

Season 2017/2018

Earth 1

Conductor: **Gabriel Feltz**

Friday, 29 September 2017
Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation, 8PM

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Ludwig van Beethoven

Symphony No. 6 in F major Op. 68

Erwachen heiterer Empfindungen bei der Ankunft auf dem Lande / Awakening of cheerful feelings upon arrival in the countryside

Szene am Bach / Scene by the brook

Lustiges Zusammensein der Landleute / Merry gathering of country folk

Gewitter, Sturm / Thunder. Storm

Hirtengesang. Frohe und dankbare Gefühle nach dem Sturm / Shepherd's song; cheerful and thankful feelings after the storm

Duration: approx. 39 minutes

Richard Strauss

Eine Alpensinfonie / Alpine Symphony Op.64

Nacht / Night

Sonnenaufgang / Sunrise

Der Anstieg / The Ascent

Eintritt in den Wald / Entry into the Forest

Wanderung neben dem Bache / Wandering by the Brook

Wasserfall / At the Waterfall

Erscheinung / Apparition

Auf blumigen Wiesen / On Flowering Meadows

Auf der Alm / On the Alpine Pasture

Durch Dickicht und Gestrüpp auf Irrwegen / Through Thickets and Undergrowth on the Wrong Path

Auf dem Gletscher / On the Glacier

Gefahrvolle Augenblicke / Dangerous Moments

Auf dem Gipfel / On the Summit

Vision / Vision

Nebel steigen auf / Mists Rise

Die Sonne verdüstert sich allmählich / The Sun Gradually Becomes Obscured
Elegie / Elegy
Stille vor dem Sturm / Calm Before the Storm
Gewitter und Sturm, Abstieg / Thunder and Tempest, Descent
Sonnenuntergang / Sunset
Ausklang / Quiet Settles
Nacht / Night

Duration: approx. 47 minutes

Concertmasters: Tijana Milošević and Miroslav Pavlović

In one of **Ludwig van Beethoven's** (1770–1827) marathon-like concerts in 1808, the programme included the composer's Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, the Piano Concerto No. 4, *Gloria* and *Sanctus* movements from the Mass in C major, the aria *Ah! Perfido*, piano improvisations and the *Choral Fantasy*. That was the first time the composer provided a written explanation of the music that was to be played within the programme of the Symphony No 6, stressing that it was "more the expression of feeling than painting". Although there had been earlier examples of programmatic music, starting from the Renaissance period, this composition, popularly known as the *Pastoral Symphony*, was a logical step towards Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* and a multitude of programmatic romantic pieces of diverse genres.

As a great admirer of the nature, Beethoven depicted its beautiful images through five non-standard movements of the symphonic cycle. After the composer's delight and elation about arriving in the countryside, the second movement leads us to a brook with the sounds of the flowing water and the singing of the birds: nightingale (flute), quail (oboe) and cuckoo (clarinet), who are given the role of soloists with a cadenza. The third movement is a scherzo with a rustic dance of the country folk in the trio section. The merry gathering comes to an end with the arrival of black clouds and the first drops of rain. Regardless of many examples of emulated thunderstorms in the musical literature, this one is probably the most true-to-life: the orchestral powers grow stronger and the trombones kick in supported by the timpani. The atmosphere then calms, the clouds disperse and the flute takes us into fantastic sunny landscapes dominated by the key of F major. Beethoven's Symphony No 6 is the reason why F major is nowadays considered as the *pastoral* key, and the most adequate choice for composers when portraying the scenes of the nature.

The tone poems by **Richard Strauss** (1864–1949), written in the last two decades of the 19th century, represented the golden period of the development of this genre. *Don Juan*, *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*, *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, *Don Quixote* and *A Hero's Life* found their permanent place in the concert repertoire. In the subsequent years, Strauss shifted his focus to the opera. Taking a break from the operatic genre in 1915, he wrote his last tone poem, which surpassed all previously written tone poems in terms of the size of the orchestra and its concept. This monumental piece (originally scored for more than 120 musicians) comprises 22 sections in one movement. Through the music, inspired by the lovely nature, we can go mountain trekking in the Alps, which covers the period from the sunrise to the sunset. Strauss had experienced a similar adventure as a boy when the group of mountain climbers he was a part of lost their way when coming down from the

mountain, as a result of a storm. From the first sketches dated to 1899, he developed a full-scale composition followed by narrative content. It is structured as a *gigantic Lisztian symphonic form, with elements of an introduction, opening allegro, scherzo, slow movement, finale and epilogue*. Tone painting dominates as the fundamental composition principle.

