



Press Release

Second Week of the Prague Spring International Music Festival 2026

Prague, 16 May 2026 | The second festival week at the Prague Spring will be devoted to early music, chamber music, jazz and opera. On Wednesday, the artistic residency of soprano and conductor **Barbara Hannigan** will begin with its first concert; the legendary jazz pianist **Fred Hersch** will make his Prague Spring debut; the winner of the **2025 Warsaw International Chopin Piano Competition 2025**, **Eric Lu**, will give a recital; and the highlight of the rich weekend programme will be a concert by the **Oslo Philharmonic** with conductor **Klaus Mäkelä** and cellist **Truls Mørk**.

The second festival week will open with the **Prague Spring Debut** concert, whose protagonist this year is conductor **Ondřej Soukup**. For his first festival appearance on 18 May at the Rudolfinum, where he will conduct the **Prague Philharmonia**, he has chosen a “dance-inspired” programme featuring works by Aaron Copland, Alberto Ginastera and Antonín Dvořák. Their atmospheric counterpoint will be provided by Samuel Barber’s compelling vocal-instrumental work *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* on a text by James Agee. The solo part will be performed by leading Slovak soprano **Simona Šaturová**.

On Tuesday 19 May, violinist **Patricia Kopatchinskaja** will return to the festival to give the Prague Spring premiere of **Luboš Fišer’s** *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*. In doing so, she will conclude her artistic residency from last year, during which she presented Fišer’s chamber works for violin and piano as well as the celebrated *Crux*. The **Czech Philharmonic** will be conducted by **Jakub Hrůša**. Alongside Fišer’s music, audiences will hear the suite from **Leoš Janáček’s** opera *Fate*, **Béla Bartók’s** *Rhapsody for Violin and Orchestra*, and the spectacular suite from his ballet *The Miraculous Mandarin*. The concert will be broadcast live by Czech Radio Vltava.

Barbara Hannigan’s artistic residency will begin on Wednesday 20 May with a chamber recital together with French pianist **Bertrand Chamayou**, featuring, among other works, the Czech premiere of **John Zorn’s** *Jumalattaret* on texts from the Finnish epic *Kalevala*. On Sunday 24 May, Hannigan will invite the outstanding **Belcea Quartet** to join her on stage for a programme transporting audiences to the splendour of the Belle Époque.



Audiences can also look forward to several other chamber music projects. The programme includes two piano recitals: on 22 May, a recital by the winner of the 2025 Warsaw International Chopin Piano Competition 2025, **Eric Lu**, and on 23 May, a piano matinée by the recent recipient of the BBC Music Magazine Award, **Jan Schulmeister**. The final string quartets of Benjamin Britten and Antonín Dvořák will be performed on 23 May at the Convent of St Agnes by the **Bennewitz Quartet**, while the chamber concerts of the second festival week will culminate on 24 May with a recital by French lutenist **Thomas Dunford** featuring works by Italian, French, German, Spanish and English Renaissance and Baroque masters.

The **Helsinki Baroque Orchestra** with artistic leader **Aapo Häkkinen** will make its Prague Spring debut on 21 May at the Rudolfinum. The ensemble will bring to Prague a programme with a strong Czech connection: Jakub Jan Ryba's *Stabat Mater* and the modern premiere of the oratorio *La Purificazione di Maria Virgine* by Antonio Casimir Cartellieri, who worked at the end of the 18th century at the court of Prince Joseph Franz Maximilian von Lobkowitz. This concert will also be broadcast live on Czech Radio Vltava.

One of the most eagerly anticipated concerts of the second festival week will be the jazz evening by the **Fred Hersch Trio** at the DOX Centre for Contemporary Art. Seventeen-time Grammy nominee Fred Hersch will appear at the Prague Spring for the first time. The concert partner is Mercedes-Benz Czech Republic.

Saturday 23 May will bring another highlight of this year's orchestral series – a performance by the **Oslo Philharmonic** with conductor **Klaus Mäkelä** and Norwegian cellist **Truls Mørk**, who will perform Antonín Dvořák's *Cello Concerto in B minor*. It will be one of Mäkelä's final appearances as Chief Conductor of the orchestra before fully assuming his positions with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. The second work on the programme will be Jean Sibelius's *Lemminkäinen* suite.

Opera will also have its place during the week. In cooperation with the National Theatre in Prague, one of the most significant operatic works of the 20th century, Francis Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*, directed by **Barbara Horáková Joly** and featuring **Jana Sibera** in the title role, will receive its Prague Spring premiere at the State Opera Prague on 21 May. The performance will be conducted by the Music Director of the State Opera, **Hermann Bäumer**.

On Sunday morning, 24 May, all admirers of the songs of jazz icon Ella Fitzgerald are invited to enjoy a free musical morning from 11.00 in the Nostic Garden in Kampa Park. The jazz morning will be

Pražské jaro / Prague Spring
Mezinárodní hudební festival
International Music Festival



hosted by StarDance star singer **Dasha** together with the **Epoque Quartet** and percussionist **Šimon Veselý**. The project has been created in cooperation with Prague 1 City District.

Tickets for individual festival concerts are available online at festival.cz/en and [at the festival box offices in the Rudolfinum and the Municipal House](#).

 Illustrative photographs: [Prague Spring 2026 official artist photos](#)

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