

Season 2016/2017

Thursday, 27 April 2017

Friday, 28 April 2017

Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation, 8pm

The Philharmania and For Lovers

Conductor: **Howard Griffiths**

Soloist: **Andrea Lucchesini**, piano

Programme:

S. Prokofiev: *The Love for Three Oranges*, symphonic suite op. 33bis

The Ridicules

The Magician Tchelio and Fata Morgana Play Cards

March

Scherzo

The Prince and the Princess

Flight

Duration: approx. 15 minutes

B. Bartok: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 3 in E major Sz. 119, BB 127

Allegretto

Adagio religioso

Allegro vivace

Duration: approx. 25 minutes

D. Shostakovich: *The Gadfly*, film suite op. 97a

Overture

Contredanse

Folk Feast (National Holiday)

Interlude

Barrel Organ Waltz
Galop
Introduction (Prelude)
Romance
Intermezzo
Nocturne
Scene
Finale

Duration: approx. 40 minutes

Concert master: **Tijana Milošević**

Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953) is one of the most versatile 20th century composers, who created music in almost all existing genres of art music. His earliest musical experiences started at age four, when he had his first piano lessons with his mother, while his first compositions came soon after. At twelve, he started studying with Glazunov at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, where he first heard Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's late operas. Anchored in the tradition of Russian, as well as Western European classical music, Sergei Prokofiev composed in the framework of Neoclassicism, but he would also often utilize the audacious, expressionistic musical language.

Opera *The Love for Three Oranges* was composed in 1921, on commission from the Chicago Opera Association. Prokofiev received the commission in 1918, during his first visit to the United States, when he gave a number of successful concerts in Chicago to present his music. The libretto for this satirical opera was written by Prokofiev himself, based on the Russian translation of an 18th century play by the Italian playwright Carlo Gozzi. Prokofiev's adaptation of the play entailed a contemporary approach to the *Commedia dell'arte* (the elements of which are also present in the original play, while Prokofiev gave them a dose of Surrealism), as well as translation into the French language, in which the opera was premiered in Chicago in 1921.

By making a selection of the most remarkable instrumental parts from the opera, Prokofiev created the orchestral suite for concert performances. The suite consists of six movements, with *March* as the most famous among them.

Hungarian composer, pianist, researcher and folk song collector (one of the founders of ethnomusicology), **Bela Bartok** (1881-1945) is one of the most significant 20th century composers. His music reflects modernistic ideas of the new, expanded tonality, which he implements in Hungarian folk songs. Highlights of Bartok's oeuvre include ballets *The Miraculous Mandarin* and *The Wooden Prince*, the opera *Bluebeard's Castle*, the Concerto for Orchestra, the collection of piano miniatures *Mikrokosmos*, six string quartets, as well as three concertos for piano, two for violin and one for viola.

Bartok mostly composed his piano pieces, which include three piano concertos, for himself or his wife Ditta Pásztor, herself also a pianist. Together, they premiered almost all of

Bartok's piano music. The composer wrote his **Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 3** as a birthday gift for his wife's 42nd birthday in 1945, but he died before he could finish it. The concerto was premiered the next year and the soloist was György Sandor, Hungarian pianist and a friend of the Bartoks, while the solo part in the first recording of the concerto was played by Ditta Pásztory.

Bela Bartok's Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 3 consists of three movements. The melody of the first movement is based on the Hungarian folk theme, resembling the popular *verbunkos* melodies, introduced by the solo piano in the beginning of the movement. The chorale style of the second movement is an allusion to Beethoven's String quartet in A minor, while the presence of Tristan's chord and its distinctive sound is a reference to Wagner. The third movement is also inspired by Hungarian folklore and radiates optimism and *joie de vivre*.

Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich (1906–1975) is one of the most significant 20th century Russian composers. His composing style is characterised by a combination of various influences, which makes his music a rich blend of thematic and character contrasts, grotesque elements and ambiguous tonality.

Shostakovich wrote *The Gadfly* in 1955 as the music for a Soviet film directed by Alexander Fainzimmer, which rose to great popularity in the Soviet Union. *The Gadfly*, based on the novel of the same name by English writer Ethel Voynich, belongs to the genre of history drama which portrays the struggle of Italian *Risorgimento* fighters from the first part of the 19th century against the Austrian occupation, focusing on the story of an ordinary, benevolent young man who turns into the Gadfly, the intrepid fighter and legendary revolutionary. Since the plot is set in Italy, it inspired Shostakovich to introduce elements of Bellini's and Verdi's opera style, as well as the flavour of seemingly Neapolitan folk tunes.

The film suite *The Gadfly* was compiled from the parts of the music used in the film, which were selected and arranged by Soviet composer Levon Atovmian (Prokofiev's assistant, arranger and collaborator in many recordings of Soviet composers). The Suite comprises 12 movements, the most famous being the lively *Galop*, the *Romance* with its solo treatment of the violin and a section inspired by Massenet's *Meditation*, and the *Finale* – the movement that has been often commercially used in the media.

Ana Djordjević*

*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.