

## Kubelík in the summer of 1968

### Lucerne Festival • Vol. XVIII



**John Ogdon** piano  
**New Philharmonia Orchestra**  
**Rafael Kubelík** conductor

Haydn: Symphony No. 99 in E-Flat Major, Hob. I:99  
Schoenberg: Piano Concerto, Op. 42  
Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 4 in F Minor, Op. 36

*Live recording: Kunsthaus Lucerne, 8 September 1968*

In the summer of 1968, a few days after the brutal suppression of the “Prague Spring”, the Czech émigré Rafael Kubelík conducted a gripping concert in his adopted home city of Lucerne: a Haydn Symphony, full of *joie de vivre*, and a passionately glowing account of Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony frame Schoenberg’s Piano Concerto, played by the British piano legend John Ogdon in his only appearance at Lucerne Festival.

In the summer of 1968, a few days after the brutal suppression of the “Prague Spring”, the Czech émigré Rafael Kubelík conducted a gripping concert in his adopted home city of Lucerne: a Haydn Symphony, full of *joie de vivre*, and a passionately glowing account of Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony framed Schoenberg’s Piano Concerto, played by the British piano legend John Ogdon in his only appearance at the Lucerne Festival.

“Kubelík championed the Tchaikovsky symphony as if it were a declaration of the victory of the spirit, of freedom over all the forces of fate”, commented a critic following the closing concert of the Lucerne Summer Festival in 1968. The historical parallels of the current situation with the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine are unmistakable: a few days before Rafael Kubelík’s performance, the socialist reform movement in Prague was brutally crushed by the tanks of the Warsaw Pact. Kubelík, a Czech émigré who had adopted Lucerne as his new home, not only pleaded for a severance of artistic relations – an appeal which was supported by musicians such as Arthur Rubinstein, Yehudi Menuhin and Igor Stravinsky – but he also asked Lucerne concertgoers to support his “Foundation for Czechoslovak Émigrés after 21 August 1968”. However, Kubelík stuck to the programme as originally planned, even though this caused controversy and was discussed in the newspapers: his dramatically pointed reading of Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony with strikingly abrupt changes in tempo and tone, heightening the orchestral virtuosity in the finale, is captivating and created a furore.

Kubelík opened the concert with the New Philharmonia Orchestra, as the Philharmonia Orchestra temporarily called itself following secession and re-establishment, with Haydn’s Symphony in E flat major, Hob. I:99. Another highlight: Schoenberg’s Piano Concerto with John Ogdon as soloist, who never recorded this work. With an unerring sense for the abruptly changing characters of this music and its ongoing variational processes, Ogdon and Kubelík succeeded in creating a faithful and comprehensible interpretation.

All three live recordings on this disc are first releases. The 32-page booklet in three languages provides a portrait of the conductor written by Wolfgang Stähr and also features photos from the festival archive, published here for the first time.

In cooperation with audite, Lucerne Festival presents the “Historic Performances” series featuring outstanding concert recordings of artists who have shaped the festival throughout its history. The aim of this CD edition is to rediscover treasures – most of which have not been released previously – from the first six decades of the festival, which was founded in 1938 with a special gala concert conducted by Arturo Toscanini. These recordings have been made available by the archives of SRF Swiss Radio and Television, which has broadcast the Lucerne concerts from the outset. Painstakingly remastered and supplemented with photos and materials from the Lucerne Festival archive, they represent a sonic history of the festival.

## Marketing / Promotion

- continuation of the successful series **Lucerne Festival Historic Performances**
- **HD downloads**
- **digital booklet for download**
- **social media promotion**
- **free track on *audite.de***

Ordering no.: audite 95.745 (2 CDs / DPac)

EAN: 4022143957450

Internet: [audite.de/en/product/CD/95745](http://audite.de/en/product/CD/95745)

