

Season 2016/2017

Friday, 10 March 2017
Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation, 8pm

For Lovers

Concert dedicated to the memory of Zoran Đinđić

Conductor: **Adrian Prabava**
Soloist: **Andrei Ioniță**, violoncello

Programme:

P. I. Tchaikovsky: *Romeo and Juliet*, overture-fantasy

Duration: approx. 20 minutes

G. Faure: *Elegy for violoncello and orchestra* Op. 24

Duration: approx. 7 minutes

C. Saint-Saëns: Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra No. 1 in A minor, Op. 33

Allegro non troppo
Allegretto con moto
Tempo primo

Duration: approx. 20 minutes

M. Ravel: *Daphnis et Chloé*, suites Nos 1 and 2

Nocturne
Interlude
Danse guerrière

Lever du Jour
Pantomime
Danse Générale

Duration: approx. 30 minutes

Concertmaster: **Miroslav Pavlović**

The Overture-Fantasy ***Romeo and Juliet*** by **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky** (1840–1893) was inspired by Shakespeare's tragedy of the same name. Tchaikovsky composed and revised this piece for more than ten years. The final, third version was completed in 1880 and premiered on 1 May 1886 in Tbilisi, Georgia. This version is the one that is now in the repertoire, whereas the earlier versions are performed occasionally as historical curiosities. Although styled an 'Overture-Fantasy' by the composer, the piece was written as a symphonic poem in sonata form, with an introduction and an epilogue.

At first, the piece was not successful in Russia and the rest of Europe. Nevertheless, several Parisian composers, including Saint-Saëns, as well as the Russian Mighty Handful, contributed to its promotion, resulting in its being quite often included in the repertoires of orchestras around the world. The popularity of *Romeo and Juliet* is reflected in the fact that this composition, especially its *love theme*, has been used in many television series, films, and even computer games.

French composer, organist, pianist and teacher **Gabriel Fauré** (1845–1924) is considered one of the most influential composers of his generation. As a teacher, and subsequently the director of the Paris Conservatoire, he modernised and broadened the musical repertoire studied at this institution, ranging from Renaissance polyphony to the works of Debussy.

Having finished composing his first string quartet in 1880, Fauré began working on a cello sonata. Since it was his common practice to first compose a slow movement, Fauré started his piece in that manner. As an announcement for the whole sonata that was meant to be completed subsequently, the movement was performed in the same year. Nevertheless, in 1883 Fauré published the slow movement as a stand-alone piece under the title *Élégie*, leaving the sonata unfinished. Under this name, the Elegy was premiered at the Société Nationale de Musique in Paris by cellist Jules Loeb, accompanied on the piano by the composer himself. The performance was a major success, and the composer was asked to write a version for violoncello and orchestra,

which was premiered in 1901. The *Elegy*, with its intense feelings of wistfulness and sorrow, is considered as one of the last pieces that can be described as French musical Romanticism, after which Fauré's music became more introverted and discreet.

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921) was a French composer, conductor, organist and pianist. His pieces are included among the best compositions of the Romantic era, since they deeply influenced generations of French composers that worked after him. Saint-Saëns wrote his **Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra No 1 in A minor** when he was 37 years old, and dedicated it to Auguste Tolbecque, French cellist and instrument maker. Tolbecque gave the first performance of the concerto on 19 January 1873, at the Paris Conservatoire, which marked the acceptance of Saint-Saëns by the French musical establishment.

In writing the concerto, Saint-Saëns broke with convention, most notably with respect to the form. Namely, instead of three separate movements, he wrote a concerto in one continuous movement with three sections, mutually connected by musical ideas, typically presented in extremely virtuosic and demanding cello passages. Instead of the traditional orchestral introduction, the piece begins with one chord from the orchestra, followed by the soloist's presentation of the main theme. After the turbulent first section, there is a short minuet, which contains a cello cadenza. A restatement of the opening material from the first section opens the third and, after the recapitulations, the piece is concluded by an entirely new musical idea, delivered in the solo passage.

The ballet *Daphnis et Chloé* by the celebrated French composer **Maurice Ravel** (1875–1937) was commissioned by the Russian ballet impresario Sergei Diaghilev. The composition has one movement, consisting of three scenes. For the scenario, Mikhail Fokin adapted the romance *Daphnis et Chloé* by the ancient Greek writer Longus. The plot is set on the island of Lesbos and inspired by the legend of the shepherd Daphnis, who overcame many obstacles on his way to a happy ending with Chloé.

Ravel began composing what he called *the choreographic symphony* in 1909, and finished it in 1912. This designation comes from the symphonically organised tonal plan, as well as from a certain number of motifs, the development of which ensured the symphonic homogeneity. Ravel conceived the ballet as a sort of homage to Greece from his dreams, which can be compared to the works of the French late 18th century painters. However, this idea was disliked by the costume designer Leon Bakst and choreographer Mikhail Fokin, who wanted to bring into life the dance from the famous ancient vases, resulting in creative disagreements between the artists during the process of creation. Nevertheless, the ballet was completed and premiered on 8 June 1912 at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris. Although the premiere was attended by a small audience and the ballet was soon taken down from the repertoire, Ravel considered it to be one of his most successful pieces.

At almost an hour long, *Daphnis et Chloé* is Ravel's longest work. The dramatic plot is followed by a large orchestra and two choirs – one on the stage, and another one behind the stage. Orchestras worldwide often play two orchestral suites, extracted by the composer himself, leaving it to the performers to choose whether to include a choir

or not. The first suite was created as an excerpt from the first part of the ballet, and it was premiered in 1911, before the entire piece was completed. The second suite, which is related programme-wise to the latter part of the scenario, was made after the ballet's first performance in Paris.

Bojana Radovanović *

*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.