

MASARYK
UNIVERSITY
RECTOR'S
AWARDS
DIES
ACADEMICUS
2024

# MASARYK UNIVERSITY RECTOR'S AWARDS DIES ACADEMICUS 2024

## PROGRAMME OF THE CEREMONY

To the accompaniment of a fanfare, the following academic dignitaries will take their places in the auditorium in order: members of MU scientific boards,

MU vice-deans,
MU faculty representatives,
Bursar of MU,
MU Vice-Rectors,
Rectors and other representatives of universities,
moderating vice-rector Jiří Hanuš,
Rector Martin Bareš.

The anthems of the Czech Republic and the European Union will be played.
Jiří Hanuš will take over the opening ceremony.
Speech by the Rector of Masaryk University Martin Bareš.
Masaryk University Rector's Awards, moderated by Jiří Hanuš, presented by Martin Bareš.

First musical performance by Tomáš Grulich.
Presentation of the Silver Medals of Masaryk University.
Second musical entry.
Presentation of Gold Medals of Masaryk University.
Final musical performance.
Jiří Hanuš will close the ceremony.
The robed academic dignitaries leave the auditorium to a fanfare.
Festive toast in the foyer of the Faculty of Law.

Concert performance of the Diversa Quartet in the Karel Englis Great Hall.

## R E C T O R ' S A W A R D S O F M A S A R Y K U N I V E R S I T Y I N 2 O 2 4

The Rector's Awards of Masaryk University are given annually in several categories in recognition of outstanding achievements in science and research, sporting achievements, teaching, art and civic activities. According to the rules of the competition, students or employees of the University, or their collectives, can become award winners. Proposals for the awards are submitted by the heads of individual units of Masaryk University and are evaluated by special committees of the Rector. The winners receive a diploma, a medal of Masaryk University and a financial reward.

## RECTOR OF MASARYK UNIVERSITY AWARD FOR A SIGNIFICANT CREATIVE ACHIEVEMENT

Mgr. Dalibor Blažek, Ph.D. Mgr. Pavla Gajdušková, Ph.D. Mgr. Milan Hluchý, Ph.D. **CEITEC MU** 

Members of Dalibor Blažek's research group, working at the Centre for Molecular Medicine at the Central European Institute of Technology MU (CEITEC MU), have been awarded for their outstanding contribution to the identification of the cellular function of cyclin-dependent kinase 11 (CDK11) and the characterization of its first inhibitor. This discovery was published in the most prestigious scientific journal Nature and has generated considerable interest at home and abroad, both in academia and among biotechnology companies. The research carried out by Pavla Gajdušková, Milan Hluchy and Dalibor Blažek provides a breakthrough insight into a new ce-Ilular function of the so-called CDK family and these findings will lead to new avenues of investigation into mRNA splicing, RNA biology, gene expression and cancer biology/treatment. The discovery has helped Dalibor Blažek to succeed in the prestigious competition of the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic, in which he was awarded an EXPRO grant for the period 2023-2027 for the development of excellent research. The published discovery also contributed to Dalibor Blažek's election last year as a member of the European Molecular Biology Organisation (EMBO), a major organisation of more than 1,800 eminent life scientists that promotes research and international exchange between scientists.

## MASARYK UNIVERSITY RECTOR'S AWARD FOR A SIGNIFICANT ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENT

## Mgr. Filip Krajník, Ph.D.

Faculty of Arts MU

Filip Krajník wins the award for his translation and publication of William Shakespeare's Hamlet. Dr Krajník has long been involved in teaching and translating early modern English drama, and his new translation of Hamlet, one of the most important works of world drama, well represents this professional and artistic activity. It is a significant artistic achievement that was staged at the South Bohemian Theatre in České Budějovice under the direction of Jakub Čermák, a leading Czech director of the younger generation, and is still in the theatre's repertoire. In this way, Filip Krajník contributes, among other things, to the dissemination of the results of his research and artistic translation work to the wider public and represents Masaryk University well. Krajník's translation of Hamlet is an extraordinary creative and cultural achievement, significantly enriching the Czech Shakespearean tradition and to a large extent setting its future direction. It is the first staged translation of Shakespeare's Hamlet since 1999 and the first significant translation of the new generation of Shakespearean translators (i.e. the generation after Professor Hilský or Associate Professor Josek). The production has been widely acclaimed, and the book edition has also received a positive response among the professional and general public.

## Ing. Klára Papalová

University Centre Telč

Klára Papalová receives the award for her significant contribution to the opening of the permanent exhibition of Míla Doleželová at the Telč University Centre, which took place on 17 June 2023. This was the culmination of the work of the previous few years, which resulted in the preservation and presentation of a significant part of the artistic legacy of the married and painterly couple Míla Doleželová (1922-1993) and Jiří Mareš (1932–1984). The implementation of the permanent exhibition of Míla Doleželová and the related activities was supported by the EEA and Norway Grants. The international grant project, implemented from 1 May 2022 to 30 April 2024, is entitled The World of Roma in the Works of the Painter Míla Doleželová – Exhibition and Cultural Education Programme of the Central European Centre for Cultural Heritage in Telč. Part of the activities aimed at promoting the painter's work is also the installation of her painting On the Road in the building of the Court of Justice of the EU in Luxembourg, where she represents the visual artists of the Czech Republic.

## MgA. Eduard Tomaštík, Ph.D.

Faculty of Education MU

Eduard Tomaštík receives the award for his festive performance of Philipp Jacob Rittler's Missa Nativitatis. Rittler's work was officially presented in a modern world premiere on 9 September 2023 in Olomouc as the closing concert of the Olomouc Baroque Festival under the baton of Eduard Tomaštík and his ensemble Societas Incognitorum. Eduard Tomaštík has completely transcribed the entire work from historical sources into contemporary notation, rehearsed and performed it with the participation of Czech and foreign artists. The chaplain Philip Jacob Rittler (1637–1690) was one of the greatest personalities of Baroque Olomouc. Rittler's compositional legacy, uniquely preserved in the Kromeriz castle archives, includes several magnificent masses, of which the Christmas Missa Nativitatis is the most extensive. In terms of its composition, it is the largest Christmas work produced in our territory in the 17th century. Czech Television and Czech Radio recorded the concert.

