PRAGUE PHILHARMONIA
Bohumil Kulinsky, conductor
Ivan Zenaty, violin soloist

US TOUR PROGRAM

Overture: Le Nozze di Figaro, K.492
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

Concerto in A minor for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 53
Antonin Dvorak
(1841-1904)

Allegro ma non troppo
Adagio ma non troppo
Allegro giocoso ma non troppo

INTERMESSION

Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op. 92
Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Poco sostenuto. Vivace
Allegretto
Presto
Allegro con brio

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PROGRAM NOTES:

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's opera “Le nozze di Figaro” was composed between October 1785 and April 1786 and received its premiere May 1, 1786 at the Burgtheater in Vienna. It was set to a libretto written by Lorenzo da Ponte in 1784, based on the 1772 comedy “La folle journée, ou le mariage de Figaro” by Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais. Not much is known about the circumstances surrounding the composition of this opera as Mozart's letters and notes from this period have been lost. What little information we have comes from the librettist, da Ponte, who displays a marked tendency towards self-aggrandizement. In his account of the creative process, it was he who did all of the work to convince authorities to allow an opera to be created on a banned work, made all of the connections to get a production scheduled and restructured the story for the opera. Planned initially to capitalize on the success of a 1782 Vienna production of Giovanni Paisiello’s opera, “Il Barbiere di Siviglia,” which is based on the same story, as musical tastes shifted the success of Mozart's version ultimately eclipsed the earlier version. Mozart's renowned overture to this opera has become a familiar staple of symphony orchestras throughout the world.

Antonín Dvořák’s Concerto in A minor for violin and orchestra, op. 53 is one of the composer's most popular and most widely performed compositions. It was created at the peak of what is known as his Slavonic period, when he began receiving international acclaim, and when he composed the first cycle of Slavonic Dances, three Slavonic Rhapsodies, and the Czech Suite.

In July 1879, the Dalibor Journal announced that Dvorak had traveled to Sychrov, where he would compose a large-scale violin concerto commissioned by Joseph Joachim, a leading German violinist and the influential Principal of the Berlin College of Music. Dvorak finished the manuscript of the score in September 1879 and sent it to the German artist in November with a dedication. He could hardly have imagined the circumstances awaiting this concerto before its first performance. Joachim was not satisfied and asked Dvorak to rework the piece completely. In a letter to his publisher, Simrock, dated May 9, 1880, Dvorak wrote: “As requested by Mr. Joachim, I have reworked the concerto, not leaving a single bar intact. He will certainly be glad. I did my best. The concerto will now have an entirely new appearance. I have preserved the themes, and added several new ones. The concept of the work is, however, totally different. Harmonization, instrumentation, rhythm, and execution are all new. I shall finish it before long and send it forthwith to Mr. Joachim in Berlin.” The second version of the score was sent to Berlin, Joachim studied it (two years after he had received it!) but still did not find it to his satisfaction. His reservations concerned the excessively compact orchestral component. To add weight to his argument, he had it played for the composer at a rehearsal of the college orchestra.

The second revision resulted in what is currently presented as the final version of the violin concerto. Paradoxically, Joachim's participation in the concerto ended with the above-mentioned rehearsal of the college orchestra. There is no evidence of any public performance of the work by him. This may have been due to the very original concept of the work, unbound by then-current classical conventions in terms of form. The first
movement lacks the traditional sonata reprise and impressive solo cadenza, and there is an *attaca* continuation between the first and second movements. The position of the solo instrument abandons the schematic alternation of solo and *tutti* passages. The concerto was first performed on October 14, 1883 by the young Czech virtuoso Frantisek Ondříček, with Moric Anger conducting the National Theatre Orchestra.

