

Season 2016/2017

Thursday and Friday, 29–30 December 2016
Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation, 8pm

New Year Concerts

Conductor: **Fabrice Bollon**
Soloist: **A Bu**, piano

Programme:

L. Bernstein: *Divertimento* for orchestra

Allegro non troppo, ma con brio (Sennets and tuckets)
Allegretto con grazia (Waltz)
Mesto (molto moderato) (Mazurka)
Allegro giusto (Samba)
Allegretto ben, misurato (Turkey-trot)
Adagio lugubre (Sphinxes)
Slow blues tempo (Blues)
In Memoriam – march “The BSO Forever”

Duration: approx. 15 minutes

G. Gershwin: *Concerto in F* for piano and orchestra

Allegro
Adagio - Andante con moto
Allegro agitato

Duration: approx. 30 minutes

G. Gershwin: *I Got Rhythm*, variations for piano and orchestra

Duration: approx. 10 minutes

D. Shostakovich: *Jazz Suite* no. 2

March – Giocoso. Alla marcia

Dance I - Presto

Dance II – Allegretto scherzando

Little Polka - Allegretto

Lyric Waltz – Allegretto

Waltz I – Sostenuto

Waltz II – Allegretto poco moderato

Finale – Allegro moderato

Duration: approx. 25 minutes

Concertmaster: **Miroslav Pavlović**

This year's New Year concert is dominated by jazz, the melodies of Broadway musicals and sounds that emulate the atmosphere of America in the 1920s. This is the time of the *Great Gatsby*, Prohibition and radio performances of exquisite musicians. Radios brought Duke Ellington's orchestra, Louis Armstrong's first appearances and George Gershwin's songs from popular musicals from small jazz clubs to thousands of homes, reaching growing audiences.

The opening piece in the programme is *Divertimento* by Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990), American composer, conductor, pianist and music author. Bernstein's oeuvre is extensive and very diverse, but he is best known to audiences as the composer of the Broadway musical *West Side Story*. His *Divertimento* was created in 1980 on a commission from the Boston Symphony Orchestra for the celebration of its centenary. The piece consists of eight short movements, virtually musical sentences, with each of them being a reference to some of the styles of American popular music (blues, samba, turkey trot), or to a symphonic pieces from the history of music (waltz from Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony, or Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, which was quoted in the third movement). The opening of the final movement (*In Memoriam*) is conceived as homage to deceased members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, whereas the latter part recapitulates excerpts from previous movements, juxtaposed with elements of Strauss famous *Radetzky March*.

George Gershwin (1898–1937) is known as the composer of a large number of theatre jazz numbers and songs, which have over time become essential part of every jazz musician's repertoire. He was also a top-notch pianist and, as such, one of the first composers who blended classical music and jazz. One of those *experiments* is the *Concerto in F*. It is conceived as a three-movement solo concerto with the classical order of movements (quick-slow-quick) and the solo cadenza, whereas the melody and rhythm of thematic materials rely on the structures typical for jazz melodies and harmonies. According to the composer himself, "the first movement employs the Charleston rhythm, representing the young enthusiastic spirit". While the second movement is reminiscent of the *blues* and a peaceful, nocturnal atmosphere, the third reverts to the grandiose rhythm, with syncopated ragtime-style passages.

The piece was premiered in 1925 in New York's Carnegie Hall, with the composer himself featuring as the soloist. After the premiere, the reviews were mixed because critics were baffled regarding its genre as a result of the said combination of classical and jazz elements.

Notwithstanding, the concert is certainly one of the most significant works in Gershwin's oeuvre and a milestone in the development of his composing style, being a piece of interesting and provocative orchestration, as well as one that includes a demanding solo part.

The second part of tonight's concert starts with another Gershwin's composition – *I Got Rhythm*, variations for piano and orchestra. It borrows the theme from Gershwin's eponymous song (*I Got Rhythm*), written for the musical *Girl Crazy* (1930), and it is nowadays considered as a jazz standard.

The variations were completed in January 1934, and premiered during Gershwin's tour with the Leo Reisman Orchestra. The composer dedicated this piece to his brother and collaborator Ira, the author of many lyrics for songs for which George wrote the music. A short introduction and the theme statement in piano and orchestra passages is followed by a series of variations, the last one of them representing the grandiose finale and restatement of the entire piece.

Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich (1906–1975) is one of the most significant 20th century Russian composers. Since his composing style is marked by a combination of various influences, his music abounds with thematic and character contrasts, as well as with grotesque elements and vaguely discernible keys. In addition to an exceptionally extensive oeuvre of *serious* music, Shostakovich also wrote many *lighter pieces*, his *Jazz Suite No. 2* being one of the most notable examples of this.

Jazz Suite No. 2 was created in the mid-1950s as the *Suite for Variety Orchestra in Eight Movements*, but it has gradually become better known as the *Jazz Suite No. 2*. Shostakovich initially composed the appealing and singing melodies of simple structures and harmonies as ballet, theatre and film music, while in the suite he developed a very interesting orchestration, by adding saxophones, a guitar, an accordion, two pianos and plenty of percussions to the symphony orchestra. *Jazz Suite No. 2* achieved huge popularity after the great success of the film *Eyes Wide Shut*, in which Stanley Kubrick used the *Waltz No. 2* from this suite. The waltz has since been used as theme music in dozens of films and series, while the whole suite has become one of the favourite pieces of many orchestras and audiences around the world.

Ana Đorđević *

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