



Pavel Šporel is among the many featured performers in the Czech Music Extravaganza. COURTESY PHOTO

# A grand celebration

## Yearlong festival takes Czech music to the world

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FOR THE POST

Amazingly, 2004 marks significant birth and death anniversaries for more than 60 Czech composers and performers, including such notables as Antonín Dvořák (died 1904), Josef Suk (born 1874). This is also the year the country joins the European Union, a confluence of events that has prompted the Culture Ministry to organize *Ceska Hudba* (Czech Music) 2004, a mega-music festival.

The festival umbrella covers a wide range of existing and new programs spanning musical genres, with an emphasis on classical repertoire. The yearlong list of events also includes music-related exhibitions, publications and conferences. While the majority of events are here, the festival's reach is worldwide, incorporating concerts in Slovakia, Hungary, Germany, Great Britain, the United States and other countries. The ultimate goal is to raise the Czech Republic's profile as an integral part of Europe's classical-music heritage as the country joins bigger players on the European cultural stage.

The Culture Ministry started planning for the program in 2002, forming a work group of music and culture experts to plan events and review applications for grant funding. The schedule thus far includes over



Janáček



Dvořák



Smetana



Křiváček



Sílka

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400 concerts, nearly 50 operas and 20 special exhibitions here. In addition, more than 80 operas, 70 concerts and several exhibitions are planned for locations abroad. More events may be added throughout the year, since registration is still open.

The program kicked off at the Rudolfinum Jan. 7 with the Czech Philharmonic playing powerful pieces by Dvořák (Symphony #8 in G) and Janáček (*Symfonia*) that announced the festival's opening and intent in loud, commanding tones. The significance of the event was underscored by the presence of President Václav Klaus and Prague Mayor Pavel Bém. The schedule for the remainder of January includes concerts all over the Czech Republic, including Brno, Písek, Ostrava, Pardubice and Prague.

If your timing is right, it's safe to say that almost anywhere you travel in the civilized world this year Czech music will be in the air. But the best performances are of course at the source. Take advantage of the location and wealth of programming, and you'll find 2004 to be an educational and musically enriching year.



### CLASSICAL

**Pro Arte Antiqua**  
Prahá  
When: Wednesday, Jan. 14, at 7:30  
Where: Dvořák Hall, Rudolfinum  
Tickets: 190 Kč at the venue

**Czech Philharmonic**  
When: Thursday, Jan. 15, and Friday, Jan. 16, at 7:30  
Where: Dvořák Hall, Rudolfinum  
Tickets: 730-790 Kč through Ticketpro and at the venue

**Prague Chamber Philharmonic**  
When: Friday, Jan. 16, at 7:30  
Where: Kongresový sál ONB  
Tickets: 210 Kč at the venue

**Epos The Berlin Rudolfinum**  
When: Monday, Jan. 19, at 7:30  
Where: Dvořák Hall, Rudolfinum  
Tickets: 190 Kč at the venue

**Czech Philharmonic**  
When: Jan. 22 and 23 at 7:30  
Where: Dvořák Hall, Rudolfinum  
Tickets: 700-740 Kč through Ticketpro and at the venue

**OPERA**  
**The Cunning Little Vixen**  
When: Tuesday, Jan. 20, at 7:30  
Where: National Theater  
Tickets: 30-700 Kč at the venue

**EXHIBITIONS**  
**The Bartered Bride**  
By Smetana  
When: Feb. 8 at 7:30  
Where: National Theater  
Tickets: 30-700 Kč

**Ladislav Vycpálek**  
When: Thursday, Jan. 15-Feb. 20  
Where: Klementinum  
Tickets: 15-200 Kč

**Bedřich Smetana**  
When: March 3, 2004-Dec. 31, 2005  
Where: Muzium Bedřicha Smetany  
When: March 3-April 12  
Where: Vagon