# MASARYK UNIVERSITY RECTOR'S AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING SPORTS PERFORMANCE

## Agata Koupilová

Faculty of Law MU

Agáta Koupilová wins the award for her outstanding performance at the World Para Swimming Championships in Manchester, UK, which took place from 31 July to 7 August 2023. Three events, three finals, three personal bests and a bronze medal – that's a brief summary of her performance at the World Championships. She started her participation at the World Championships with the 50 m freestyle, where she improved her personal best in the heats and scored her first final appearance. She then achieved her best result in her main event, the 200 m freestyle, when she finished in 3:02.83 to claim the bronze medal. At the same time, she was only one second behind the national record. She concluded her World Championships performance with the 100 m freestyle event, in which, in addition to her final participation, she also swam the limit for participation in the Summer Paralympic Games in Paris, the second one in 2023. Agata Koupilová has been swimming at the top level for many years. In 2022, she was struggling with significant health problems that forced her to interrupt her studies and cancel her planned participation in the World Championships. However, last year she was able to return to full training and her interrupted studies. She was also awarded the TOP TEN Czech Para Sport 2023 award for her performances.

## MASARYK UNIVERSITY RECTOR'S AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN GRANT COMPETITION

## Mgr. Peter Fabian, Ph.D.

Faculty of Science MU

Peter Fabian has excelled in obtaining grants internationa-Ily twice in the past year. He was awarded an ERC Starting Grant for his project Metabolic regulation of the skeletal stem cell niche (MERLIN) in a European Research Council (ERC) competition. This grant confirmed the excellent quality of the research proposal and accelerated the establishment of his own research group within the Department of Animal Physiology and Immunology. Fabian's project was one of only three successful Czech projects in a competition of 2696 European projects. Peter Fabian also succeeded in the DIOSCURI programme, announced by the German Max Planck Society, which led to the establishment of the Centre for Stem Cell Biology at Masaryk University. Both of these awards show Peter Fabian's outstanding research potential and can serve as a tool to attract top groups to the university. In the past year, the awardee has demonstrated outstanding scientific contributions and exceptional achievements in research that have contributed significantly to the reputation of Masaryk University. His achievements attest to the excellence of his work and also highlight the superior quality and international prestige of our University's research.

# MASARYK UNIVERSITY RECTOR'S AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENTS FOR YOUNG SCIENTISTS UNDER 40

## NATURAL SCIENCES AND MEDICINE

Klára Marečková, Ph.D., M.Sc.

Klára Marečková has had a remarkable academic career characterized by prestigious achievements, such as completing a Marie Curie Individual Scholarship and obtaining a grant from the Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic, where she focused on the study of the role of biological aging in vulnerability to cognitive and effective disorders from a lifelong perspective. She pioneered research on biomarkers and underlying mechanisms of depression, revealing the enduring influence of prenatal factors on the course of depression. Her pioneering work explores the relationship between accelerated biological aging, anxiety, and dysregulated mood in young adulthood. Her recent study of brain aging trajectories in young adults revealed that maternal mental health during pregnancy has a consistent association with offspring brain age. Klára Marečková has published in top journals and her significant research findings have earned her invitations to lecture at renowned institutions such as Harvard Medical School, the University of Toronto and the University of Ottawa. Last year, Klára Marečková succeeded in the Czech Grant Agency's Junior Star competition, winning a grant to implement the project Prenatal Programming of the Brain and Child Behaviour: New insights into mechanisms.

## SOCTAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

## doc. Mgr. et Mgr. Jan Šerek, Ph.D.

Faculty of Social Studies MU

Jan Šerek has long been one of the most successful researchers and researchers of research projects in the field of psychology. His research focuses on political psychology. specifically on civic and political socialization and the psychology of democracy (including legitimacy and trust). He is the leader of the Citizenship and Democracy research group. He is one of the few Czech psychologists conducting this type of research at the international level and setting the direction of research. This is evidenced by his extensive publishing activity, success in grant competitions and repeated involvement in international projects. In the past years, he has been the principal investigator of a successful research project supported by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic, Psychological Determinants of Perceived Democratic Legitimacy. He is now the principal investigator of the project Psychological processes linking civic engagement and well-being and in December 2023 he was awarded another highly competitive project Trust in authority a lifelong development perspective. Since 2023, he has been collaborating with experts from other social science fields (FSS) and information technology (FIT BUT) in the framework of the Czech Technology Agency project. He has also been collaborating with the Institute of Psychology of the CAS for a long time and is active in the European Association for Research on Adolescence.

## ECONOMICS AND INFORMATICS

## Ing. Miloš Fišar, Ph.D.

Faculty of Economics and Administration MU

Miloš Fišar received the award for two articles published in prestigious journals, one of which he co-authored. In the case of first-authored publications, he led a small international team of co-authors. The text Reproducibility in Management Science was published in the prestigious journal Management Science. The author team led by Miloš Fišar, with the help of more than 700 reviewers, evaluated the extent to which scientific journals can contribute to the reproducibility and replicability of scientific knowledge. In 2019, Management Science has implemented a policy to submit data and reproducible software code at the same time as submitting a scientific article. The aim of this paper was to evaluate this policy and to assess the reproducibility of nearly 500 articles published in Management Science before and after the introduction of the data and code submission policy in 2019. The paper thus makes an important contribution to the debate on the so-called replication crisis that has affected social and scientific disciplines and challenged some scientific results. A paper titled Ovulatory shift, hormonal changes, and no effects on incentivized decision-making published in the Journal of Economic Psychology discusses the results of a laboratory experiment that examined whether the phase of women's menstrual cycle affects their decision-making.

# MASARYK UNIVERSITY RECTOR'S AWARD FOR LONG-TERM EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

## NATURAL SCIENCES AND MEDICINE

## Prof. PharmDr. Karel Šmejkal, Ph.D.

Faculty of Pharmacy MU

Karel Šmejkal is interested in phytochemistry - especially in the separation and identification of natural substances. He works mainly with prenylated phenols from Moraceae and Paulowniaceae plants. He focuses on chromatographic techniques for analytical and preparative separation and works with various chromatographic methods, then participates in the spectroscopic identification of isolated metabolites. His secondary interest is in natural substance bioassays - in particular anti-cancer (effect on cell cycle), anti-inflammatory (COX inhibitors, NF-kB), antibacterial activity (anti-MRSA). Since 2007 his publication record shows 103 publications according to WOS, H-index according to WOS 31, 2600+ citations. He has authored or co-authored at least 70 conference papers, active participant in 30 conferences. He works within the European Phytochemical Society - he was its regional representative for Eastern Europe in 2017-2022. He has supervised 120+ thesis students and 10+ PhD students who have successfully defended their theses. Prof. Šmejkal has been and is the principal investigator and co-investigator of a number of university projects (VFU Brno, MU) and projects of the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic. For example, the project The role of prenylation and glycosylation in the anti-inflammatory activity of metabolism of natural phenolic substances (2023-2025). Within this project, a series of prenylated and/or glycosylated phenolics will be prepared, their effect on the gut microbiota, metabolism in intestinal models and in vivo will be investigated, pro- and anti-oxidant, anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial activity in in vitro and in vivo models will be tested using metabolomic methods. The project Complexes of selected transition metals with plant compounds with anti-NF-kappa B and pro-PPAR dual activity (2021-2023) aims to identify compounds with potent anti--inflammatory activity that could be used in the treatment of inflammatory diseases.

## SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

## Prof. Bernadette Nadya Jaworsky, Ph.D.

Faculty of Social Studies MU

Bernadette Nadya Jaworsky was educated at two of the best educational institutions in the world: Wellesley College (BA in Sociology/American Studies) and Yale University (MA and PhD in Sociology). He continues to work at Yale University in the Center for Cultural Sociology. Throughout her career, Prof. Jaworsky has published extensively, in the form of books, journal articles, edited volumes, book chapters, and book reviews. A 2007 article co-authored with Peggy Levitt for the prestigious Annual Review of Sociology has become a classic in transnational and migration studies with over 900 citations in Web of Science and Scopus databases and over 2,000 in Google Scholar. She has published on a wide range of topics, including irregular migration, spiritual capital among immigrants, media images of refugees, national identity, political culture, attitudes toward migration, covid-19, conspiracy theories, and Ukrainian refugees. The common denominator of her work is the methodology and theoretical framing of cultural sociology. She also has an excellent track record of winning research grants and leading research teams. Her most recent book published by Lexington Books, A Critical Cultural Sociological Exploration of Attitudes toward Migration in Czechia: What Lies Beneath the Fear of the Thirteenth Migrant, is the result of research funded by the Czech Republic's Grant Agency for the years 2020-2022. The follow-up project for the years 2023-2025 is entitled People Like Us? A Reverse Sociology of Migration in the Czech Republic. She trains young Czech and international researchers at all levels, supervising Bachelor (4 completed), Master (61 completed) and PhD students (5 existing). Two of her PhD students defended their dissertations in 2019 and 2023, and two more defenses are scheduled for spring 2024. She has involved at least 10 PhD and Master students in her Czech Grant Agency research projects, giving them the opportunity to learn how to collect and analyze data.

## ECONOMICS AND INFORMATICS

## prof. RNDr. Antonín Kučera, Ph.D.

Faculty of Informatics MU

Antonín Kučera has long been working on problems of analysis, verification and synthesis of discrete systems, which form the formal basis of contemporary methods for verifying and ensuring correct behaviour of computer systems. Of fundamental importance is his work on the algorithmic analysis of classes of infinite-state stochastic systems, for which he received the 2016 Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Prize from the Humboldt Foundation. In the last decade, he has also been intensively researching methods for optimizing the long-time behavior of multiagent systems, with a special focus on automatic patrolling. The quality of the results obtained attracted the attention of the US Army Research Agency (ARO), whose representatives, after a visit to Masaryk University, supported research in this area with a three-year grant. A generally accepted measure of the quality of scientific results in the field of computer science is papers accepted at top international conferences. The quality of conferences is regularly assessed by the Australian CORE Association. Approximately 7% of the conferences indexed within the CORE database are assigned the highest grade of A\* and represent a highly competent platform for publishing the best results in each subfield of computer science. During his career to date, Antonín Kučera has published 27 papers in the proceedings of these conferences, in three subfields of computer science: logic and verification, artificial intelligence, and algorithms and complexity. The results in the first mentioned area have contributed significantly to Masaryk University being the 18th most important research institution worldwide in the field of logic and verification according to the Computer Science Rankings. This is a unique result in the Czech Republic. During his career, Antonín Kučera has so far trained nine PhD students, many of whom hold important positions in industry and academia.

## MASARYK UNIVERSITY RECTOR'S AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING TEACHERS\*

## NATURAL SCIENCES AND MEDICINE

## Mgr. Barbora Hutňan Chattová, Ph.D.

Faculty of Science MU

Barbora Hutňan Chattová receives the award for teaching the courses Methods of Field Phycology, Ecology of Cyanobacteria and Algae, and supervising bachelor and master theses.

## SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

## prof. PhDr. Lubomír Kopeček, Ph.D.

Faculty of Social Studies MU

Lubomír Kopeček has been awarded for his guidance of students and well-received lectures in the courses Stein Rokkan Theory, Democracy, Autocracy and Ideology, Heads of State, Governments and Parliaments.

## **ECONOMICS AND INFORMATICS**

## RNDr. Nikola Beneš, Ph.D.

Faculty of Informatics MU

Nikola Beneš received the award for his courses Programming in C++, Fundamentals of Programming and On the Origin of Autonomous Agents.

<sup>\*</sup> The Masaryk University Rector's Award for Outstanding Teachers will be officially announced and presented during the Opening of the Academic Year on 8 October 2024.

## MASARYK UNIVERSITY RECTOR'S AWARD FOR INNOVATION IN TEACHING

### TEACHING AREA

Mgr. Martin Fico doc. Mgr. Jana Kratochvílová, Ph.D. Mgr. Michaela Pulkrábová Mgr. Lucie Škarková, Ph.D.

Faculty of Education MU

The award is given to a team that has been supporting the development of entrepreneurial competence among students of teaching at the Faculty of Education at the Faculty of Education at the Masaryk University since 2016 through teaching, cooperation on development projects and the implementation of the Entrepreneurship Day at the Faculty of Education at the Masaryk University. The unique concept of entrepreneurship development of university students is based on the internationally anchored concepts of entrepreneurship education, ENTREComp and project learning. Two levels are key to the design of the innovation in teaching: a/ broadly conceived support for learners in gaining opportunities for the development of competence for entrepreneurship with regard to the field of education, b/ the creation of new courses that allow learners to gain experience directly with creating their own projects or facilitating student projects in primary or secondary schools and sharing experiences with "entrepreneurial teachers" from different school levels. The innovative approach consists not only in applying the principles of entrepreneurship in higher education (establishment of panel discussions on entrepreneurship at PdF MU, Festival of Ideas: students to students at PdF MU, Entrepreneurship Day at PdF MU, participation in projects on entrepreneurship: Helping together outside school), but also in bringing project--based learning methods into the preparation of future teachers and, above all, in empowering learners to implement their own projects.

## LEARNING SUPPORT AREA

JUDr. Mgr. Jakub Harašta, Ph.D. doc. JUDr. Tereza Kyselovská, Ph.D. doc. JUDr. Matěj Myška, Ph.D. prof. JUDr. Naděžda Rozehnalová, CSc. doc. JUDr. David Sehnálek, Ph.D.

Faculty of Law MU

The awarded personalities have contributed in a fundamental and unique way to the most significant change in the way of teaching at the Faculty of Arts since the 1990s. Jakub Harašta, Matěj Myška and David Sehnálek have created an innovative course design for the needs of teaching in internationally recognized courses, which is based on a balanced combination of independent work of the student from the materials (video, audio and text) available in the interactive curriculum in IS (however, it is not a flipped classroom method in the traditional sense), followed by live teaching, providing individual feedback by distance learning. The teaching process is completed in the course with a joint consultation in MS Teams. The structure of the course materials was further defined by Assoc. Kyselovská so that it has a logical and sequential order. The teaching design was further adapted by Nadezhda Rozehnalová and David Sehnálek for the needs of teaching in bachelor degree programmes. The structure of distance synchronous and asynchronous teaching in bachelor programmes, its optimal distribution and also the standard of interactive curricula were defined in three variants depending on the nature of the subject and available study materials. The work resulted in the successful accreditation of the new distance learning programme International Business Studies in 2023, which is the first distance learning programme in the field of law in the Czech Republic.

## RECTOR OF MASARYK UNIVERSITY AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING STUDENTS OF MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMMES MU

## Mgr. Martin Erlebach

Faculty of Law MU Study programme: law and legal science

Martin Erlebach is awarded for his excellent results during his Master's studies, both for his 1.7 grade point average and for his Master's thesis on Data Protection in the Digital Markets Act and Digital Services Act, defended in June 2023 with an excellent grade. The thesis supervisor JUDr. MgA. Jakub Míšek, Ph.D., points to "the author's ability to formulate his own opinions and ideas, which exceeds the usual standard of theses. The thesis deals with a very topical issue and has a practical overlap when it unravels the relationships and continuities of the new European data legislation, which is characterized by high complexity and even opacity." The diploma thesis deals with topics that have not yet been treated in the Czech environment. It can be pointed out not only his publishing activities, but also his involvement in the research activities of the Institute of Law and Technology, either as an auxiliary researcher or as a member of the research team of the Czech Technology Agency's project Protection of Data Flows in Shared Transportation Vehicles, in which he also recorded one co-authored publication. His independent scientific and creative activity was further realized by presentations at conferences. Martin Erlebach is currently a PhD student.

## **Julia Anna Kent**

Faculty of Medicine MU
Study programme: general medicine

Julia Anna Kent stands out for her scientific activities, which she has been doing since 2018 within the P-PooL scientific program at the Faculty of Medicine, then under the supervision of Prof. Irena Rektova, Ph.D., she worked on the Applied Neuroscience project at CEITEC MU, since 2021 she has been working on a project at ICRC - Stroke team under the supervision of Prof. Robert Mikulík, Ph.D. In 2022 she published twice as first author and co-author. For this activity, the student won the 1st place of the Dean's Award of the Faculty of Medicine of MU in 2023 in the category for outstanding scientific performance. Julia Anna Kent was also selected for the WhyByNe motivational internship programme by MEP Martina Dlabajová. In addition, the student was included among the Young Talents within the IRENE COST network for her publication under the supervision of Prof. Mikulík. During her studies, she participated as a student in several professional conferences of various societies for neurology and completed a number of internships and pre-promotional practices abroad (Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Lithuania). She has excellent academic results with an average of 1.14. Moreover, she is a member of the Pre-Graduate Curriculum Task Force of the EAN, whose aim is to prepare recommendations for the unification of the curriculum for the teaching of the subject of Neurology in European medical schools.

## Mgr. Daniel Pluskal

Faculty of Science MU

Study programme: biochemistry

Daniel Pluskal focused on the study and engineering of the bioluminescence apparatus of the sea urchin Renilla reniformis in his master thesis Engineering of a macromolecular complex resonantly transmitting the energy of bioluminescent radiation. The student independently prepared a grant application and received financial support for his research from the Grant Agency of Masaryk University. Daniel Pluskal managed to biochemically reconstitute a macromolecular complex resonantly transmitting the energy of bioluminescent radiation from the sea pennywort Renilla violet and to perform its detailed structural and biochemical analysis. This is in a way unique, as no one in the world has succeeded in doing anything similar so far. The student has demonstrated his ability to critically analyse scientific information, design complex molecular biological, biochemical and physical experiments, collect high quality data and perform sophisticated mathematical and statistical analysis. His thesis is an outstanding work with great impact not only for biology, chemistry and physics, but also for engineering disciplines. Daniel Pluskal excelled during his Master's studies with exceptional academic results, completing his studies with a state final exam with a grade of A and a grade point average of 1.00.

# MASARYK UNIVERSITY RECTOR'S AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING STUDENTS OF DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

## Marcos González Lopéz, MSc.

Faculty of Medicine MU Study programme: Biomedical Sciences

Doctoral student Marcos González Lopéz receives the award for his long-term highly superior performance, which resulted in his first-authored publication Spatiotemporal monitoring of hard tissue development reveals unknown features of tooth and bone development in the journal Sicence Advances in August 2023. This work has been widely acclaimed by the international scientific community and media at home and abroad. This paper presents a newly developed technique called BEE-ST (Bones and tEEth Spatio-Temporal growth monitoring approach). This methodology allows to accurately monitor and quantify the development, regeneration, remodelling or healing of any type of calcified tissue in all vertebrate groups, both in space and time. The work also provides new parallel information on the growth dynamics of continuously growing mouse teeth, and on the influence of soft and hard diets on tooth root development. Using additional model organisms, the work reveals the dynamics of bone and tooth growth in reptiles, amphibians, birds and fish. In addition to his publications, Marcos González Lopéz has presented the results of his work at major international conferences and has repeatedly been involved in ambitious projects with significant representation of research teams from abroad (USA, Finland, Austria, Sweden, UK, France), thus giving the Faculty and Masaryk University a good reputation.

