

Season 2017/2018

THE BELGRADE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

*Series: Water*

Conductor: **Fabrice Bollon**

Soloist: **Tamara Stefanović**, piano

Friday, 23 February 2018

Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation, 8pm

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

Programme:

**Alexander Zemlinsky**

*The Mermaid*

*Sehr mäßig bewegt*

*Sehr bewegt, rauschend*

*Sehr gedehnt, mit schmerzvollem Ausdruck*

Duration: approx. 40 minutes

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**Johannes Brahms**

Concerto for piano and orchestra No. 1 in D-minor, Op. 15

*Maestoso*

*Adagio*

*Rondo: Allegro non troppo*

Duration: approx. 44 minutes

Concertmaster: Tijana Milošević

Austrian composer **Alexander Zemlinsky** (1871–1942) was one of the key figures in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Viennese musical circles; however, his name is not frequently found in concert programmes. Best known for having been Arnold Schoenberg's only music teacher, this versatile musician was also close to other members of the Second Viennese School (he taught orchestration to Berg and Webern). Through his successful and rich conducting career, he often promoted theirs, as well as other contemporary composers' works. As a composer, he was not revolutionary and wrote in the spirit of late Romanticism, exploring innovative solutions without using extreme dissonance. His position, which he wrote in a letter to Schoenberg, was that an artist *must respect the boundaries of beauty*.

Aside from the *Lyric Symphony* (which Alban Berg quoted in his famous *Lyric Suite* from 1926), ***The Mermaid*** (1902–03) is Alexander Zemlinsky's most frequently performed piece. Strauss', Mahler's and Wagner's influences are obvious, especially in orchestration. Zemlinsky began composing this work during his great emotional crisis, after his darling Alma Schindler left him to marry Gustav Mahler. Inspired by the popular fairy-tale *The Mermaid* by Hans Christian Andersen, Zemlinsky composed the first of his several autobiographical works – recognising himself in the character of the naïve mermaid, and Alma in the role of the prince who left her to marry a princess. The original idea was to write a two-movement piece: the first movement would portray the sea and the mermaid saving the prince from a storm, while the second would give an account of the mermaid's yearning for the prince, her encounter with the sea witch, the prince's wedding and, ultimately, her death. Over time, the piece grew into a three-movement symphonic fantasy with thematically connected movements, and the fairy-tale plot can be discerned in the music. The opening motif, which evokes an image of ocean depths and waves, permeates the entire piece through various transformations, while the mermaid is embodied in the solo violin.

*The Mermaid* was premiered on 25 January 1905 in a concert together with Schoenberg's symphonic poem *Pelleas und Melisande*. The two composers attempted to *reconcile* programmatic and absolute music by using the Wagnerian technique of leitmotifs and the Brahmsian treatment of the material. Although Zemlinsky's work was received better by the audience, he withdrew it. He gave one movement to Marie Pappenheim (the librettist of Schoenberg's *Expectation*), while bringing the other two with him, running away from the Nazis to the USA. The movements were not reunited until the 1980s, and the piece was performed in 1984.

In his famous 1853 article *New Paths*, Robert Schumann announced the emergence of a new musical personage on the German scene – **Johannes Brahms** (1833–1897) – who was an obscure twenty-year-old at the time. Schuman saw Beethoven's successor in Brahms, whose destiny was to compose orchestral works, and he publicly invited him to write a symphony and thus affirm his status. However, it would be 23 years before Brahms would write his first symphony (1876), after several unsuccessful attempts. He had committed to this task as early as 1854, but he subsequently reworked what he had written and used it for his first concerto for

piano and orchestra, on which he continued working until 1858. The remainder of the unused material became a part of his *A German Requiem* (1868).

**Concerto for piano and orchestra in D-minor Op. 15** is monumental, colossal, dramatic and entirely typical of Brahms' symphonic world. Critics have referred to it as a *symphony with piano accompaniment*, since the soloist and the orchestra are treated equally, with the orchestra often being more prominent in the introduction of new ideas. Certain parallels can be drawn between this work and Beethoven's Symphony No 9 (also in D minor), which the composer had heard shortly before writing this piece, in Cologne in 1854. According to violinist Joseph Joachim, Brahms' friend, the turbulent opening of the thematically rich first movement reflects the composer's emotions to the news of Schumann's attempted suicide and confinement to a sanatorium. The extensive virtuosic first movement is followed by a contrasting, meditative slow movement – the *gentle portrait* of Clara Schumann, as the composer himself described it. The final vigorous rondo, in which Brahms wrote as many as two solo cadenzas, is modelled on the final movement of Beethoven's Concerto for piano and orchestra No 3.

Biljana Aleksandrovski \*

The next concert of the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra, as part of the **Fire** series, is scheduled on Friday, **2 March 2018**, 8pm at the Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation:

### **Gabriel Feltz**

R. Gliere: Symphony No. 3 (*Ilya Muromets*)

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 pleasant 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.

**Fabrice Bollon** is a highly versatile conductor, internationally acclaimed both in the field of opera and within the symphonic range. His wide repertoire includes lesser known works of the 19th century (particularly French) such as the operas *Cendrillon* of Jules Massenet, *Pénélope* of Gabriel Fauré or symphonies of Albert Roussel and Joseph Ryelandt. Bollon, born 1965 in Paris, dedicates a certain amount of his directing for performances of contemporary compositions and has conducted a large number of premieres including works by Emmanuel Nunes and Mauricio Kagel. After studying conducting at the Mozarteum in Salzburg with Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Michael Gielen, he had his début at the Salzburg Festival with the opera *Satyricon* by Bruno Maderna.

