

WHAT'S NEW



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RECORDING**

SU 3994-2



another star singer in her place. The Australian tenor Steve Davislim, who performed in the role of Michel, was a splendid partner to Magdalena Kožená in the lyrical and dramatic position. On this CD, *Three Fragments* is supplemented by the orchestral suite from the same opera, which sensitively treats the music of all three Acts and corresponds with the “dreamy logic” of the original.

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ – Three Fragments from the Opera Juliette (The Key to Dreams)*, Orchestral Suite from Juliette (arr. Z. Vostřák)

Magdalena Kožená (*Juliette*), Steve Davislim (*Michel*), Frédéric Goncalves, Michèle Lagrange, Nicolas Testé, Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, conductor Sir Charles Mackerras

Libretto: B. Martinů after Georges Neveux's play Juliette où la Clé des Songes

***Live recording from the work's world premieres on 11 and 12 December 2008**

This is not the first case of a premiere performance of a work by Bohuslav Martinů (1890 – 1959) decades after his death. On 11 December 2008 the sold-out Rudolfinum in Prague heard for the first time a work which ranks among Martinů's most significant and which the composer himself highly esteemed. Martinů originally composed the opera *Juliette* in Czech. However, so as to ensure appropriate publicity for the work, he wanted – already armed with a French libretto – to place extracts from the most relevant scenes on French radio. Yet *Three Fragments from the Opera Juliette (The Key to Dreams)* was not broadcast on the radio and had to wait some 70 years for its first performance. This was entrusted to the safe hands of that most competent of conductors Sir Charles Mackerras, who has devoted a great part of his life to discovering Czech music and promoting it on world stages. Thanks to Martinů's dreamily beautiful music and the remarkable engagement of all the interpreters, the conductor's December leave-taking of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra was transformed into a joint triumph. After experiencing Magdalena Kožená in the role of Juliette, it is hard to imagine



SU 3844-2



BEDŘICH SMETANA – Piano Works IV

A Treasure of Melodies, Album Leaves, Op. 2, Character Pieces, Op. 3, Sketches Op. 4 and 5, Three Salon Polkas, Op. 7, Three Poetic Polkas, Op. 8

Jitka Čechová – piano

The dramaturgy of the fourth CD comprising Bedřich Smetana's piano works also reflects the pedagogic activity that fully occupied him in the late 1840s and early 1850s. It gave rise to a host of charming compositions and cycles, rather small in proportion yet rich as regards the scale of moods, impressions, compositional techniques and expressive possibilities the composer gave rein to on these modest areas. A significant group of compositions is formed by the generally popular Album Leaves, which at the time Smetana succeeded in publishing under different titles (*Stammbuchblätter*, *Charakterstücke* or *Skizzen*, dedicated to Clara Schumann). The other group is formed by Polkas which, after the fashion of Chopin's mazurkas, begin stylising and transforming into independent concertante formations of idealised dance (*Trois polkas de salon*, *Trois polkas poétiques*). In the form of an easy-on-the-ear collage, the energetic young pianist and member of the renowned Smetana Trio Jitka Čechová offers another chapter of Smetana's piano works in a gamut of colours and moods.



SU 3978-2



JANÁČEK, NOVÁK, NEDBAL / Sonatas for Violin and Piano / Ženatý, Kasík

Vítězslav Novák – Sonata for Violin and Piano

Oskar Nedbal – Sonata for Violin and Piano, Op. 9

Leoš Janáček – Sonata for Violin and Piano

Ivan Ženatý – violin, Martin Kasík – piano

Following the highly acclaimed recording of J. B. Foerster's violin concertos (*BBC Symphony Orchestra / Jiří Bělohlávek*, Supraphon SU 3961-2), the violinist Ivan Ženatý – who has gained international renown as both a virtuoso and pedagogue – and the pianist Martin Kasík have chosen violin sonatas by three Czech composers from the turn of the 20th century. Nedbal's and Novák's not overly known and in stylistic terms distinctly romantic works contrast with Janáček's sonata, an opus of the mature Master whose modernity places it firmly in the 20th century. In Janáček's third (yet only preserved) violin sonata there are distinctly “Russian” undertones, reflecting the period it began to originate: the outset of World War I. Novák's romantically flamboyant sonata was written under Dvořák's supervision and is clearly influenced by Chopin and Liszt; Novák's *Sturm und Drang* is referred to on occasion. Oskar Nedbal's early work bears witness to his mastery of both instruments and rich melodic invention. The intensity of the listener's experience is augmented by the technical bravura and musical maturity with which the two performers have undertaken this repertoire.



SU 3979-2



W. A. MOZART – Divertimenti for String Quartet and Two Horns

Divertimento in F major, K 247, Divertimento in B major, K 287 (271b),
Divertimento in D major, K 334 (320b)

*Stamic Quartet (Bohuslav Matoušek – 1st violin, Josef Kekula – 2nd violin,
Jan Pěruška – viola, Vladimír Leixner – cello), Zdeněk Tylšar, Bedřich Tylšar – horn*

The period in which the divertimenti for string quartet and winds originated was replete with revolutionary events for Mozart (the struggle of the twenty-year-old “child prodigy” to be accepted as a respected musician, the death of his mother, unreciprocated ardour). The divertimenti, however, as it were remained aloof from these life dramas, rather reflecting memories of the warm Italian sun on his recent travels. Italianate musical style and grace also had a big influence on Mozart’s chamber instrumental works.

The Stamic Quartet combines within itself the strong tradition of the Czech quartet school and a long-term interest in the classicist repertoire. This ensemble’s conjunction with the phenomenal horn-playing brothers Zdeněk and Bedřich Tylšar has resulted in a model recording of Mozart’s divertimenti; a recording that (just like these compositions themselves) should serve primarily as a celebration of the joyous side of life.



SU 3977-2

+ video clip



F. BENDA, V. PICHL, A. VRANICKÝ – Violin Concertos / Demeterová

František Benda – Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in D major
Václav Pichl – Concerto for Violin and Orchestra No. 1 in D major, Op. 3
Antonín Vranický – Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in C major

*Gabriela Demeterová – violin, Prague Chamber Orchestra,
concertmaster – Milan Lajčák*

Benda, Pichl, Vranický – three superb violinists, composers and chapel masters who worked in the services of the nobility and the King. All three of them can be called ambassadors of Czech musicality in the Europe of the time. Their journeys led from Prague and Brno to the major European musical centres (Dresden, Vienna, Milan, Warsaw, etc.) and encountering the greatest composers of the time – Mozart, Haydn, C. P. E. Bach, Quantz and Zelenka. Their oeuvre spans the style and forms of late Baroque to high Classicism. However, in the field of the violin concerto they could demonstrate to the full their compositional invention and virtuosity, so great as to remain a challenge to present-day performers. Remarkable too is the mastery and bird’s-eye view with which the charming violinist Gabriela Demeterová squared up to this challenge on this CD. Even such virtuosos as the three composers in question would be hard to put to find fault with this splendid interpretational performance.



SU 3995-2



National Anthems of Member States of the European Union

Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, conductor Jan Kučera

Since 2004 alone, some 12 new member states have joined the European Union within the enlargement process. Along with the new territory, the EU has also integrated the history, culture and tradition of each of these countries. A national anthem often reflects one of the most significant chapters in a country’s history and in some cases it refers to the very beginnings of its existence. This new recording of the national anthems of all current EU member states affords the listener the possibility of discovering the diversity concealed beneath the unifying blue flag. Besides possible use on international occasions and during state celebrations, our CD also provides an excursion into the history and traditions of each of the EU countries.