

Season 2017/2018

THE BELGRADE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Series: Fire

Conductor: **Howard Griffiths**

Soloist: **Sanja Romić**, oboe

Friday, 17 November 2017

Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation, 8pm

www.bgf.rs

Programme:

Modest Mussorgsky

Night on Bald Mountain

Duration: approx. 12 minutes

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Concerto for oboe and string orchestra

Rondo Pastorale (Allegro moderato)

Minuet and Musette (Allegro moderato)

Scherzo (Presto – Doppio più lento – Lento – Presto)

Duration: approx. 19 minutes

Hector Berlioz

Symphonie fantastique Op. 14

Rêveries – Passions / Reveries – Passions

Un bal / A Ball

Scène aux champs / Scene in the Fields

Marche au supplice / March to the Scaffold

Songes d'une nuit du sabbat / Dream of the Night of the Sabbath

Duration: approx. 50 minutes

Concertmaster: Tijana Milošević

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881) drew inspiration for his tone poem *Night on Bald Mountain* from Gogol's tale *St. John's Eve*, symbolically completing the piece on St. John's Eve in 1867. The composition was severely criticised by Miliy Balakirev, Mussorgsky's mentor, who proposed numerous modifications before he would accept to perform it. Mussorgsky did not want to change what he considered his first independently composed piece, which resulted in the original version not being premiered until the period between the two world wars. Five years after Mussorgsky's death, *Night on Bald Mountain* found its way into the hands of Rimsky-Korsakov, who orchestrated it, rewrote and premiered this version.

Mussorgsky himself put several short notes in the score: 1. *Assembly of the witches, their talk and gossip* 2. *Satan's journey* 3. *Obscene praises of Satan* 4. *Sabbath*, with which he portrays the shortest night of the year, when, according to popular belief, witches perform a ceremony that praises Satan until dawn. On that night, many peoples ritually searched for medicinal herbs and lit bonfires on bald heights celebrating St. John, in order to chase away evil, dark forces wandering about. Mussorgsky's huge pride – *Night on Bald Mountain* is a Russian authentic, high-spirited and chaotic piece with a powerful, fiery beginning; a dark and grotesque worship kindles and burns ablaze, before it dies down at dawn, choked by the chime of church bells.

Concerto for oboe and orchestra in A minor (1944) by **Ralph Vaughan Williams** (1872-1958) is one of the most significant pieces with which the 20th century contributed to the tradition of oboe concertos, fostered since the times of baroque masters such as T. Albinoni, A. Marcelllo, J. S. Bach, Handel and Vivaldi. Dedicated to famous British virtuoso Léon Goossens, the concerto is an idiosyncratic portrait of his virtuosity and poses a great challenge for both the soloist and the orchestra.

Honoured as an English national composer, Vaughan Williams studied with Bruch and Ravel, collected and analysed English folk songs, and the synthesis of these interests and knowledge lead to the development of his own personal expression. Thus, the modal, pentatonic tune of the oboe concerto is in the spirit of the English folklore: the theme of the first movement is *a solitary shepherd piping on a hillside*, the combination of Minuet and Musette in the second movement evokes a rustic dance, while the third movement scherzo ignites melancholy. The dynamic shading of the oboe and the string orchestra that has a chamber sound to it result in a capricious, lyrical, nostalgic warmth.

Reluctant to assimilate with the spirit of the era and conform to the mediocre taste of the audience, **Hector Berlioz** (1803-1869) was frequently passionately defending his right to compose *his own* music and reshape the taste of the audience to his own criteria. Despite his strong desire, Berlioz continually failed to achieve major success as an opera composer, so he invested his musical and dramatic instinct into another genre - symphonies.

Symphonie fantastique was his first great programmatic piece, with its programme coming from the composer's quill pen, which *must be considered as the spoken text of an opera, which serves to introduce musical movements and to motivate their character and expression*. Berlioz wrote the first version of the symphony in 1830 and revised it in 1845 and 1855. Also known as an *Episode in the life of an artist*, the work was inspired by the composer's tumultuous and unhappy

love for actress Harriet Smithson, so it can be considered as an autobiographical fragment. Instead of a conventional four-movement sonata-symphony cycle, Berlioz presented a cycle of five movements. Each movement depicts the feelings and moods of the young artist with a wild imagination, who is desperate because of unrequited love and decides to poison himself with opium. Through the movements 1. *Reveries, Passions* 2. *A Ball* 3. *Scene in the Fields* 4. *March to the Scaffold* 5. *Dream of the Night of the Sabbath*, the young artist is obsessed by the face of his loved one, present in the form of *idée fixe*. Phantasmagorical in its multifaceted passion, malevolence and grotesqueness, it smoulders until the burnout in the final fortissimo.

Marija Kostić *

The next concert of the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra, as part of the **Water** series, is scheduled on Friday, **24 November 2017**, 8pm at the Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation.

