



The Martinů Quartet

The beginnings of the **Martinů Quartet** date back to its members' student days at the Prague Conservatory and the Academy of Performing Arts. It has existed since 1976, when it was established under the name Hlavák Quartet. Subsequently, pursuing the tradition of the Czech quartet "school", the ensemble won a number of awards both at home and abroad. In 1985 it named itself after Bohuslav Martinů. The quartet has performed in the majority of European countries, in the USA, Canada and Japan, and has been invited to prestigious festivals and concert stages (Europamusicale, City of London Festival, Orlando Festival in the Netherlands, Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival in Finland, Prague Spring, in Paris, Tokyo, Basel, etc.). Its members have shared their experience as lecturers at international master classes. The quartet's repertoire naturally contains works by Bohuslav Martinů. It has received the MIDEM award for the best CD of 20th-century chamber music (Cannes 2004). Over the long term, the ensemble has performed and recorded quartets by the US-based composer Tomáš Svoboda, as well as other contemporary and neglected Czech composers. The Martinů Quartet has made recordings for Czech Radio, Radio France, the BBC, ARD and ORF, and for a number of Czech and foreign labels. The ensemble has received the Czech Chamber Music Society Award (1990) and a special prize from the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation (2001).

During the last two years, the Martinů Quartet toured and played concerts in the USA, UK, Holland, Israel, France, and Japan. Their next season includes a tour in China. The Quartet was invited to play concerts at major Czech international festivals like Dvořák's Prague 2016, Prague Spring 2017 or Concentus Moraviae 2016. Their last double CD of Taneyev Quintets received great recognition and was introduced in Radio France and BBC. Next CD projects include recording of chamber works by Petr Eben - internationally best-known and most respected Czech contemporary composer. Their Chamber music courses PLAYWIP are very popular and have participants from all over the World including Japan, USA, Canada and Taiwan.



Reviews:

„Thanks to the Martinu Quartet, the genius of Taneyev, the Russian creator of melodies, and teacher of Scriabin, Rachmaninoff and Medtner, lives again today. A magnificent recording.

The Martinu Quartet give an opulent account of this music and make no attempt to persuade us that a sparer rendering will render it more modern. Unlike Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff, Taneyev does not go in for drama or theatrical expression. This is borne out by the Largo of the Piano Quintet (Op.30), a true masterpiece. In the simplicity of its inspiration Haydn comes to mind. The two String Quintets reveal a wealth of inspiration and a freshness that the musicians express with an elegance unparalleled in the modern readings.

In the Piano Quintet they surpass the up to now excellent version by Repin, Gringolts, Imai, Harrell and Pletnev (DG).“

CLASSICA, November 2015

“ Taneyev: Complete Quintets, review: 'fascinating'

The Martinu Quartet do full justice to Taneyev's dynamic, romantic impulse

[Taneyev] had a musical heart, often passionately expressed and with a dynamic, romantic impulse.

Those are qualities that come across clearly in these performances: they have a strong backbone, but equally are alert to the lithe interplay between the five instruments to create substantial canvases in sound.”

The Telegraph, 21st March 2015

“The string quintets emerge as near-orchestral giants, hard to categorise...The finest performance here is undoubtedly the perfectly-integrated sound of piano (Olga Vinokur, superlative) and string quintets I can imagine performances running a greater gamut of dynamics. But a thousand thanks to the Martinu and their colleagues for enlightenment.”

*BBC Music Magazine, June 2015 *****

“Taneyev’s chamber works are cast on a big scale, infused with a nostalgic late-romanticism that is both winning and slightly cloying. The Martinu Quartet, however, makes the strongest possible case for them”

*Classical Music, January 2016 *****

“the artists have an exceptional understanding of what Taneyev is doing...very appealing work, sensitively understood and played”

Gramophone Magazine, May 2015