

Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra

The idea for founding a symphony orchestra started in Zlín as early as 1920s. Shortly after the liberation of the country, on 1st June 1945, the basis of the Symphony Orchestra of Bata National Enterprise, was formed. The first performance of the orchestra, which had almost fifty members and was conducted by Rudolf Kvasnica, was given on 2nd April 1946. In May 1950 the Philharmonic Orchestra of Working People started its first spa season in the spa town of Luhačovice. The concerts for the spa visitors during the summer months have become a tradition. In November 1955 the Monument to Tomas Bat'a was converted into the House of Arts according to the needs of the orchestra. Over the course of years the name of the orchestra has been changed several times – from the Symphony Orchestra of Bata National Enterprise and the Philharmonic Orchestra of Working People to the State Symphony Orchestra of Gottwaldov Region. In the early 1989 it was renamed the Bohuslav Martinů Czech Philharmonic Orchestra.

Gradually, it has become a significant Czech orchestra whose artistic profile has been formed by a great number of outstanding chief conductors and full-time or guest conductors such as Rudolf Kvasnica, Richard Týnský, Eduard Fischer, Jaroslav Opěla, Rostislav Hališka, Stanislav Macura, Petr Altrichter, Miloš Machek, Peter Lúcker, Kirk Trevor, Tomáš Koutník, Jakub Hruša, Stanislav Vavřínek etc. Vojtěch Spurný has been the chief conductor of the orchestra since the 2015 – 2016 season. The main guest conductor is Leoš Svárovský. Many outstanding soloists were invited there: Mstislav Rostropovitch, Daniel Schafran, Mischa Maisky, Vadim Repin, Jennifer Larmore, Libuše Domanínská, Eduard Haken, Dagmar Pecková, Eva Urbanová, Václav Hudeček, Ivan Moravec, Eugen Indjic, Rolando Villazón, Joseph Calleja and others. The concert to 70th anniversary was played by pianist Fazil Say.

Its repertoire consists of great symphonic works. It also includes jazz, chanson and popular music. That's why the orchestra invites some musicians and ensembles playing not only classical music but also other kinds of music to collaborate with it. Nowadays, the concert activities of the orchestra are arranged in five subscription series. Apart from them, the orchestra also performs in many other concerts in Zlín and Zlín region. The orchestra also tours all the important centres of the Czech Republic (e.g. the International music festival Smetana's Litomyšl, May of Janáček Ostrava, Špilberk Brno, Prague Spring, Prague Music Festivals, etc.). Guest performances abroad have taken the orchestra to Italy, Denmark, Hungary, Greece, Poland, Austria, Romania, Germany, France, Portugal, Spain and the USA (Carnegie Hall). In 2016 Bohuslav Martinu Philharmonic Orchestra was performed in India as the second Czech orchestra in late 57 years.

Since 1972 the Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra has been holding a unique festival of young artists called Talentinum, and it also organizes the autumn festival Harmonia Moraviae.

Cooperation with radio and television stations as well as recording sessions have become an integral part of the orchestra's activities. From January 2011 is the new home scene the orchestra Congress Center designed from famous Czech architect Eva Jiřičná.