

TOMÁŠ KAČO

piano

Critics describe Tomáš Kačo's genre of music as "sui generis" – referring to his highly original way of blending classical, jazz, and traditional Romani music. His journey from an outoftune piano to a grand Steinway at New York's Carnegie Hall, is a kind to the American dream. On that journey, apart from the necessary good luck, has been diligence, persistence, curiosity, and courage. Tomáš Kačo composes and arranges music for choirs and orchestras and is also involved in film music. His ability to look at established topics in a new way is highlighted, he is often called as "The opener".

Tomáš Kačo started playing the piano at the age of five; at first he learned quite intuitively, and only became acquainted with sheet music, scales and piano technique at the age of twelve, at a music school. He later studied at the Janáček Conservatoire in Ostrava under the guidance of Professor Pavel Motloch, whom Tomáš Kačo considers his personal mentor. Professor Ivo Kahánek was one of his key teachers at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. He used the money he won in the young composers' competition to pay for the entrance exam to the Boston College of Music in Berklee – his American chance. In the open environment of one of the world's best schools of contemporary music he began to see his Romani descent as an appealing distinction and an asset. This was reflected in his recital programme at Carnegie Hall at Weil Recital Hall in February 2018, entitled Gypsy Soul; a mix of his own compositions and arrangements of Johann Sebastian Bach and Frédéric Chopin, i.e., music that is neither Romani, Czech, classical, nor jazz, and in which "each of the listeners will find their own story".

Tomáš Kačo has given recitals in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Israel, the Kennedy Center in Washington, and the Metropolis Performing Arts Center in Chicago. He has collaborated for many years with Ida Kellarová, recording together the album Romani Ballade in 2010, and also with a number of Czech symphony orchestras, for whom he writes arrangements. Although his aim is primarily music itself, he believes that he can play a part in the search for a common path for the majority and minority and become an example for other Roma children. His debut album My Home, featuring multiple Grammy Award winner John Patitucci, Ondřej Gregor Brzobohatý, the Kühn Children's Choir, and Kačo's younger sister Veronika, was released in 2018, symbolically on October 28 – on the National Day of the Czech Republic. A series of five singles followed, released in successive steps in December 2020, to coincide with the dates of concerts disrupted during the pandemic. They show him playing around with traditional Czech carols and paying homage to Ludwig van Beethoven in the composition For Ludwig, Yours Elise.

Tomáš Kačo composes and arranges music for choirs and orchestras and is also involved in film music. As a commission from the Czech Philharmonic, he wrote a piece for the Open Air concert inaugurating their 125th season in June 2021, aptly titled Fantasy Open Air. It consists of variations on themes drawn from the most famous Czech opera arias. For the Czech presidency of EU, commissioned by the Office of the Czech government, he wrote another fittingly titled composition, Stronger Than Yesterday. The premiere with PKF – Prague Philharmonia, lively broadcasted by Czech TV was held in Rudolfinum in Prague, then in Brussels BOZAR in 2022.