

Season 2017/2018

THE BELGRADE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Earth

Conductor: **Gabriel Feltz**

Friday, 26 January 2018
Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation, 8pm

www.bgf.rs

Programme:

Gustav Mahler

Symphony No 9 in D major

Andante comodo

Im Tempo eines gemächlichen Ländlers. Etwas täppisch und sehr derb

Rondo-Burlesque. Allegro assai. Sehr trotzig

Adagio. Sehr langsam und noch zurückhaltend

Duration: approx. 85 minutes

Concertmaster: Tijana Milošević

Symphony No 9 (1909-10) by Gustav Mahler (1860–1911), the last piece completed by the composer before he died, became one of the chapters of the *Curse of the Ninth Symphony*, the others being works by Beethoven, Schubert, Bruckner and Dvorak. The symphony was premiered in Vienna in 1912 under the baton of Bruno Walter, one year following Mahler's death. The posthumous first performance and the indicative annotation – the exclamation *Farewell! Farewell* – found in the manuscript of the composition, led many critics to label the work as his *Farewell Symphony*. However, the question as to whom or to what Mahler bid farewell has remained unanswered: the inscriptions in the score may refer to his daughter Maria Anna, who suddenly died in 1907, or to Vienna, which the composer left in his final years due to the rise of anti-Semitism, or possibly they might be his final farewell to life. Leonard Bernstein saw in this piece not solely the prediction of Mahler's death, but also of many others; according to his interpretation, Symphony No 9 represents the composer's awareness of the imminent ending of the Romantic era, the symbolic death of tonality and even the prediction of the carnage of World War I.

Symphony No 9 avoids the excess that characterises Mahler's earlier works – it is stripped of ambitious, pervasive programmatic ideas, mass constructions and requests for enormously huge orchestras – yet, the impression that his piece leaves is equally powerful, if not many times more. The first movement, *Andante comodo*, rises from nothingness. The sounds of the cellos and two horns emerge from virtual silence, like voices from another world. The fabric of the movement is made of a rich musical mosaic, with interweaved reminiscences of the composer's Symphony No 4, the sounds of street music and fragments from Johann Strauss' waltz *Enjoy Your Life*. Through the complex texture and the play with these musical references, the composer displays a homesick image of a life in Vienna of his youth. The second movement builds on this theme by introducing two dances – the first one is the *Ländler*, the rustic Austrian countryside dance, while the other one is the sophisticated urban waltz. In doing so, the composer symbolically unites both spheres of the Austrian life. The third movement, *Rondo-Burlesque*, suddenly leads us into an unexpectedly gloomy and aggressive ambience, which was only vaguely hinted in the previous movements; the unrestrained strength of its energy has led many to interpret it as the musical embodiment of the unpredictability of the *vortex of life*. Dissonant and chaotic, *Rondo-Burlesque* is considered the most progressive part of the symphony, and of Mahler's music overall, which indicates the imminent future of the art of music – expressionism of the composer's contemporaries Richard Strauss and Arnold Schoenberg. The final movement, *Adagio*, opens like a pianissimo flicker. Instead of a triumphant finale, which was a standard feature of the 19th century symphonic genre, Mahler bids farewell to us with a very slow lyrical movement. The elaborate melody infused with pathos includes the final goodbye to Mahler's daughter, a short quotation from the composer's cycle *Songs on the Death of Children: I often think they have only just gone out*. With the last breath of the cello and the note marked with *ersterbend* (dying away) the sound of the symphony is slowly diluted into complete silence.

Symphony No 9 can be interpreted as a *symphony of remembrance*. Its musical elements include numerous references to the music that defined Mahler's childhood and youth, as well as to the composer's earlier works. After three movements of looking back and recollection, the fourth is a step forward – a leap into the unknown, where the music builds bridges between the worlds of existence and non-existence. The pessimistic views that this composition is the *hymn of death*, dominant in the latter part of the 20th century, are being re-examined nowadays; the

unrestrained and powerful, while at the same time ethereal and contemplative music of the piece fostered the idea that Symphony No 9 is, actually, the composer's final *ode to life*.

Tisa Jukić *

The next concert of the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra, as part of the ***Fifth Element*** series, is scheduled on Friday, **2 February 2018**, 8pm at the Ilija M. Kolarac Foundation.

