

Concert Season 2017/18

The Philharmonic Pandemonium

The BPO Chamber Scene

Chamber Music Series

Conductor and soloist: HK Gruber

BPO musicians:

Stana Krstajić, principal flute/piccolo
Jelena Draškoci, second flute
Snježana Pavićević, third flute
Predrag Nedeljković, clarinet/bass clarinet
Nenad Janković, bassoon
Tarek Beswick, French horn
Jovan Savić, principal trumpet
Luka Kalezić, second trumpet
Danijela Veselinović, third trumpet
Kornel Papista, tuba
Aleksandar Radulović and Ivan Marjanović, percussions
Sladjana Gajić, piano
Miroslav Pavlović, first violin
Vladimir Veljković, second violin
Aleksandra Damjanović, viola
Nemanja Stanković, Julijana Marković, Nataša Lišanin and Dušan Kočišević,
violoncellos
Filip Savić, double bass

Thursday, 19 October 2017

The Belgrade Philharmonic Hall, 7pm

Kurt Schwertsik *Transfiguration Scene from Das Märchen von Fanferlieschen
Schönefüßchen*

*Kleine Ouverture
Triumpfmarsch und Trio mit Verzagte Reprise
Nach Munkelwust
Fanfare
Luftschlosserei
Schlaflied
Parade
Vigil
Kleines Finale
Nachtanz*

Duration: approx. 21 minutes

HK Gruber *Frankenstein!!* A pan-demonium for chansonnier and ensemble after children's rhymes by H. C. Artmann.

*Fanfare, Prolog.
I Zueignung. Dedication
Fräulein Dracula
II Goldfinger und Bond
Django
Unhold
III Ein Mi-Ma-Monsterchen
IV Fanfare, Intermezzo.
V Frankenstein
VI Rattenlied und Crusolied
VII Herr Supermann
VIII Finale
Ein Mann mit _grünen_ Haaren.
Batman und Robin
Im Parke, wo die Unhold weilen.
Litanei
Grüß Gott, grüß Gott, Herr Frankenstein
Grete Müller's Abschied*

Translation of the verses from German: Gavriilo Rabrenović

After the Second World War, a group of Viennese composers gathered around the ensemble Klangforum Wien, which specialises in contemporary music, called the *Third Viennese School*, left a distinctive mark on the European musical scene. Beside Bernhard Lang, Friedrich Cerha and Olga Neuwirth, notable members of this group also include Kurt Schwertsik (1935) and HK Gruber (1943).

After completing undergraduate studies of composition in Vienna, Kurt Schwertsik pursued further training with Stockhausen in Cologne and Darmstadt, yet despite his strong influence, he managed to resist serialism. His music is characterised by tonal musical language with elements of irony and humour, which draws inspiration from Satie's style and the Dadaist movement. In addition to many operas, orchestral works and song cycles, Schwertsik has also authored some significant chamber music works. Together with HK Gruber, he co-founded the ensembles *die reihe* and *MOB art & tone ART*. For a while, he worked as a hornist in the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, and then also as Professor of Composition at the Vienna Musikhochschule.

Transfiguration Music is an excerpt from Schwertsik's 1983 opera *Das Märchen von Fanferlieschen Schönefüßchen*. The opera was premiered by the Stuttgart Kammertheater ensemble under Dennis Russel Davies, while the ensemble *die reihe* directed by Friedrich Cerha first played the instrumental excerpt at the Vienna Konzerthaus in 1985. Ten sections are linked by a tonal and simple musical language that easily reaches the audience.

HK (Heinz Karl) Gruber is the leading figure of the *Third Viennese School*. Although he was taught in the post-Schoenbergian style by Erwin Ratz, Hanns Jelinek and Gottfried von Einem, he very quickly found his own expression in the tonal musical language. He achieved international fame in 1978 with his composition *Frankenstein!! A pan-demonium for chanssonier and ensemble (orchestra)*, which he wrote on poems of absurdist and Viennese-dialect poet Hans Carl Artmann.

Of his composition, Gruber wrote:

The origins of this 'pan-demonium' go back to the Frankenstein Suite of 1971 – a sequence of songs and dances written for the Vienna 'MOB art and tone ART Ensemble', which was then active in the field of instrumental theatre. Although the Suite was a success, I was unhappy about its improvisatory structure, and also needed the resources of a full orchestra. So in 1976/77 I completely recomposed the work in its present form. It was first performed on 25 November 1978 by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra under Simon Rattle, with myself as soloist. For the 1979 Berlin Festival I wrote an alternative version for soloist and 12 players (first performed that year by the Vienna ensemble 'die reihe' under Kurt Schwertsik, again with myself as soloist). Since then, the two versions have happily co-existed; and in 1983, at the Espace Cardin in Paris, Frankenstein!! entered the theatre for the first time – an unforeseen development, but one that proved suited to Artmann's multi-layered fantasy.

The title of the volume from which I took the poems of Frankenstein!! – Allerleirausch, neue schöne kinderreime (Noises, noises, all around – lovely new children's rhymes) – promises something innocuous; but Artmann himself has described the poems as being, among other things, 'covert political statements'. Typically he refused to explain what he meant. But his reticence is eloquent: the monsters of political life have always tried to hide their true faces, and all too often succeed in doing so. One

of the dubious figures in the pandemonium is the unfortunate scientist who makes so surprising an entry at mid-point. Frankenstein – or whoever we choose to identify with that name – is not the protagonist, but the figure behind the scenes whom we forget at our peril. Hence the exclamation marks.

