
CU Artistic Ensemble celebrating the 65th Anniversary with the world premiere of Czech Vigil

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The world premiere of Czech Vigil (České Vigilie) composed by Antonín Tučapský, the previous Professor of Composition at Trinity College of Music, London was performed by The Charles University Artistic Ensemble on September 29th - 2013 at St James Basilica, Prague.

The concert was not only the debut of the latest work by this wonderful composer, but it was part of a series of concerts - this season celebrating the 65th Anniversary of Charles University Artistic Ensemble (Vysokoškolský umělecký soubor Univerzity Karlovy v Praze). Founded in 1948 as the first university choir in Czechoslovakia, the choir has seen more than 1000 members, comprising of students, graduates and staff of Charles University.

Antonín Tučapský is a Czech Composer who lives and works in London having left his home country in 1968 to settle in England with his wife, Beryl Musgrave of Yorkshire, in 1975. As a distinguished composer, he was appointed Professor of Composition at Trinity College of Music, London and held this position for 21 years until his retirement. Tučapský is best known for his choral writing. Dramatic potential and spiritual quality are among the characteristic features of his works. Unfortunately, Tučapský was unable to attend the premiere performance due to illness.

The musical style was based on that of secular church music of the past centuries, but with aspects of modernisation. New singing techniques and unique melodic ideas delicately separated time present and time past. Gestures of chromaticism in turn extended the progressions evoking a degree of light and shape leaving one in awe with the outright virtuosity.

The opening prayer with no words, was performed by Jan Kalfus - on organ - a powerful introduction leading us to the first reading. Nine hymns followed - dedicated to ten patron saints of the Czech Republic. Between each hymn, Bishop of České Budějovice, Mons. Jiří Paďour O.F.M. Cap., would announce a reading and prayer in Czech.

Tučapský's Czech Vigil was refreshing and genuine in its modernistic take on secular church music. The voices of Charles University Artistic Ensemble were a perfect complement, projecting their sound perfectly throughout every crevice in the church. It was truly breath-taking. A genuine sense of warmth crept over me at the sound of the final close. I hope this ensemble capture this work to CD to add to their collection. This was a challenging programme for any non-professional group, but they gave a flawless and riveting performance which earned them standing ovation.

Czech Vigil (České Vigilie) by Antonín Tučapský

Conductor: Jakub Zicha

Charles University Artistic Ensemble, Vysokoškolský Umělecký Soubor Univerzity Karlovy v Praze

Organ: Jan Kalfus

Spoken Prayer: Bishop of České Budějovice, Jiří Paďour



By:

Helena Hradilová is a student of Translation and Interpreting (Czech, English and German) at the Institute of Translation Studies of Faculty of Arts of Charles University in Prague. She is very fond of languages, meeting new people and getting to know other cultures, which is one of the reason she became a tutor of the Erasmus Club of Faculty of Arts at Charles University. To further support Erasmus students in exploring the Czech culture and student life at Charles University, she joined also iForum, which she sees as a great opportunity to maintain contact between students of different cultures and as a possibility to improve their journalism and communication skills.

David Williams is a third year student studying a BA in Music from University College Dublin, and is studying here on Erasmus for one year with the Faculty of Education in Charles University. David is focusing on his love for music with his Violin and Conducting ambitions.

David was keen to write for the iForum as his ideal job would be related with media, radio and performance.