**Ludwig van Beethoven's** Symphony no. 7 in A major, op. 92 (1811-12) received its first performance on December 8, 1813 in Vienna at the Great Hall of the University After Beethoven's marathon concert in December 1808, which included the first performances of his Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, the city of Vienna was not to hear a new Beethoven symphony for some five years. The long awaited Seventh was completed about May of 1812, and thus dates from the period during which the Austrian capital was recovering from French occupation. The delay of the work's premiere until the winter of 1813-14, by which time Napoleon's armies had been all but crushed in western Europe, made the concerts an occasion for celebrating and helped to ensure the work's enormous popularity and the composer's lasting fame. The Seventh Symphony can be appreciated as an expression of military and political victory, seen in Beethoven's atypical use of the wind instruments as a self-contained group in the orchestra rather than as the amplifier of an essentially string-dominated texture or as a collection of soloists dependent upon string accompaniment.

The special treatment of the winds plays an important role in the shaping of the work: for although Beethoven's orchestra here is the same size as that of his first two symphonies, he is able to expand his thematic material by setting large instrumental groups against each other. In the slow introduction to the first movement, the opposition of full orchestra and wind band is emphasized by each group's having its own theme - in a different key - so that there is a strong hint of sonata structure even before the main part of the movement begins. But in the *vivace*, which is in sonata form, the normal roles of strings and winds are sometimes actually reversed, so it is the winds - led by the flute rather than, more conventionally, by the oboe - which get to play the opening statement of the first subject.

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The second movement, in A minor, has strong links with Beethoven's earlier “heroic” style. Its affinity with the Funeral March of the “Eroica” reaches perhaps deeper than its often-discussed, rather lively tempo marking, *Allegretto*, would seem to indicate. Its rhythm, its form and its tonal organization all underscore its relationship to the somber processional march of the early 19th century.

Though the form of the scherzo had by now become standard in the Beethoven symphony, its remote key relation between principal section and trio (F major - D major) was something new. What is more, the composer emphasizes the tonal distance between them by basic differences in tempo, phrase construction and the use of the orchestra. Then in order to bind together these two seemingly irreconcilable musical entities, he hit upon a unique solution by using the timpani as mediator, tuned to the interval of a sixth (A-F) instead of the conventional fifth. As a result Beethoven is able not only to reinforce the fortissimo repetitions of the principal section's main motif (F-A-F) but also to support
the long dominant pedal point on the note A in the trio, thus imparting the same distinctive orchestral sound to both sections of the movement.

The finale is in sonata form, but Beethoven plays down the contrasts of tonality and theme and gives the movement more the character of a coda to the entire symphony than an argumentative piece to be reckoned with in its own right. Seen in this light, it may be said to sum up the composer's middle-period approach to symphonic finales, which goes back as far as the “Prometheus” variations in the “Eroica.” and, indeed, it is the last such finale that Beethoven was to write.

BIOGRAPHIES

The PRAGUE PHILHARMONIA grew from modest beginnings to become one of the major classical orchestras of the world. It originated in 1992 as the “Giovanni virtuosi da camera,” started by members of Claudio Abbado’s Mahler Youth Orchestra who wanted to create a new chamber orchestra. The following year conductor Jiri Belohlavek took over the artistic leadership of the ensemble and its name was changed to the New Czech Chamber Orchestra. In 1994 the orchestra won the first of many awards at the Youth Forum in Karlovy Vary.

At this time, Jiri Belohlavek was enlisted to create a new showcase orchestra in Prague, which brought the transformation of the young ensemble into the Prague Philharmonia. Under Belohlavek’s leadership the orchestra has become an exceptional ensemble, where technical perfection and the musicality of individual players is enhanced by a sense for ensemble playing, balance, and enormous vitality. The orchestra burst onto the Czech musical scene with its first official concert in Prague during November 1994, winning the “Classic ‘94” award as “Most Important Musical Event of the Year.”