From 1994 to 1998, Fabrice Bollon worked as Principal Conductor of the Symphony Orchestra of Flanders, with which he undertook numerous concert tours, CD, and broadcast productions. He then held the position of Deputy Music Director of the Opera Chemnitz from 1998 to 2003. Guest appearances led him to the Operas of Tel Aviv, Krakow, Lucerne, Amsterdam and to the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin and repeatedly to famous orchestras all over Europe, such as the SWR Orchestra Stuttgart, the DSO Berlin, the Berlin Radio Symphony, the Residentie Orkest Den Hague, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Luxembourg, RAI Torino and the Orchestre National de Lyon.

In 2002 Fabrice Bollon conducted the German première of the opera *Pénélope* by Gabriel Fauré and the world première of the opera *Labyrinth* by Peter von Winter, for which Schikaneder wrote the libretto *The Magic Flute Part II*, performed for the first time in 175 years. The score was edited, shortened and supplemented with articulation and dynamic indications for the orchestra by Fabrice Bollon.

Selected highlights of recent seasons include re-invitations to the MDR, SWR Freiburg, SWR Stuttgart, Konzerthaus Orchester Berlin, Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, Berner Sinfonieorchester, Opera Maastricht with Barber of Seville, NJP Japan, SR-Saarbrücken and concerts in Amsterdam with the Holland Sinfonia and the Brabants Orkest. Invitations to France, Norway, Switzerland, Spain, as well as numerous CD and radio broadcasts make him one of the most interesting French conductors. In summer 2008 Fabrice Bollon also conducted two concerts at the Salzburg Festival.

Fabrice Bollon is music director of the Theatre Freiburg where he has performed the whole of Wagner's "Ring Cycle" alongside numerous orchestral concerts. Fabrice Bollon has also recently composed a work for turntables and orchestra for the MDR Leipzig.

Fabrice Bollon has been nominated three times for Conductor of the Year in the Opernwelt Yearbook. 50 critics nominate their favourite in 14 categories. Alongside Fabrice's nominations, his Freiburg Philharmonic Orchestra was nominated three times for the best orchestra and the Theatre Freiburg was nominated once for the best theatre.

In 2013, he was engaged at the Stanislavski National Opera of Moscow to conduct the first production of *Tannhauser* after they didn't play Wagner for 90 years. In 2016, Fabrice conducted at the famous International Bartok Festival in Miskolc, Hungary.

Fabrice Bollon was recently nominated for the Gramophone Award for the CD *Francesca da Rimini*, by Riccardo Zandonai.

Known for captivating interpretations of a wide repertoire, Serbian pianist **Tamara Stefanović** performs at the world's major concert venues including Carnegie Hall New York, Berlin Philharmonie, Suntory Hall Tokyo and London's Royal Albert and Wigmore Halls. She features in international festivals such as Lucerne, La Roque d'Antheron, Ravenna, Aldeburgh, Salzburger Festspiele, Styriarte Graz, Klavier-Festival Ruhr and Beethovenfest Bonn.

Highlights of the current season include her return to the Philharmonia Orchestra with Esa-Pekka Salonen, performances of Szymanowski's *Symphonie concertante* on tour with the National Youth Orchestra Great Britain and the presentation of *Quasi una fantasia* and the *Double concerto* with the Ensemble Asko|Schönberg and Reinbert de Leeuw at Amsterdam's Muziekgebouw as part of ECM'S complete recording of Kurtág's works. She will give recitals at International Piano Series London, Musikfest Berlin, Milano Musica, Vienna's Konzerthaus and Antwerp's De Singel performing Stockhausen's *Mantra* with Pierre-Laurent Aimard. Tamara is cofounder and curator of the newly created festival "The Clearing" at Portland International Piano Series that will see her perform in recitals and work with young pianists and composers. Her appearance at the festival will be surrounded by recitals in Ithaca and Bellingham.

Recent engagements have included Tamara's debut with the Sarasota Orchestra and performances with the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, MDR Symphonieorchester Leipzig, WDR Symphonieorchester Köln, Chamber Orchestra of Europe and Iceland Symphony Orchestra as well as an extensive US recital tour marking the 90th birthday of Pierre Boulez garnering exultant reviews.

Stefanović has appeared with orchestras including The Cleveland and Chicago Symphonies, London Symphony, London Philharmonic, Bamberger Symphoniker, Britten Sinfonia, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Swedish Chamber Orchestra and London Sinfonietta.

Tamara Stefanović has collaborated with conductors such as Vladimir Ashkenazy, Osmo Vänskä, Susanna Mälkki, Vladimir Jurowski as well as leading composers including Peter Eötvös and György Kurtág. She regularly leads educational projects at London's Barbican Centre, Philharmonie Köln and at Klavier-Festival Ruhr such as innovative online project of interactive pedagogical analyses of Boulez' *Notations*: [www.exploretthescore.org](http://www.exploretthescore.org)

Her discography includes the Grammy-nominated recording of Bartók's *Concerto for Two Pianos, Percussion and Orchestra* with Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Pierre Boulez and the London Symphony Orchestra for Deutsche Grammophon. Stefanović has also recorded for the AVI and harmonia mundi labels, featuring new piano solo works by Thomas Larcher. Her latest recording of Hans Abrahamsen's *concerto for piano and orchestra* and *10 studies for piano* with WDR Symphonieorchester Köln released by Winter & Winter. In 2015 she recorded Kurtág's '*Quasi una Fantasia*' and the *Double Concerto* with Asko | Schönberg Ensemble and Reinbert de Leeuw for ECM.

Taught by Lili Petrović, Tamara Stefanović became the youngest student at the University of Belgrade at the age of 13. As well as music, her broad university education encompassed several other disciplines – psychology and education. She

also studied at the Curtis Institute with Claude Frank, and subsequently with Pierre-Laurent Aimard at the Hochschule Köln.