## Mgr. Július Vida, Ph.D.

Faculty of Science MU Study programme: physics

Július Vida is this year's PhD graduate, in January he defended his dissertation thesis Applications of coplanar dielectric barrier discharge for modification of printed functional coatings with an excellent grade. Under the supervision of doc. Tomáš Homola, he works at the Institute of Physical Therapy in the research group Plasma Nanotechnology and Bioapplication. Július Vida had excellent study results and excellent scientific outputs, he was actively involved in teaching and project solutions and cooperated with domestic and foreign institutions. In his first year he was awarded a scholarship in the prestigious Brno Ph.D. competition. During his studies, he focused mainly on plasma physics and applications of plasma modification of nanostructured surfaces for advanced optoelectronic applications such as thin-film solar cells based on perovskites. This new generation of solar cells could revolutionise the availability of low-cost photovoltaics in the future. During his studies, he was a researcher on an MU IGA project on the application of plasma as an alternative to high--temperature treatment of printed films. He also participated in the MOBILITY project with Joanneum Research in Austria, where he investigated superhydrophobic surfaces created by atmospheric plasma.

## Mgr. Jakub Vostoupal

Faculty of Law MU Study programme: law of information and communication technologies

Jakub Vostoupal's doctoral thesis focused on the problem of the attributability of cyber attacks from the perspective of international law, while the literature in the Czech legal environment generally deals with this topic rather sporadically. The thesis is therefore a useful contribution to (not only Czech) scholarship and practice. Moreover, the combination of international law and cybersecurity requires the ability to think in a broader context with considerable interdisciplinary overlaps, which the PhD student undoubtedly fulfils with the activities and professional outputs listed below. The PhD student is out of the ordinary range of students in a number of areas - his publication activity is well above standard, he is the author or co-author of almost 50 publications, many of them published in foreign professional journals, which are indexed e.g. in SCOPUS (including citations) or Web of Science. He has been successful in international competitions (both publishing and student moot court). In the context of application practice, it has established cooperation with central administrative authorities (National Office for Cyber and Information Security) or international organizations (NATO). He is involved in a number of international and Czech projects, within the framework of which he has developed specific methodologies.

# MASARYK UNIVERSITY RECTOR'S AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING DISSERTATION THESIS

## Domagoj Gajski, Ph.D.

Faculty of Science MU

Study programme: ecological and evolutionary biology

Domagoj Gajski in his PhD thesis Investigating predator-prey interactions through direct and indirect approaches investigated interactions between predators and their prey using modern molecular methods. He focused mainly on the use of natural enemies of pests in biological control, which is an essential part of organic farming. The main contribution of his articles to the field is not only the development and use of molecular methods for organic studies, but also new findings, e.g. that some spiders are more important predators of pests at the beginning of the season than the sunfish or flatworms, which have been used commercially in biological control. His two papers published in Pest Management Science and the Journal of Pest Science are particularly valued because they provide a completely new perspective on the role of spiders in the control of important pests in pear orchards. His PhD thesis stands out for the high number of publications (11) in leading journals with an IF = 35.2 that he was able to produce in only 4 years of study. Domagoj was an excellent student, versatile, able to implement modern technologies in his own research. He was also very independent and helpful to other colleagues. During his studies he completed two internships abroad at the University of Trier (Germany).

## RNDr. Samuel Pastva, Ph.D.

Faculty of Informatics MU

Study programme: computer science

Samuel Pastva's dissertation, Digital Bifurcation Analysis: On the Qualities of Long-term Behaviour in Discrete Systems, was devoted to the analysis of models of biological systems using formal informatics methods. Biological models play a central role in the field known as computational systems biology. This is due to the holistic nature of the discipline and grasping the biological system as a whole is not possible without a suitable model. Samuel Pastva was primarily concerned with how the parameters of models affect their dynamics. Specifically, he was interested in what parameter values (bifurcation points) lead to a substantial change in dynamics. In his work, Samuel Pastva achieved a number of excellent results in the fields of bioinformatics and systems biology. He can be considered the initiator of research in the field of digital bifurcation analysis, as he laid the theoretical foundations and proposed specific computational methods for this area. He performed many case studies and, last but not least, implemented software tools to support his approach. Another area to which Samuel Pastva has contributed several original ideas is research in graph algorithms. He has proposed several new symbolic algorithms for large graphs with colored edges, which have led to significant advances in the possibilities of analyzing such graphs.

# MASARYK UNIVERSITY RECTOR'S AWARD FOR ACTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

## prof. PhDr. Libor Musil, CSc.

Faculty of Social Studies MU

Libor Musil linked his professional life with the institutionalization of the field of Social Work in the Czech Republic. He is one of the founders of the Association of Social Work Educators in the Czech Republic, where he participated in the creation of the minimum educational standard, which was adopted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs as a basis for granting accreditation for social work education as a regulated profession. Therefore, an integral part of his activities has also become the support and development of organizations focused on social work services. For example, he was involved in the founding of Ratolest Brno, an organization focused on helping children and young people in risky situations (since 1998 he has been the chairman of the board of the association), and in 1997-2010 he was a member of the board of the Home of the Needy Brno Foundation. He has educated several generations of social workers as part of his teaching activities. The combination of social work and social responsibility stems from Libor Musil's lifelong interest in the environment; for many years he has been involved in various NGO activities, for example, in 1998-2008 he was a member of the board of the Ecological Institute Veronica Brno. He applied the combination of social and environmental perspectives in the implementation of the project of the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic Support for people with intellectual disabilities in leisure activities.

## MASARYK UNIVERSITY RECTOR'S AWARD FOR VOLUNTEERING

## STUDENT CATEGORIES

IFMSA Students' Association
Martin Bartoš, Kateřina Bartlová, Jozef
Diškanec, Anna Fundárková, Karolína Holíková,
Matej Jankovich, Iva Jankurová, Dominika
Karasová, Ivana Kravárová, Gabriela Lyčková,
Nela Pelánková, Tomáš Sedláček, Anna
Sedláčková, Tereza Šimáková, Marie Tormová
Faculty of Medicine MU

Every year, the IFMSA Students' Association organizes a number of volunteer projects, which in 2023 were aimed primarily at educating the general public about various health issues and informing about prevention options. As part of the World Health Day (WHD) on 7 April, students prepared a programme in the Olympia shopping centre in Brno, which included several stations where blood pressure, body fat and BMI were measured. In addition, people learnt about smoking cessation, basic first aid and CPR. There was also nutritional advice or simple exercises from physiotherapists and interesting information about healthy walking and good dental hygiene. The Co-Safe project and the SafeRUN event are other activities of the association. SafeRun took place on 5 October at Špilberk Castle with the aim of supporting gynaecological oncology patients and spreading awareness about the importance of gynaecological cancer prevention. Students organized the event together with partners and provided promotion. On World Diabetes Day (WDD) on 14 November, they organised an event to raise awareness among the general public about diabetes itself, its prevention and care through various examinations and interactive counselling. As part of the programme, visitors can have their blood glucose, blood pressure, BMI, fat percentage and waist circumference measured for free.