The Prague Philharmonia is modeled after the Viennese classical orchestra, flexible in size according to the needs of its repertoire. The ensemble performs works ranging from string and wind ensembles to full symphonic orchestra. In the orchestra’s Czech name (Prazska komorni filharmonie, or Prague Chamber Philharmonic), the word “chamber” is used in the sense of the interpretational approach it cultivates and systematically refines. The ideal is intimate music-making founded on perfect preparation, a unified concept of the work performed, and absolute freedom of expression during performance, open to the inspiration of the moment. The orchestra focuses on masterpieces of the Classical and Romantic eras and music of the twentieth century. They have illuminated little known composers, seldom heard compositions, and new works by contemporary composers from both the Czech Republic and abroad. Outstanding Czech and international artists collaborate with the Prague Philharmonia, but the orchestra is also committed to the younger artistic generation, featuring winners of performance competitions, and offering solo opportunities to gifted artists of all ages.

The Prague Philharmonia has appeared at many of the most renowned music festivals: including London’s BBC Proms, the Flanders Festival, Europhalia, Mitte Europa, the Jerash Festival, Prague Spring, Prague Autumn, Moravian Autumn, the Bratislava Musical Festivities, the Janacek May Festival in Ostrava, and the festivals in Berlin, Leipzig, Schleswig-Holstein and Hamburg, among others. The orchestra performs regularly in major concert halls including the Konzerthaus, Berlin, the Auditorio National, Madrid, Suntory Hall, and Opera-City Hall in Tokyo, and the Auditorium in Dijon.
During 2004, the international “Year of Czech Music,” the Prague Philharmonia has been presenting concerts throughout the United States, France, Britain, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, and Japan, under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic.

The Prague Philharmonia appears regularly on Czech Television and Czech Radio. It has recorded more than thirty compact discs for the leading Czech labels including Deutsche Grammophon, Supraphon, Clarton, Lotos, Multisonic, Panton, Studio Matous, and Bohemia Music and others.

BOHUMIL KULÍNSKY, the renowned Czech conductor, was born in 1959 and is currently Music Director of the Orchestra of the National Theater Opera in Prague. He is one of the outstanding conductors of his generation. From the beginning of his professional career, Mo. Kulínsky drew on the artistic influences of his youth. His parents were professional choirmasters. He was a singer in the internationally-renowned children’s choir, Bambini di Prague, and at the age of sixteen, became its conductor.

Mo. Kulínsky studied conducting at the Prague Conservatory and the Janácek Academy of Performing Arts. In 1984 he began a close association with the Prague Symphony Orchestra which has continued to this day. In 1986 he became a regular conductor of the Pardubice Chamber Philharmonic, where for the 1989-1990 season, he served as Chief Conductor. His work with these orchestras allowed him to broaden his repertory in both chamber and symphonic music, with particular emphasis on large, vocal-symphonic works and music of the 20th Century.

Mo. Kulínsky is frequently invited to conduct orchestras throughout Europe and North America. He has conducted in Paris, Berlin, Lisbon, Montreal, Kraków, Nantes, Lausanne and Dresden. He has appeared regularly in Japan since 1995 conducting the Sapporo Symphony, the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Tokyo Metropolitan Philharmony. In 1997 Kulinsky made a highly successful debut with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra (Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks) in Munich, where he was reengaged to conduct subscription concerts in 2001.

In September 1997 Mo. Kulínsky was named Music Director of the Orchestra of the National Theater Opera in Prague, where he introduced new productions of Petr Eben’s sacred opera Jeremias, Verdi’s La Traviata, Mozart’s Don Giovanni, Smetana’s The Bartered Bride and Dalibor, and Tchaikovsky’s The Queen of Spades. In October 1999 he conducted Bizet’s Carmen with great acclaim on the National Theater Opera’s tour of Japan, and in January 2000 he conducted a symphonic concert of the Orchestra and Chorus of the National Theater as part of an international music festival in Hong Kong. In October 2000, Kulinsky conducted a new production of Zdenek Fibich’s melodrama The Death of Hippodamia in the National Theater.

