

Season 2017/2018

THE BELGRADE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The Philharmania(c)

Conductor: **Uroš Lajovic**

Soloist: **Xavier de Maistre**, harp

Thursday, 8 February 2018

Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation, 8pm

www.bgf.rs

Programme:

György Ligeti

Atmospheres

Duration: approx. 9 minutes

Joaquín Rodrigo

Concierto de Aranjuez (version for harp and orchestra)

Allegro con spirito

Adagio

Allegro gentile

Duration: approx. 21 minutes

Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky

Manfred Symphony Op. 58

Lento lugubre

Vivace con spirito

Pastorale: Andante con moto

Allegro con fuoco

Duration: approx. 57 minutes

Concertmaster: Tijana Milošević

Hungarian composer **György Ligeti** (1923–2006) is regarded as one of the most progressive composers of his generation. After acquainting himself with the achievements of avant-garde in Cologne and Darmstadt in the 1950s, in his work *Apparitions* Ligeti introduced the orchestral cluster, as well as his technique of *micropolyphony*, which brought him international recognition. The logical sequel of this idea was the new orchestral piece, ***Atmospheres*** (1961), for which he received international acclaim of both the musical community and the general public, since it was used in Stanley Kubrick's film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Ligeti deliberately avoids conventional melody, harmony and rhythm in favour of the static “sound masses” and tone clusters in which each instrument often plays its own tone. *In Atmospheres, I have attempted to supersede the "structural" approach to music which once, in turn, superseded the motivic-thematic approach, and to establish a new textural concept of music. In this kind of music, there are no "events", but only "states", no contours or forms, but instead, an uninhabited, imaginary musical space. Tone colour, usually a vehicle of musical form, is liberated from form to become an independent musical entity. This so-to-speak "informal" music is embodied in a new type of orchestral sound: the sonorous texture is so dense that the individual interwoven instrumental voices are absorbed into the general texture and completely lose their individuality. This new, unaccustomed orchestral sound results from the fact that the sound of each individual instrument (consisting of a number of "partial" tones) is itself a "partial" of a still more complex acoustical structure. Atmospheres presumably occupies an extreme position, which possibly may be interpreted as a dead end. But often, it is the apparent dead end which conceals a gateway opening into fresh fields.*

Joaquín Rodrigo (1901–1999), blind from his early childhood, was the musical successor of Isaac Albeniz, Joaquín Turina, Enrique Granados and Manuel de Falla and one of the most significant 20th century Spanish composers. His early works also show influences of composers such as Maurice Ravel, Paul Dukas and Igor Stravinsky, and his music was over time shaped by his keen interest in the music and culture of Spain's past times. Rodrigo described his music as *faithful to tradition*, inspired by the classical and authentically Spanish. Although tonight's version of ***Concierto de Aranjuez*** (1939) is one for harp and orchestra, this piece is probably the best-known concerto written for guitar and orchestra, its second movement being especially fascinating to audiences. In 1974, the composer transcribed the piece for harp and orchestra at the request of the famous Spanish harpist Nicanor Zabaleta, who adapted the finger positions.

Concierto de Aranjuez was named after the summer resort palace of the Bourbon kings, located outside Madrid on the road to Toledo. Rodrigo said for this concerto that it is meant to *sound like the hidden breeze that stirs the treetops in the parks, and it should be only as strong as a butterfly, and as dainty as a veronica*. The popular second movement uses the *saeta*, Andalusian religious mourning song that was sung on Good Friday, as the topic of the 'dialogue' between the solo instrument and the wind instruments. It sits between two quick movements – the first, which resembles an invitation to a passionate southern folk dance, and the finale in mixed metre, alternating 2/4 and 3/4, emulating the atmosphere in a baroque Spanish court.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) composed the ***Manfred Symphony*** (1885) based on the motifs of the literary work *Manfred: A dramatic poem* by Lord Byron. Although it was created in the period between his Fourth and Fifth symphonies, *Manfred Symphony* is Tchaikovsky's only symphony that is not numbered, as well as his only programmatic work that consists of several movements. The composer had lost hope that this symphony would be successful: he thought it was too difficult and complex to be performed and that, as such, it would never be a repertoire work. In his opinion, only the first movement deserved attention, whereas the others should be destroyed.

Although the road to success was not smooth, the piece luckily survived and became a part of the repertoire, posing a creative challenge before the performers. In four extensive movements, *Manfred Symphony* gives an account of a typical romantic hero, wanderer, spurred by various questions and inner conflicts and of his destiny, interweaved with phantasmagorical swirls. The tragic atmosphere that starts in the first movement recurs throughout the whole piece. The second movement is lyrical, with images of fairs on waterfalls; the third is pastoral, while the type of the composer's script closely resembles Tchaikovsky's ballet scores. In the final movement, Manfred is obsessed with underground spirits and dies.

The premiere in 1886 was played by the Russian Musical Society Orchestra conducted by Max Erdmannsdörfer.

Marija Kostić *

The next concert of the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra's ***Philharmonia(c)*** series is scheduled on Thursday, **26 April 2018**, 8pm at the Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation.

Conductor: **Gabriel Feltz**

Soloist: **Benjamin Schmid**, violin

A. Borodin: *Polovtsian Dances*

P. I. Tchaikovsky: Violin Concerto

I. Stravinsky: *The Rite of Spring*

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.