## CATEGORIES EMPLOYEES

## doc. Ing. RNDr. Barbora Bühnová, Ph.D.

Faculty of Informatics MU

Barbora Bühnová opens up the world of IT to women, girls and other socially or economically disadvantaged groups, whose access to IT education enables them to bridge the digital divide in their personal lives and in the labour market. In this regard, she is active in the management of three non--profit organizations (on a voluntary basis, without remuneration). She is a co-founder and board member of Czechitas, z.ú., which has impacted over 70,000 women in the Czech Republic with its educational programs over the past almost 10 years of operation, thanks to a community of over 1,000 volunteer IT professionals across the country. She is the Chair of the Board of Directors and a founding member of the Czechitas Endowment Fund, which offers extended support to socially and economically disadvantaged women on their path to IT retraining (covering 100% of the cost of training). In the past, the Czechitas Endowment Fund has made possible, for example, the launch of the Czechitas for Ukraine project, which opened the way to free IT retraining for hundreds of women from Ukraine. Barbora Bühnová is also a member of the board of directors of the educational non-profit organization 42 Prague, z.ú. (since its foundation), which offers free IT retraining programs to those interested in IT retraining. Although the programme is open to all groups of people, it also encourages the participation of women (currently there are three times more women among the students than there are women in IT).



## SILVER MEDAL OF MASARYK UNIVERSITY

The MU Silver Medal is usually awarded to leading MU personalities for strengthening the significance of MU at the national and global level, deepening MU's cooperation with domestic and foreign institutions and long-term significant support of the fields developed at MU.

## prof. RNDr. Ladislav Dušek, Ph.D.

Ladislav Dušek was an assistant professor at the Faculty of Arts of the Masaryk University in 1994-1999. Since 1999 he has been the head of the Institute of Biostatistics and Analyses at the Faculty of Medicine, MU. He is a member of many academic bodies, supervisor of doctoral students, supervised diploma and bachelor theses. He teaches courses at the Faculty of Medicine and Science. He focuses on the analysis and evaluation of biological and clinical data, applications of statistical methods in biology and medicine, biostatistics, predictive oncology and epidemiology, and information technology in medicine, and has participated in the development of software for healthcare. He is the author or co-author of more than 1000 scientific texts, he has been and is the principal investigator and co-investigator of a number of projects (funded by the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, the European Union, the Grant Agencies of the Czech Republic, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of the Environment, Novartis, the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic). Recently, he has been a principal investigator of the MU projects "Innovative Partnership for Action Against Cancer" (EU/Horizon 2020), "Covid-19 infodemia: Al communication platform to counteract infodemia in relation to journalistic and media ethics" (TA ČR/ ÉTA), "Czech-Norwegian Collaboration on Meta-Research and Critical Thinking Education in Healthcare" (House of Foreign Cooperation/EEA Funds 2014-2021: Education Programme). He is co-author of the publication "Covid-19 infodemie" (Academia, 2022). The book deals with the phenomenon of infodemia, i.e. the dissemination of excessive information, including false or inaccurate information, about a health problem that makes it difficult to find an effective solution.

## prof. Ing. Jakub Fischer, Ph.D.

Jakub Fischer is Professor of Economic Policy. He was a member of the MU Scientific Council until 2023. In 2006-2010 he was the Vice Dean of FIS for Science and Research at the University of Economics in Prague, and since 2018 he has been its Dean. From 2010 to 2018, he served as Vice-Rector for Strategy at the University of Economics in Prague (2010-2018), from 2014 as the statutory deputy rector of the University of Economics. In his teaching, research and publication activities he focuses on the field of socio-economic statistics and national accounting, especially on the issues of statistical capture of social, economic and environmental

phenomena and processes. He is active in a number of professional organisations, e.g. the Czech Statistical Society, the Czech Demographic Society, the Czech Economic Society, the Union of Czech Mathematicians and Physicists and the International Statistical Institute (ISI), and is a member of several scientific and academic councils of universities and faculties. He is an expert witness in statistics. He was a member of the Academic Assembly of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, in 2012–2017 he chaired the Council of Universities. In the form of occasional popularization lectures he introduces economic statistics to students of various types of secondary schools.

## Mgr. et Mgr. Tomáš Hruda

As Project Director/CEO (2009-2012), Tomáš Hruda was instrumental in the establishment of the Central European Institute of Technology (CEITEC), a 5.2 billion crowns European centre of scientific excellence under the Operational Programme Research and Development for Innovation. From 2012–2014 he was Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Education and Science. He is the co-founder, owner and lecturer of EDU22, s. r. o. (since 2015). Since 2022, he has held various positions at the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. The CEITEC project in Brno was approved by the European Commission on 1 June, making CEITEC the first definitively approved scientific excellence centre project in the Czech Republic. The aim was for CEITEC to become a hub for the best scientists, which will then be followed up by commercial companies and profits. This included responding to the demand from pharmaceutical and engineering companies for research, training of experts and rental of facilities. CEITEC is the first ever type of science centre in the country to combine research and development in life sciences, advanced materials and technology on such a scale. New state-of-the-art laboratories have been built at the Bohunice MU campus and the BUT campus. Hundreds of special instruments and equipment selected according to the specific needs of scientific teams have been acquired. The Institute was soon used by 600 Czech and foreign scientists and 1200 students.

## prof. MUDr. Petr Husa, CSc.

Petr Husa is the head of the Infectious Diseases Clinic, a joint department of the Faculty of Medicine and the University Hospital Brno. He is a member of the MU Crisis Staff, his professional interest is internal medicine. For decades he has been involved in teaching Infectious Diseases, Nursing Care in Infectious Medicine and has successfully supervised and mentored a number of PhD students. He is currently the principal investigator or co-principal investigator of two projects of the Ministry of Education and Science investor within the EXCELES programme of the National Recovery Plan "National Institute of Virology and Bacteriology" and the EU investor within the Horizon 2020 programme "VACCELERATE - European Corona Vaccine Triel Accelerator Platform". The National Institute started its activities in 2022 and its primary task is basic and clinically oriented research on viruses and pathogenic bacteria that cause diseases with significant health and economic impact. The second project is a clinical research network for the coordination and conduct of studies of the covid-19 vaccine. This network is made up of academic institutions from across Europe and currently includes 26 national partners from 16 EU Member States and 5 EU associated countries. VACCELERATE is funded by the European Commission's future pandemic preparedness agency, "HERA Incubator", which is similar to the US BARDA. The professor's publication output is also significant. He has authored or co-authored hundreds of scientific texts, more than seventy of which are indexed in the Web of Science. A number of recent papers have addressed issues related to covid-19 therapy, the diagnosis and treatment of hepatitis D, and the implications of highly suppressive therapy for HIV infection. During the pandemic years, he made a significant contribution to the awareness and dissemination of knowledge related to the efficacy of the covid-19 vaccine in adults. His expert voice is therefore also very valuable as a member of our university's crisis staff.