In January and February 2001, Mr. Kulinsky conducted Mozart’s Don Giovanni on the National Theater Opera’s tour of Japan, as well as concerts of the Prague Symphony Orchestra’s tour of Japan. In July 2002 he conducted a new production of Verdi’s Macbeth.

IVAN ZENATÝ has emerged as one of the most prominent violinist of his generation. Born in 1962, he graduated from the Prague Conservatory and Academy of Performing Arts (1987). He completed additional master courses in Zurich and Weimar with Nathan Milstein, Andre Gertler and Igor Bezrodny. Since 1988 he has been working priovately with the legendary Czech violinist and great-grandson of Antonin Dvorak, Josef Suk.
Mr. Zentay entered the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow (1982) where he took fourth prize. He was the winner of the Prague Spring International Violin Competition later that year. He became soloist of the Prague Symphony in 1998 and in 1994 of the Czech Radio Orchestra. At the same time he made his debut with the Berlin Symphony at their Festwochen performances and toured Europe with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra. He has performed with Yehudi Menuhin, Yo-Yo Ma, Serge Baudo, Neville Marriner, and many others and has appeared in Queen Elizabeth Hall, Barbican and Wigmore Halls in London, the Metropolitan Hall in Tokyo, Concertgebouw in Amsterdam as well as in Edinburgh, Madrid, Jerusalem, Buenos Aires etc.

Ivan Zenaty has performed regularly with the Czech Philharmonic and has appeared with major orchestras abroad such as the BBC Symphony in London, Bavarian Orchestra in Munich, Philharmonic in Petersbourg, the Czech and Slovak Radio Symphony Orchras, the Philharmonic of Saint Petersbourg etc and orchestras in Canada. In the last three seasons Ivan Zenaty has given more than 300 concerts throughout Europe, the U.S. and Canada. He has been invited regularly to the Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), Musikverein (Wien), Auditorio (Barcelona), Herkules-Saal (Munich), Hunter College (NY) e... He has participated on significant festivals in Firenze, Linz, Prague, Quebec, Mallorca

Since 1996 Mr. Zenaty has been a professor of the Music Academy in Dresden. He gives regular master classes in Germany, Spain, Canada and the United States. Ivan Zenaty was a chairman of the International Beethoven Violin Competition in Graz and a member of the jury at the International Prague Spring Violin Competition.

His orchestra repertoire is unusually large, his recitals feature compositions ranging from the baroque to the present.

Ivan Zenaty has made numerous recordings for Dorian (USA), Stradivari (USA), Discover (Austria), Supraphon and Clarton Records. His most recent CDs include Sonatas by Martinu (Dorian, NY) and Bach (Nibiru). He also appears frequently performs on television and radio.

Ivan Zenaty plays the famous Guarneri del Gesu violin called Prince of Orange.

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THE ORCHESTRA:

1st Violin
Jan Fiser
Miloslav Vrba
Romana Zieglerova
Martin Bialas
Petr Benda
Hana Kubisova
Alexandra Kadlecova
Alzbeta Falcenikova
2nd Violin
Jan Adam
David Danel
Lukas Kroft
Irena Herajnova
Alena Miracka
Lada Sevcikova

Viola
Stanislav Svoboda
Ludmila Sovadinova
Zdenek Suchy
Pavel Stanek
Jindriska Janalova

Cello
Lukas Pospisil
Balazs Adorjan
Libor Masek
Sebastian Toth

Double-bass
Radim Otepka
Pavel Klecka
Michal Rychly

Flute
Jiri Sevcik
Lenka Neubauerova

Oboe
Vladislav Borovka
Zbynek Muller

Bassoon
Jiri Jech
Tomas Frantis

French horn
Zdenek Vasina
Zuzana Rzounkova
Eva Vinklarova
Lukas Korec

Trumpet
Svatoplug Zaal
Marek Vajo

Clarinet
Jindrich Pavel
Vojtech Nydl

Timpani
Pavel Rehberger

Executive Manager
Klara Nemcova

Technical Support
Robert Sitek