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## Škampa Quartet

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The Škampa Quartet is among the very finest of an outstanding group of current Czech string quartets that has represented their country in major Concert Halls around the world for twenty five years.

Through their mentors, the legendary Smetana Quartet, they trace their roots to the earliest quartets - such as the Bohemian Quartet - in a land described in the 18th century as the Conservatoire of Europe and that remains, to this day, the very cradle of European Chamber Music.

To this innate musicality they have added their own particular research to inform their understanding of the folk-song and poetry, rhythms and dance from which their native music grew - to the extent that their recordings of the quartets by Janacek and Smetana particularly are quoted as the bench-marks against which other performances are judged. This research resulted in, among other things, the production of an illustrated talk - 'Janacek and his Moravian Roots' - and led to collaboration with singer Iva Bittova which successfully crossed many musical boundaries.

Prizes at International Competitions, Awards from the Royal Philharmonic Society and others - and appointment as the first-ever Resident Artists at Wigmore Hall - marked the solidity of their early years and provided recognition which led to invitations to perform at major Festivals world-wide including Prague Spring, Schwetzingen, Edinburgh, Schleswig-Holstein and Melbourne.

These engagements included collaboration with many fine internationally recognised artists including Melvyn Tan, Itamar Golan, Josef Suk, Michael Collins, Kathryn Stott and Janine Jansen among many others.

From the beginning they have established a close relationship with BBC Radio 3 resulting in regular broadcasts from Wigmore Hall, St John's Smith Square, LSO St Luke's and the Chamber Music Proms.

The Škampa quartet have been award-winning recording artist for Supraphon for most of the Quartet's career. They are now also among the elite artists whose performances have

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been selected for release on the Wigmore Hall Live label.

Education has long been an important facet of their work, and one that they find particularly rewarding. They teach in many places around the world but particularly at the Royal Academy of Music in London where they were appointed Visiting Professors of Chamber Music in 2001.

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