in the opening to the heavenly choirs and bells in the coda. The tutti sections are devastating in their power and density, yet the piece has long stretches of Mahler's most delicate, chamber-like music, and often relies on the power of silence. Mahler said a symphony should contain the entire world, and this one comes perhaps closer than any to fulfilling that impossible standard.

**Scoring:**
solo soprano
solo mezzo-soprano
chorus
4 flutes (all doubling piccolo)
4 oboes (3rd and 4th doubling English horn)
3 clarinets (3rd doubling bass clarinet)
2 E-flat clarinets (2nd doubling 4th clarinet)
4 bassoons (4th doubling contrabassoon)
10 horns
10 trumpets
4 trombones
tuba
timpani
percussion
2 harps
organ
strings

**Performance Time:**
approximately 80 minutes

**Premiere:**
Composed from 1888 to 1894 and revised in 1903, Mahler's Symphony No. 2 in C Minor, "Resurrection," received its US premiere at Carnegie Hall on December 8, 1908, with the New York Symphony Orchestra, soprano Laura Combs, contralto Gertrude May Stein, and the Oratorio Society of New York, conducted by the composer.

## A Long Struggle for Acceptance

Mahler is now a beloved part of modern culture, but this is a recent phenomenon. The struggle for acceptance was long and hard-fought, spearheaded mainly by Bernstein, along with the earlier, heroic efforts of Bruno Walter, Maurice Abravanel, and other die-hard Mahlerians. Critics going back to the late 19th century gorged themselves in a feast of ridicule at Mahler's expense, labeling his symphonies incoherent, overblown, banal, and worse. (The same kind of contempt was heaped on Bruckner, whose "glorious art" Mahler championed as a conductor, without much success.) As recently as the 1950s, the "Resurrection" Symphony was scoffed at for its "faux mysticism" and "masochistic aural flagellation."

The most stinging criticism came right at the beginning of its composition in 1891, when Mahler played the first movement for distinguished conductor-pianist Hans von Bülow, who put his hands over his ears and declared the piece so incomprehensible that it made Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* seem like a Haydn symphony. "If what I have just heard is still music," he said, "then I no longer understand anything about music." Mahler was so devastated that he told Richard Strauss he was having second thoughts about being a composer.

## "The Flash that All Creative Artists Wait For"

The struggle from despair to triumph depicted in the symphony mirrors the composition process, which began with Bülow's withering put-down and, in a supreme irony, came to fruition at his funeral. The opening movement was originally an 1888 tone poem called *Todtenfeier* (*Funeral Rites*), meant to be a kind of sequel to the First Symphony, depicting the burial of the symphony's hero. Mahler planned this as the opening movement of a new symphony, but he did not write the second and third movements until 1893. He envisioned the work as a metaphysical musing on life, death, and resurrection—not in a doctrinal sense, but in the individual's struggle for hope and meaning.

He also knew he wanted this to be a choral symphony like Beethoven's Ninth, but had no idea what text to use or how to end the work. The idea for the epic finale came at Bülow's funeral, where, filling in for Strauss, Mahler conducted Siegfried's Funeral March from *Götterdämmerung*.

The ceremony climaxed with a children's choir singing Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock's "Auferstehn, ja auferstehn wirst du." This music and its text ("Rise again, yes, you will rise again") gave Mahler the epiphany that had eluded him: "It flashed on me like lightning, and everything became plain and clear in my mind. It was the flash that all creative artists wait for ..."

Mahler seized on the song, added apocalyptic verses of his own, and quickly pulled everything into final form, writing the symphony's huge last movement and a revision of the first in the spring and summer of 1894, and inserting "Urlicht" ("Primal Light") as the fourth. He premiered the complete work in Berlin in 1895, but continued making changes into the new century.

**Out with the Programs**

Mahler wrote three sets of program notes for the work—all quite different—and then withdrew them, stating that "the spiritual message is clearly expressed in the words of the final chorus ... I leave the interpretation of details to the imagination of each individual listener." Jettisoning unsatisfying programs seemed part of his composition process. In his next symphony, he affixed programmatic titles to all six movements, then removed them, allowing the epic Third Symphony to speak for itself.

