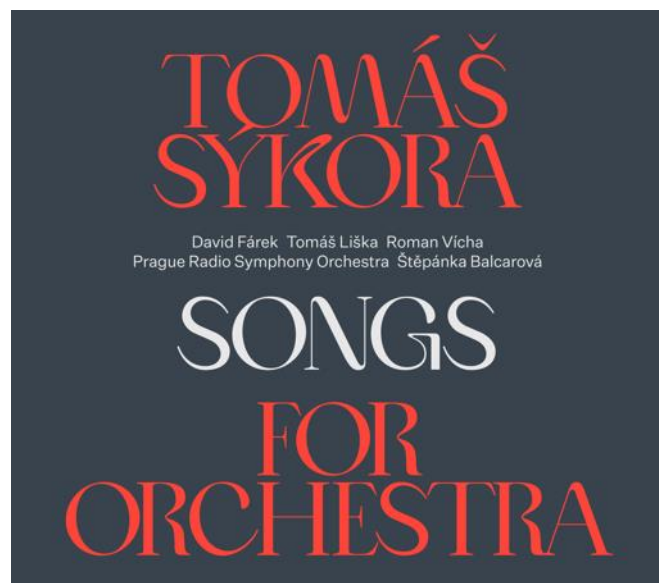


JAZZ PIANIST TOMÁŠ SÝKORA RELEASES A RECORDING OF A SYMPHONIC HOMAGE TO KAREL RŮŽIČKA



SONGS FOR ORCHESTRA is a new album and the most extensive music project to date by jazz pianist and composer **TOMÁŠ SÝKORA**. It features a live recording of a concert performance in honour of the memory of Karel Růžička who was Sýkora's teacher and close friend. Sýkora assembled the programme as a curator of the "New Horizons" concert series by the **PRAGUE RADIO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** which merges jazz and classical music in unique concert projects. On the present album, which is an example of such an original fusion, Sýkora is joined by three other jazz soloists – saxophonist **DAVID FÁREK**, double bassist **TOMÁŠ LIŠKA** and drummer **ROMAN VÍCHA**. Together, they are joined by the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra which performs under the baton of Štěpánka Balcarová, who is best-known as the artistic director of the Concept Art

Orchestra big band. The album comprises Růžička's famous piece *Lovebird* for a chamber ensemble and jazz quartet, arranged by Sýkora for a larger line-up. This is followed by Sýkora's own suite, *Hidden Songs*, whose individual movements evoke various song forms. The album also comprises a selection of compositions from the latest album *Grace and Gratitude* by Růžička's son, composer and saxophonist Karel Růžička Jr., released by Animal Music in 2018. The compositions from the album, dedicated to the memory of Růžička's loved ones, have been arranged and assembled by Sýkora into an eponymous large suite. The composition is concluded by the powerful theme of "On Earth As It Is In Heaven", a song which pays tribute to Karel Růžička as an outstanding man, loving father, an excellent musician and a close friend. The digital version of the album contains an additional track, "Celebration Blues", from Růžička's famous composition *Celebration Jazz Mass*. The compositional invention of both Karel Růžičkas and Tomáš Sýkora is supported in this album by Sýkora's sensitive and effective orchestrations in which the varied colours of the orchestra intermingle with the energy of the jazz performers who have been given a generous space for improvisation as well.

The recording of the concert, which took place at the DOX Centre for Contemporary Art in Prague on 18 September 2020, has been made and overseen by Roman Kolliner (Czech Radio), Adam Karlík and Pavel Karlík (Sono Records). The mix was done at Sono Records by Milan Cimfe, the album's producer Petr Ostrouchov, Tomáš Sýkora and Adam Karlík. The cover design is by Andrea Vacovská of Studio Najbrt. The album is distributed by SUPRAPHON on CD and digitally and is available also from the ANIMAL MUSIC e-shop at www.animalmusic.cz. **SONGS FOR ORCHESTRA** is released as part of the Animal Music Edition 2021, supported by a grant from the City of Prague.



TOMÁŠ SÝKORA (*1979) is an established composer, pianist, teacher, producer and arranger, and an author of several internationally acclaimed projects. As composer, he has been focussing on contemporary classical music and jazz and has collaborated with foremost Czech ensembles and orchestras, including the Moravian Philharmonics Olomouc, the Pilsen Philharmonic Orchestra, Prague Wind Quintet and Pavel Bořkovec Quartet. Tomáš is an active member of the Prague

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Six, a group of composers formed around the Concept Art Orchestra big band, led by composer and trumpeter Štěpánka Balcarová. The big band has released three albums with Animal Music, all of which have been nominated for the Anděl Award. The debut album, *The Prague Six* became the winner of its category in 2015. Tomáš Sýkora was Růžička's pupil of many years, but also a close friend and an arranger of his compositions. In 2017, he prepared a complete orchestral version of Růžička's *Celebration Jazz Mass*. In the autumn of the same year, he released a solo album featuring his own music, *Songs and Old Forms*, in which he explored his own musical roots in the Czech music culture and intermixed classical-music inspiration with jazz. The project met with high acclaim in the Czech Republic and abroad. In the autumn of 2018, he established Tomáš Sýkora Trio with the intention of performing his own music. Similarly to his solo project, he has been drawing on his musical roots with the trio, while also paying tribute to his jazz idols, including Bill Evans, Horace Silver, Chick Corea and John Taylor. His music, however, also testifies to inspiration by contemporary artists such as Edward Simon, Aaron Parks, Nitai Herskovits and Tigran Hamasyan. The core of his style lies in powerful melodies, sophisticated sound, thoughtful application of musical form and structure and the varied colours of the individual compositions.

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