Conductor: **Gabriel Feltz**

Soloists: **Tijana Milošević**, violin

Nemanja Stanković, violoncello

Gabriel Feltz, piano

P. Dukas: *L'Apprenti Sorcier*

L. van Beethoven: Ghost Trio

J. Williams: *Harry Potter*, suite

R. Wagner: *The Flying Dutchman*, overture

Dear subscribers, ahead of each concert of the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra, musicologist Maja Čolović-Vasić will be giving introductory words about the pieces in the programme for that evening, at the Kolarac Music Gallery starting at 7.30pm.

Dear visitors, please turn off your mobile phones; you are also kindly reminded that taking photographs and the use of video and audio recording devices is strictly forbidden during the concerts of the Belgrade Philharmonic. We wish you a pleasant evening.

* In the season 2017/18, the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra offers an opportunity to selected young musicologists to enhance their professional training by writing programme notes.

The newly appointed Chief Conductor of the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra, **Gabriel Feltz** was born in 1971 in Berlin. Since 2013, Feltz has concurrently worked as the Generalmusikdirektor of the Dortmund Opera and Chief Conductor of the Dortmund Philharmonic Orchestra. After three very successful years, his contract has been renewed ahead of time until 2023. After the Philharmonic Orchestra Altenburg-Gera (2001-2005) and the Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra (2004 – 2013) this is his third position in a row as chief conductor of a German orchestra. With unusual programs and a marked rise of musical quality he managed to increase audiences significantly with all these orchestras. In 2007, the Sergei Rachmaninoff Foundation awarded Gabriel Feltz and the Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra the Prix Rachmaninoff for their exceptionally extensive Rachmaninoff concert cycle. In addition, Feltz has been Principal Guest Conductor at the Basel Theatre (2008- 2013) and had been responsible for several opera productions, which led to the Basel Theatre being named Opera House of the Year in 2009 and 2010.

From 1989 to 1994, Gabriel Feltz studied conducting and piano at the Hanns Eisler Academy of Music in Berlin. After the studies, he became Gerd Albrecht's assistant at the Hamburg State Opera (1994-1995). The first engagements took him to the Lübeck Opera (1995-1997) and the Bremen Theatre (1997-2001).

Gabriel Feltz has conducted leading orchestras in Germany and abroad such as Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden, the Symphonieorchester of the Bayerischen Rundfunk, the Bavarian State Orchestra, the Deutsche Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, the Konzerthausorchester Berlin, the Frankfurt Opernhaus- and Museumsorchester, Staatskapelle Weimar, the orchestra of the Nationaltheater Mannheim, the Bamberger Symphoniker, the Essen Philharmonic, the Radio Symphony Orchestras of Berlin (RSB), Cologne (WDR), Leipzig (MDR), Hannover (NDR) and Saarbrücken (SR), the German National Youth Orchestra, the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, the Berner Symphonieorchester, the Sinfonieorchester Basel, the Orchestra of the Vlaamse Opera Antwerpen, the RTE National Symphony Orchestra (Ireland), the KBS Symphony Orchestra Seoul, the Orchestre Symphonique de Mulhouse, as well as the Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra, the China National Symphony Orchestra and the Beijing Symphony Orchestra. In 2013/14, Gabriel Feltz gave his highly successful debut at the Komische Oper Berlin with Bernd Alois Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten* and in the same season he conducted the *Flying Dutchman* at the Bavarian State Opera. Gabriel Feltz' personal highlight of the 2014/15 season was Gustav Mahler's Symphony No 8 for the 200th Anniversary celebrations of the Musikverein Graz.

The extensive Discography of Gabriel Feltz makes him one of the outstanding conductors of his generation. The repertoire ranges from Mozart and Beethoven to Rachmaninoff, Elgar, Prokofiev, Scriabin and Richard Strauss to Nono and Ligeti. In 2007, Gabriel Feltz started the recording of all Mahler symphonies (Dreyer-Gaido) with the Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra. At the moment, the symphonies 1–7 are available. The cycle is highly acclaimed as the most "extraordinary and controversial cycle of the recent years". The recording of Luigi Nono's *Intolleranza* performed by the Bremen Philharmonic Orchestra and the choir of the Bremen Opera under Gabriel Feltz has been awarded the Diapason d'Or in June 2013. Ottorino Respighi's *Belkis – Regina di Saba* has been released in 2013. This recording is the first complete performance of the piece that is highly appreciated by Feltz since its world premiere in 1932 at La Scala, Milano. The TV production of *Aida am Rhein* under Maestro Feltz

had an outstanding success all over Europe (live on Swiss TV, 3Sat, RAI, ZDF) and is available on DVD.

His future projects include concerts and opera productions in Berlin, Zürich, Taipei (Taiwan), Köln, Graz, Sendai (Japan) and San Antonio (USA).