## Ing. Ladislav Chodák

Ladislav Chodák is a member of the MU Council for Technology Transfer and Commercial Cooperation, an advisory body to the Rector, a member of the FI MU Scientific Council, an entrepreneur, investor and mentor. Since 1990 he has founded or actively participated in the operation of several dozen companies operating mainly in the IT sector, engineering, construction and energy. He has also invested in private

educational institutions Open School Space and Karel Engliš College. He has been cooperating with our university since 2007 on the CERIT project, with the help of which MU has become a centre of excellence in cyber security. Since 2010, Chodák has focused on developing and mentoring companies, investing in technology startups and development projects, and engaging in private companies and non-profit organizations. Since 2017, Chodák has been the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Brno Regional Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber significantly contributes to the development of business in the region. One of the visible projects of the Brno Regional Chamber of Commerce is the investment fund. As part of his work in the MU Council for Technology Transfer and Commercial Cooperation, Chodák helps to ensure that the University's strategic plans are in line with the development of technology transfer at MU, as the Council reviews strategic projects and major commercialisation plans, discusses strategic plans in the field of transfer and innovation business development or presents key outputs and suggestions from its meetings to the University management.

## JUDr. Dagmar Lastovecká

Dagmar Lastovecká graduated from the Faculty of Law of Masaryk University (then Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Brno), where she received her doctorate in law in 1981. After the Velvet Revolution, she was a deputy in the House of Peoples of the Federal Assembly (1992) and chairwoman of the Privatisation Commission. Her work is closely linked to Brno, where she was mayor in the 1990s (1994-1998). In 1998-2003 she was a senator of the National Assembly of the Czech Republic for district 58 Brno-City. In the Senate of the National Assembly, she was the Chair of the Constitutional and Legal Committee and a member of the Constitution Committee, and therefore had the opportunity to prepare important laws, including the law on the referendum on the accession to the European Union. She is a respected jurist and former judge of the Constitutional Court of the Czech Republic (2003-2013). She is also associated with the University as a judge emeritus due to her multi-year membership and later chairmanship of the MU Board of Trustees. She began to serve on the Board of Governors at the invitation of the former Rector of the University, Mikuláš Bek. She monitored the events at MU in terms of the competences that the Board of Trustees has - approval of the budget and disposition of property, and also focused on the annual reports and long-term strategic plans of the University.

# prof. Ing. Hana Machková, CSc.

Hana Machková is associated with MU primarily in connection with her membership in the MU Scientific Council and the related discussion and co-decision of major issues related to university affairs. She has participated, among others, in. She participated in the discussion of the draft strategic plan for MU's educational and scientific, research, development and innovation, artistic or other creative activities and the annual plan for the implementation of the strategic plan prior to its submission to the MU AS, and the discussion of the draft annual reports on MU's activities prior to its submission to the MU AS, approval of plans to submit applications for accreditation of habilitation procedures and procedures for the appointment of professors, approval of plans to submit applications for institutional accreditation in the field of education and for the extension of institutional accreditation in other fields of education, appointment of professors, appointment of professors emeritus, proposals for the award of MU medals. Professor Machková is the Vice-Rector of the University of Economics in Prague, where she has worked in various positions since 1981. She is the recipient of numerous awards (Knight of the Order of Academic Palms, Knight of the Legion of Honour) and the author of more than two dozen monographs and textbooks. Her professional interest is in the field of international business, marketing and PR.

#### PhDr. Alena Mizerová

Alena Mizerová is the long-term director of Munipress Publishing House, a MU publishing house that publishes and popularizes science. She is also a member of the MU Editorial Board (scientific editorial board), the MU Cultural Centre Council and the MU Rector's Extended College. As Director, she oversees the dissemination of the results of MU's scientific, research and educational activities. She strives to contribute to strengthening the University's prestige towards the professional public and ensures the quality of academic publications. Dr. Mizerová has long integrated the publishing house into a wide range of collaborations with other educational institutions, including libraries. Let us mention, for example, the Book Fair and the literary festival Books in Brno (knihyvbrne.cz), in which Munipress cooperates with the Jiri Mahen Library and the Moravian Library. It tries to promote publishing in Open Access mode. Munipress is one of the most important specialist publishers in the Czech Republic, publishing more than 400 titles of specialist and

popular science books and 54 specialist journals each year. At the same time, Munipress publishes books by domestic and foreign authors who are not active at the university. Under Dr. Mizerova's leadership, Munipress has successfully strengthened MU's reputation in society and built international partnerships.

# Mgr. Jiří Nantl, LL.M.

Jiří Nantl is a progressive internationally recognized expert in the field of education and science policy. He currently serves as a Deputy Member of the Government at the Ministry of Education. From 2016–2023 he successfully led the Central European Institute of Technology MU (CEITEC MU) and at the same time was Deputy Governor of the South Moravian Region for Education, Health and Smart Region Strategy from 2020-2023. During his tenure as Director, he has managed to significantly advance CEITEC MU, both in terms of institutional management and the internationalisation of the institution and the quality of scientific outputs. The key to his success was ambitious strategic plans, inspired by good practice from abroad, which he was able to successfully implement with the help of his team. Mgr. Nantl, for example, ended the practice of so-called "inbreeding" and, thanks to the open, transparent and international recruitment policy of CEITEC MU, attracted a number of top experts to Brno. Today, the institute boasts a highly internationalised centre and an improved gender balance.

