

PRESS RELEASE

June 2, 2023

This year's Prague Spring Festival attracted the audience of more than 24 thousand

Already 78th Prague Spring International Music Festival will conclude today with a closing concert with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, the Prague Philharmonic Choir and the conductor Christoph Eschenbach. The programme will include György Ligeti's masterful *Atmosphères*, Johannes Brahms' *Song of Destiny* and the evening will culminate in *Symphony No. 9* with Ludwig van Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*.

More than 24,000 people attended 48 concerts, master classes, discussions and film screenings. The average attendance was 90% and ticket sales reached CZK 25.1 million. *"We are extremely pleased that ticket sales trends have returned to pre-Covid levels and we are seeing sold-out venues. We attribute this to the fact that the audience is able to appreciate true quality and after two years they are again eager for extraordinary concert performances that they will only hear at Prague Spring,"* says festival director Pavel Trojan.

Traditionally, a week before the opening of the festival, the Prague Spring Interpretation Competition began with a star-studded international jury. The winner of the trombone category was Portugal's Gonçalo Nova, and the historic first winner in the viola category was Sào Soulez Larivière from France. Next year, the competition will challenge young violinists and horn players.

The Welsh National Opera Orchestra with its chief conductor Tomáš Hanus provided an extraordinary opening of the festival. Their *My Country* was, according to the critics *"imaginative, lyrical and dancing, refined into purely musical images that seemed to accompany an imagined and possible 'opera' visualisation."* In addition to Tomáš Hanus, conductor Tomáš Netopil presented his collaboration with "his" foreign orchestra, the Essen Philharmonic.

The festival's artist in residence Antoine Tamestit, who also chaired the jury of the viola competition, performed at four different concerts at the Rudolfinum and the Agnes Convent. He performed alongside the other jurors but also as a soloist in concerts with pianist Cédric Tiberghien and violinist Isabelle Faust. One of the highlights of the festival

was undoubtedly his collaboration with conductor Klaus Mäkeläm and the Czech Philharmonic. The young Finnish artist, designated chief conductor of Amsterdam's Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, left a huge impression on both the enthusiastic audience and the orchestra itself with his performances of Schnittke's *Viola Concerto* and Mahler's *Symphony No. 1*.

The Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks and the British conductor Daniel Harding lived up to expectations with their performance of Gustav Mahler's *Symphony No. 7* 115 years after its world premiere in Prague.

Unforgettable experiences were prepared by singer Magdalena Kožená with pianist Mitsuko Uchida, pianists Víkingur Ólafsson and Igor Levit or harpsichordist Jean Rondeau. We witnessed the world premiere of Eduard Resatsch's *In Flames* at the PKF-Prague Philharmonia concert with Ukrainian conductor Oksana Lyniv. The enthusiasm in the Rudolfinum was also provided by a slightly younger conductor, Alena Hron, to whom belonged the Prague Spring Debut.

Early music was represented in the Czech Republic by the debuting ensemble Les Talens Lyriques with the conductor Christophe Rousset with a modern premiere of Royer's one-act ballet *Almasis*. The Czech Ensemble Baroque with countertenor Andreas Scholl presented the work of the Czech-born giant of baroque music František Ignác Tůma.

The second weekend of contemporary music of the Prague Offspring with the ensemble-in-residence Klangforum Wien offered not only the music of composer-in-residence Georg Friedrich Haas but also new works by six Czech composers: Jana Vöröšová, Michaela Pálka Plachká, Matouš Hejl, František Chaloupka, Pavel Šabacký and Šimon Voseček. Based on a performance of new works by a trio of HAMU and JAMU students, Klangforum Wien and Prague Spring selected composer Matej Sloboda to write a new piece for the next Prague Offspring. The music of the 20th and 21st centuries was also brought along by American music legend, composer and conductor John Adams. Surprisingly, he also performed in Prague for the first time.

Cooperation with the National Theatre brought the festival premiere of Antonín Dvořák's *Armida* in a musical setting by Robert Jindra and directed by Jiří Heřman.

The young alto singer Bella Adamová dazzled during the concert matinee. The youngest performers became the opening act of the opening concert under the open sky in Prague's Kampa Park in cooperation with the ZUŠ Open initiative. At the concert in the Church of St. Simon and Jude, called the ZUŠ Salon, the scholarship holders of the MenArt Academy got the opportunity to present themselves.

Prague Spring
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Photographs of the Prague Spring 2023 concerts are available here:
https://bit.ly/PJ2023_foto

Photographs from the festival concerts can be found [here](#).