**About the Music**

Mahler invented a new kind of symphony and a new way to listen. In Carnegie Hall's historic traversal of all nine symphonies with the Staatskapelle Berlin in 2009, the late Pierre Boulez commented on how Mahler walked a treacherous

**When distinguished conductor-pianist Hans von Bülow heard the first movement of Mahler's symphony, he declared the piece so incomprehensible that it made Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* seem like a Haydn symphony.**

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line between "sentimentality and irony," "nostalgia and criticism," "meticulousness of detail" and "grandeur of design," demanding that we listen in a "manner more varied, more ambiguous and richer" than we ordinarily do. In the Second Symphony, "nostalgia" is represented by the retrospective second and fourth movements; a new world of turbulence and irony is sounded by the brutal crescendo of dissonance in the middle of the first movement, the sardonic third-movement scherzo, and the mocking deconstruction of the symphony's most noble themes in the finale's march.

**A Closer Listen**

The first movement is a gripping funeral march with contrasting elements, its dark drama played out on a large scale. Following an opening thrust from deep in the strings, a sinister march commences, brightened by a pastoral theme (an homage to Beethoven's Violin Concerto) that forecasts the symphony's beatific conclusion. Other ideas include the medieval chant Dies irae, which is burnished and dignified in Mahler's variation rather than garish and ghoulish, as in Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* and Liszt's *Totentanz*. The development section climaxes with a crescendo of dread and dissonance that looks forward to the modernism of Berg and Shostakovich.

Between the huge first and last movements are three shorter ones, each inhabiting a different sonic and emotional world. The second and fourth are as simple and innocent as the first is complex and funereal. Mahler worried that the dancelike *ländler* second movement, with its charming cello countermelody, would be too startling a contrast with the first, and asked for a long pause between the first two movements.

The third movement is an instrumental version of a song from a collection of German folk verse, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (*The Youth's Magic Horn*), depicting St. Anthony of Padua's sermon to the fishes. (The woozy grotesquerie of the rhythm and

harmony suggests that St. Anthony was slightly drunk.) This scherzo provides a startling example of Mahler's radical juxtapositions and his penchant for yoking contradictory elements: The music pipes and scampers along with witty solos for winds and brass until, suddenly, a cosmic "cry of despair" (Mahler's words) for full orchestra erupts out of nowhere.

The fourth movement, "Urlicht" ("Primal Light"), marked "very solemn but simple," is an actual song, its text again from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. Mahler introduces a voice for the first time in his symphonies, making it clear that, for him, the boundaries between symphony and song were as thin as the separation between serious and popular music. The hymn-like brass chorale forecasts the resurrection theme in the finale.

### A Bold Piece of Massive Construction

Mahler called the finale a "bold piece of massive construction." With its huge orchestral upheavals and its vivid evocation of final things, it is the musical equivalent of what art scholars call "the apocalyptic sublime"—a vision both terrifying and ecstatic. Mahler divided it into two parts: the first instrumental, the second choral. Opening with the "despair" outburst from the scherzo, it is packed with ideas, several from previous movements (a nod to Beethoven's Ninth). Some are expansively developed, while others are brutally parodied and scrambled together, often competing with offstage trumpets, horns, and percussion—a "spatialization" effect that became popular with composers ranging from Ives to Berio, who used the "Resurrection" Symphony's scherzo to surreal effect in his 1968 collage piece, *Sinfonia*.

Introducing the second part, the chorus enters in a whisper, blending with a soaring soprano in one of the symphony's most magical moments. Vocal sequences alternate with lyrical instrumental interludes as the vast forces in the work gradually come together and rise in ecstasy, the mezzo-soprano intoning Mahler's own text, and the

**Writing the finale, Mahler found himself in the grip of creative powers he could not understand: "The increasing tension, working up to the final climax, is so tremendous that I don't know myself, now that it is over, how I ever came to write it."**

resurrection theme reaching full bloom in a series of crescendos that lead to a blazing release of fanfares, bells, organ, gongs, and a final massive chord that takes all within earshot to new heights.

When Mahler came to write the ending, he found himself in the grip of creative powers he could not understand: "The increasing tension, working up to the final climax, is so tremendous that I don't know myself, now that it is over, how I ever came to write it."

—Jack Sullivan

# Texts and Translations

**GUSTAV MAHLER**
**Symphony No. 2 in C Minor, "Resurrection"**

**IV. Urlicht** — ***Primal Light***

Text from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (*The Youth's Magic Horn*), edited by Clemens Brentano and Achim von Arnim

**Mezzo-Soprano**

| | |
|---|---|
| O Röschen rot! | *O red rose!* |
| Der Mensch liegt in größter Not! | *Man lies in greatest need!* |
| Der Mensch liegt in größter Pein! | *Man lies in greatest pain!* |
| Je lieber möcht ich im Himmel sein! | *How much would I rather be in heaven!* |
| | |
| Da kam ich auf einen breiten Weg; | *I came upon a wide path;* |
| Da kam ein Engelein und wollt mich abweisen. | *There came an angel and wanted to turn me away.* |
| Ach nein! Ich ließ mich nicht abweisen. | *Ah no! I would not be turned away!* |
| Ich bin von Gott und will wieder zu Gott! | *I am from God, and will return to God!* |
| Der liebe Gott wird mir ein Lichtchen geben, | *The dear Lord will give me a small light,* |
| Wird leuchten mir bis in das ewig selig Leben! | *Will light my way to eternal, blessed life!* |

**V.**

Text: Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock (1724–1803) and Gustav Mahler

**Chorus and Soprano**

| | |
|---|---|
| Aufersteh'n, ja aufersteh'n wirst du, | *Rise again, yes, you will rise again,* |
| Mein Staub, nach kurzer Ruh'! | *My dust, after a short rest!* |
| Unsterblich Leben! Unsterblich Leben | *Immortal life! Immortal life* |
| Wird der dich rief, dich rief dir geben! | *Will be given to you by Him who called you.* |
| | |
| Wieder aufzublüh'n wirst du gesät! | *You are sown in order to bloom again!* |
| Der Herr der Ernte geht, | *The Lord of the harvest goes* |
| Und sammelt Garben uns ein, | *And gathers the sheaves* |
| Die starben! | *Of us who have died.* |

**Mezzo-Soprano**

| | |
|---|---|
| O glaube, mein Herz, O glaube: | *Oh, believe, my heart, believe:* |
| Es geht dir nichts verloren! | *You have lost nothing!* |
| Dein ist, dein, ja dein, was du gesehnt! | *Yours, yes, yours is what you have longed for,* |
| Dein, was du geliebt, was du gestritten! | *Yours, what you loved, what you fought for!* |

**Soprano**

| | |
|---|---|
| O glaube: | *Oh, believe:* |
| Du wardst nicht umsonst geboren! | *You were not born in vain!* |
| Hast nicht umsonst gelebt, gelitten! | *You have not lived and suffered in vain!* |

**Chorus and Mezzo-Soprano**

| | |
|---|---|
| Was entstanden ist, das muss vergehen! | *What was created must perish!* |
| Was vergangen, auferstehen! | *What has perished must rise again!* |
| Hör auf zu beben! | *Cease trembling!* |
| Bereite dich! Bereite dich zu leben! | *Prepare yourself to live!* |

**Soprano and Mezzo-Soprano**

| | |
|---|---|
| O Schmerz! Du Alldurchdringer! | *Oh, pain, all-pervading,* |
| Dir bin ich entrungen! | *From you have I been wrested!* |
| O Tod! Du Allbezwinger! | *Oh, death, all-conquering,* |
| Nun bist du bezwungen! | *Now are you conquered!* |
| | |
| Mit Flügeln, die ich mir errungen, | *With wings that I have earned* |
| In heissem Liebesstreben | *In fervent, loving aspiration,* |
| Werd' ich entschweben | *Will I soar* |
| Zum Licht, zu dem kein Aug' gedrungen! | *To the light that no eye has penetrated!* |

**Chorus**

| | |
|---|---|
| Mit Flügeln, die ich mir errungen, | *With wings that I have earned* |
| Werde ich entschweben! | *Will I soar!* |
| Sterben werd' ich, um zu leben! | *I shall die, that I may live!* |
| | |
| Aufersteh'n, ja aufersteh'n wirst du, | *Rise again, yes, you will rise again,* |
| Mein Herz, in einem Nu! | *My heart, in an instant!* |
| Was du geschlagen, | *What you have fought for,* |
| Zu Gott wird es dich tragen! | *Will carry you to God!* |

Marco Borggreve

# The Artists

**Semyon Bychkov**

Internationally recognized for an approach to music making that combines innate musicality with the rigors of Russian pedagogy, Semyon Bychkov begins his tenure as chief conductor and music director of the Czech Philharmonic at the start of the 2018–2019 season.

