

Press Release for 10/29/14 Performance

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 12, 2014

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Czech Masters at Christ & St. Stephen’s Church

Wednesday, Oct. 29, 2014 | 8 PM

122 W. 69th St., New York, NY

$10/$7 Tickets

**Box Office**:

For tickets visit: <http://www.upchamberorchestra.org/czech-masters.html> or

For press tickets call (508) 327-7136 or email info@upchamberorchestra.org

Cellist **Sofia Nowik** is a recent graduate of the Juilliard School where she received both her Bachelor and Master's Degrees, studying with David Soyer, Bonnie Hampton, and Darrett Adkins. Sofia served for five years as one of the principal cellists of the Juilliard Orchestra. Sofia was the recipient of the Samuel Mayes Cello Award for her participation as an orchestral fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center this past summer, and has been invited back as a returning fellow for this coming summer season.

An active freelance musician in the New York and New Jersey Area, Sofia enjoys a diverse career as a chamber, orchestral, and studio musician. She recently joined the roster of the Shuffle Concert Ensemble, the Exponential Ensemble, and has performed as principal cellist with the Arcos Chamber Orchestra, the Arco Ensemble, and is a substitute cellist for Symphony in C and the New World Symphony. As a soloist she has performed concerti with local orchestras in New Jersey, including the Livingston Symphony, Manalapan Symphony, The Tim Keyes Consort, Central Jersey Symphony Orchestra, and the New Jersey Youth Orchestra.

Conductor **Thomas Cunningham** is artistic director of Urban Playground Chamber Orchestra. Mr. Cunningham made his New York City debut conducting Tchaikovsky's final opera, Iolanta for Opera Slavica. He is conductor of the Ripieno Ensemble in Bucks County, PA, and works regularly with The Princeton Festival, Opera Slavica, and The CoOPERAtive program. Previously, he has worked on productions ranging from Jenůfa and Eugene Onegin, to Alcina, Così fan tutte and La fille du régiment. Also in demand as a chorus master, Mr. Cunningham regularly prepares choruses in Romantic, Germanic and Slavic languages. For more information, visit [www.ThomasCunningham.us](http://www.thomascunningham.us/%22%20%5Co%20%22%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

**About Urban Playground Chamber Orchestra**

Founded in 2014, Urban Playground Chamber Orchestra's purpose is to collaborate anywhere, anytime, with anyone. A collection of musicians from the greater New York City area, we work with artists, organizations and communities to create engaging programming and events.

Urban Playground is made up of graduates from the major conservatories of New York, and boasts players who have performed with leading orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic.

**PROGRAM**

Smetana: Má Vlast: Vltava (The Moldau) +
Martinu: Nonet
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Dvorak: Cello Concerto in B Minor +
SOFIA NOWIK, Cello

+ Premiere of chamber orchestration by Thomas Cunningham

Please join us for a concert of Czech Masterworks, depicting both the beauty of the Czech countryside and the continuing New York-Czech connection.

Smetana's set of six Symphonic Poems entitled Má Vlast (My Homeland) colorfully illustrating aspects of the countryside, history and legends of Bohemia. Vltava (The Moldau) is the second piece of the set, and traces the route of the river from two small springs past various scenes and locations, until it vanishes into the distance and the Elbe River in Germany.

Martinů's Nonet (1959) follows the tradition instrumentation dating back to Louis Spohr in 1813 (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet Bassoon, Horn, Violin, Viola, Cello and Bass), but uses a Neo-Classical idiom. It was one of his last compositions, and is playful, episodic, and frequently rhapsodic.

Dvořák's Cello Concerto (1895) was the last solo concerto he wrote, composing it only 2 years after his Symphony No. 9 "From the New World." However, it's creation required consistent prodding from numerous cellists. Dvořák once said the cello was a fine orchestral instrument but totally insufficient for a solo concerto. However, his colleague's pressure paid off, and Dvořák did end up writing a concerto for cello, while in New York, no less.

The Dvorak Concerto and Smetana's Vltava are presented here in premiere chamber orchestration.

-Thomas Cunningham

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