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THE LAST ALBUM OF KAREL RŮŽIČKA IS BEING RELEASED



In the year the legendary jazz pianist and composer **KAREL RŮŽIČKA** would turn 80, his last album which never came out during his lifetime is released on CD, LP and digitally. It contains nine of his own compositions which he recorded in 2010 and now have been brought out of the archive by Růžička's student and friend Tomáš Sýkora. The album's title, **GARDEN OF SILENCE**, refers to his famous solo album "Garden of Joy" from 1981 which defined the character of Růžička's solo piano work. As Sýkora explains, in the album Růžička „established his masterful ability to encompass all the tree aspects whose perfect balance is the goal of every solo performer: to be a composer, melody maker and improviser all at once”. The same capacity has been

confirmed in this last recording.

In their incredible diversity, Růžička's compositions included in **GARDEN OF SILENCE** remind us of his genius as a composer. A combination of lyrical style with energetic play and of inventive melodies with original harmonic advancements is crowned by beautiful, introspective approach by Růžička as an "authorial" interpreter and free jazz improviser. As Růžička himself remarked in an interview with Jan Mazura for the *Harmonie* magazine in the year the recordings originated, "In my opinion, jazz is live music – 'water of music,' that's a phrase I've come up with." In the same interview he also described his approach to composition which seems very fresh and corresponds with tendencies found in the work of jazz artists by a generation younger: "My intention was to give jazz music a fundament, so that it would be clear from its sound that it stands on a solid base. I thought it was important to remove its reception from the sphere of entertainment into a higher sphere. That's why I have also tried to accomplish things which were completely outside the range of jazz."

Růžička himself initiated these recordings made at the studio of the HAMU (The Music and Dance Faculty of The Academy of Performing Arts in Prague) in 2010 where he collaborated with sound master Ondřej Urban, but he never had the time to release them, even though he intended it: „I have not come up with the title for the album yet. It's a solo recording I made in April and we are now doing the last touches on it." In the same interview Růžička adds: „I always need to be prodded into playing solo. I enjoy it hugely but it's a very hard discipline. For a long time, I simply had no motivation to do anything like it. Then it came naturally, as if from within. Whenever I sat down at the piano, new themes emerged. I took them all down and then simply sat down in the studio to record them. I just reversed the process, so to speak, and didn't wait until someone would come up with an offer to record a solo album. I paid for the studio and thought I would decide later on whom to approach about the release." The idea to release the album posthumously as a tribute to Růžička's genius was conceived by Petr Ostrouchov, the owner of Animal Music, after he learnt about the recording's existence from Tomáš Sýkora. The album fully respects Růžička's own preference of versions and the order of compositions, as well as the pauses in between them since all this he still managed to plan himself. Thus in the catalogue of Animal Music, Karel Růžička

now notionally meets with his son whose recent album GRACE & GRATITUDE was nominated for the Anděl Award as the best album of the year.

The recordings received final touch ups from Milan Cimfe and Pavel Karlík in the Sono studio. The photographs included in the booklet were kindly provided by Pavel Strážay, the graphic design is by Marek Pistora from the Najbrt Studio. The album is released as part of the Animal Music Edition 2020, supported by a grant from the City of Prague. It is distributed by SUPRAPHON both on CD and LP as well as digitally. From the Animal Music e-shop it is also available both on CD and LP and digitally in the WAV format as well as in the MP3. The album is released on Friday 25 September 2020.



Karel Růžička (1940-2016) was one of the most important Czech jazz musicians and composers. He was also one of the key pedagogues of the contemporary middle generation of jazz musicians. From the beginning of his career he was a member of jazz big bands and orchestras, for example the Semafor theatre and the Jazz Orchestra of the Czech Radio where he met many of his later musical partners. He was a member of the Jazz Cellula band of Laco Deczi and SHQ of Karel Velebný with whom he recorded the famous album „Jazzové nebajky“ (Jazz Non-Fables, 1973).

He regularly performed and recorded in duo with guitarist Rudolf Dašek and other Czech and foreign soloists such as Rudolf Rokl, Georg Mraz, Benny Golson and others. He often collaborated with jazz orchestras, performed at international festivals and was the recipient of many prestigious awards. Among his best-known compositions counts “Celebration Jazz Mass” from the early 1990s, a piece which was performed in 2017 by the Symphonic Orchestra of the City of Prague in an arrangement by Tomáš Sýkora. In his lifetime Karel Růžička recorded several solo albums and recordings with his ensemble and participated in many others.

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