Following early concerts with the Czech Philharmonic in 2013 that sparked the relationship, Mr. Bychkov initiated *The Tchaikovsky Project*, an intensive exploration of the venerated composer's seminal works through a series of concerts, residencies, and recordings for Decca Classics. *The Tchaikovsky Project* culminates in 2019 with residencies in Paris and Vienna, and a box set of Tchaikovsky's complete symphonic repertoire. In addition to a nine-city tour of the US, Mr. Bychkov inaugurates his tenure with the orchestra with concerts in London, Bruges, five cities in Germany, and a residency at Vienna's Musikverein.

Mr. Bychkov conducts the major orchestras and appears at the major opera houses in the US and Europe. In addition to his title with the Czech Philharmonic, he holds the Günter Wand Conducting Chair with the BBC Symphony Orchestra—appearing annually with the orchestra at the BBC Proms—and the honorary Klemperer Chair of Conducting at the Royal Academy of Music. He was named Conductor of the Year at the 2015 International Opera Awards.

Spanning four centuries, his repertoire is wide-ranging. The coming season brings two weeks of concerts with the New York Philharmonic—including the US premiere of Thomas Larcher's Symphony No. 2, "Kenotaph"—and The Cleveland Orchestra, where he will conduct works by Detlev Glanert, Martinů, and Smetana. In Europe, his concerts include performances with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic, Berliner Philharmoniker, Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, and Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra.

Mr. Bychkov was born in St. Petersburg, studied at the Leningrad Conservatory, and, at age 20, won the Rachmaninoff Conducting Competition. Denied the prize of conducting the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra, he immigrated to the United States, where his first appointments as music director were with the Grand Rapids Symphony and Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. He went on to become music director of the Orchestre de Paris, principal guest conductor of the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra, and chief conductor of both the WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne and Semperoper Dresden.

Gisela Schenker

**Christiane Karg**

Christiane Karg studied singing at the Mozarteum Salzburg (where she was awarded the Lilli Lehmann Medal) with Heiner Hopfner and Wolfgang Holzmair, and the Music Conservatory in Verona. In 2009, she was named Young Performer of the Year by *Opernwelt* magazine; more recently, in 2018, she was awarded the prestigious Brahms Prize.

Ms. Karg was a member of the International Opera Studio of Staatsoper Hamburg before joining the ensemble of Oper Frankfurt in 2008, where her roles included Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Musetta (*La bohème*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Servilia (*La clemenza di Tito*), Zdenka (*Arabella*), Sophie (*Der Rosenkavalier*), the title role in *La Calisto*, and Mélisande in Claus Guth's new production of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, for which she received great critical acclaim.

In 2006, Ms. Karg made an auspicious debut at the Salzburg Festival, and has returned to sing Amor (*Orfeo ed Euridice*) with Riccardo Muti and Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) with Yannick Nézet-Séguin. She is a regular guest at the Theater an der Wien, where she has sung Ismene (*Mitridate, re di Ponto*), Telaire (*Castor et Pollux*), and Héro (*Béatrice et Bénédict*). She has sung the preceding roles and others at the Bayerische Staatsoper, Komische Oper Berlin, Opéra de Lille, and Semperoper Dresden. She made her house debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, singing Pamina; her house debut at Teatro alla Scala singing Sophie; and her US operatic debut singing Susanna at Lyric Opera of Chicago, where she returned for *Die Zauberflöte*.

In concert, Ms. Karg has worked with conductors such as Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Daniel Harding, Mariss Jansons, and Christian Thielemann. A distinguished recitalist, she has appeared at the Vienna Musikverein and London's Wigmore Hall, as well as at the Edinburgh International and Schubertiade Schwarzenberg festivals. In addition, she has toured the US and Asia, including an NHK television broadcast from Tokyo's Oji Hall.

**Elisabeth Kulman**

Julia Wesely

Elisabeth Kulman is one of today's most sought-after singers and leading authorities in the international classical music scene. She impresses audiences and critics alike with her rich, colorful timbre, charismatic stage presence, and musical versatility.

