



Monday 9th July 2024 at 20:00

Pavel Haas Quartet

Dana Zemtsov, viola - Ivan Vokáč, cello



Bohuslav MARTINŮ (1890 – 1959)

String sextett, H.224 (1932), 18'

- I. Lento - Allegro poco moderato
- II. Andantino – Allegro scherzando – Tempo 1
- III. Allegretto poco moderato

Erwin SCHULHOFF (1894 – 1942)

String sextett (1924), 22'

- I. *Allegro risoluto*
- II. *Tranquillo (Andante)*
- III. *Burlesca*
- IV. *Molto adagio*

--- Intermission ---

Antonin DVOŘÁK (1841 - 1904)

String sextett in A Major, Op. 48 (1878), 36'

- I. *Allegro moderato*
- II. *Dumka (Elergie). Poco allegretto*
- III. *Furiant. Presto*
- IV. *Finale. Tema con variazioni. Allegretto grazioso, quasi andantino*

15:30 Hoppe-Poltera-Brautigam, piano trio
20:00 String sextett w. Pavel Haas Q + Zemtsov & Vokac



About the music

Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959): String Sextet, H.224 (1932)

Czech Martinů spent most of his life in political exile. In 1923, he fled the Communists and settled in Paris. With the Nazi invasion in 1941, he crossed the Atlantic and lived in poverty in the United States for a number of years. But despite the harsh conditions, his hundreds of works exude vitality and optimism.

Martinů composed his String Sextet in just five days. When it was subsequently awarded an honorary prize, Martinů was convinced that his friends were making fun of him. And although the work quickly became popular, Martinů only agreed to publish the score 15 years later, in 1947.

The first movement begins in darkness and C minor. The movement quickly changes tempo and character. Through a long series of fugal entries, the music moves towards a triumphant D major climax. The second movement also begins mournfully. Halfway through, the character changes. The scherzo-like cheerfulness is quickly replaced by resignation, which puts the elegiac movement to rest. The fast tempo and melodic clarity of the finale is the work's most uplifting. The darkness is dispelled and the six instruments come together in a sparkling energetic coda.

Erwin Schulhoff (1894-1942): String Sextet (1924)

World War I changed the previously conservative Czech-born Schulhoff. He joined the Communist Party, threw himself into Dadaism and jazz and moved to Dresden, where he began composing his String Sextet in 1920. But in 1923, he fell in love with his compatriot Leos Janáček's philosophy and musical roots in Bohemian folk music. So when Schulhoff found time to complete the sextet the following year, his aesthetic convictions had changed. The new and old styles meet and are juxtaposed.

The beginning is an expressionistic explosion. The dissonant sounds and violent gestures soften in the central section. But the bombardment returns before the energy seeps out and calms the music. The second movement begins with the same notes as the first movement ended. The silent, ghostly music gradually grows into a hypnotic horror melody that

demonstrates Schulhoff's flair for unusual playing techniques. The third movement in 5/8 is like a satanic folk dance. But the dance is transformed into elegiac powerlessness in the slow and darkened finale.

When the Nazis occupied Czechoslovakia in 1939, the communist composer with Jewish roots was captured. He died in a concentration camp in 1942. The end of the sextet is like a harbinger of Schulhoff's own fate.

Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904): String Sextet in A major, opus 48 (1878)

In 1876, Dvořák was 35 years old and completely unknown outside his native Czech Republic. But at a composer competition, Johannes Brahms was on the jury. He fell in love with Dvořák. From then on, his fame grew and Dvořák had to "hammer while the iron was still hot". Within 10 months, he published the first volumes of his Slavonic Dances, Serenade for Winds, String Quartet No. 10, Moravian Songs and String Sextet. All of these popular works are inspired by Bohemian folk music.

Adding an extra viola and cello to a string quartet darkens the sound and adds a depth and sadness that suits the elegiac folk music that forms the background of the work.

The two recurring themes in the large first movement are inspired by Bohemian songs. The second movement is a characteristic *Dumka*, a Slavic type of movement where deep *weltschmerz* is contrasted by fleeting, joyful passages.

