

Jiří Bělohlávek to receive 2014 Antonín Dvořák Prize at New York's Carnegie Hall

Prague, 12th November 2014 – Jiří Bělohlávek, the conductor and champion of Czech music internationally, has been awarded this year's Antonín Dvořák Prize. He will receive the prestigious award this Sunday at a special ceremony held in one of the world's most famous concert halls – Carnegie Hall in New York. It was in this hall that Dvořák's 'New World' symphony was first performed, and where Bělohlávek will be leading the Czech Philharmonic in a performance of the iconic work on Sunday afternoon. Bělohlávek and the orchestra have been performing the work on their current US tour to great critical acclaim. The Dvořák Prize is awarded by the Czech Academy of Classical Music, organizers of the Dvořák Prague International Music Festival.

Jiří Bělohlávek, who recently recorded an exceptional collection of the complete Dvořák symphonies, will receive the award from the Czech Minister of Culture, Daniel Herman, in the presence of leading cultural, social, and political figures of the Czech Republic and the United States. The ceremony will be attended by the President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic Jan Hamáček, Kennedy Center President Michael M. Kaiser, philanthropist and founder of KKCG investment group Karel Komárek, and Executive and Artistic Director of Carnegie Hall Clive Gillinson. Dvořák's grandson, Antonín Dvořák III, will also be present at the ceremony.

'Looking after the legacy, and promoting the works of Antonín Dvořák is the chief aim of the Academy of Classical Music and the Dvořák Prague festival. We are proud that the prize-giving ceremony is taking place in such an august institution as Carnegie Hall, which is indelibly linked to Dvořák's life and work,' says Robert Kolář, Director of the Academy of Classical Music. The award, a glass statuette of a cello, was designed by architect Jiří Pelcl and made by the Moser glassmakers.

The Czech Philharmonic concert and Dvořák Prize ceremony are part of an official presentation of Czech culture in the United States, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution and in recognition of the Year of Czech Music 2014.

The decision by a jury of experts to award the prize to Bělohlávek was unanimous. The internationally-respected conductor this year recorded the complete Dvořák symphonies for Decca Classics. He is also the President of the Dvořák Society for Czech and Slovak Music.

Symphony "From the New World" is Back to the New World

To mark the 25th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution and the Year of Czech Music 2014, the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the House of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic have prepared a unique presentation of Czech Culture in the United States of America.

On 16 November, 2014, one of the world's best known symphonies, Symphony No. 9 in E Minor, Op. 95 "From the New World" by Antonín Dvořák, will return to New York, its place of birth. One of the most famous concert halls of the world, the site of the world premiere, will resound with the tones of the Symphony From the New World under the baton of Jiří Bělohlávek, who will receive the prestigious Antonín Dvořák Prize in Carnegie Hall on this occasion, for his outstanding promotion of Czech music. The prize is awarded by the Academy of Classical Music, the organizer of the Festival Dvořák Prague. On the same day, the Czech National Building in Manhattan will display the original score of this work of music for one week. The score is today a strictly protected collection item of the Czech National Museum. It will be the first time since Dvořák's return to his homeland that the score has left the territory of the Czech Republic. Under the personal leadership of Minister of Culture Daniel Herman, two significant cultural institutions have joined forces, the National Museum and the Czech Philharmonic, to symbolically return the Symphony "From the New World" to its place of origin. The original score will be brought to the United States by an official delegation of the Czech Republic, led by the Speaker of the House of Deputies Jan Hamáček, and Minister of Culture Daniel Herman. The display of the score together with Czech Philharmonic concerts which will be held in New York and in Washington, D.C., symbolize an exceptional gift of the Czech Republic and the Czech people, marking the 25th anniversary of the fall of the iron curtain, the restoration of freedom and democracy in the Czech Lands, a token of thanksgiving, and a symbol of transatlantic cultural relations.

The Antonin Dvorak Prize

Since 2009, the Czech Academy of Classical Music has presented the Antonin Dvorak Prize to individuals who, through their life's work or extraordinary artistic achievement, have contributed in an outstanding way to the promotion and popularization of Czech music both at home and abroad. Past recipients of the award include violinist Josef Suk, soprano Ludmila Dvorakova, and choreographer Jiri Kylian, pianist Ivan Moravec, conductor Jiří Kout and the Dvorak prize has quickly become one of the most prestigious awards in Czech music.

The 2014 Recipient: Jiri Belohlavek

There can be few more deserving recipients of the Antonin Dvorak Prize than world-renowned Czech conductor Jiri Belohlavek, whose distinguished career has seen him twice hold the position of chief conductor of the Czech Philharmonic, as well as found the much-acclaimed Prague Philharmonia. Belohlavek also enjoyed an 8-year stint as chief conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and has conducted opera at the Met in New York, and at Glyndebourne. Always a passionate supporter of Czech music, Belohlavek recently led the Czech Philharmonic in a recording of the complete Dvorak symphonies and concerti for the Decca label.

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General partner of the Antonín Dvořák Prize is KKCG Investment Group. Project is supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic and City of Prague.

More information on www.dvorakovapraha.cz.

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