Ms. Kulman studied voice with Helena Łazarska at the Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts and made her debut as Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*) in 2001 at the Volksoper in Vienna. She enjoyed early success as a soprano; since 2005, she has sung the major parts in the mezzo-soprano and alto repertoire. Her operatic repertoire, which she established in large part at the Vienna State Opera, includes works by Gluck, Wagner, Verdi, and Weill. Her symphonic repertoire includes Bach's passions, Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*, Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder*, Dvořák's *Stabat Mater*,

Mahler's lieder with orchestra, and Schnittke's *Faust Cantata*.

Ms. Kulman is in demand as soloist in the metropolitan centers of the music world, including Vienna, Paris, London, Berlin, Tokyo, and Moscow. She regularly works with world-class orchestras and conductors such as Zubin Mehta, Kirill Petrenko, Christian Thielemann, Philippe Jordan, Herbert Blomstedt, Mariss Jansons, Kent Nagano, and Marek Janowski. She enjoyed a particularly close collaboration with conductor Nikolaus Harnoncourt.

Since 2015, Ms. Kulman has focused her artistic activities on recitals (with her longtime accompanist Eduard Kutrowatz), concerts, and operas in concert. She is devoted to unconventional projects, such as *Mussorgsky Dis-Covered* with jazz quartet, *Mahler Lieder* and *Wer wagt mich zu höhnen?* with the Amarcord Wien ensemble, and *Hungaro Tune* with symphony orchestra and jazz soloists. In her latest solo show, *La femme c'est moi*, Ms. Kulman joyfully correlates different genres in personal ways, including opera arias, classic lieder, and show tunes, as well as songs by the Beatles and Michael Jackson arranged for chamber orchestra by Tscho Theissing.

**Lukáš Vasilek**

Lukáš Vasilek, principal conductor of the Prague Philharmonic Choir (PPC), studied conducting at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague and musicology at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University. Beginning in 1998, he was conductor of the Foerster Female Chamber Choir for 11 seasons; between 2005 and 2007, he was also second choirmaster of the Prague National Theatre's Opera Chorus.

Mr. Vasilek took up his post at the helm of the PPC in 2007. Apart from preparing and conducting the choir's a cappella concert productions, he has been building up the PPC's repertoire for participation in large-scale cantata, oratorio, and opera projects, working with leading international conductors and orchestras.

Mr. Vasilek has made numerous recordings with the PPC for various major labels, including Decca Classics, Deutsche Grammophon, Sony Classical, and Supraphon. In 2016, Supraphon issued an album of Martinů's cantatas, which was nominated for *BBC Music Magazine*'s Choral Award, among other plaudits.

In 2010, Mr. Vasilek formed the vocal ensemble Martinů Voices, whose repertoire focuses primarily on 20th- and 21st-century choral music.

**Prague Philharmonic Choir**

Founded in 1935, the Prague Philharmonic Choir (PPC) is a leading European vocal ensemble. Lukáš Vasilek has been its principal choirmaster since 2007.

The PPC's repertoire is centered primarily on oratorio and cantata works. The choir has worked with eminent international orchestras (Czech Philharmonic, Berliner Philharmoniker, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, Staatskapelle Dresden, Vienna Symphony Orchestra) and conductors (Daniel Barenboim, Jiří Bělohlávek, Christoph Eschenbach, Vladimir Fedoseyev, Manfred Honeck, Jakub Hrůša, Tomáš Netopil, Gianandrea Noseda, Philippe Jordan, Fabio Luisi, Zubin Mehta, Sir Simon Rattle). The PPC is also active in opera, regularly working with the Prague National Theatre; since 2010, it has held the position of choir-in-residence at the opera festival in Bregenz, Austria.

Apart from these commitments, the PPC engages in a number of its own projects, some of which have been presented abroad, including tours in the US and Mexico in 2014, and Russia in 2018. Since 2011, the choir has organized its own choral concert series in Prague.

The PPC has an extensive discography to its credit, released by major international labels (Decca Classics, Deutsche Grammophon, Sony Classical, Supraphon). In recent years, the choir has taken part in several unique recording projects, two in association with the Czech Philharmonic: Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* conducted by Jiří Bělohlávek (Decca, 2017), which received the prestigious *Diapason* d'Or de l'Année; and Martinů's *The Epic of Gilgamesh* conducted by Manfred Honeck (Supraphon, 2017), which won several awards in the United Kingdom, as well as a *Diapason* d'Or.