Conductor: **Daniel Raiskin**

Soloist: **Lukas Geniušas**, piano

F. Mendelssohn: *Hebrides*, overture

F. Chopin: Piano Concerto No.1

R. Schumann: Symphony No. 3 (Rhenish)

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. We wish you a nice evening.

* In the season 2017/18, the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra offers an opportunity to selected young musicologists to enhance their professional training by writing programme notes.

Howard Griffiths was born in England and studied at the Royal College of Music in London. He has lived in Switzerland since 1981. Howard Griffiths was the Artistic Director of the Zurich Chamber Orchestra for ten years and has appeared as a guest conductor with many leading orchestras all over the world. These include the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra London, the Orchestre National de France, Radio Moscow's Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the Warsaw Philharmonic, the Basle Symphony Orchestra, the London Mozart Players, the Orquesta Nacional de España, various radio orchestras in Germany (NDR, SWR and WDR), the Polish Chamber Orchestra, as well as the English Chamber Orchestra and the Northern Sinfonia.

Howard Griffiths was Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Zurich Chamber Orchestra from 1996 to 2006. His work with the orchestra also involved extended tours of Europe, the United States and China, which were enthusiastically received by audiences and critics alike, both in Switzerland and abroad.

Since the season 2007/08 Howard Griffiths has been Artistic Director of the Brandenburg Staatsorchester. He is also committed to regular performances of contemporary music. Examples include his direction of the Collegium Novum Zurich at the Swiss première performance of Hans Werner Henze's *Requiem* in the presence of the composer and his close collaboration with composers such as Sofia Gubaidulina, George Crumb, Arvo Pärt and Mauricio Kagel.

More than sixty CD recordings with various labels (including Warner, Universal, cpo, Sony and Koch) bear witness to Howard Griffiths' broad artistic range. These recordings include works by contemporary Swiss and Turkish composers as well as première recordings of rediscovered music dating from the 18th and 19th centuries. Howard Griffiths' recordings of all the eight symphonies by Beethoven's pupil Ferdinand Ries met with worldwide critical acclaim. Readers of the British magazine *Classic CD* voted his recording of the works by Gerald Finzi "Classical CD of the Year" in this category.

Howard Griffiths performs with numerous renowned artists, including Maurice André, Kathleen Battle, Joshua Bell, Rudolf Buchbinder, Augustin Dumay, Sir James Galway, Bruno Leonardo Gelber, Evelyn Glennie, Edita Gruberova, Mischa Maisky, Olli Mustonen, Güher and Süher Pekinel, Mikhail Pletnev, Julian Rachlin, Vadim Repin, Maria João Pires, Fazil Say, Gil Shaham and Thomas Zehetmair. Apart from his collaboration with renowned soloists and orchestras, Howard Griffiths is also extremely committed to supporting and promoting young musicians. This is reflected in his work for the Orpheum Foundation for the Advancement of Young Soloists, of which he has been Artistic Director since 2000.

In the annual New Year's Honours List, which is announced on New Year's Day by Queen Elizabeth II, Howard Griffiths was appointed a Member of the British Empire (MBE) in recognition of his services to musical life in Switzerland.

Oboist **Sanja Romić** began her musical education with Žužana Egić in Novi Sad. She initially studied at the Novi Sad Academy of Arts, with Prof. Dienes and Prof. Puškaš, and later at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, with Peter Pongracz and Gabor Dienes, as a recipient of the Soros Foundation scholarship. She received further training at the Mozarteum University in Salzburg, in the class of Stefan Schilli, and attended masterclasses with Han de Vries, Laszlo Hadady, David

Walter, Emanuel Abbühl and Gordon Hunt. Sanja is the laureate of several competitions in Serbia and Hungary.

Between 2005 and 2009, she worked as the solo oboist of the Slovenian National Opera and Ballet Theatre, while she also collaborated with the Slovenian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra, Slovenian Army Orchestra, Festine Ensemble and the Society of Slovene Composers. She has appeared with many international orchestras, including the Erdody Chamber Orchestra and the Matav Orchestra (Hungary), Salzburg Kammerphilharmonie, Junge Philharmonie Salzburg, Bad Reichenhal Orchestra (Germany), the Zagreb Soloists and the Academia ArsMusicae Chamber Orchestra from Klagenfurt.

Sanja gave masterclasses at the Royal Academy of Music in Dublin, at international workshops for wind instruments in Tivat and at the Novi Sad Academy of Arts. She also taught in music schools in Jesenice and Ljubljana. Sanja Romić has worked with pianist Danijel Detoni (Croatia), harpist Paola Baron (Italy) and Fionnuala Moynihan (Ireland). She also performs as a member of various chamber ensembles, such as the Harp Duo, Ventus Quintett Salzburg, Quintologia Quintet etc. She has made recordings for Radio Novi Sad and has been hired for various performance art projects, incidental and studio music.

Since March 2011, she has been the principal oboist of the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra.