

2017/18 Concert Season

Philharmonic Pandemonium

Belgrade Philharmonic Chamber Music Scene

Chamber Music Concert Series

Tijana Milošević, violin
Boban Stošić, double bass
Mihailo Samoran, clarinet
Sava Đurić, bassoon
Jovan Savić, trumpet
Igor Ranković, trombone
Aleksandar Radulović, percussion

Conductor: Aleksandar Kojić

Directed by: Vlatko Ilić

Soldier/Devil: Tamara Krcunović

Narrator: Vladica Milosavljević

Soldier made on stage by: Vojislav Klačar, visual artist

Video: Boris Šebez, camera; Dobrivoje Milijanović, sound design; Rastko Ubović, editor

Belgrade Philharmonic Concert Hall

Thursday, 5 April 2018, at 7:00 p.m.

Igor Stravinsky: *The Soldier's Tale*

Part 1

Introduction. The Soldier's March. Airs by a Stream. The Soldier's March (reprise). Pastorale. Airs by a Stream (reprise).

Part 2

The Soldier's March (reprise). The Royal March. The Little Concert. Three Dances (Tango, Waltz, Ragtime). The Devil's Dance. Little Choral. The Devil's Song. Great Chorale. Triumphal March of the Devil.

The Soldier's Tale by Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) was written in 1918, during the composer's exile in Switzerland. It was premiered with great success in the Municipal Theater in Lausanne on 28 September of the same year, conducted by Ernest Ansermet. The libretto in French was written by Swiss writer Charles Ferdinand Ramuz based on a Russian folk tale. Stravinsky scored this theatrical work for a septet of violin, double bass, clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, trombone, and percussion. The reason for such a small ensemble was the shortage of musicians, who had mainly been mobilized, and consequently Stravinsky, in agreement with Ramuz, wrote the music for a considerably reduced stage scenography, which was well suited for tours and performance in small venues. Soon thereafter Stravinsky staged a concert suite in London in 1920, with a full staging only four years later in Berlin, Paris, Frankfurt, and Wiesbaden.

The two-part story, which, according to Stravinsky's instruction, is "to be read, played, and danced," can be told by three actors: the soldier, the devil, and a narrator, who also takes the roles of minor characters. The non-speaking role of the princess is played by a dancer.

The story tells of Joseph, a Russian soldier who sells his fiddle (actually his soul) to the Devil, in exchange for a book that contains events that happen in the future and that he says could bring him untold wealth. Guided by the good and bad advice of the Narrator and the Devil, he is tricked into losing his violin. After becoming rich but losing everything he cared for, the soldier realizes that material things really have no value at all and he tries to get back what he once had. Joseph succeeds in getting back his violin by challenging the Devil to a game of cards that he knows he cannot win. He loses all his money, but he gets back his soul and earns the love of the Princess. Finally the soldier goes back to his home town desiring to see his mother, but he violates the only condition of his hard-earned freedom. Approaching his home town the soldier again encounters the Devil, who waits for him, playing the fiddle. With his head bowed Joseph slowly and quietly goes off with the Devil.

A Word from the Director

The Soldier's Tale by Stravinsky and Ramuz was premiered in 1918, in the year following the October Revolution. And just as in the story the Soldier keeps falling under the power of the Devil over and over again, but because of the fact that he does manage to return home in the end, it is very probable that for most of the then

displaced persons and for Stravinsky himself, the prospect of returning home was as terrifying as meeting Beelzebub himself. Those are things that defy interpretation, not because they are unknown to us, but because they are part of a personal experience. They are not ideas that artists build into their works, but rather, they comprise the weft of the moment in which a work comes into being. The soldier in the Russian folk tale from the collection of Afanasyev, which served as the inspiration for *The Soldier's Tale*, also finds himself in a changed world that surpasses his powers of comprehension. After 10 years of having served his master (serfdom in Russia was abolished during Afansyev's lifetime), he remained illiterate and therefore the book the Devil gave him seems to be utterly useless. That is why, in 1918, the soldier from the First World War, who has razed Europe, will be offered a greater stake - specifically, a book that foretells the future and can enable him to speculate on the stock market, which he will take in exchange for his fiddle. The motive for striking a deal with the Devil in which the soul is traded for some gain (in knowledge, health, or riches) has roots that can be followed back to medieval morality. But, even though in *The Soldier's Tale* we recognize traces of Russian folklore, Marlowe's or Goethe's *Faust*, as well as an avant-garde spirit (let us not forget that Dadaism started in 1916), today it is performed in a different ambience, which, very probably, is equally terrifying for those who live in it. That is why this setting has been conceived as a work that is open to different interpretations, and primarily to different emotional experiences. The hero of our story is also the soldier from Brecht's play *Man Equals Man*, and the post-atomic antihero of the theater of the absurd (Beckett, *Not I*), the paper baby in Bond's *Red Black and Ignorant*, as well as the man from the multimedia world of Peter Greenaway. Finally, our hero is a woman, a far less obvious victim of times of war as well as of times of peace. They all comprise a staging map, which, albeit permeable, should serve for discovering new territories of humanity.