The PPC's many commitments in the 2018–2019 season include concert appearances at the Dvořák Festival Prague, Beethovenfest Bonn, and Prague Spring International Music Festival; a tour in Belgium; and appearances with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. The PPC will conclude the season at Bregenz Festival.

# Prague Philharmonic Choir

**Lukáš Vasilek**, Principal Conductor

**Sopranos**
Grażyna Biernot
Hana Červenková
Barbora Drábková
Monika Drdová
Klára Džuganová
Věra Eichlerová
Kristýna Fílová
Pavla Frassová
Darina Glatzová
Martina Harvánková
Anežka Hergeselová
Tereza Hořejšová
Romana Hýžová
Yvona Jurčíková
Aleksandra Konyukovskaya
Martina Kritznerová
Iva Krůšková
Marie Matějková
Yveta Matoušková
Denisa Myslivečková
Marie Němcová
Barbara Solazzo
Andrea Soukupová
Jana Sováková
Věra Váchová
Martina Vostalová
Dagmar Williams
Kateřina Zelenková
Dana Zíková

**Contraltos**
Zuzana Bártová
Ada Bílková
Daniela Demuthová
Hana Dobešová
Jana Drábková
Agata Hauserová
Zuzana Hirschová
Lenka Jančíková
Magda Kaňková
Nadia Ladkany
Marcela Melková
Pavla Mlčáková
Dagmar Novotná
Štěpánka Pýchová
Dana Sedmidubská
Marina Shcherbaková
Romana Soukupová
Dita Stejskalová
Kristýna Šorsáková
Kateřina Špičková
Lenka Švehlíková
Jana Tolašová
Hana Vasiluková
Jana Vikukelová
Eva Zbytovská

**Tenors**
Ondřej Benek
Jan Bochňák
Tomáš Brádle
Viktor Byčok
Tomáš Fiala
Michal Foršt
Tomáš Hinterholzinger
Ondřej Holub
Zdeněk Kazda
Jakub Koś
Ondřej Maňour
Rudolf Medňanský
Zdeněk Nádeník
Jiří Navrátil
Vladimír Okénko
Bronislav Palowski
Miloslav Pelikán
Bohumil Sládeček
Martin Slavík
Petr Svoboda
Linhart Švancar

**Basses**
Jiří Černý
Vladimír Hambálek
Tomáš Hanzl
Michael Havlíček
Lukáš Hynek-Krämer
Josef Chaloupka
Karel Chaloupka
Pavel Kobrle
Michal Krůšek
Tomáš Křovina
Pavel Kudrna
Petr Kutina
Jan Morávek
Mikhail Pashayev
Daniel Pinc
Jan Pirner
Peter Poldauf
Vladislav Renza
Jan Socha
Petr Svoboda
Jiří Uherek
Martin Vacula
David Vaňáč

**Choir Staff**
Eva Sedláková
Director
Lukáš Vasilek
Choirmaster and Conductor
Radim Dolanský
Manager
Michal Krůšek
Secretary

**Czech Philharmonic**

The Czech Philharmonic—which debuted in 1896 under Antonín Dvořák—has an extraordinary legacy that reflects its place in the pantheon of the great European orchestras, as well as its distinct embrace of both Eastern and Western European cultures. The orchestra resides in Prague at the Rudolfinum and proudly represents the Czech Republic internationally as an esteemed and cherished cultural ambassador.

Since its founding, the all-Czech orchestra has championed the music and composers of its homeland. Its past is inextricably woven to that of the Czech Republic; one particularly potent symbol of that connection is Smetana's *Má vlast* (*My Homeland*), which many consider to be the country's unofficial national anthem. The orchestra has used the work numerous times to exemplify the country's perseverance and pride throughout its complicated and often turbulent political history: It was played as an act of defiance during the Nazi occupation; in a "concert of thanks" for the newly liberated Czechoslovakia in 1945; to mark the country's first free elections in 1990; and, this year, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Czech and Slovak independence in a new release from Decca Classics.

