

Season 2016/17

Thursday, 3 November 2016
Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation, 8pm

Philharmania

Conductor: **Eiji Oue**
Soloist: **Stephen Kovacevich**, piano

Programme:

Draško Adžić: *Thallus*, Belgrade Philharmonic commission

Duration: approx. 10 minutes

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Concerto for piano and orchestra No.24, K 491 in C major
Allegro
Larghetto
Allegretto

Duration: approx. 30 minutes

Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. 5, Op. 67 in C minor

Allegro con brio
Andante con moto
Allegro
Allegro

Duration: approx. 35 minutes

Concert master: **Miroslav Pavlović**

This season's concert series *For Beginners* will be opened by **Thallus**, a piece by young composer **Draško Adžić**. He described his composition with these words:

The word thallus is a botanical term for the body of organisms that lack differentiated plant organs – roots, stems and leaves. These are organisms like fungi and moss, or lichens which are, actually, what I had in mind when I named my composition.

More specifically, the title Thallus refers to the lichens that we can find on high altitudes – those multi-coloured and kaleidoscopic lichens living on bare rocks of mountain landscapes, which are the most apparent chroniclers of the life and the time that seem to occur within animistic worlds of mountains and hills in a different, distinctive and concealed way.

Thallus, the catalogue of oronyms for symphony orchestra is a piece of music about all those associations that are evoked by the thought about distant and inaccessible mountain ranges. It is music that sings about the kind of quiet excitement caused by images of fantastic galleries of limestone and dolomite formations. It is music that leads to the kind of elation caused by mere reference to the existing and still non-existent oronyms – the names of mountain ranges and their peaks: Minin bogaz, Bandijerna, Midžor, Babin zub, Prokletije, Komovi... Names like these radiate poetics stemming from pagan spirituality and superstition, and they tell a story about ancient comprehension of the world, in which it was not uncommon to believe that “thy sky is held above the ground by mountain tops”.

The piece was commissioned by the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra.

Draško Adžić (1979) graduated from the Department for Orchestration and Composition at the Belgrade Faculty of Music, where he studied with Prof. Isidora Žebeljan. He is currently pursuing a doctoral degree at the same faculty and works as a teaching assistant at the same time. He has participated in many European festivals and his music has been performed both in Serbia and abroad. He often composes for the theatre, TV and films, and his works in applied music have been featured at many major national and international festivals (Berlinale, Fest, Bitef, Sterijino pozorje...). He received the Sterija Prize in 2012 for original theatre music and has often appeared as a performer (singer, pianist and conductor), playing his own as well as pieces by other composers.

Concerto for piano and orchestra No. 24 in C major by **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** was written in the winter of 1785/86 in Vienna. The composer worked on it concurrently with the opera *The Marriage of Figaro* (the concerto was finished a few days before the opera was premiered), which are two quite contrasting pieces of music in terms of their nature – a comic opera dominated by major keys, and a concerto in C-minor, the key associated with bleak and dark sentiment. The concert was premiered in early April 1786, with the composer himself featuring as the soloist and conductor. The orchestral part is scored for a full wind orchestra (Mozart's concertos usually exclude oboe or clarinet sections), which contributed to a full and splendid orchestral sound.

The concerto's first movement is in sonata form with a double exposition, typical of concertos. The second movement is in E-flat major and the orchestra now excludes trumpets and timpani. The movement is opened by the soloist playing a four-measure theme, its further development being actively accompanied by the orchestra. The third and final movement consists of the theme followed by eight variations. This movement is quoted as a typical example of Mozart's variations and as one of his best concerto finales. The distinctive rhythm of the theme implies a march-like movement, although march is not explicitly indicated in the score.

Symphony No. 5 by Ludwig van Beethoven is also written in the home key of C minor. Composed between 1804 and 1808, it was premiered in Vienna on 22 December 1808 as part of a marathon concert that included premieres of Beethoven's pieces (Symphony No 6, Piano concerto No 4 and the Fantasy for piano, chorus and orchestra). Immediately after the premiere, composer and music critic E. T. A. Hoffmann described Beethoven's Fifth Symphony as *one of the most important works of the time*. Nowadays, it is performed very frequently and considered the best-known piece of classical music. The symphony most probably owes this appreciation to its memorable opening motif.

The symphony's opening motif consists of four tones in a minor third interval, which repeats once more after its first presentation. The motif (or some of its aspects – the rhythmic pattern, melodic movement) is noticeable in all movements of the symphony, so that it can be regarded as the basis for the entire thematic material of the piece, the *nucleus* from which the entire symphony evolved, or the motif that thematically connects all movements and renders the piece thematically compact. There is also an interpretation suggesting that almost all motifs and themes in the first movement are, actually, variations of the opening motif.

Furthermore, the opening motif of the symphony's first movement also has a symbolic interpretation. Namely, it is often called the *Fate* motif, after the composer's alleged claim that *thus Fate knocks at the door*. Accordingly, the entire symphony is often labelled the *Fate symphony*. Owing to this connotation, the beginning of this symphony has often featured in films, radio and television. It can often be found in popular music, in various arrangements and covers (from disco to rock 'n' roll versions).

Ana Đorđević

*In the season 2016/17, the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra is giving an opportunity to young musicologists to enhance their professional training by writing programme notes.