



Press Release

Two icons of the contemporary music world come to Prague Spring: Unsuk Chin and Ilan Volkov

Prague, 28 May 2026 | On 29 and 30 May, the DOX Centre for Contemporary Art in Prague's Holešovice district will come alive with contemporary music. The fifth edition of Prague Offspring, presented as part of the Prague Spring Festival, will feature performances by Ensemble Modern of works by the Korean composer Unsuk Chin, Ondřej Adámek, Iannis Xenakis and five world premieres by Czech and Slovak composers: Michal Nežtek, Jiří Kadeřábek, Michaela Antalová, Tobiáš Horváth and Patrik Kako. Alongside the concerts, DOX will also host workshops, masterclasses and discussions with distinguished guests.

The Korean composer **Unsuk Chin** has accepted the role of Prague Offspring's composer-in-residence for 2026. It will mark the first visit to the Czech Republic in her career. "I nevertheless feel a very close connection to the Czech Republic, because both our countries have gone through similar hardships and share a similar political history. I love the writings of Milan Kundera and Franz Kafka, and I am also fascinated by Czech music, especially that of Leoš Janáček. His music is so closely bound to language, and that is something truly exceptional," says **Unsuk Chin**. Born in Seoul, South Korea, Chin has forged a distinctive style shaped by the meeting of Eastern and Western cultural traditions. Her works have earned her the highest international honours a living composer can receive: in 2004 she was awarded the Grawemeyer Award – often referred to as the Nobel Prize of music – followed by the Arnold Schoenberg Prize and, in 2024, the prestigious Ernst von Siemens Music Prize. In 2026, she received the BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Award in the category of Music and Opera. Her compositions have been performed and commissioned by the world's leading orchestras and opera houses, including the Berlin Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics, and the Bavarian State Opera. Among her most ardent champions is conductor Kent Nagano, though her works are also frequently performed by other distinguished conductors such as Sir Simon Rattle, Gustavo Dudamel, Esa-Pekka Salonen, David Robertson and Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla.

Four of Unsuk Chin's works will be heard at Prague Offspring: *Akrostichon–Wortspiel* (1993) for soprano and orchestra, featuring **Sarah Aristidou**, *Double Concerto for piano, percussion and ensemble* (2003) with pianist **Orlando Bass** and Ensemble Modern percussionists **Rainer Römer** and **David Haller**, *Gougalōn* (2009), inspired by the composer's first journey to China, and the scene *Advice from a Caterpillar* for solo bass clarinet from her opera *Alice in Wonderland*, which was named "World Premiere of the Year 2007" by Die Opernwelt magazine.



Ilan Volkov became familiar to the general public at only 23 years of age when he was named assistant to the then Music Director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa. This appointment launched his colourful international career, a fundamental part of which was his tenure with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, where he held the position of Principal Conductor in the years 2003–2009; in the period 2009–2024 he was Principal Guest Conductor and today he collaborates with the orchestra as Creative Partner. Apart from being a respected performer of classical music from previous eras, he is also a key figure on the international contemporary music scene, a genre he promotes assiduously. In 2012 he launched the Tectonics festival, which very soon became one of the world's most important and most progressive platforms for new music. Under Volkov's direction Tectonics has grown into a global network of festivals with branches in Glasgow, Reykjavik, Tel Aviv, New York, Oslo, Athens, Kraków and Adelaide, providing an opportunity for meetings between avantgarde composers, improvisers and experimenters from all over the world. Volkov collaborates with the finest ensembles specialising in contemporary music, such as Ensemble Modern, Klangforum Wien and Ensemble intercontemporain. He has performed the premieres of a whole series of works, including those by Unsuk Chin, Missy Mazzoli and Hans Abrahamsen. He is a regular guest at the Salzburg, Lucerne and Edinburgh festivals and the BBC Proms, where he combines traditional and contemporary repertoires. He has earned numerous distinctions for his many recordings, among them several Gramophone Awards.

Ensemble Modern was founded in 1980 by former members of the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie with a shared interest in contemporary music. Since then, the ensemble has worked closely with countless distinguished composers, among them György Ligeti, Wolfgang Rihm, Helmut Lachenmann, Steve Reich, Heiner Goebbels, Unsuk Chin and George Benjamin. One of Ensemble Modern's landmark projects was its collaboration with Frank Zappa on the 1992 album *Yellow Shark*. In addition to concerts in its own subscription series at Frankfurt's Alte Oper, the ensemble appears regularly at major festivals and concert seasons, including the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Berliner Festspiele, the Holland Festival, Wigmore Hall and London's South Bank Centre, as well as New York's Carnegie Hall.

Programme of Prague Offspring 2026

Friday 29 May

18.30 [Unsuk Chin in Conversation](#)

20.00 [Concert: Ensemble Modern I](#)



Saturday 30 May

14.00 [Reading Lessons](#)

16.00 [Masterclass](#) with members of Ensemble Modern

18.30 [How To Spring Off?](#) A discussion between Miroslav Srnka and the Director General of Czech Centres, Jitka Pánek Jurková, on the position of Czech contemporary music abroad and contemporary art as part of Czech cultural diplomacy.

20.00 [Concert: Ensemble Modern II](#)

World premieres at Prague Offspring 2026

Michal Nejtěk: *Die Hintergedanken*

Michaela Antalová: *Unravel*

Tobiáš Horváth: *423*

Patrik Kako: *funktionslust : R*


Jiří Kadeřábek: *COVID-19 (Fury and Silence)*

Concert I details: <https://festival.cz/en/programme/ensemble-modern-i-29-5-prague-offspring/>

Concert II details: <https://festival.cz/en/programme/ensemble-modern-2-30-5-prague-offspring/>

Tickets for all events are available online at festival.cz and at the Prague Spring box offices in the Rudolfinum and the Municipal House.

 Photographs of Unsuk Chin: <https://bit.ly/3NAdJzh>

 Photographs of Prague Offspring 2026 artists: <https://bit.ly/49tvxUG>

 Concert programme in PDF: <https://bit.ly/3Q6QH4o>

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