Uroš Lajovic was born on 4 July 1944 in Ljubljana. He studied composition and conducting at the Academy of Music in Ljubljana, graduating in 1967 and in 1969, respectively. For his outstanding achievements in both fields, he was awarded the 1968 and 1969 Student Prešeren Prize. He continued his studies at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna with Prof Hans Swarowsky, where he graduated with honours in 1971 and was awarded the Graduating Prize ('Abgangspreis').

In 1968 and 1969, he took part in the Salzburg Summer Academy, studying conducting with Prof Bruno Maderna. From 1972 to 1991, he was employed in the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra, first as Assistant Conductor and since 1978 as Permanent Conductor. In parallel, he led the RTV Slovenia Chamber Orchestra from 1974 to 1976, was Chief Conductor of the Croatian RTV Symphony Orchestra from 1979 to 1981 and in 1988 founded the *Slovenicum* Chamber Orchestra.

From 2001 to 2005, he was Chief Conductor of the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2009, he became the Artistic Advisor and Permanent Guest Conductor of the Zagreb Philharmonic. He works as the permanent guest conductor of the Sofia Philharmonic and Shenzhen Symphony Orchestra (China).

Uroš Lajovic was appointed Professor of Conducting at the University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna, in 1989, and, in 1991, he was promoted to Full Professor of Conducting. In his conducting class, there have been around 300 students from 58 countries. From 2011 to 2014, he was Full Professor of Conducting at the Zagreb Music Academy. He retired from the Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts in 2012.

As a visiting professor, he has held conducting master classes in Stockholm, Vilnius, Constanta, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Dubrovnik.

In addition to his work in home institutions, he has performed across Europe, conducted in the US, Colombia, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, China and Japan. During his 40-year career has given over 1.400 concerts, conducted more than 90 different symphony orchestras and ensembles and accompanied over 900 soloists.

Maestro Lajovic's repertoire consists of symphonic and opera works. He helped stage 14 operas. In addition to the standard repertoire, he has conducted over 1.500 symphonic works and premiered 80 pieces of music of Slovenian and international composers.

Uroš Lajovic is a receiver of numerous awards and recognitions, the most recent among them being the Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art, awarded by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, which he received in November 2013.

Xavier de Maistre belongs to an elite category of soloists who are redefining what is possible with their instrument. Aside from commissions from composers such as Kaija Saariaho, he performs works like Smetana's "Ma Vlast" with breath-taking precision, presenting masterful arrangements of works that are usually played by an entire orchestra. The interpretation of these works, that few harpists before him have even considered playing, has contributed to his reputation as one of the most creative and extraordinary musicians of his generation.

Xavier de Maistre has appeared with major orchestras under the direction of such eminent conductors as Bertrand de Billy, Lionel Bringuier, Daniele Gatti, Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, Daniel Harding, Kristjan Järvi, Philippe Jordan, Riccardo Muti, Andrés

Orozco-Estrada, André Previn, Sir Simon Rattle and Yuri Temirkanov. He performs at many leading international festivals, including Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, Salzburg Festival, Budapest Spring Festival and Mostly Mozart in New York. He collaborates with such chamber music partners as Diana Damrau, Daniel Müller-Schott and Baiba Skride.

The 2017/2018 season started for de Maistre entirely under the auspices of contemporary music. In September he played three national premieres of “Trans”, Kaija Saariaho’s new harp concerto, with the Frankfurt and Swedish Radio Symphonies and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Further season highlights include concerts with NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Orquesta Sinfonica de Galicia, Turku Philharmonic, Münchener Kammerorchester, Zürcher Kammerorchester, Moscow Virtuosi, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra and China Philharmonic Orchestra. A recital tour in Germany with the Spanish-Mexican flamenco legend Lucero Tena (castanets) brings him to venues such as the Stuttgarter Liederhalle, the Elbphilharmonie, the Boulezaal Berlin, the Tonhalle Düsseldorf and the NDR Hannover.

De Maistre has an exclusive recording contract with Sony Music. Releases have included music by Haydn, Rodrigo, Ginastera and Debussy – the latter for which he was awarded the Echo Klassik Award 2009 as “Instrumentalist of the Year”. In 2012 his album “Notte Veneziana” entered the top ten in the classical music charts. His most recent releases include a DVD with Diana Damrau and a CD recording of Mozart piano concertos arranged for harp. In 2015 “Moldau – The Romantic Album”, a recital CD featuring Slavonic repertoire received high critical acclaim. “La Harpe Reine” with Les Arts Florissants and William Christie was released in October 2016 (harmonia mundi). A new solo CD with Spanish repertoire will be available in spring 2018 (Sony).

Xavier de Maistre was born in Toulon and began studying harp aged nine. He studied in Paris and in 1998 he was awarded first prize at the International Harp Competition in Bloomington, Indiana, immediately becoming the first French musician to join the ranks of the prestigious Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. Since 2001 Xavier de Maistre has taught at the Hamburg Academy of Music. He also gives regular masterclasses at New York’s Juilliard School of Music, Tokyo’s Toho University and London’s Trinity College of Music.

Xavier de Maistre plays a Lyon & Healy harp.