

philharmonia orchestra

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

JAKUB HRŮŠA: FIRST MAJOR SERIES WITH A BRITISH ORCHESTRA

2014 sees a major series of Czech music by the Philharmonia Orchestra, led by a new champion of the region's music and one of most exciting conductors of his generation. *Bohemian Legends* is Jakub Hruša's first major series with a British orchestra, and explores the music of Suk and Janáček in relation to that of their mentor, Antonín Dvořák.

A Czech national and Music Director and Chief Conductor of the Prague Philharmonia, Hruša studied conducting at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague where his teachers included Jiří Bělohlávek, perhaps the greatest champion of the music of Suk. His name has become synonymous with the music of this region, with critically acclaimed productions of Dvořák's and Janáček's operas in many of the world's leading opera houses, as well as a variety of critically acclaimed recordings for the Supraphon label.

The series is designed to get under the skin of an extraordinary period in Czech cultural history showcasing some rarely performed but integral works in this repertoire. It features some prominent Czech and Slovak soloists including pianist Lukáš Vondráček and tenor Peter Berger, and artists with a special affinity for this region's music.

Highlights include three works by Suk including his vast eulogy to his mentor Dvořák, and his own wife (Dvořák's daughter), the *Asreal Symphony*. There is also the symphonic poem he wrote at the same time as this, *Praga*, detailing the rich history of the Czech capital, and the *Scherzo Fantastique*, a nod to Dvořák's *Scherzo Capriccioso*, written towards the beginning of Suk's career.

There are five works of Janáček including the *Glagolitic Mass* – Janáček's patriotic hymn to the greatness of the newly formed Czechoslovak nation – and the blaring fanfares of the *Sinfonietta* that was written during the same period. *The Diary of One Who Disappeared*, a work directly linked to his muse, and his much younger mistress, Kamila Stösslová, and *Capriccio* are performed by students from the Royal College of Music in free pre-concert events (10 April and 15 May, Royal Festival Hall).

The performances are supplemented with talks by notable musicologists including Professor Nigel Simeone and Dr Mark Audus in conversation with Jakub Hruša.

David Whelton, Managing Director of the Philharmonia: *"This is a showcase for a sensational young conductor, one of the most exciting of his generation, conducting music for which he has a personal affinity. In this series, we have some of the greatest music ever written, some of which is very seldom performed, and music that packs a punch in terms of its scale and emotional intensity."*

For more information, pictures, biographies, and interviews, please contact Jim Follett: jim.follett@philharmonia.co.uk, 020 7921 3932

Notes to editors:

1. Concert details:

Thursday 10 April 2014 7.30pm

Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall

Jakub Hrůša *conductor*

Arabella Steinbacher *violin*

JANÁČEK Overture, *Jealousy*

DVOŘÁK Violin Concerto in A minor

SUK *Praga*

JANÁČEK *Sinfonietta*

6pm, Pre-concert performance, Royal Festival Hall. Royal College of Music students perform Janáček's *Capriccio*, introduced by Jakub Hrůša. Free admission.

Sunday 13 April 2014 7.30pm

Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall

Jakub Hrůša *conductor*

Lukáš Vondráček *piano*

Gun-Brit Barkmin *soprano*

Monica Groop *mezzo-soprano*

Peter Berger *tenor*

Mischa Schelomianski *bass*

Thomas Trotter *organ*

Bristol Choral Society

SUK *Scherzo Fantastique*

DVOŘÁK Piano Concerto

JANÁČEK *Glagolitic Mass*

6pm, Pre-concert talk, Royal Festival Hall. Jakub Hrůša in conversation with Nigel Simeone. Free admission.

Thursday 15 May 2014 7.30pm

Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall

Jakub Hrůša *conductor*

Truls Mørk *cello*

DVOŘÁK Cello Concerto

SUK *Asrael Symphony*

6pm, Pre-concert performance, Royal Festival Hall. Royal College of Music students perform Janáček's *Diary of One Who Disappeared*, introduced by Jakub Hrůša. Free admission.

Tickets: £9-48; Box office: 0800 652 6717/philharmonia.co.uk

2. Philharmonia Orchestra

The Philharmonia Orchestra is one of the world's great orchestras. Acknowledged as the UK's foremost musical pioneer, with an extraordinary recording legacy, the Philharmonia leads the field for its quality of playing, and for its innovative approach to audience development, residencies, music

education and the use of new technologies in reaching a global audience. Together with its relationships with the world's most sought-after artists, most importantly its Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor Esa-Pekka Salonen, the Philharmonia Orchestra is at the heart of British musical life.

Today, the Philharmonia has the greatest claim of any orchestra to be the UK's National Orchestra. It is committed to presenting the same quality, live music-making in venues throughout the country as it brings to London and the great concert halls of the world. In 2013/14 the Orchestra is performing more than 150 concerts, as well as presenting live digital events and recording scores for films, CDs and computer games. www.philharmonia.co.uk

3. Jakub Hrůša

Born in the Czech Republic and described by Gramophone as “on the verge of greatness”, Jakub Hrůša is Music Director and Chief Conductor of the Prague Philharmonia and Principal Guest Conductor of Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra.

He is a regular guest with many of Europe's leading orchestras, including the Philharmonia Orchestra, Czech Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Finnish Radio Symphony, SWR Symphony Stuttgart, WDR Symphony Cologne and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. In 2010 he became the youngest conductor since 1949 to lead the opening concert of the Prague Spring Festival.