The third movement is a *Furiant*, a fast Bohemian folk dance with syncopated emphases on weak pulse beats. The finale is a mournful theme that is tossed between minor and major through six variations before the brilliant conclusion.

Dvořák specialist Otakar Sourek describes the string sextet as follows: "Dvořák wrote the melodies himself. But every one of them pulsates with Slavic life. Every thought is coloured by national feelings. Every timbre and musical expression is deeply rooted in Bohemian folkloristic life, which Dvořák loved more than anything else." *Mathias Hammer*

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About the artists

Pavel Haas Quartet

What does a young woman do when she is a recent graduate, unemployed and a violinist? Well, she starts her own small company, just four employees, and over the next ten years she is honoured with five Gramophone Awards, including one Record of the Year. Something that must be some kind of unofficial record.

That's how you could summarise the career of Veronika Jarůšková and thus the Pavel Haas Quartet. To achieve so much in such a short time, you need a flying start, and Veronika's husband, Peter, was one day sucked into the powerful slipstream and whirled into the quartet. A cellist and anchorman in the Czech Republic's leading quartet, the Skampa Quartet, he jumped at the chance to play with his wife and become an assisting spouse in her sassy startup when it presented itself.

The exhausting life of many competitions that comes with being a young quartet was overcome in a hurry by immediately winning two important competitions, *Prager Frühling* and *Premio Paolo Borciani*, so they could concentrate almost immediately on "real" concerts. It was also much needed. The victory in the *Premio Paolo Borciani* was followed by 40 concerts in Europe, the USA and Japan, of which 11 concerts in Europe alone had to be completed in the first 14 days, then it was straight to the USA, where the quartet had to perform the same night they arrived, jet lag and all.

For a young quartet that up until then had only played the odd gig here and there, without getting paid for it, it was quite a change of gear and a real trial by fire. Which the quartet got through well, even though they had to find a new second violin afterwards, as their first had a family and soon realised how difficult it was to combine with a prison stay.

The quartet's mentor, the great violist Milan Škampa, of the legendary Smetana Quartet, was so passionate about quartet life that it bordered on fanaticism, and one day, in the midst of passing on this passion, he announced that "the string quartet is the most beautiful prison in existence."

And fortunately, the most beautiful ones tend to stay put, year after year, despite a change here and there.

Ulrik Damgaard Andersen, 2019

Formal bio: pavelhaasquartet.com/en/biography/

Dana Zemtsov, viola

Dana Zemtsov is one of the most promising viola soloists of her generation. Gramophone Magazine has celebrated her playing as being *"so perfectly tuned, so varied in color and with such considerable distances in the intervals between the notes, that you would be forgiven for thinking it sounded more like a chamber orchestra"*.

Dana regularly performs in concert halls such as the Royal Concertgebouw Amsterdam, St. Petersburg Philharmonia, The Opera House in Tel Aviv, and Carnegie Hall in New York. She has played chamber music with Janine Jansen, Giovanni Sollima, Martin Frost, Anna Fedorova, Ilya Gringolts, Boris Berezovsky, and many others. As a soloist, Dana has performed with symphony orchestras in the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, US, Brasil, Mexico, Ukraine and Estonia, under the baton of Leif Segerstam, Otto Tausk, Daniel Raiskin, Massimo Quarta, Marco Parisotto, and Fabio Mechetti. In 2011, she participated in the 'Stars of Tomorrow' tour in Germany, together with the most promising young talents of Europe.

Dana is 1st Prize laureate of several competitions in Luxembourg, Italy, Austria, Germany, Portugal, and the Netherlands. In 2010 she won the Dutch competition 'Evening of the Young Musician' and became the *Young Musician of the Year*. She represented The Netherlands at the Eurovision Young Musicians Competition in Vienna. She has also been awarded the prestigious Kersjes Prize, granted every year to an outstanding young string player in the Netherlands. In 2016, Dana was chosen as 'Guest of Honor' among talented young violists to represent her generation at the 43rd Viola Congress in Cremona by the side of Bruno Giuranna, Ettore Causa and Tabea Zimmermann.

