

## **The North Czech Philharmonic Teplice**

The first official document from the National Council, which is responsible for Teplice's spa music, dates back to February 1831. From the onset of 1838, preparations took place to get the spa orchestra up and running. At that time, Teplice's spas were at their prime hosting concerts with the finest personalities the world of music had to offer. For example, conductors Richard Strauss, Felix von Weingartner, Siegfried Wagner, Alexander Zemlinský, pianists Eugen d'Albert, Ferruccio Busoni, Teresa Carreño, Ernst von Dohnányi, Moriz Rosenthal, Emil von Sauer, violinists Adolf Busch, Willy Burmester, Henrich Hermann, Bronisław Huberman, Joseph Joachim, Fritz Kreisler, Pablo de Sarasate, Eugène Ysaÿe, cellists Hugo Becker, Pablo Casals, Julius Klengel, David Popper, singers Vittorio Arimondi, Lilli Lehmann and many others. All great Czech violinists performed here from Josef Slavík and Váňa Příklad to Jan Kubelík. In the summer, the orchestra performed approximately 150 spa and 18 symphony concerts and cycles of symphony music during the winter season. As chief conductors were here Karl Schmit (1838-1848), Franz Lagler (1848-1864), Hans Schöttner (1864-1869), Carl Peters (1870-1886), Karl Wosahlo (1886-1898), Franz Zeischka (1898-1906), Johannes Reichert (1906-1922), Oskar Konrad Wille (1922-1938) and Bruno Schestak (1938-1945), but at the end of the Second World War, the closing of the town's German theatre marked the end of the thriving orchestra's concerting era.

On January 11, 1948, the town's council gave Miloš Sedmidubský a proposal for restoring the once renowned spa orchestra. Within its first year, the Town Spa Orchestra performed 180 concerts. The orchestra was transferred to the care of the Regional Authorities in Usti nad Labem, expanding to 60 musicians. Over the years there have been many conductors, for example Josef Hrnčíř, Miloslav Bervíd, Milivoj Uzelac, Bohumil Berka, Martin Turnovský, Libor Pešek oder Vladimír Válek. In 1972, Jaroslav Soukup was named director and chief conductor. At that time, the orchestra had established a good reputation and stable contacts with several Czech cities. Jaroslav Soukup worked on solving the needs of the orchestra and on increasing the size of the body that had been bearing the name North Czech Philharmonic of Teplice since 1979. Jaroslav Soukup belonged to those who came with the idea to build a concert hall in Teplice that would meet the criterion of contemporary requirements. In 1983 and 1985, the philharmonic set out on concert tours to Spain and later on to Italy, Austria and Germany, always achieving excellent results and receiving positive responses and invitations.

In November of 1989, the philharmonic situation didn't differ much from other orchestras in the Republic. This is what led to changes of head conductors during December of the very same year. The post was assigned to Jan Štván, who had previously been working as second conductor. The desire for higher quality led the new management to offer the position of chief conductor to Tomáš Koutník, who had previously had several years of experience with artistic leadership of Ostrava's Janáček Philharmonic. It was soon clear that the step was a positive one shown by the gradual increase in attendance of season subscription concerts and also in the quality of the orchestra's performances. In the summer of 1997, Tomáš Koutník left his post as Teplice's chief conductor nevertheless leaving behind what is regarded by avid followers of the orchestra and the public to be an unforgettable era in the history of the NCP.

An equivalent substitute was discovered at the State Philharmonic of Brno for the resigning head conductor. Taking over as chief conductor in July 1997 was young Canadian conductor Charles Olivieri-Munroe. A new interpretation of music appreciated by and accessible to a wide range of listeners caused a notable increase in the attendance of season subscription concerts. The new head conductor and the NCP artistically influenced each other creating a unique relationship. Charles Olivieri-Munroe brought to Teplice a number of world famous artists. This collaboration reached its peak in 1999 with a concert in Monaco in the presence of numerous world renowned personalities of society. Chief conductor Charles Olivieri-Munroe was invited to prestigious concert podiums all over the world. He conducted acclaimed orchestras and perfected his work as a conductor which reached its peak in 2000 when he was awarded first prize for conducting at the Prague Spring competition.

Based on the results of the ensuing recruitment, Roman Dietz was appointed director by the council of Teplice on October 1, 2000. At that time, the orchestra found itself in a complicated financial

situation and the only way out was to find new resources, to increase tour activities and to gain sponsors. From 2001, the NCP markedly increased its activities at home and abroad. During 2004, the philharmonic of Teplice performed 142 concerts of which 52 took place abroad. A very significant project was the undertaking of tours across Europe – the most extensive yet by the orchestra, in which it visited 25 cities in 11 European countries from Slovakia and Hungary through Austria, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Switzerland, France, Spain, Portugal to Denmark and Germany. The orchestra played in cities such as Bratislava, Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Madrid, Lisbon, Berlin, Munich, Basil, Paris, Valencia, Prague and many other cities which would follow in inviting the prestigious NCP to perform for them. Foreign critics remarked on the predominance of young musicians in the orchestra, the teamwork and the overall musical impression. In January 2005 the Philharmonic was invited to give a concert in conjunction with the National Orchestra of Malta in the Mediterranean Conference Centre of Valletta to celebrate the recent joining of Malta and the Czech Republic into the European Union.

The North Czech Philharmonic regularly performs in prestigious domestic music festivals like the Prague Spring International Festival, the Antonín Dvořák Festival, the Beethoven Music Festival, the Český Krumlov Festival, the Gustav Mahler Festival, the Leoš Janáček Festival and others.

In autumn 2013 the North Czech Philharmonic Teplice absolved a concert tour to Asia, where the orchestra visited Vietnam, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Singapur, Malajsia and Brunei. The orchestra played by the attendance of the royal families as in the capital of Malajsia, Kuala Lumpur, in the concert hall Dewan Filharmonik Petronas or in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia or in Brunei in Bandar Seri Begawan. In spring 2017 it was very successful tour in South America - Santiago de Chile, San Juan, Córdoba, Rosario and Buenos Aires. Foreign critics often point out the mostly young make up of the orchestra, and its energetic, emotional and soulful ensemble playing. At home in Teplice the North Czech Philharmonic performs alongside the most famous contemporary musicians, such Mischa Maisky, Sharon Kam, Shlomo Mintz, Kun-Woo Paik, José Carreras, David Lomelí and others. At the same time the orchestra devotes many concerts to younger audiences in the form of educational concerts.

Since 1964 the North Czech Philharmonic is also responsible for running the Ludwig van Beethoven Music Festival in recognition of the composer who not only visited this urban home of the orchestra but was also inspired by the town and its surroundings to write several of his most famous compositions.

From 2013 Alfonso Scarano (Italy) is appointed to the position of the chief conductor of the North Czech Philharmonic Teplice and from september 2018 is appointed to the position new chief conductor Petr Vronský.