Acknowledged for its definitive performances of works by Dvořák, Janáček, Martinů, and Suk, the orchestra is also recognized for its deep relationships to Brahms, Tchaikovsky, and Mahler, the latter of whom was of Czech origin and whose Symphony No. 7 was premiered by the orchestra in 1908. Historic collaborations and premieres include a podium appearance by Grieg; Stravinsky conducting his Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra; Bernstein conducting Copland's Symphony No. 3; Honegger conducting his own music; Milhaud introducing his *Music for Prague*; and Krzysztof Penderecki conducting his Concerto for Clarinet and Chamber Orchestra.

This year marks the beginning of a new era for the Czech Philharmonic as Semyon Bychkov becomes the orchestra's 14th chief conductor and music director, taking the mantle from luminary predecessors who include Václav Talich, Rafael Kubelík, Karel Ančerl, Václav Neumann, and Jiří Bělohlávek. Mr. Bychkov's tenure began in Prague with performances of Mahler's "Resurrection" Symphony, Berio's *Sinfonia,* and Dvořák's Symphony No. 7. He and the orchestra immediately embarked on their inaugural international tour together to London, nine US cities, a weeklong residency in Vienna, Belgium, and five cities in Germany.

# Czech Philharmonic

**Semyon Bychkov**, Chief Conductor and Music Director

**First Violins**
Josef Špaček
Concertmaster
Jiří Vodička
Concertmaster
Magdaléna Mašlaňová
Otakar Bartoš
Luboš Dudek
Marie Dvorská
Bohumil Kotmel
Viktor Mazáček
Pavel Nechvíle
Zdeněk Starý
Jindřich Vácha
Milan Vavřínek
Miroslav Vilímec
Zdeněk Zelba
Marco Čaňo
Anna Pacholczak

**Second Violins**
Ondřej Skopový
Libor Vilímec
Zuzana Hájková
Petr Havlín
Pavel Herajn
Jitka Kokšová
Veronika Kozlovská
Jan Ludvík
Vítězslav Ochman
Jiři Ševčík
Markéta Vokáčová
Milena Kolářová
Kateřina Jelínková
Marek Blaha

**Violas**
Jaroslav Pondělíček
Pavel Ciprys
Dominik Trávníček
Jiři Řehák
René Vácha
Pavel Hořejší
Jaromír Páviček
Jaroslav Kroft
Jan Šimon
Jan Mareček
Jiři Poslední
Lukáš Valášek

**Cellos**
Václav Petr
Concertmaster
Tomáš Hostička
Jan Holeňa
František Lhotka
Peter Mišejka
Marek Novák
Karel Stralczynský
Eduard Šístek
Dora Hájková
Aneta Šudáková

**Basses**
Jiři Hudec
Petr Ries
Ondřej Balcar
Jaromír Černík
Martin Hilský
Jiři Valenta
Jiři Vopálka
Danijel Radanović

**Flutes**
Daniel Havel
Oto Reiprich
Andrea Rysová
Jan Machat
Petr Veverka

**Oboes**
Jana Brožková
Vladislav Borovka
Jiři Zelba
Magdaléna Klárová

**Clarinets**
Tomáš Kopáček
Jan Mach
Jan Brabec
Petr Sinkule
František Bláha
Zdeněk Tesař

**Bassoons**
Ondřej Roskovec
Jaroslav Kubita
Tomáš Františ
Ondřej Šindelář
Martin Petrák
Arlen Fast

**Horns**
Jan Vobořil
Kateřina Javůrková
Jiři Havlík
Jindřich Kolář
Zdeněk Vašina
Hana Sapáková
Petr Duda
Petra Čermáková
Tomáš Kolář
Mikuláš Koska
Kanako Mori

**Trumpets**
Jaroslav Halíř
Walter Hofbauer
Antonín Pecha
Jiři Šedivý
Zdeněk Šedivý
Jakub Halata
Ladislav Pavluš
Vilém Hofbauer
Tomáš Topenčík
Jakub Doležal
Stanislav Masaryk

**Trombones**
Lukáš Moťka
Jan Perný
Karel Kučera
Břetislav Kotrba

**Tuba**
Karel Malimánek

**Timpani and Percussion**
Petr Holub
Michael Kroutil
Daniel Mikolášek
Pavel Polívka
Miroslav Kejmar
Štěpán Hon
Ladislav Bilan
Saori Seino

**Harps**
Jana Bouškova
Barbara Pazourová

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Chief Executive Officer
Robert Hanč
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Alžběta Lupíšková
Tatiana Čudová
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