

## When a unique marble guitar weeps

*On Friday 9<sup>th</sup> March one of the best guitarists and composers in the world, Štěpán Rak held a show entitled "Around the World with a Guitar", where he gave spa guests a demonstration of his "stone guitar", the only one of its kind in the world. The packed hall in Ann's Peat Spa was the venue for a unique concert performance.*

The Czech sculptor Jan Řeřicha made his name with his remarkable creations using minerals. One of the main reasons he started making marble musical instruments was the desire to get the greatest resonance from a material which is more or less considered the symbol of silence. The sculptor claims that the great advantages of this material are its inherent natural beauty, gorgeous greenish-white colouring and principally its mechanical properties, in that it is sufficiently flexible and easy to grind, allowing highly precise workmanship.

The first marble violins were made in 2003 – known as "mramorky". At the end of last year, after three months of work, he finished another unique work – a Spanish guitar. Professor Štěpán Rak was the main consultant as regards the sound of the marble guitar and Jan Řeřicha decided to donate this unique instrument to him – the most skilled figure in the guitar world.

Štěpán Rak, the first ever university professor of guitar in this country, is a pioneer of the five-finger guitar technique, which he passes on to students at HAMU in Prague and universities. This classical guitar master



fills venues all around the world on his concert tours.

Now, for example, he is getting ready to go to exotic Peru or the celebrated Uffizi Gallery in Florence, where he will present his unique marble instrument from the workshop of the Czech sculptor. Patients and guests at the Bělohrad spa, however, had the chance to see

and hear this stone Spanish guitar back at the beginning of March. Their appreciation of Štěpán Rak's unmatched skill on the guitar was evident by the long applause at the end of his performance.

The Spanish guitar with its stone body (the neck and bridge are made of wood) is made from a material known within the stone industry as Verde Guatemala; its geological name is serpentine. It weighs around 15 kilogrammes and fits into a guitar case,

so it has been kept to the proportions of a classical Spanish guitar. It is truly unique! According to Štěpán Rak, one of the first admirers of this stone guitar was, amongst others, his long-time friend, the famous director Miloš Forman, who recently paid a working visit to Prague.

Photo: Václav Lejdar



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**Anenské slatinné lázně a.s.**  
Lázeňská 165, 507 81 Lázně Bělohrad  
Czech Republic  
TEL.: +420 493 767 111  
+420 493 767 351  
FAX.: +420 493 767 443  
E-MAIL: lazne@belohrad.cz  
www.belohrad.cz

**E-CONTACTS**  
lazne@belohrad.cz  
info@belohrad.cz  
ferbrova@belohrad.cz  
kalfus@belohrad.cz  
stofira@belohrad.cz  
kalfusova@belohrad.cz  
hybnerova@belohrad.cz

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