

PRESS RELEASE

May 16, 2023

Klaus Mäkelä's Czech debut at the Prague Spring Festival

One of the most closely watched concerts of this year's Prague Spring Festival is the performance of the Czech Philharmonic with Finnish conductor Klaus Mäkelä and violist Antoine Tamestit, the festival's artist in residence.

When the Concertgebouw Orchestra Amsterdam announced in the spring of 2022 that Finnish conductor Klaus Mäkelä would become its chief conductor in 2027, it was one of the music world's biggest news stories. Only twenty-seven years old, the Finnish artist, who currently holds the positions of Chief Conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic and Orchestre de Paris, has confirmed his place among the most sought-after conductors of today. His Czech debut takes place at the Prague Spring Festival, when Mäkelä performs Mahler's monumental First Symphony with the Czech Philharmonic and accompanies the festival's Artist in Residence Antoine Tamestit in Alfred Schnittke's Viola Concerto.

"One of the first things that struck me about Mäkelä was his willingness to experiment. Even when performing familiar repertoire, he is not afraid to take risks, even at the cost of not always succeeding. It stretches or changes phrases in new and inventive ways and moves entire groups of instruments to change the sound of the ensemble in certain ways. Ideally, this musical research presents the composition in a completely new light that reveals much," wrote Norwegian music critic Aksel Tollåli for the Prague Spring catalogue.

"Mäkelä's conducting has a natural musicality and is characterised by an understated elegance and carefully measured movements often reminiscent of dance. I find great openness in Mäkelä's conducting. He welcomes commitment to the performance from his musicians, but at the same time maintains the necessary authority. He has a flair for creating musical moments. Always completely immersed in the music he is creating. By shaping individual phrases, he achieves thrilling results," adds Aksel Tollåli.

Antoine Tamestit and his instrument, built in Stradivari's workshop in 1672, appear at the Prague Spring Festival in several roles. Together with the Czech Philharmonic under the baton of Klaus Mäkelä, he will take the solo part in one of the key works of viola literature of the second half of the 20th century - Alfred Schnittke's Viola Concerto (17. 5). With pianist Cédric Tiberghien, he will present a varied programme of works by German

Romantics Franz Schubert and Robert Schumann and English composers of various periods - John Dowland, Benjamin Britten and Rebecca Clarke (20.); with violinist Isabelle Faust, he will offer a dramaturgically equally attractive confrontation of historical music (Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Monsieur de Sainte Colombe) and historicizing compositions by 20th century classical composers György Kurtág and Bohuslav Martinů (21. 5.). In addition, he chaired the viola competition of the Prague Spring Festival and on Saturday he performed at a special concert of the viola jury members at the St. Agnes Monastery.

“Antoine Tamestit and Klaus Mäkelä are regular artistic partners. They are not only working together as soloist and conductor. At this year's festival in Verbier, Switzerland, they will even become chamber music partners when Mäkelä will take up his original instrument, the cello, and together with Tamestit, Yuja Wang and Daniel Lozakovich will perform the Brahms Piano Quartet,” says Josef Třeštík, the Prague Spring Festival's Programming Director.

Czech Television is the partner of the concert of the Czech Philharmonic with Klaus Mäkeläm and Antoine Tamestit.

Contact journalists:

Juraj Gerbery, gerbery@festival.cz, +420 774 574 130

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

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