From the mysterious opening sounds of the dark night emerges the *mountain theme*, which recurs often in later sections of the piece. The arrival of the day that conquers the night is depicted with a bright tonality and a climbing motif, which formally concludes the introduction. The ascent on the mountain brings two new motifs, the marching and the fanfare themes, describing the dangers of such a journey, with distant sounds of a hunting party. The climbers' entry into the forest is painted with darker instrumental colours, with only occasional call of the birds. *Wandering by the Brook* marks the beginning of a new formal section – the development – dominated by cascading figures, whereas the *Waterfall* is an example of brilliant instrumentation. Through pastoral sights of meadows and pastures we can hear the sounds of cowbells, yodelling and even the bleating of sheep, which creates both a strong visual and aural image of the mountain sights. As the road to the top gradually becomes more dangerous, the musical language becomes rougher. The *peak motif* is a reminiscence of Strauss' opening motif from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in the passage that becomes the central section of the piece, with a panoramic sight before the eyes of the auditorium. This is, at the same time, the dramaturgical culmination, which extends into the lyrical culmination in the *Elegy*, as the calm before the incoming storm, when the orchestra is presented in its maximum size. The sounds of thunder and tempest are supplemented with various sound effects to augment the performance. After the rain stops, in the end of the day, the sun starts to bashfully appear. In this final part of the tone poem the sounds of pure nature gradually die down, as it prepares for the end of a tumultuous day and the upcoming night.

An Alpine Symphony, recorded by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Herbert von Karajan, features in the first commercial classical music CD published under the Deutsche Grammophon label in 1983.

The Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra's first performance of the *Alpine Symphony* was in 1984 under Hans Graf, and then again in 2013 under the then Chief Conductor Muhai Tang.

Asja Radonjić

The newly appointed Chief Conductor of the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra, **Gabriel Feltz** was born in 1971 in Berlin. Since 2013, Feltz has concurrently worked as the Generalmusikdirektor of the Dortmund Opera and Chief Conductor of the Dortmund Philharmonic Orchestra. After three very successful years, his contract has been renewed ahead of time until 2023. After the Philharmonic Orchestra Altenburg-Gera (2001-2005) and the Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra (2004 – 2013) this is his third position in a row as chief conductor of a German orchestra. With unusual programs and a marked rise of musical quality he managed to increase audiences significantly with all these orchestras. In 2007, the Sergej Rachmaninow Foundation awarded Gabriel Feltz and the Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra the Prix Rachmaninow for their exceptionally extensive Rachmaninow concert cycle. In addition, Feltz has been Principal Guest Conductor at the Basel Theatre (2008- 2013) and had been responsible for several opera productions, which led to the Basel Theatre being named Opera House of the Year in 2009 and 2010.

From 1989 to 1994, Gabriel Feltz studied conducting and piano at the Hanns Eisler Academy of Music in Berlin. After the studies, he became Gerd Albrecht's assistant at the Hamburg State Opera (1994-1995). The first engagements took him to the Lübeck Opera (1995-1997) and the Bremen Theatre (1997-2001).

Gabriel Feltz has conducted leading orchestras in Germany and abroad such as Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden, the Symphonieorchester of the Bayerischen Rundfunk, the Bavarian State Orchestra, the Deutsche Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, the Konzerthausorchester Berlin, the Frankfurt Opernhaus- and Museumsorchester, Staatskapelle Weimar, the orchestra of the Nationaltheater Mannheim, the Bamberger Symphoniker, the Essen Philharmonic, the Radio Symphony Orchestras of Berlin (RSB), Cologne (WDR), Leipzig (MDR), Hannover (NDR) and Saarbrücken (SR), the German National Youth Orchestra, the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, the Berner Symphonieorchester, the Sinfonieorchester Basel, the Orchestra of the Vlaamse Opera Antwerpen, the RTE National Symphony Orchestra (Ireland), the KBS Symphony Orchestra Seoul, the Orchestre Symphonique de Mulhouse, as well as the Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra, the China National Symphony Orchestra and the Beijing Symphony Orchestra. In 2013/14, Gabriel Feltz gave his highly successful debut at the Komische Oper Berlin with Bernd Alois Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten* and in the same season he conducted the *Flying Dutchman* at the Bavarian State Opera. Gabriel Feltz' personal highlight of the 2014/15 season was Gustav Mahler's 8th Symphony for the 200 Anniversary celebrations of the Musikverein Graz.

The extensive Discography of Gabriel Feltz makes him one of the outstanding conductors of his generation. The repertoire ranges from Mozart and Beethoven to Rachmaninoff, Elgar, Prokofiev, Scriabin and Richard Strauss to Nono and Ligeti. In 2007, Gabriel Feltz started the recording of all Mahler symphonies (Dreyer-Gaido) with the Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra. At the moment, the symphonies 1–7 are available. The cycle is highly acclaimed as the most "extraordinary and controversial cycle of the recent years". The recording of Luigi Nono's *Intolleranza* performed by the Bremen Philharmonic Orchestra and the choir of the Bremen Opera under Gabriel Feltz has been awarded the Diapason d'Or in June 2013. Ottorino Respighi's *Belkis – Regina di Saba* has been released in 2013. This recording is the first complete performance of the piece that is highly appreciated by Feltz since its world premiere in 1932 at La Scala, Milano. The TV production of *Aida am Rhein* under

Maestro Feltz had an outstanding success all over Europe (live on Swiss TV, 3Sat, RAI, ZDF) and is available on DVD.

His future projects include concerts and opera productions in Berlin, Zürich, Taipei (Taiwan), Köln, Graz, Sendai (Japan) and San Antonio (USA).

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