

Season 2015/2016

Friday, 26 February 2016
Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation at 8pm

Series: **For Beginners**

Conductor: **Vladimir Kulenović**

Programme:

Joseph Haydn

Symphony No 1 in D major

Presto

Andante

Presto

Duration: approx. 11 minutes

Ludwig van Beethoven

Symphony No. 1, Op. 21 in C major

Adagio molto – Allegro con brio

Andante cantabile con moto

Menuetto – Allegro molto e vivace

Adagio – Allegro molto e vivace

Duration: approx. 26 minutes

Gustav Mahler

Symphony No. 1 in D major (*Titan*)

Langsam, schleppend. Immer sehr gemächlich

Kräftig bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell, Recht gemächlich)

*Feierlich und gemessen, ohne zu schleppen Sehr einfach und schlicht wie eine Volksweise,
und Wieder etwas bewegter, wie im Anfang*

Stürmisch bewegt – Energisch

Duration: approx. 53 minutes

Concertmaster: **Tijana Milošević**

Joseph Haydn's (1732–1809) first symphony was written in the period when the composer worked for Count Morzin in today's Czech Republic. Although the piece is classified as Haydn's first symphony, the scholars who studied his works are uncertain if this was actually the first one he composed or the first that survived to posterity.

Like most of Haydn's early symphonies, as well as his contemporaries' pieces of this genre, his **Symphony No 1 in D major** has three movements (*presto – andante – presto*). The instrumentation employed is also typical for the period in which the symphony was created – two oboes, a bassoon, two horns, strings and the continuo. The first movement was in the technique of the *Mannheim school*, whose followers, spearheaded by Johann Stamitz, wrote music for the court orchestra in Mannheim in the latter part of the 18th century. Composers of the *Mannheim school* introduced many innovations into the orchestral music of their day, most notably the sudden dynamic changes. In the beginning of his first symphony, Haydn also used the so-called *Mannheim crescendo*, while the remainder of the piece adheres to the classical Austrian tradition and character.

Symphony No 1, Op. 21 in C major by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) is dedicated to Gottfried van Swieten, the composer's patron in the period when he was a young artist. Stylistically, the piece fully follows the tradition of Beethoven's predecessors, particularly J. Haydn and W.A. Mozart, but nonetheless this early piece is clearly marked by features distinctive of Beethoven's unique stylistic expression.

The Symphony No 1 was premiered in Vienna in 1800, in a concert that was meant to announce Beethoven, as a young and promising composer, to the fastidious Vienna audience. Musicology considers this piece as the result of Beethoven's bold and advanced experimentation, which he presented five years after Haydn's last and twelve years after Mozart's last symphony.

Its form was laid down in correlation with the established composing tradition of the period. The musical content, instrumentation and tempos were, however, unusual, if not revolutionary, in terms of the treatment of the symphonic material.

With his first symphony, Beethoven introduced himself as a very bold, unique and advanced symphonist and he stayed true to the distinctive style he demonstrated in that piece throughout his entire career.

Strongly relying on Beethoven's and Bruckner's symphonic tradition, the first symphony of **Gustav Mahler** (1860–1911) illustrated clear characteristics of his symphonic style. **Symphony No 1** was composed in 1887–1888, while Mahler held the position of the second conductor at the Leipzig Opera. The premiere in Budapest in 1889 was not so well received and led to Mahler's disappointment. By 1907, Mahler had revised the score four times. The original five-movement plan of the symphony was thematically divided in two parts, with three movements in the first part and two in the second part. For two early performances in Hamburg (1893) and Weimar (1894), the composer added the subtitle *Titan – A Tone Poem in Symphonic Form* (the name *Titan* came from the novel by Jean Paul, which inspired Mahler), as well as programme notes to the movements, which he subsequently dropped. The final version has four movements, because the movement *Blumine*, which previously stood between the first and second movements, was removed. It was not rediscovered until 1966 by Donald Mitchell, while Benjamin Britten conducted the first performance of the symphony's integral version a year later. The reason for removing this movement is not sufficiently clear and it is assumed that Mahler buckled under the pressure of the critics who dubbed this movement sentimental and trivial.

Symphony No 1 starts a chronological sequence of four *Wunderhorn* symphonies, thematically and emotionally inspired by a collection of German folk poems *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (The boy's magic horn). In addition to a multitude of original themes, Mahler also used two poems from his song cycles *Songs of a Wayfarer* and *The boy's magic horn*, which he combined with new materials in the first and third movements.