

PRESS RELEASE

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Solo Performance by Iva Bittová

SARANAC LAKE, New York. Friday, June 4, 2010. Historic Saranac Lake announced an upcoming solo performance by acclaimed Czech singer and violinist, Iva Bittová. Ms. Bittová will perform on Sunday, September 19 at 4pm, at the First United Methodist Church in Saranac Lake. A reception will follow in the John Black Room of the Saranac Laboratory, at 89 Church Street.

In the days prior to the event, Iva Bittová will practice and meditate in the Bartok Cabin, the small cottage in Saranac Lake where Béla Bartók spent the last summer of his life. The cabin is privately owned. Historic Saranac Lake oversees the building and shows it to visitors by appointment. "Bartok's music has been kind of a mother's milk for me," said Ms. Bittová. In 1997, "44 Duets for Two Violins – Bela Bartok, with Dorothea Kellerova" was released.

Iva Bittová describes her work as "my own personal folk music." In her singularly original and powerful performances, Bittova sings, plays, and acts simultaneously to create pieces that have been described as "... so intimate and personal you can almost feel her breath on your ears." (CMJ). Her compositions and improvisations are highly abstract yet deeply rooted in the classical and gypsy music of the tiny Moravian villages where she spent her formative years. Uninhibited and unaffected, Bittová sings in poetry that is sensual, fervent and evocative.

A charismatic performer with an established reputation both in Europe and Japan, Bittová toured North America first as a solo performer in 1992. She returned in 1998 upon the release of her eponymous album on Nonesuch Records, selling out concerts in Boston, New York, and Berkeley. The New York Times wrote, "Ms. Bittová is a true cosmopolitan, but she remains grounded in local expressions, and her own physicality. She takes on the role of the singer as town crier whose voice animates old myths and current news. Ms. Bittová's town

is her self, ruled by the rhythms of sexuality, the flights of her imagination and the realities of modern social life.”

As much at home in classical music as in avant-garde and folk, she has sung the role of Donna Elvira in the Mozart opera “Don Juan in Prague” as well as performed songs by Leos Janáček. In 2005, she began collaborating with the Bang On A Can All-Stars, recording the CD “Elida” (Cantaloupe Music), and performing together at Carnegie Hall, in Philadelphia, Los Angeles as well as in London and Prague. Other recent recordings are “Mater” by Slovakian composer Vladimír Godár (ECM), Leos Janáček’s “Moravian Folk Poetry in Songs” with the Skampa String Quartet (Supraphon), and “Moravian Gems” with bassist George Mraz.

After moving to the United States in 2007, Bittová now lives with her son Antonin in the Hudson River Valley, just a few hours from New York City. She has since performed more frequently in the US and Canada, as a soloist as well as in collaborations with her fellow countryman Mraz, pianist Lisa Moore, clarinetist Don Byron, guitarist Marc Ribot, drummer Hamid Drake, and the Wendy Osserman Dance Company.

Iva Bittová was born in Bruntal, in northern Moravia. Her father, a classical double bass player, relocated the family often. Bittová attended violin and ballet classes as a child and also appeared in the Silesian Theatre of Zdenek Nejedly. As a teenager she attended a local conservatory and studied music and drama. Upon completion of school in Brno, she won a contract at the avant-garde Theatre On A String. She has since appeared in multiple television and film roles, including the documentary film about Fred Frith, “Step Across The Border,” and “Zelary,” one of the most successful Czech movies in recent years and nominated for an Academy Award for best foreign film in 2003. She received a Czech “Oscar” and the Best Actress Award at the Syracuse International Film Festival for her starring role in the 2007 film “Tajnosti” (Little Girl Blue.)

Reflecting on her life-long work as a performer, Bittová has said, “I have found the way to myself and thus also to others. I understand there are many hearts in the world, and each beats differently.”

“Iva Bittová is an extraordinary artist. Raw and refined, passionate and contained, she has the soul of a gypsy, the voice of a troubadour, and the mind of a genius.” **–NPR/All Things Considered**

“... a forward-thinking composer who sings and plays violin simultaneously... Her sound is invigorating, urgent, and also soothing; it is a fusion of Old World and new-music sensibilities, infused with the spirit and language of Czech, Slovak, and Moravian folk music.” **–New York Magazine**