Artmann's demystification of heroic villains or villainous heroes finds a musical parallel in, for instance, the persistent alienation of conventional orchestral sound by resorting to a cupboard-full of toy instruments. However picturesque or amusing the visual effect of the toys, their primary role is musical rather than playful – even howling plastic horses have their motivic / harmonic function. (...) By analogy with Artmann's diction, my aim was a broad palette combining traditional musical idioms with newer and more popular ones, and thus remaining true to the deceptive simplicity of texts whose forms at first glance suggest a naive and innocently cheerful atmosphere.

Danica Maksimović

Composer, conductor and chansonnier, **HK Gruber** was born in Vienna in 1943 and sang with the Vienna Boys' Choir as a child, going on to study at the Vienna Hochschule für Musik. In 1961, he began playing double bass with Ensemble *die reihe* and from 1969 to 1998 he played in the Radio Symphonieorchester Wien. Gruber first began performing as a singer/actor with the *MOB art and tone ART* ensemble, which he co-founded in 1968 with fellow Viennese composers Kurt Schwertsik and Otto Zykan. Composing in his own highly individual style, he is one of the most well-loved figures in contemporary music and his music is performed by the world's leading artists and orchestras. Gruber was awarded the 2002 Greater Austria State Prize (*Großer Österreichischer Staatspreis*), Austria's most prestigious cultural prize, and in 2009 was announced as an Honorary Member of the Wiener Konzerthaus, following a great tradition of musicians to also receive this accolade, including Igor Stravinsky, Pierre Boulez, Leonard Bernstein and Claudio Abbado

Gruber's compositions have been written for and performed by orchestras at the highest level, including the Vienna Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Berliner Philharmoniker and at Lucerne Festival, Carnegie Hall, BBC Proms and Komische Oper Berlin. Gruber is particularly noted for his concertos, including *Aerial* for trumpeter Håkan Hardenberger, which has received over 60 performances, two for violinist Ernst Kovacic, the Cello Concerto written for Yo-Yo Ma and premiered at Tanglewood in 1989, Percussion Concerto *Rough Music*, and *Busking* for trumpet, accordion, banjo and string orchestra, premiered by Hardenberger in 2008. Orchestral scores include *Dancing in the Dark*, premiered by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Simon Rattle in 2003. Gruber's recent works include an opera based on Horváth's *Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald* (Tales from the Vienna Woods) premiered at the Bregenz Festival in 2014 and the percussion concerto *into the open...* premiered by Colin Currie at the 2015 BBC Proms.

Gruber has appeared extensively in the role of chansonnier, most notably in *Frankenstein!!*, his most popular work which he premiered with Sir Simon Rattle and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic in 1978 and has received more than 600 performances since, by major orchestras and conductors around the world. He has also performed and recorded as chansonnier in the works of Kurt Weill and Hanns Eisler as well as Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* and Maxwell Davies' *Eight Songs for a Mad King*.

An active conductor with many major international orchestras, recent highlights of Gruber's conducting career include engagements with the Vienna Philharmonic, Bayerischer Rundfunk Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Mozarteum Orchester, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, TonhalleOrchester Zürich, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Cleveland Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Seattle Symphony. He has appeared at festivals such as the BBC Proms, Lucerne, Salzburg and Grafenegg Festival and was Composer/Conductor with the BBC Philharmonic from 2009-2015, conducting concerts, tours and recordings with the orchestra. Most recently Gruber conducted the world premiere of his new opera *Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald* with the Vienna Symphony at Bregenz Festival in July 2014 and at Theater an der Wien in 2015.

The 2016/17 season saw the world premiere of Gruber's Piano Concerto written for Emanuel Ax with the New York Philharmonic/Alan Gilbert in January 2017, followed by the German premiere by Berliner Philharmoniker/Sir Simon Rattle, with future performances by co-commissioners Tonhalle Orchestra and Royal Stockholm Philharmonic. Other highlights of the season include conducting the New World Symphony, Bamberg Symphony, Mozarteum Orchester, österreichisches ensemble für neue musik at the Salzburg Festival and conducting and chansonnier appearances at the BBC Proms, Malmo Chamber Music Festival with Mahler Chamber Orchestra, and Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne. Gruber also completes a recording of Weill's *Marie Galante* with Ensemble Modern, with whom Gruber has had a longstanding close association.

Gruber's latest CD release sees him conduct music by Brett Dean with the Swedish Chamber Orchestra for BIS and a release by Chandos of works by fellow Austrian composer Kurt Schwertsik with the BBC Philharmonic. He has also recorded a number of his own works for Chandos and BIS.

The biographies of BPO musicians are available at www.bgf.rs.

The next concert of the chamber music series:

Thursday, 30 November 2017

G. Sollima: *Viaggio in Italia*

Soloist: Maja Bogdanović, violoncello

Narrator: Vladimir Aleksić

The Belgrade Philharmonic String Quartet