



Season 2016/2017

Thursday, 9 February 2017

Friday, 10 February 2017

Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation, 8 pm

The Philharmania and For Adventurers

Conductor: **Gabriel Feltz**

Soloist: **Giovani Sollima**, violoncello

Programme:

K. Szymanowski: *Concert Overture Op. 12*

Duration: approx. 15 minutes

G. Sollima: *Folktales for cello with orchestra*

Duration: approx. 30 minutes

B. Smetana: *My Fatherland* (excerpts)

Vyšehrad

Vltava

Šarka

Duration: approx. 40 minutes

Concertmaster: **Tijana Milošević**

Tonight's *adventure* concert opens with Karol Szymanowski's well-known *Concert Overture*, followed by the sound of Giovanni Sollima's violoncello leading us to sun-bathed Italy. We will finish our journey in the Czech Republic, where Bedrich Smetana awaits to introduce us to the sounds of his homeland.

Polish composer **Karol Szymanowski** (1882–1937) was born in a large family, to parents who were landowners but also amateur musicians. In addition to fostering their children's love for music and art, they also provided them with the best education in these fields. Thus, after graduating from the Warsaw Conservatory, Karol Szymanowski travelled to European musical capitals (Vienna, London, Paris) to become acquainted with the latest developments and achievements in music. During the First World War, he was exploring the Islamic culture, Byzantine art, as well as enhancing his critical thought by studying the works of Greek philosophers, which contributed to certain composing freedom in the later period.

The Concert Overture Op. 12 in E major was Karol Szymanowski's first orchestral piece. The sketches for this composition were made in 1904, the orchestration was completed the next year, and the first performance took place in Warsaw in 1906. The piece shows influences of Wagner and Richard Strauss, which was somewhat common to all young composers of the day. Szymanowski returned to this piece several years later and the second version of his *Concert Overture* was premiered in Vienna in 1919. Although the critics argued that this piece did not do justice to the composer's talent and skills, the *Concert Overture* over time found its way into concert venues and reached large audiences, and today it one of the most favourite compositions of many orchestras worldwide.

Giovanni Sollima (1962) is an Italian composer and cellist. He graduated composition at the Conservatorio di Palermo, and pursued further training in Stuttgart and at the Mozarteum University Salzburg. His compositions show the influence of minimalism, although traces of Italian folk music, as well as popular genres (jazz, rock 'n' roll) can also be found.

Folktales were composed in 2009 on commission from the Budapest Festival Orchestra and conductor Ivan Fischer. The piece has an atypical structure for a solo concerto for cello and orchestra since it has a single movement in which there are outlines of movements of various nature, i.e. sections dominated by various musical instruments. The solo part is exceptionally technically demanding and improvisational, which puts the soloist in the role of the narrator who tells the folk tales freely with his instrument.

My Fatherland is a set of six symphonic poems by Czech composer **Bedrich Smetana** (1824–1884), a representative of Czech Romanticism and the father of the Czech national music. Smetana modelled his symphonic poems on Franz Liszt's symphonic poems – the complex symphonic pieces that accentuate a certain theme or programmatic content. The programmes of *My Fatherland* poems describe the concepts and stories related to the Czech folklore that the composer know very well and found it exceptionally interesting for reusing, which is noticeable in the remainder of his music (most notably in his opera *The Bartered Bride*). The titles of the poems are instantly indicative of their programmes –

Vyšehrad and *Tabor* point to Czech geographic and historic sites, *Vltava* and *Z českých luhů a hájů* (From Bohemia's woods and fields) depict the beauty of the Czech countryside, while *Šarka* and *Blaník* refer to national legends.

Tonight's concert will include the first three poems – *Vyšehrad*, *Vltava* and *Šarka*. *Vyšehrad* describes the eponymous castle in Prague, which was the seat of Czech kings. The poem begins with harps invoking Lumir, the singer and lute player from the Czech national tales, and then introduces the musical motifs that sporadically reappear throughout the entire cycle. In *Vltava*, Smetana uses the technique of tone painting to emulate the river Vltava from its spring (the melodies of the flutes in the beginning of the poem represent two streams that unify into a river), its course through woods and landscapes, its passage through Prague underneath the city's castles and bridges, until at last it joins Elbe at the Czech-German border. *Šarka* is named after a female warrior from a Czech legend, in which she challenges the princely knight Ctirad. Šarka cunningly deceives him, defeats Ctirad and his comrades and sounds the victory with a hunting horn.

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.