So far, Dana has released five critically acclaimed albums: 'Enigma' (solo, 2014), 'Romantic Metamorphoses' (with pianist Cathelijne Noorland, 2015), 'Essentia' (with Estonian National Symphony Orchestra and conductor Daniel Raiskin, 2018), 'Silhouettes' (with pianist Anna Fedorova, 2020), and 'Dutch Hidden Gems' (with Phion Orchestra, pianist Anna Fedorova and conductor Shizuo Z Kuwahara 2022), all on the Channel Classics Records label.

In her own words, Dana tells us: *"I was born in Mexico City, into an intensely musical family. Apart from a few violinists, a composer and one singer, the rest of my family members are all viola players. I like to think that part of the inspiration for me to pick up the viola was my grandmother Mila. She was a very free and bohemian spirit, a wonderful violist and so in love with music! Her dream was for the whole family to live in the same house in the countryside"*

15:30 Hoppe-Poltera-Brautigam, piano trio

20:00 String sextett w. Pavel Haas Q + Zemtsov & Vokac



and to make music together all day long. That is the atmosphere that I want to keep alive, I bring that unconditional love for music to every single concert that I play."

Born into a family of musicians in 1992, Dana received her first music lessons from her grandmother and her parents. She continued her studies with viola virtuoso Michael Kugel. Dana teaches regularly at places such as the Kuhmo Festival, Cividale International Masterclasses and the Davidsbündler Music Academy in The Hague. Together with family members, she annually organizes the Zemtsov Viola Masterclasses

danazemtsov.com/bio

Ivan Vokáč, cello

Winner of a number of international competitions (Liezen 2002, Dresden 2005, Martinů competition in Prague 2008, Janáček competition in Brno 2013), Ivan Vokáč performs with leading Czech orchestras, such as the Czech Philharmonic, Prague Philharmonia and Pilsen Philharmonic, and also dedicates himself to chamber music, with artists including the Lobkowitz Trio, Daniel Hope, Paul Neubauer, Josephine Knight and Ivo Kahánek. He is a member of the Prague Cello Quartet and Escualo Quintet, playing the piano in the latter. He has been a co-principal of the cellos in the Czech Philharmonic since 2017.

Bohuslav Martinů's music has always been very close to his heart but he has recently also fallen for Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 2 "Resurrection". His secret passion is jazz.

He started playing the cello as a child, first attended private lessons with Professor Oldřich Kavale, then studied at the Prague Conservatory and the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague with Professor Miroslav Petráš. He attended masterclass courses in Kronberg (Germany) with S. Isserlis and B. Pergamenschikow and in Pilsen (Czech Republic) with R. Wallfisch. As a soloist, he has appeared at many festivals in the Czech Republic (Talich's Beroun, Young Prague, Young Stage) as well as abroad (Festival l'Été Musical en Bergerac in France, Music Home Alive Festival in the Netherlands). He

regularly collaborates with the Czech Radio and the Czech TV.

He is the laureate of many international interpretation competitions. Among his greatest achievements are victories in Liezen (Austria, 2002), Dotzauer Competition in Dresden (Germany, 2005), Bohuslav Martinů competition in Prague (2008) and the overall winner title he received together with violinist Jakub Junek at Concertino Praga 2006. In 2010, he won the Yamaha Music Foundation of Europe scholarship and in 2012, he was a semi-finalist of the Prague Spring International Competition which made him the most successful Czech contestant. In 2013, he crowned his competition career winning the Leoš Janáček International Competition in Brno.

With the Taras Piano Trio, he won the Internationaler Johannes Brahms Wettbewerb competition (Pörschach, Austria) in 2007 and Rovere d'Oro (San Bartolomeo, Italy) in 2008. With the Lobkowitz Trio, he won the 3rd prize and the award for the best performance of composition by Antonín Dvořák at the Antonín Dvořák International Chamber Music Competition and the 1st prize at the Johannes Brahms International Competition (Pörschachu, Austria). The ensemble also won the Czech Chamber Music Society Award 2017.

ceskafilharmonie.cz/en/players/ivan-vokac/

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