

Czech National Symphony Orchestra

Over the past 30 years the Czech National Symphony Orchestra has grown to become one of the leading Czech ensembles, currently ranking among the most highly sought-after orchestras in Europe. Its glowing reputation can be attributed to the members' versatility, performing a wide range of genres, spanning classical works, film music and jazz, as well as musicals, which attract large domestic and international audiences.

Notable conductors, composers and film directors who have been collaborating with the orchestra or who worked with them at concerts and in the ČNSO Studio in Prague include Lalo Schifrin, Pino Donaggio, Giuliano Taviani, Danny Elfman, Hans Zimmer, James Newton Howard, Quentin Tarantino, Vince Mendoza, Giuseppe Tornatore, Carl Davis, Steven Mercurio, Marcello Rota, Vladimir Cosma, Christian Lindberg and Chick Corea.

We should also mention the valuable and long-standing collaboration the orchestra enjoyed with the legendary Ennio Morricone (1928–2020), involving studio recordings and a series of concerts performed on numerous European tours.

In the studio the orchestra has recorded a wealth of wonderful music, including a Christmas album with acclaimed tenors Plácido Domingo and Vittorio Grigolo, as well as music for Tarantino's Western *The Hateful Eight*. On the strength of the aforementioned concert collaboration, the composer Ennio Morricone also booked the Czech National Symphony Orchestra for a recording, and they subsequently created a truly exceptional soundtrack together at London's famous Abbey Road studio. Morricone's music went on to pick up a number of awards, among them a Golden Globe, a BAFTA and an Oscar.

In recent years, artists to have performed on several occasions with the orchestra include Andrea Bocelli, Rolando Villazón, José Carreras, Plácido Domingo, Jonas Kaufmann, as well as Piotr Beczala, while in the field of pop music collaborations have included top names such as Sting, George Michael, Natalie Cole, Dianne Reeves, Angélique Kidjo, Denise Donatelli and Ute Lemper, along with instrumentalists James

Morrison, Branford & Wynton Marsalis, Bobby Shew, Joe Lovano, John Abercrombie, John Patitucci, Dave Weckl, Chick Corea and many more.

Since 2005, the CNSO has organized the Prague Proms International Music Festival, and it is also its resident ensemble. In 2012, the Prague Proms o. p. s. agency took over the organization of the festival directly. In addition to its subscription series the orchestra also travels abroad on international tours. Alongside almost all countries in Europe, the CNSO has performed in places as far flung as the United States, Japan, Australia, South Korea, China, Dubai, Oman, Canada and Mexico.

In the spring of 2016, the orchestra travelled on a tour of the United States, where (after a successful concert at the 2015 Prague Proms festival) it performed a spectacular show *Disney Fantasia: Live in Concert*.

2017 saw the orchestra head off on a month-long European tour with film composers Ennio Morricone and James Newton Howard.

2018 brought an interesting opportunity for the orchestra to tour Europe with the acclaimed musical *La La Land*, and notably, as part of the *Symphonic Cinema* project, they toured the UK for nearly two months, performing a programme of box-office Hollywood evergreens, conducted by Ben Palmer.

In 2019 the orchestra set off on a promising extended tour of the United States, however, at the beginning of 2020, it was forced to scale back its concert activities due to the global pandemic. Nevertheless, the ensemble responded quickly to the changing landscape by arranging its live performances online. The orchestra is currently launching its new internet platform NetConcert.

The CNSO's activities on the concert platform have now resumed their standard tempo. After accompanying Plácido Domingo at his performance in the Czech Republic during the summer of 2021, it accepted a collaboration with the world-famous writer and composer Dan Brown, performing his *Wild Symphony* in Prague.

The orchestra is currently based at the above-mentioned recording Studio No. 1, otherwise known as the "Gallery", where it has earned several gold CDs for the sale of more than 30,000 media, also the Gustav Mahler Prize for the interpretation of the composer's works and, in particular, prestigious contracts with IMG Artists in London and APM in New York.

A long-term recording project in cooperation with the Japanese publishing house JVC Victor Entertainment stands out as yet another significant achievement, so far resulting in fifty CDs and 8 DVDs.

The notional pinnacle for the CNSO was the Grammy Award it won in April 2022 in the category "Best Arrangement, Instruments and Vocals". The award was given for the composition *To The Edge of Longing* from Vince Mendoza's record *Freedom Over Everything*. Vince Mendoza was nominated twice for two different tracks from this album, which was recorded together with the Czech National Symphony Orchestra in the CNSO's Studio No. 1. Moreover, the orchestra's director Jan Hasenöhrl was also the initiator of the project and the record's producer.

Trumpet player Jan Hasenöhrl launched the Czech National Symphony Orchestra in 1993 together with legendary conductor Zdeněk Košler; the ensemble then enjoyed ten wonderful years under the direction of American conductor Paul Freeman (1996–2006).

From 2007 the orchestra was led by chief conductor Libor Pešek. This partnership was exceptional, whether they were working together in concert during their subscription series or on the five hugely successful tours around Great Britain. These concerts have earned the CNSO an enviable reputation with British audiences, and the orchestra regularly returns to the country.

One particularly noteworthy, historic achievement was the recording marathon undertaken between 2007 and 2017 when, led by Libor Pešek, the CNSO made a complete recording of Gustav Mahler's symphonies.

In the spring of 2019, following the departure of Libor Pešek, the post of conductor was assumed by American artist Steven Mercurio. This outstanding musician, a pupil of Leonard Bernstein, has been working with the orchestra for several years now, a collaboration that continues to deliver a number of exceptional projects.

For more information, see:

www.cnso.cz

www.pragueproms.cz

www.loopjazzclub.cz

www.cnsostudios.com