



**PKF – Prague Philharmonia** is considered one of the greatest cultural phenomena in the recent history of the Czech Republic, after 1989. It was founded in 1994 on the initiative of the conductor Jiří Bělohlávek (1946–2017) under the name Prague Chamber Philharmonic. Today it is one of the most recognised orchestras, not only among Czech but also among world ensembles. Regular invitations to tour abroad as well as recording projects with the most prestigious international labels bear testimony to this. Since 2015–2016 season the orchestra has been led by the French conductor Emmanuel Villaume.

Over the last two seasons, the PKF – Prague Philharmonia has undertaken tours and concerts in the USA, China, Germany, France, Hungary, Switzerland and Oman. In the 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee season 2018–2019 listeners in Spain and France (at the Festival international de musique de Besançon Franche-Comté), Austria, Switzerland and Oman will have an opportunity to hear the orchestra, and there are two major tours in preparation to Germany: the first with Jonas Kaufmann and the second with Gábor Boldoczki and Soyoung Yoon.

Over the period of its existence the PKF – Prague Philharmonia has played with a whole host of internationally famous conductors and soloists, including Christopher Hogwood, Michel Swierczewski, Libor Pešek, Shlomo Mintz, Julian Rachlin, Robert McDuffie, Martha Argerich, Jefim Bronfman, András Schiff, Emmanuel Pahud, Gautier Capuçon, Daniel Müller-Schott, Sarah Chang, Isabelle Faust, Gábor Boldoczki, Luciano Pavarotti, Diana Damrau, Anna Netrebko, Angela Gheorghiu, Plácido Domingo, Elina Garanča, Juan Diego Flórez, Thomas Hampson, Magdalena Kožená and many others. The orchestra is regularly invited to international music festivals and gives concerts at top world venues (BBC Proms, Dresdner Musikfestspiele, MITO Settembre Musica, Prague Spring, Festspielhaus Baden Baden, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Gasteig Munich and Royal Opera House Muscat in Oman, among others). The ensemble has recorded over 90 CDs, released by leading Czech and world music publishers, such as Deutsche Grammophon, Warner Classics, Decca, Supraphon, EMI, Sony Classical and Harmonia Mundi. Among the numerous prizes the recordings have garnered are: the Gold Record RAC Canada in 2000, Harmony Award 2001 and Diapason d'Or in 2007.

The CD *Héroïque* with Bryan Hymel was in 2016 nominated for the 'International Opera Award' and in 2017 the recording of *Bohemian Rhapsody* with Gábor Boldoczki was nominated at the 'International Classical Music Award (ICMA)'. At the end of August and beginning of September 2018 the PKF recorded, after a few years break, for the Deutsche Gramophone label, and the orchestra's 'profile' recording with Emmanuel Villaume and Andrew von Oeyen was released by Warner Classics presenting works by Ravel, Debussy and Bizet.

Between the years 1994-2005 the orchestra was led by one of the most internationally recognised conductors and the founder of the orchestra, Jiří Bělohlávek (1946–2017), who later became its Music Director Laureate. The second PKF chief conductor was the Swiss conductor and flautist Kaspar Zehnder. The excellent Czech conductor, Jakub Hrůša, led the orchestra in the years 2008–2015.

Freshness, energy and perfectionism are characteristics inscribed in the orchestra's 'Birth Certificate', as well as a love of music expressed in each of their concerts. Behind the highly valued distinctive sound of the PKF – Prague Philharmonia is partly its key repertoire, which has been from the beginning Viennese Classicism, namely compositions by Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Ludwig van Beethoven. As far as Czech composers are concerned, the orchestra finds itself most 'at home' with the work of Bohuslav Martinů.

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