

Season 2017/2018

THE BELGRADE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

*Series: Fire*

Conductor: **Gabriel Feltz**

Soloist: **Philipp Kopachevsky**, piano

Friday, 27 October 2017

Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation, 8pm

[www.bgf.rs](http://www.bgf.rs)

**Richard Strauss**

*Macbeth*, symphonic poem Op. 23

Duration: approx. 20 minutes

**Petar Konjović**

*Symphonic Triptych (Koštana)*

*Sobina*

*Chestnut Wood*

*The Great Choček Dance*

Duration: approx. 23 minutes

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**Alexander Scriabin**

*Prometheus, Poem of Fire*, Op. 60

Duration: approx. 24 minutes

Concertmaster: Miroslav Pavlović

When **Richard Strauss** (1864-1949) met composer and violinist Alexander Ritter, this encounter caused a dramatic change in Strauss' work. Ritter proposed to Strauss to start composing a new genre, emulating the work of Franz Liszt, who improved not only Strauss' music, but also the music of the whole era in general. Thus, modelled on the Shakespeare's play, he wrote the tone poem *Macbeth*, still insufficiently differentiated as a form and more as an attempt to introduce a new genre that entailed a combination of text and music in a cyclic form. In addition to opera, Strauss' music would rise to its pinnacle in this genre, especially with *Don Juan*, *Death and Transfiguration*, *Don Quixote*, *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and others. However, it was difficult in the beginning. Strauss returned to *Macbeth* so many times before it was complete, revising its details and especially orchestration solutions. He primarily focused on the development and recapitulation sections of the piece composed in the traditional sonata form. All this was the consequence of his inexperience in this genre and the difficulties he faced in trying to balance narrative content with musical form. For that reason, Strauss' *Macbeth* is interpreted as the portrayal of two main characters – Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

When **Petar Konjović's** (1883-1970) best-known work and one of the most momentous Serbian operas – *Koštana* (1931) became widely popular on the opera stage, the composer combined three orchestral fragments and arranged them into a concert piece titled *Symphonic Triptych*. It was premiered in this version on 11 April 1938, at the festival of Yugoslav philharmonic orchestras in Belgrade, when the united Ljubljana, Zagreb and Belgrade philharmonic orchestras were conducted by Lovro Matačić. The *Triptych* would soon become Konjović's best-known and best-loved work, as well as a representative work of the Serbian national music. The interlude *Sobina*, which connects the first and second scenes, is based on the contrasts between the atmosphere on Easter Eve and the loud carousal at Hadži-Toma's mill. The role of the slow movement is played by the prelude to the sixth scene, titled *Chestnut Wood*. On top of its pedal tone substratum played by double bases and timpani, the composer develops the melody inspired by the folk song *Crni goro*. *The Great Choček Dance* is a ballet from the second scene, consisting of nine arranged and orchestrated tunes from the area surrounding the town of Vranje, most notably *Donesi more*, *Mare*, *Fatiše kolo* and *Eva, Eva kaurkinja*.

The early creative period of **Alexander Scriabin** (1875-1915) was marked by piano pieces in the manner of Chopin, which the composer himself performed as a young piano star and Gold Medal recipient at the Moscow Conservatory. Having reached his mature phase, the composer entirely transformed his private life, but he also made a sharp turn in his creative work. Influenced by Nietzsche's *Übermensch* philosophy, and especially by a new love that introduced him into the world of theosophy, Scriabin believed that his music had to power to bring mystical unity to a fragmented world. Thus, he became to compose innovative, visionary music suited to his self-perception as the *musical Messiah*.

In this period, Scriabin wrote a series of symphonic works that he believed would lead to the transformation of human consciousness: *The Divine Poem*, *The Poem of Ecstasy*, *Prometheus*, *The Poem of Fire* and *Mysterium*. *Mysterium* was meant to be the final phase – the transformation itself – which suggested that performers and the audience would experience actual transformation during the

performance envisioned in India, during which the entire mankind would be elevated to the state of ecstatic consciousness. The piece was never developed from the initial idea, since Scriabin unexpectedly died at age 43.

*Prometheus* is a distinct chapter in the fulfilment of this idea. It was premiered in Moscow in 1911, with Scriabin as piano soloist and Sergei Koussevitsky conducting. Across its twenty-minute span, the composer attempts to depict the entire sequence of development of human consciousness, from primordial formlessness through man's emerging self-awareness to a final ecstatic union with the cosmos. In Prometheus' fire, Scriabin saw the symbol of human consciousness and creative energy. In order to depict this concept, he envisioned the piece not as a *symphony of sound* but as a *symphony of colour rays*. He also designed the *tastiera per luce*, or "color-keyboard", that would project light of different colors on a screen behind the orchestra, reproducing visually what the orchestra was dramatizing in sound. This concept is nowadays considered one of the earliest examples of a multi-media event.

