

Dvořák Prague Festival Offers Superb Performances of Magnificent Works for Chorus, Soloists, and Orchestra in the Heart of Europe

Prague, 31 May 2017. – The Dvořák Prague Festival, one of the most prestigious music festivals in Czechia, has for ten years now been inviting topflight artists both domestic and foreign to pay tribute to one of the greatest composers of all time, Antonín Dvořák. A dominating feature of this year's festival, which will run from 7 to 23 September, is the 'Dvořák Collection' series, in 2017 and 2018 offering superb works in which large choral ensembles join forces with vocal soloists and the rich sound of a full orchestra. On the schedule are such celebrated works as the *Stabat Mater*, *Requiem*, and *Te Deum* along with rarely-heard pieces like the *Patriotic Hymn* and *The American Flag*. The festival is progressively presenting Dvořák's output in its full breadth, now continuing after performances in previous years of all his symphonies and symphonic poems, and, in its closely-followed modern premiere, his first opera *Alfred*. More information on www.dvorakovapraha.cz.

The festival's imposing opening concert on 7 September in the Rudolfinum will be an extraordinary performance of Dvořák's superb *Stabat Mater* with operatic stars known from the Metropolitan opera and other famous opera houses of the world—Latvian soprano **Kristine Opolais**, Slovak mezzo-soprano **Jana Kurucová**, Polish tenor **Piotr Beczala**, and German bass **René Pape**—accompanied by the **Czech Philharmonic Choir of Brno** and the **PKF - Prague Philharmonia** under the baton of its chief conductor Emmanuel Villaume. Another peak experience will certainly be the performances on 13 and 14 September of Dvořák's *Requiem*, again with an extraordinary case of soloists: charismatic American soprano **Ailyn Pérez**, Dutch mezzo-soprano **Christianne Stotijn**, American tenor **Michael Spyres**, and world-renowned Czech bass **Jan Martiník**. Accompanying the soloists this time will be the **Czech Philharmonic** under **Jiří Bělohlávek** and the **Prague Philharmonic Choir**. The closing concert on 23 September will offer another ornament to the 'Dvořák Collection', with **Tomáš Netopil** leading the **Vienna Symphony**, the **Prague Philharmonic Choir**, soprano **Simona Šaturová**, and bass **Adam Plachetka** in Dvořák's fabulous *Te Deum*. Festival Artistic Director Marek Vrabec explains: 'Presentation of all Dvořák's works with chorus and orchestra would be a major event in itself; until now we have steered around this set of works at a respectful distance. The importance and ambition of our project is confirmed by the interest of the renowned recording label Decca in recording our performance of Dvořák's *Requiem*.

Also sounding in the 'Dvořák Collection' this year will be the *Patriotic Hymn* and the *Festival Song*.

Dvořák was one of the greatest geniuses not only of Czech music but of music history worldwide. A man who achieved a brilliant combination of firm anchoring in Czech national culture with openness to everything new and interesting going on in the world. A composer whose timeless music is loved by Czechs as well as other Europeans, whom America considers its own, and towards whom an equally great affinity is felt in Japan, China, and Australia. His *New World Symphony* is one of the most often-performed works in history. The Dvořák Prague Festival invites audiences to hear his immortal works in the best renditions, in the city that was his home for most of his life, whose *genius loci* is embodied in his music.

The Dvořák Prague Festival

Marek Vrabec, Artistic Director

The Dvořák Prague Festival as a whole is presented under the patronage of Adriana Krnáčová, mayor of Prague,

and the opening concert under the patronage of Czech Minister of Culture Daniel Herman, while the 'Dvořák Collection' boasts the patronage of Cardinal Dominik Duka OP, Archbishop of Prague.

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Special thanks to: the Czech Philharmonic, the National Gallery in Prague, the Antonín Dvořák Society

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