

Season 2016/2017

Friday, 16 June 2017

Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation, 8pm

For Beginners

Conductor: **Uroš Lajovic**

Soloist: **István Várdai**, violoncello

Programme:

L. van Beethoven: Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major, Op. 55 (*Eroica*)

Allegro con brio

Marcia funebre: Adagio assai

Scherzo: Allegro vivace

Finale: Allegro molto

Duration: approx. 50 minutes

J. Haydn: Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra in C-major Hob.VIIb:1

Moderato

Adagio

Allegro molto

Duration: approx. 24 minutes

P. I. Tchaikovsky: *Overture 1812*

Duration: approx. 15 minutes

Concert master: **Miroslav Pavlović**

Symphony No. 3 by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) opened a new chapter in the composer's career. After the first two symphonies, modelled on Haydn's and Mozart's works in this genre, Beethoven got the idea to write the *Buonaparte Symphony*. However, since Beethoven became very disappointed in Napoleon by the time he was finishing the symphony, he withdrew the dedication to the French military leader and subsequent Emperor and re-dedicated it to a nameless, universal hero.

The key feature of this symphony is the expanded dimension of the sonata-symphony cycle. This is evident in the two monumental, contrasting themes in the first movement, with an emerging expressive, episodic theme in the extensive development section. The movement ends with a long coda, equal in length to other parts of this movement. For the slow movement, Beethoven writes a funeral march in the ternary form, influenced by mournful ceremonial funeral music. It is followed by a lively scherzo, also in the three-part song form, while the finale is a set of variations on a theme. The final movement ends with an extensive fugue, with which Beethoven introduced the symphonic genre into a new era, while also paying homage to the great masters of the German musical history.

The most prolific years in the life of **Joseph Haydn** (1732–1809) coincide with his work at the court of the Esterházy family, where he took up service in 1761. Over a period of almost thirty years (and also in his entire composing career), Haydn wrote two concertos for violoncello and orchestra. Between 1761 and 1765, he was working on his first **Concerto for violoncello and orchestra in C major** in collaboration with the court orchestra's principal cellist Joseph Weigl, so it is assumed that the concerto was dedicated to him. Although the piece chronologically belongs to Haydn's early classical compositions, in stylistic terms it actually announces the master of High Classicism, which Haydn would become less than two decades after completing this concerto. Accordingly, the first movement shows Haydn's concise musical expression of noble, ceremonial nature. The second movement was modelled on mid-18th century operatic music. It is in fact the transformation of the melody typical of opera arias into a solo violoncello passage. Haydn conceived the final movement based on the late Baroque, *moto perpetuo*, quick and virtuosic movements of concertante music of that time. An exceptionally demanding solo part is embellished with multiple sound effects, such as quick changes of the key and pace, which is one of the most effective ways of highlighting the soloist's virtuosity in this concerto.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) is one of the greatest names in the late 19th century Russian Romanticism. He composed a large number of operas and symphonies, as well as solo songs. He takes the credit for some of the best known Russian full-length ballets, including *The Nutcracker*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake*. Among Tchaikovsky's other popular pieces is also his **1812 Overture**. It was written in 1880 to commemorate Russia's defence against the invading French Army led by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1812. After the Battle of Borodino, in September of that year, French Army remained in Russia until December, when it had to withdraw battered by starvation, diseases and cold weather.

To portray the conflict of the Russian and French armies, Tchaikovsky employed the Russian Orthodox Troparion *O Lord, Save Thy People*, which opens the overture, and the anthem of the Russian Empire, on the one hand, and thematic material from the French hymn *La Marseillaise*, on the other. These themes initially come one after the other, only to be blended in various ways as the musical material develops. At the most dramatic part of the overture, as a special effect employed to produce a true-to-life emulation of the sounds of battle, Tchaikovsky also included cannons. The great popularity of the overture in concert repertoire led to its numerous adaptations into film and popular music.

Miloš Bralović*

*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.