Vlatko Ilić

Aleksandar Kojić, conductor, was born in Novi Sad in 1984. After finishing his basic and specialized studies of conducting at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade, he trained in master courses with Uros Lajovic, Mark Stringer, Erwin Ortner, Frieder Bernius, Timothy Brown, Helmuth Rilling, Ton Koopman, and Riccardo Muti. In 2009 he received an invitation to serve as permanent conductor in the Opera and Ballet of the Serbian National Theater in Novi Sad.

In addition to a standard opera repertoire, he also places emphasis on new opera works. The performance of the opera *Mileva* by composer Aleksandra Vrebalov, received the Serbian National Theater's Annual Award for best opera in 2012. French television network ARTE recorded this opera and aired it six months later, after which this production was included into the first 15 performances broadcast by the ARTE in the year 2012. On the centenary of the birth of Rudolf Brucci in 2017, he conducted at the Novi Sad premiere of the ballet *Katerina Ismailova*.

He had a notable performance of the cantata *Alexander Nevsky* by Sergei Prokofiev, with the ensemble of the Serbian National Theater Opera in Novi Sad and a gala concert marking the 150th anniversary of the birth of Richard Strauss. He is a multiple recipient of the Serbian National Theater Award. He has performed with the orchestra Camerata Academica, the Zrenjanin Chamber Orchestra, the Belgrade

Philharmonic, the RTS Symphony Orchestra, the Zrenjanin Philharmonic, the Subotica Philharmonic, and the Czech Virtuosi chamber orchestra from Brno. He also plays piano as accompaniment and is rehearsal coach and works with opera singers and chamber musicians. He has made guest appearances in Hungary, Russia, Croatia, and the Czech Republic.

Tamara Krcunović studied acting at the Belgrade University School of Drama. After graduating, she enrolled at the *Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique* in Paris, where she worked with film acting professor Philippe Garrel. In theater she has played roles such as Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Nastenka in *White Nights*, and has collaborated with authors such as O. Frlić, S. Spahić, V. Ilić, H. Galle, B. Lavigne, and others. On film and television she has worked with Stevan Filipović, Nikola Ljuca, Ralph Fiennes, David Depesseville, Shamim Sarif, Laurent Boulanger, and Dejan Zečević. Her work includes films such as *Vlažnost* (Berlin International Film Festival 2016), *Fluffy* (TIFF 2016), *Un an*, *Coriolanus*, *La Dernière Plaine*, *Despite the Falling Snow*, as well as TV series, including *Urgentni centar*, *Ubice moga oca*, *Vojna Akademija*, *Sumnjiva lica*, *Jagodići*.

Vladica Milosavljević is a distinguished film, theater, and television actress. She has played many notable roles on film and television, such as, *Samo jednom se ljubi*, *Splav meduza*, *Još ovaj put*, *Srećna nova '49*, and others. She is a member of the Trupa "Kačinski" independent theater group, and since 1980 she has been a permanent member of the Yugoslav Drama Theater.

Director **Vlatko Ilić**, assistant professor at the Department of Theory and History of the Belgrade University School of Drama, was born in Belgrade in 1981. He graduated in 2006 at the Department for Theater and Radio Directing as the best student in his generation. In December 2010 he defended his doctoral dissertation at the University of the Arts in Belgrade and got his Ph.D. in the area of art and media theory.

He is the recipient of a special Sterija Award for directing (2007) and has written a book called *Introduction to New Theater Theory*. He is also one of the editors of a thematic publication *Theater Within the Context . . . and Not Just Theater*. In addition to directing, Ilić is actively involved in scholarly research: publishes articles, takes part in international research projects, gives presentations at scholarly meetings in the country and abroad (Serbia, Croatia, Slovakia, Germany, and others). He is a regular contributor to Radio Belgrade's Drama program (*The Testament of This Day*, E. Bond; *Pet nivoa pet razgovora dr Svetolika Plesnika i dr Marije Polek*, B. Klačar; *Isceljenje*, D. Vuksanović, and others). Between 2012 and 2014 he has produced a science research project: *Теорија извођачких чиновца: од драмског театра до друштвених промена* at the Academy of Arts of the University of Novi Sad, and as of 2012 he has been visiting professor at the Arts School of the University of Donja Gorica, Montenegro. He is a member of the Aesthetics Society of Serbia. He has written many art works in the country and abroad.

Vojislav Klačar is an artist who is active in the creative multimedia sphere. He holds a Ph.D. at the University of Arts in Belgrade, Department of Multimedia Art. He

completed undergraduate studies in sculpture in 2006 at the Fine Arts School in Belgrade. That same year he was awarded a Unique Creative Innovation Award from the Miloš Bajić Foundation and signed up for specialized study of painting. In 2007 he became a member of the Association of Fine Arts of Serbia (ULUS), extended media group. Vojislav Klačar's many-years of practical art experience *Kraljevina Koreta* includes: sculptures, drawings, digital graphics, Internet presentations, video works, performances, drama texts, and theater installations. His works have been realized and presented in the country and abroad: at the October salon, the Dom omladine gallery (Belgrade), the Museum of Contemporary Fine Arts (Novi Sad), the Institute for Theater Study (Leipzig), the Hebbel am Ufer Theater (Berlin), and so on.

The biographies of the musicians of the Belgrade Philharmonic can be found at www.bgf.rs.