

Czech vocal ensemble Martinů Voices releases a new album with Benjamin Britten's choral works



Three essential choral works by **Benjamin Britten** have been recorded by the Czech vocal ensemble of extraordinary qualities and scope – **Martinů Voices** conducted by its artistic director **Lukáš Vasilek**. With the album briefly entitled „**Britten**“ Martinů Voices add another recording to their catalogue of albums dedicated to diverse masters of choral composition. Dr Lucy Walker, British musicologist and Britten expert has contributed by liner notes to the album's booklet and says: *„Te Deum in C, A Ceremony of Carols and Hymn to St Cecilia occupy a special place in Britten's oeuvre. Writing music for choirs of all shapes and sizes enabled Britten to carry out his long-term goal, i.e. to create music that would be 'useful' or, in other words, that could serve his community and fulfil the democratic potential of choral singing. Each of the three works was intended for different forces: one for choir and organ, one for choir and harp, and one for unaccompanied choir. The*

compositions very well illustrate Britten's ability to create an entirely different world with each new composition.“ On the present album, harpist **Kateřina Englichová** and organist **Daniela Valtová Kosinová** are featured as soloists. The recording was initiated by the producer and label owner Petr Ostrouchov: *„I collaborated with Martinů Voices eight years ago on the concert performance of the full film score Marketa Lazarova by the legendary Czech film composer Zdeněk Liška. Since then I am a keen admirer of Martinů Voices and Lukas Vasilek's art and skills. Few years ago, I became a passionate fan of Britten's music, for change. And because in Animal Music we release music that we love, everything fell into place and right after the last Christmas' concert that Martinů Voices gave in Prague, presenting Britten's choral works, I contacted Lukas with the recording proposal. Fortunately he shared my enthusiasm and soon after we found the studio dates. I am very happy that almost exactly one year from the first idea, we can present the album to the audiences“,* says of the project the recording director Petr Ostrouchov.

Lukáš Vasilek is one of the foremost Czech choir conductors. Apart from being the artistic director of Martinů Voices ensemble since its foundation in 2010, he is the chief conductor of Prague Philharmonic Choir and has collaborated, among others, with Jiří Bělohlávek, Sir Simon Rattle, Semyon Bychkov, Manfred Honeck, Gianandrea Noseda, Jakub Hrůša, Fabio Luisi and world-renowned orchestras including the Berlin Philharmonic and Vienna Symphonic. In recent years, he has systematically devoted himself to the recording of Bohuslav Martinů's choral works. Albums featuring Martinů's cantatas (with the Prague Philharmonic Choir) and madrigals (with the Martinů Voices), released in 2016 and 2018 respectively, met with great international critical acclaim and received prestigious accolades from Gramophone (Editor's Choice for both discs), the BBC Music Magazine (Choral & Song Choice for the cantatas) and Diapason (Diapason d'Or for Madrigals). The recording of Martinů's cantatas was also nominated for the BBC Music Magazine Awards 2018. In 2023, Vasilek achieved great success as a conductor of Britten's War Requiem performed with the Czech Philharmonic, PKF – Prague Philharmonia, Prague Philharmonic Choir, members of Kyiv Symphony Orchestra, and an international trio of soloists.



The album's recording took place in April and June 2023 in the Martinů Hall of the Liechtenstein Palace in Prague in collaboration with the sound engineer Aleš Dvořák.

The album will be **out on November 24** and will be available on **CD, for streaming and download**, including the spatial **Dolby Atmos** audio that was mixed by Viktor Ekrt in the Soundsquare studio in Prague. Britten album is

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being distributed internationally by Supraphon and Believe and its release was supported by the City of Prague, PPF Foundation, State Culture Fund of the Czech republic and by the donation from Mr Roman Bělor.

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Publisher – Petr Ostrouchov (Animal Music): info@animalmusic.cz

Publisher's website and e-shop: www.animalmusic.cz

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