#### Mgr. Hana Ripková, Ph.D.

Hana Ripková is a graduate of Charles University and a recipient of the prestigious Woodrow Wilson Freedom Award for her outstanding contribution to Czech-American relations and mutual understanding between the two countries. Dr. Ripková heads the J. William Fulbright Commission, which has been facilitating Czech-American scholarly and student exchanges since 1991. In that time, the intergovernmental Czech-American organization has supported over two thousand scholarship recipients, including students and scholars from MU. The primary mission of the Fulbright Commission is to build and promote mutual understanding between the peoples of the two countries through cultural exchanges in the field of education. The Commission administers government scholarships or other programs for study, research,

and teaching in the U.S. for Czech citizens, and vice versa for U.S. scholars at academic institutions in the Czech Republic. The prestige of the organization is reflected in the fact that fellows of the program later become rectors, directors, diplomats, and successful scholars and teachers. The Fulbright Commission Fellowships support all disciplines from all schools and institutions, with the quality of the project being the determining factor. In her role as Director, Dr. Ripkova helps to ensure that the country commissions can respond flexibly to demand from home universities and to current local issues, and to add new types of programs accordingly.

# GOLD MEDAL OF MASARYK UNIVERSITY

The MU Gold Medal is awarded to prominent representatives of science, culture, higher education and public life in recognition of their long-term outstanding contributions to their development, including their commitment to the fight for human rights and dignity.

### Prof. JUDr. Naděžda Rozehnalová, CSc.

Naděžda Rozehnalová works at the Department of International and European Law of the Faculty of Law of the Masaryk University as a professor and head of the Department of Private International Law. From 2007 to 2015 she was the Dean of the Faculty of Arts. In this position she achieved a number of successes and managed to establish the Faculty as a leading research institution in Central Europe. In 2015-2019 she served as Vice-Rector for Student Affairs. She is a leading representative of the field of private and commercial international law in the Czech Republic. In the field of scientific research, she has long been involved in private international law, international and domestic arbitration and non-state law in proceedings before judges and arbitrators. During her career she has produced a number of key works which constitute basic literature in teaching and application practice. She has also significantly influenced the field of arbitration through her academic and practical direction. She is a member of a number of important organizations influencing the direction of the field. She has served as a member of evaluation panels for research projects (Czech Republic, Poland) and has received numerous awards from the international scientific community.

# prof. MUDr. Jiří Vorlíček, CSc., dr. h. c.

Jiří Vorlíček graduated from the Brno Medical Faculty and then joined what is now the Masaryk Institute of Oncology in Brno. During 45 years he worked in several other places. In 1973, he moved to the Second Internal Clinic of the St. Anne's University Hospital in Brno and later became the head of the Internal Haemato-Oncology Clinic of the University Hospital Brno, which he headed from 1989 to 2010. In 1997-2003 he was the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine in Brno and in 2003-2008 he participated in its management as Vice-Dean. During his deanship, the LF MU underwent, among other things, a major overhaul of the former medical faculty building, but his activities in the construction of the Bohunice University Campus are particularly important. He was the first to come up with the term palliative medicine in the 1990s and was awarded many times for his textbook of the same name. In 2007, he was awarded the Medal of Merit for the State in the field of science by the President of the Republic. In 2008-2014 he was the director of the Masaryk Cancer Institute. He is a lecturer and author of many scientific publications, textbooks and articles not only in the field of hematology and oncology.



# MUSICAL PERFORMANCES DURING THE CEREMONY

#### Tomáš Grulich plays the organ

#### ENTRY ONE

#### Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Fantasy in A minor (BWV 904) arranged for organ As with many of Bach's other compositions, little is known about the circumstances of its composition and it is not even clear for which keyboard instrument it was originally written, whether for organ, clavichord or harpsichord. It was probably composed around 1725 in the early years of his time in Leipzig. It was not published for the first time until 1839.

#### ENTRY TWO

#### Carson Cooman (\*1982)

Fantasies on "Victimae paschali laudes"

The Latin sequence Victimae paschali laudes (Praise of the Paschal Sacrifice) commemorates the Easter season, usually attributed to Wipo of Burgundy, chaplain to Emperor Conrad II. It dates from the 11th century. There are a number of settings, but the original version of the Gregorian chant is the most commonly used, quoted by the American composer Carson Cooman in the slower opening of his organ fantasy and in its faster sections.

#### THIRD AND FINAL ENTRY

## Carson Cooman (\*1982)

Dance of Fire (from diptych Eternal City)

Carson Cooman is an extremely prolific composer, having composed more than 1500 works, including several operas and five symphonies. Most of his work, however, has been on the organ. Dance of Fire is part of the 2017 diptych Eternal City, inspired by the composer's visit to Rome.



# ENSEMBLE OPERA DIVERSA

#### **Diversa Quartet**

The string quartet, which operates under the umbrella of the Brno-based art company Ensemble Opera Diversa, was founded in the summer of 2022 in response to the lack of recent quartet music in the domestic music scene. In line with the ensemble's mission, it aims to create audience-interesting programmes without banal or notorious pieces and the need to fit into the contemporary classical music mainstream. Through its dramaturgy, encouragement of new compositions and interpretive commitment, it has been in dialogue with open-minded listeners for over twenty years.

The members of the Diversa Quartet are Barbara Tolarová (1st violin), Jan Bělohlávek (2nd violin), David Křivský (viola) and Iva Wiesnerová (cello). Kristýna Znamenáčková, who studied piano at the Brno Conservatoire, the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague and the JAMU in Brno, plays the piano. In 2016 she won the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation's performance competition and received a special award for her interpretation of his Sonata for piano.

Ondřej Kyas (\*1979) is a musician and a graduate of musicology at Masaryk University. In collaboration with librettist Pavel Drábek, he has created a number of full-length operas and mini operas for Diversa. In addition, Kyas plays and writes in the alternative band Květy and performs as the "electrified songwriter" Kygiss. His solo album, Solarium, was released in 2019, as well as his poetic debut, Demonoscopy, last year on the publishing house Větrné mlýny. As contemporary as Kyas' work is, it remains accessible, comprehensible and does not forgo an emotional level. The String Quartet No. 5 (2021), which alternates passages that are rhythmically imaginative with ostinato and melodically nostalgic with playful, bears the same characterization. The work received its world premiere at the Diversa Quartet's inaugural concert in October 2022.

David Matthews (\*1943) is an important British composer with significant links to Brno. In addition to his active participation in housing seminars in the 1980 s, he has long-standing friendships with several Brno personalities. He returns to Brno repeatedly, most recently on the occasion of his 80th birthday last September, when he was present at a concert organised to mark the anniversary. The four-movement work is full of polyphonic and dance-like surfaces, but it does not shy away from more static, contrasting elements. The premiere of the opus, recorded several times, took place in Cardiff in December 2004.

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