

Season 2016/2017

Friday, 3 March 2017

Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation, 8pm

For Megalomaniacs

Conductor: **Cristian Mandeal**

Soloists: **János Benyus, István Flammer, Bence Mészáros, Máté Hamar**, French horns

Programme:

A. Schönberg: *Verklärte Nacht*, Op. 4

Duration: approx. 30 minutes

R. Schumann: Concerto for Four French Horns and Orchestra, Op. 86

Lebhaft

Romanze

Sehr lebhaft

Duration: approx. 20 minutes

H. Berlioz: *Symphonie funèbre et triomphale*, Op. 15

Marche funèbre. Moderato un poco lento

Oration funèbre. Adagio non tanto – Andantino un poco lento e sostenuto

Apothéose. Allegro non troppo e pomposo

Duration: approx. 33 minutes

Concert master: **Miroslav Pavlović**

Arnold Schönberg (1874–1951) is one of the composers who defined the 20th century music in a very distinctive way. His music began evolving from the lineage of late Romanticism in the period following Wagner's death, before Schönberg shifted his focus towards expressionistic tendencies of destroying tonality and turning to atonal and twelve-tone music, whereas in his late period he developed a synthesis of those elements. One of the more significant pieces from Schönberg's early period is the string sextet ***Verklärte Nacht***. Composed in 1899, it is one of several pieces (mostly solo songs) inspired by Richard Dehmel's poetry. The poem that served as the literary template for this piece is about a woman who confesses to her lover that she bears the child of another man, whom she has never loved. He tells her that he would accept the child as his own. The literary template is not essential for understanding the piece because of the absence of a dramatic plot, both in the poem and in its transposition into the string sextet. Consequently, the piece is often interpreted as a single-movement programmatic composition with abstract content. It was originally composed for the competition organised by the Vienna Music Society, but was rejected owing to the employed harmonic solutions that were quite unconventional at the time. Although Schönberg's piece very clearly reveals the synthesis of Wagner's and Brahms' musical thinking, it was described as *similar to Tristan and Isolde if the ink were smeared across Wagner's score*. Since it was originally composed for string sextet, the composer revised it for string orchestra in 1943.

Robert Schumann (1810–1856) is one of the representatives of German Romanticism, a music critic and essayist, the founder of *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (New Journal for Music) and the composer of many pieces of music in various genres, most notably piano compositions, solo songs and symphonies, although his contribution to other genres known at the time is not negligible either. **Concerto for Four French Horns and Orchestra** was written in 1849, in one of the most prolific periods of his life. The traditional three-movement structure of the concerto is enriched by exceptionally virtuosic treatment of the solo horns, which is reflected in the contrasts between the four horns and the orchestra, as well as between the four individual horns. Moreover, the orchestration clearly displays very gentle reflections of tone colours, enabled by the nature of the solo instruments. Namely, the French horn, as a specific 'connective tissue' in orchestras, serves as a bridge that connects the 'non-related' orchestral groups. Since this concerto features four solo French horns, the situation is somewhat reversed. The 'non-related' orchestral groups are employed in various ways to enrich the tone colour of the French horn.

Under the influence of opera music of his time, French composer **Hector Berlioz** (1803–1869) wished to enrich the symphonic genre by infusing it with dramatic plot (commonly taken from non-musical sources), since symphonies, besides chamber music, were often neglected in the 19th century owing to the domination of opera. Berlioz's symphonic oeuvre was created between 1830 and 1840, starting with the famous *Symphonie fantastique*, in which he developed the concept of the *idée fixe*, followed by *Harold en Italie* – a symphony with a concertante treatment of solo viola, as well as the symphony with soloists and a choir *Romeo et Juliette*, based on Shakespeare's eponymous play, and his last, ***Symphonie funèbre et triomphale***.

Berlioz wrote it on commission from the French Government, for the tenth anniversary of the July Revolution. The piece was structured in the style of French ceremonial music, as a three-movement cycle in which all movements are in different keys, and each of them can be related to some of the general aspects of various public ceremonies, which is also obvious in the titles of the movements. Thus, the first movement is a funeral march, the second one, with its concertante treatment of solo trombones, should be evoking a funeral oration, while the third and final movement was written in the manner of a triumphal march. In line with its purpose, the piece is very interestingly scored. The Place de la Bastille hosted a procession of 200 marching musicians – a large military wind band and the percussionists. An option was subsequently introduced to significantly reduce the entire ensemble for concert performances, as well as the possibility to include strings in the final movement and a choir in the very final section.

Miloš Bralović*

*In the season 2016/17, the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra offers an opportunity to selected young musicologists to enhance their professional training by writing programme notes.