

Season 2015/2016

Friday, 15 April 2016
Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation, 8pm

Cycle: ***For Adventurers***

Conductor: **Daniel Raiskin**
Soloist: **Martin Fröst**, clarinet

Program:

P. Vasks: *Sala*, symphonic elegy
Duration: approx. 18 minutes

C. Nielsen: Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra Op. 57
Duration: approx. 24 minutes

A. Hillborg: Clarinet Concerto *Peacock Tales* (*Millennium* version)

Duration: approx. 12 minutes

I. Stravinsky: *Petrushka* (1947 version)

The Shrove-tide Fair
Petrouchka's cell
The Moor's cell
The Shrove-tide Fair

Soloist: **Biljana Gorunović**, piano

Duration: approx. 34 minutes

Concertmaster: **Tijana Milošević**

Pēteris Vasks (1946) is the most successful representative of the Latvian composing school. His symphonies, choir and chamber music pieces are frequently included in concert programmes all around the world, while famous performers of his music are most notably Gidon Kremer and the Kronos Quartet. Vasks' poetics is based on a distinctive relationship between the man and the nature, exemplified in his *Sala*. The piece was commissioned by the Magnus Opus Project, which gathered three orchestras in California with the aim to ensure that new pieces were performed more frequently, instead of being lost to obscurity after the first performance. *Sala* was premiered by the Marin Symphony Orchestra in January 2007 in San Rafael, California. The piece is best summarised in these words: *The sounds of nature are combined with very fluid, long lines and modal melodies, somewhat like a Baltic folk tune. The asymmetric rhythmic structure also gives it a peasant, or country-like, character and there are also some influences of Latvia's geographic neighbours, like Sibelius and Shostakovich. But the emotional immediacy and spiritual identification gives Vasks' 'Sala' a language all its own.*

Danish composer Carl Nielsen (1865-1931) is considered one of the most prominent Scandinavian composers of the Romantic period, along with Edvard Grieg and Jean Sibelius. His prolific oeuvre includes six symphonies, two operas, violin, flute and clarinet concertos, a wind quintet and other chamber music pieces, as well as piano and vocal music.

The Clarinet Concerto is his last piece to involve an orchestra. Encouraged by the success of his Wind Quintet, Nielsen wanted to write five concertos, one for each member of the Copenhagen Wind Quintet, but managed to realise his intent only partially. After the Concerto for flute and orchestra, over a period of several months in 1928, he composed the Concerto for clarinet, dedicated to the clarinettist Aage Oxenvad. Nielsen showed his reverence to wind instruments in this score, its solo section being considered a genuine portrait of Oxenvad. Always strongly contrasting the orchestra, the exceptionally virtuosic clarinet section radiates humour, untypical for Nielsen's usual style and life disposition. The down-scaled orchestration is dominated by the snare drum section, functioning as unusual support to the soloist. The piece is presented in one continuous movement, separated into four sections, with the form being wrapped up quite uncommonly by the slow section "of serene cruelty".

The music of Swedish composer Anders Hillborg (1954) is performed worldwide. The most renowned interpreters of his works include Esa-Pekka Salonen, Alan Gilbert, Gustavo Dudamel, Andrey Boreyko, Yannick Nézet-Séguin with the Berlin, Los Angeles, New York and Stockholm philharmonic orchestras, many of which have commissioned music from him. After graduating from the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Hillborg started working as a freelance artist and soon after began teaching composition in Malmö.

Clarinet takes a prominent place in his body of work and the use of this instrument is best illustrated in the *Peacock Tales* Clarinet Concerto. The piece was commissioned by the Swedish Radio Orchestra in 1998, and the composer dedicated it to Martin Fröst. So far, this has been one of the key pieces in Fröst's repertoire. There are several versions of this remarkable blend of music, performance art, acting, pantomime and dance, and the Belgrade audience will hear the so-called *Millennium* version. It is the product of three months' worth of laborious effort and was premiered in October 1998, under the leadership of Leif Segerstam. Acting details were devised by Martin Fröst

and, besides the composer's original themes, the piece also includes quotations taken from other composers, the most momentous being *E lucevan le stelle* from the opera *Tosca*.

Petrushka, a ballet burlesque in four scenes, was a joint project of Diaghilev and Stravinsky. It was composed in 1911 and revised in 1947. The ballet was conceived as an orchestral suite with exceptionally demanding piano part, and was subsequently transcribed into a piano piece *Three fragments from Petrushka*, which became a standard part of piano virtuosi's repertoire. *Petrushka*'s "rigid, elementary sound" brought revolution into the history of music. Shocking in terms of the idea and the means, it provoked the same feelings in the audience. Although Stravinsky stemmed from the traditional school of Rimsky-Korsakov and the *Mighty Handful*, he abandoned the mixing of orchestral colours in favour of instrumentation with "rudimentary timbres". Chromatic harmonies of the late Romantic period were replaced with diatonic ones, embedded in the new context of polytonality, while the unique rhythmic pulse that flows out of the folklore patterns becomes the driver of the action. This bizarre story is about unrequited love of three puppets – Petrushka, who loves the Ballerina, and the Moor, whom she loves, and who eventually kills Petrushka. The First Tableau, *The Shrovetide Fair*, describes the place where the story unfolds. The Second Tableau is dedicated to Petrushka and gives a musical portrayal of his benevolent character. Its most compelling aspect is the polytonality of two diametrically opposing (the most tonally remote) chords, like the combination of human and puppet's qualities in the character of Petrushka. The Third Tableau presents the evil Moor – his dance with the Ballerina emerges from a military sound of the trumpet, which transforms into a waltz, interrupted by Petrushka's jealousy. The final tableau brings tragedy. The Moor kills Petrushka at the fair that abounds with genre-scenes: dance of nannies, the peasants with the bear, the merchant and the gypsies, the coachmen and the masquerade. Petrushka's spirit appears in a new guise, deformed and crooked to the core.

Danica Maksimović