



Press Release

Prague Spring's Prague Offspring Heads to Frankfurt am Main

Prague, 8 October 2026 | **Ensemble Modern**, one of the world's most highly respected contemporary music ensembles and ensemble-in-residence at **Prague Offspring 2025–2027**, will perform the German premieres of *Grain, Chaff and Fire* by **Slavomír Hořinka**, *Pulsum Noctis* by **Barbora Tomášková**, *Awakening* by **Pavel Šabacký** and *Unravel* by **Michaela Antalová** on **10 October 2026 at the Alte Oper in Frankfurt am Main**, in collaboration with the Prague Spring Festival, to mark the Czech Republic's participation as Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair. All four works were commissioned by Prague Spring and received their world premieres at Prague Offspring in 2025 and 2026. Ensemble Modern has also included *A Tribute to Vladimír Holan* by **Marek Kopelent** in the programme.

"I am very pleased that works by Czech and Slovak composers, commissioned by the Prague Spring, will be performed as part of such a significant event as the Frankfurt Book Fair. I see the Prague Spring as an ambassador not only of traditional but also of contemporary Czech music, consistently supporting domestic composers through its commissions and giving them a valuable opportunity to engage with top international creative output. For many of them, this represents another valuable professional experience and an opportunity to gain wider international recognition. At the same time, I am already looking forward to May 2027, when Ensemble Modern's three-year residency at Prague Offspring will culminate as part of the 82nd Prague Spring Festival, with another exciting series of concerts featuring five world premieres and three Czech premieres," says **Robert Hanč**, Director of the Prague Spring Festival.

The concert in Frankfurt am Main will be conducted by **Ustina Dubitsky**, who works with the Bavarian State Opera and the orchestra Les Siècles, among others. The concert is part of the programme of the Year of Czech Culture in German-speaking Countries, which runs from October 2025 to December 2026 in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

Concert Information

10 October 2026, 20.00

Alte Oper Frankfurt, Mozart Saal

Performers: Ensemble Modern | Ustina Dubitsky (conductor)

Tickets: <https://www.frankfurtticket.de/tickets/ensemble-modern-17864.75929/>

Programme

Pavel Šabacký: *Awakening* (2025) (German premiere)

Michaela Antalová: *Unravel* (2026) (German premiere)

Marek Kopelent: *Pocita Vladimíru Holanovi* (1965) (German premiere)

Barbora Tomášková: *Pulsum Noctis* (2025/26) (German premiere)

Slavomír Hoříňka: *Grain, Chaff and Fire* (2025) (German premiere)

A word from the artists / photos / videos

Pavel Šabacký (*1995): *Awakening*

“Unusually for me, *Awakening* is based on an extramusical narrative, though in a somewhat veiled, secondary sense,” the author explains. “It consists of six movements: *Submergence*, *Aurora*, *Tranquille*, *Ripples and Lances*, *Summit of Atonement*, and *Ascent*. On the surface, the piece revolves around my favourite elements: gradations of colour, timbre, instrumentation, texture, and sonic density. Beneath the surface, however, it traces an unfinished journey – a process of opening one’s eyes and heart, stepping outside the comfort zone, absorbing different cultures and environments, learning empathy, and bursting the bubble of one’s own perspective. It is a journey on which I have been guided by my extraordinary partner. It is to her – Emily Chen – that this piece is dedicated.”



<https://bit.ly/4APJ6Kd>



<https://bit.ly/4y4Gvt6>

Michaela Antalová (*1993): *Unravel*

“The piece unfolds through repetition and gradual transformation, anchored by a resolute melody shared by oboe and trumpet. Delicate voices surface and fade, weaving in and out of focus to shape a brief yet cohesive work for chamber orchestra. This piece grew out of a short excerpt and prolonged listening to Cassandra Miller’s *Duet for Cello and Orchestra*. As I unravelled elements of this beautiful work, while reflecting on the question of who I write for, they became entangled with thoughts, more less unconscious, like textile, texture, knitting, weaving. A scarf, perhaps. Perhaps thoughts of humanity. Perhaps a meditation on humanity. Perhaps connections to other people.”



<https://bit.ly/4ekDE8i>

Barbora Tomášková (*1990): *Pulsum Noctis*

“It is about searching for silence at night, about unravelling the threads that suffocate sleep. When the silence of night falls, a new world emerges – a world of suppressed fears, unheard emotions, doubts, and uncertainties. Of expectations, memories, glimpses of joy, and recollections of touch. Suddenly, it resounds with a force that is difficult to contain. Tones appear – tones we thought were long forgotten. It pulses in waves of constant ebb and flow, and only sometimes does St John’s wort tea bring peace. The waves turn into foam – the foam of days gone. And yet, I try to grasp it, but in the hands of my thoughts, it transforms into threads, knotted endlessly. Will they bring me silence if I untangle them? Just as I am about to succeed, the structure shifts again. It settles into the wrinkled cerebral cortex, like into an intricate bark of an old, wise tree. Will it help me to become the tree, to simply witness the scars of my past? To be, without unravelling. To breathe. To sleep. The pulses of the night will not let me sleep. They force me to dance to their rhythm of agony and endless exhaustion. I listen to how they sound. Is it me? Or is it the voice of something beyond all this? The sounds and voices of people near and far, of feelings, of touches, of thoughts. I listen and unravel.”

 <https://bit.ly/4i6bqjT>

 <https://bit.ly/4rOFG6e>

Slavomír Hoříňka (*1980): *Grain, Chaff and Fire*

“The piece presents seven perspectives on the process of refining an ununified multitude into a diverse unity. I see it as a commentary on the biblical parables of baptism by the fire of the Holy Spirit and the separation of the grain from the chaff. Each of us is a grain, encased in various husks that often serve as protection, and the purpose of life seems to be to separate, smooth, and purify these husks through fire so that we can truly touch others and they can touch us – that is, to form relationships. Teilhard de Chardin said: ‘To be more is to be more united.’ It was only during the compositional process that I realised that the structure of the piece, in some way, reflects his ideas. The source and the goal of my musical commentary is the sound of fire. Following the story of Moses and the burning bush, I perceive fire as an abstract, elusive metaphor, a cipher, or a sonic icon, to which I listened while composing. In this piece, I am wildly determined to have the listener imagine nothing and simply listen with me.”

 <https://bit.ly/4hGcg5G>

 <https://bit.ly/4768TjG>

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