

Season 2016/2017

Thursday, 19 January 2017

Friday, 20 January 2017

Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation, 8pm

Cycles: *Philharmania and For Beginners*

Conductor: **Daniel Raiskin**

Soloist: **Akiko Suwanai**, violin

Programme:

W. A. Mozart: Symphony No. 32 in G major K 318

Allegro spiritoso

Andante

Primo tempo

Duration: approx. 10 minutes

W. Walton: Concerto for violin and orchestra

Andante tranquillo

Presto capriccioso alla napolitana

Vivace

Duration: approx. 30 minutes

J. Brahms: Symphony No. 1 in C minor op. 68

Un poco sostenuto – Allegro – Meno allegro

Andante sostenuto

Un poco allegretto e grazioso
Adagio

Duration: approx. 50 minutes

Concertmaster: **Tijana Milošević**

Tonight's programme opens with Symphony No. 32 in G major (K 318) by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791). It was written in 1779 in Salzburg, after Mozart's return from Paris and Mannheim (1777-1778), the musical centres of the time, of key significance for the development of orchestral performance. In this journey, Mozart was able to hear interesting orchestras and performances and to learn about new orchestral techniques, which he later employed in his music, including in this symphony.

Symphony No. 32 was composed as an overture – consisting of three brief movements in the same key, but of diverse character, which follow one another without a break in the musical flow. The succinct *allegro* in sonata form is succeeded by a slow movement, followed by the final movement, which is a kind of a recapitulation of the first one. Owing to its interesting and simple form that diverges from the classical symphonic pattern, this symphony was thought to be an overture to some of the Mozart's operas for a long time. However, it was later found that this is a standalone piece, although it was, indeed, used in 1785 as overture to the comic opera *La villanella rapita* by Francesco Bianchi, an acclaimed Italian opera composer.

In the 1930s, British composer William Walton (1902–1983) was already acknowledged and famous as the composer of a few very successful pieces – the music for the collection of poems *Façade* by Edith Sitwell (1922), the Viola concerto (1929), the cantata *Belshazzar's Feast* (1931) and others. This status brought him a commission from the celebrated violinist Jascha Heifetz for a new Concerto for violin and orchestra, in which Heifetz wanted to demonstrate his remarkable technique and virtuosity.

Walton spent almost two years working on the concerto (1938–39), thoroughly and meticulously, with frequent corrections and revisions, which was typical for his composing practice. Fearing that the concerto would not be worthy of Heifetz's talent and performance skills, the composer often consulted with the soloist, especially regarding the concerto's third movement.

The piece has a standard three-movement structure. The first movement is characterised by a slow, tranquil tempo, leading the listeners into the mystic ambience with an emphatic lyrical cantilena in the solo passage. The second movement changes the tempo with a tarantella – the quick Neapolitan dance and its distinctive rhythm. The final movement features interesting changes of the rhythm and effectively concludes the entire piece.

Heifetz gave the first performance of Walton's Violin concerto in 1939 with the Cleveland Orchestra under Artur Rodziński. Although the premiere was very successful, Walton returned to this piece in 1942 and revised the orchestration of the entire concerto. From then on, this revised version is performed.

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) began his work on the Symphony No.1 in 1855 and it took more than twenty years to finish. It was completed in 1876, and premiered in the same year. The value and significance of the Symphony No.1 was immediately recognised by critics and audiences alike.

Composer, pianist and conductor Hans von Bülow called this symphony Beethoven's Tenth, since he recognised Beethoven's influence in it and saw Brahms as the continuator of Beethoven's tradition. Brahms never denied that his Symphony No.1 was a kind of homage to Beethoven and his music very convincingly demonstrated this. The most memorable moment is, certainly, the theme of the fourth movement which evokes the *Ode to Joy* from Beethoven's Symphony No.9, but there are also other elements indicating Beethoven's influence – the theme of the first movement and the rhythm reminiscent of the distinctive *fate motif* from the Symphony No.5, the solemn tone of the lyrical second movement, which for a moment evokes the *Missa solemnis*, as well as the solo treatment of the first violin, again in the second movement, which resembles Beethoven's late string quartets.

The densely weaved musical fabric, the references to the great master of past times and the complex orchestration are recognizable aspects of Brahms' cultivated style in this piece. Brahms is nowadays considered as one of Beethoven's successors, but also as a role model for many subsequent generations of composers, who pushed the boundaries of music in the 20th century (such as Arnold Schoenberg). Therefore, Brahms is rightfully included among the three Bs, beside Bach and Beethoven, as one of the pillars of the western European music.

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.

