

Season 2015/2016

Thursday, April 7 2016
Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation, 8pm

Series: ***Philharmania***

Conductor: **Eiji Oue**
Soloist: **Nemanja Radulović**, violin

Program:

Richard Strauss
Don Juan, Op. 20

Duration: approx. 17 minutes

Max Bruch
Violin concerto No 1 in G minor, Op. 26

Prélude: Allegro moderato
Adagio
Finale: Allegro energico

Duration: approx. 24 minutes

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Symphony No 6 in B minor, Op. 74 (*Pathétique*)

Adagio-Allegro non troppo
Allegro con grazia
Allegro molto vivace
Finale: Adagio lamentoso-Andante

Duration: approx. 46 minutes

Concertmaster: **Tijana Milošević**

Richard Strauss (1864–1949) gave the greatest contribution to symphonic music in the late 19th and early 20th century through his tone poems. Building on the heritage of Richard Wagner's style of composing, over a period of almost three decades Strauss wrote ten pieces of this genre, which became ever more mature in terms of their style as the time passed. Following the success of his symphonic poem *Aus Italien*, the next one – **Don Juan** – was written in 1888 as a result of the composer's meeting with Alexander Ritter, himself a composer and violinist, who referred him to the world of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. The following year, Strauss conducted the premiere of this piece with huge success, performed by the orchestra of the Weimar Opera, where he served as Court Kapellmeister. Although Strauss had only passed the gates of the realm of orchestration skills with *Don Juan*, the piece was already showing his affinity for this field. Derived from a poem by Nikolas Lenau, *Don Juan* is a portrait of the famous libertine, which does not follow a specific programme with its music. Thus, we can hear themes of his love adventures, filled with pride and exaltation, juxtaposed with episodes of tenderness and womanly themes. The ending, it is fair to say, is an alternative end of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Just like Mozart's librettist Da Ponte, who finished the story with Don Juan's death, Lenau also leads Strauss' story to the same outcome. However, instead of the statue of the Commendatore sending Don Juan to hell, the great seducer of women's hearts is killed by the hand of Don Pedro, the Commendatore's son, avenging the death of his father.

One of the most popular concerts of the entire violin repertoire is, certainly, the **Violin concerto No. 1 by Max Bruch** (1838–1920). The piece was written in 1866, and premiered on 24 April of the same year by Otto von Königslow, with the composer himself conducting. Following the first performance, Bruch considerably revised the piece with the help from celebrated violinist Joseph Joachim, completing it in its present form. Joachim premiered the revised version of the concerto on 5 January 1868 in Bremen, under the baton of Karl Martin Rheinthal.

The first movement is unusual in that it is conceived as a prelude to the second movement and is directly linked to it. The piece starts off slowly, with the melody first taken by the flutes, and then the solo violin becomes audible with a short cadenza. This repeats again, serving as an introduction to the main portion of the movement, which contains a strong first theme and a very melodic second theme. The movement ends with two short cadenzas, even more virtuosic than before, and the orchestra's final tutti flows into the second movement, connected by a single note from the first violins. The second movement is famous for its well-known melody, which is considered to be the *heart* of the entire concerto. The finale opens with an orchestral introduction, followed by the first dance theme, played by the solo violin. The second theme is a representative example of Romantic lyricism, a slower melody which cuts into the movement several times, before the piece culminates in a fiery *accelerando* and a brilliant ending.

The last years of **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's** (1840-1893) life were marked by a shift in his creative impulse. After the epic-romantic works and *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker* ballets, the composer's *swan song* was his **Symphony No. 6 in B minor**, premiered ten days before his death. The tragic tone of this work is influenced by the state of the composer's soul, while the entirely unexpected concept is the reflection of inner chaos and hopelessness. Tchaikovsky himself called the symphony an *adagio in big form*, although there is no slow movement, and the ending of the final movement that fades out instead of an exalted finale was a pivotal point in music history. Symphony N. 6 is nowadays known for its subtitle *Pathétique*. The very beginning of the first movement is underlined by a gloomy mood. The opening is entrusted to three themes with different tempos, resembling a small suite with the motif of the Fate connecting the sections. The second theme ushers in a feeling of radiance, typical of Tchaikovsky's earlier works. The development brings an *avalanche* of sound, with a quotation of a chant from an old Russian mass for the dead by the trombone section, which extends and replays until a tragic eruption of sound. This movement is characterised by an abundance of musical ideas, symphonic developments and orchestral situations. The second movement, a *quasi-waltz* in 5/4 time, is a rare example of a classical piece written in a mixed compound meter, which sounds completely natural. The first performances of this movement in Europe, when this type of meter was exceptionally

rare, were undoubtedly rewarded with critical acclaim. The quick-paced third movement (although it might be more logical for it to be the final movement) exhibits themes of a march nature in an ambience of senselessness and delirium. In the fourth movement, a dirge played by the strings announces the final farewell and the rising pessimism. The brass section solemnly laments and fades out. The fate is not defeated, it is accepted.

Asja Radonjić