Scriabin never saw a performance with lights, nor did there exist an instrument at that time that could technically achieve this. In fact, Scriabin's ideas about the correspondences between particular colors and tones were never developed in a systematic way, and those who create the light display at performances of *Prometheus* must create their own theory of light and its relation to this music.

The piece was scored for a large orchestra, with a prominent part for the piano. Nevertheless, it was not conceived as a concerto and the piano is simply one of the characters in this drama that leads the listeners through the complex process of enlightenment.

This will be the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra's first performance of *Prometheus, Poem of Fire*.

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 Chiefconductor 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 Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra, 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. Otto Respighi's *Belkis – Regina di Saba* has been released in 2013 (Blue-Ray and DVD) with Stella Doufexis, Mezzosoprano, Julia Jentsch, Speaker, the Brno Philharmonic choir and the Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra. 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 M° 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, Belgrad, Taipei (Taiwan), Köln, Graz, Sendai (Japan) and San Antonio (USA).

A prize-winner at international competitions, the young pianist **Philipp Kopachevsky** had won tremendous audience admiration and acclaim by the age of twenty-three. He regularly appears in recital in Great Britain, Germany, the USA, the Netherlands, France, Italy, Greece, Poland and Spain as well as throughout Russia. Kopachevsky has won particular popularity in Japan, where especially for NHK TV he recorded a disc of piano music by Chopin.

Philipp Kopachevsky was born in Moscow in 1990. He graduated from the Central School of Music of the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatoire. He is currently a student at the Moscow Conservatoire (class of Professor Sergei

Dorensky). has been a prize-winner at eight prestigious international competitions, among them the X International Franz Schubert Piano Competition (Germany).

The musician has performed with the world's great orchestras, among them the English Chamber Orchestra, the Academic Symphony Orchestra of the Moscow Philharmonic, the Symphony Orchestra of the Kolobov Novaya Opera Theatre in Moscow, the Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra, the Russian National Orchestra, the National Philharmonic Orchestra of Russia, the Moscow State Academic Symphony Orchestra under Pavel Kogan, the Novaya Rossiya State Symphony Orchestra, the Yevgeny Svetlanov State Symphony Orchestra of Russia and the Academic Symphony Orchestra of the St Petersburg Philharmonic. He has collaborated with such illustrious conductors as Mstislav Rostropovich, Vladimir Spivakov, Mikhail Pletnev, Yevgeny Kolobov, Yuri Simonov, Alexander Dmitriev, Andrew Gourlay, William Noll, Bjarte Engeset, Charles Olivieri-Munroe, Yevgeny Bushkov, Maxim Vengerov, Paul Watkins, Jan Latham-Koenig, Dorian Wilson and Dmitry Liss among others.

Philipp Kopachevsky has appeared at numerous international festivals, such as the Andrei Sakharov Festival (Nizhny Novgorod), the Vera Lotar-Shevchenko Memorial Competition (Novosibirsk), the Steinway Festival, the Miami Piano Festival, the Arts Naples World Festival (USA), the Colmar International Festival (France), the Mstislav Rostropovich Memorial Festival (Baku), the Baltic Seasons festival (Kaliningrad), Vladimir Spivakov Invites, Stars on Baikal, Crescendo and Denis Matsuev Invites among numerous others.

He performed at the world premiere of choreographer Benjamin Millepied's ballet *Without* at the Mariinsky Theatre.

Philipp Kopachevsky is involved in the Moscow State Academic Philharmonic's project *Stars of the 21st Century*.

The next concerts of the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra are scheduled on Thursday, **2 November 2017**, as part of the *Philharmania(c)* series, and Friday, **3 November 2017** as part of the *Water* series, at the Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation, at 8pm.

Conductor: **Fabrice Bollon**

Soloist: **Višnja Popov**, mezzo-soprano

Programme:

A. Lyadov: *Enchanted Lake*

E. Elgar: *Sea Pictures*

M. Logar: *Goldfish*, ballet suite No. 3

S. Rachmaninoff: *Isle of the Dead*

Dear subscribers, ahead of each concert of the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra, musicologist Maja Čolović-Vasić will be giving introductory words about the pieces in the programme for that evening, at the Kolarac Music Gallery starting at 7.30pm.

Dear visitors, please turn off your mobile phones; you are also kindly reminded that taking photographs and the use of video and audio recording devices is strictly forbidden during the concerts of the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra. We wish you a pleasant evening.