

Season 2017/2018

BELGRADE PHILHARMONIC

Series: ***Water***

Conductor: **Uroš Lajovic**

Soloist: **Alban Gerhardt**, cello

Kolarac Music Hall

Friday, 11 May, 2018 - 8:00 p.m.

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Program:

**Jean Sibelius**  
*The Oceanides*

Duration: approx. 9 min.

**Bohuslav Martinů**  
Concerto No. 1 for Cello and Orchestra

*I Allegro moderato*  
*II Andante moderato*  
*III Allegro*

Duration: approx. 27 min.

**Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**  
*Swan Lake* – excerpts

*Scene*  
*Valse*  
*Dance of the Swans*  
*Scene*  
*Hungarian Dance – Czardas*  
*Spanish Dance*  
*Neapolitan Dance*  
*Mazurka*

Duration: approx. 25 min.

Concertmaster: **Miroslav Pavlović**

Of the 13 tone poems by **Jean Sibelius** (1865-1957), composed in the period of late Romanticism, *The Oceanides* (1913-1914) was the only piece not based on the elements from Finnish history or folklore. Instead, the composer drew his inspiration from ancient Greek mythology and legends of nymphs who inhabited the Mediterranean Sea. Originally called *Rondo of the Waves*, the work was written as a musical evocation of the motion of sea waves. During the composition, two themes conflict and clash: the sharp and playful outcries of the flutes, representing the lighthearted games of the nymphs on the placid surface of the water, and the muffled sound in the orchestra's lowest registers, symbolizing the primeval and unpredictable power and majesty of the sea. These two themes expand and deepen, building up to an enormous wave-crash climax, characterized in literature as a *point of textural, dynamic and chromatic saturation*. Even though the piece abounds with impressionist coloristic effects, like the lavish tremolos in the string ensemble, with the conspicuous use of two harps and a glockenspiel, it still retains the characteristic Romanticist firmness of form and comprehensiveness of the entire work.

**Bohuslav Martinů** (1890-1959), a composer nowadays mostly known locally in the Czech Republic, spent his life traveling between the Czech Republic, France, and the United States. The development of his creativity was heavily influenced by different composing styles, which he got to know during his travels through some of the most significant 20th century musical centers. Many of his early works were dominated by elements of the Czech School of Romanticism, but a significant turning point happened during his move to France in the period between the two world wars, when he encountered neoclassicism as developed by Igor Stravinsky. His Cello Concerto No. 1 is one of the first compositions written in this period, when Martinů endeavored to reconcile the legacy of Romanticism with the expression of neoclassicism. The work was inspired by the Baroque form of concerto grosso, as established by A. Corelli and G. F. Handel, whose compositions Martinů studied intensively during the years when he was writing his Concerto. Thus, the first version of the piece from 1930 was written for soloist and chamber orchestra, and only later was the piece rewritten, in 1939 and in 1955 (which is the version being performed tonight), transforming this concerto into a large composition for symphony orchestra, which is its most well-known version today. The abruptness and objectivity of the orchestral part stands opposite to the strikingly expressive and lyrical, albeit also Romanticist virtuoso language of the cello. As the composition progresses, the two initially distinctly contrasting modes of expression begin to infuse and merge, reaching a culmination in the final movement through an intensive and energetic dialogue between soloist and orchestra.

Swan Lake (1876) was the first of three ballet-fairy tales by **P. I. Tchaikovsky** (1840-1893), in which the composer succeeded in translating a ballet from the domain of frivolous entertainment into a serious art form, by incorporating drama into the musical text. On the one hand, following the ballet music of his French contemporary L. Delibes, and on the other hand, influenced by the operas of R. Wagner (particularly the leitmotif technique), in this work, for the first time, Tchaikovsky gives the heroes of the drama their own separate themes, which will change in accordance with the course of the drama. He no longer treats the orchestra as an accompaniment to dance music, but liberally delves into the richness of color and scope of the symphonic orchestra. The music created in this process was evaluated as too complicated for ballet and therefore enjoyed greater popularity at the time at concert podiums than on the theater stage. Nevertheless, Tchaikovsky stayed true to certain rules of the ballet genre; for the sake of the performers he preserved the traditional ballet construction as a series of short dance numbers. Our selection of eight excerpts for tonight's concert contains the formal, aristocratic *white ballet* in the first scene, with the famous theme of the white swan with oboe, but also several compelling dances with strong colorful local style: the spirited czardas, the Spanish

dance, characterized by the unique sound of the castanets, and the Neapolitan dance, dominated by melodies similar to the canzona in the trumpet section.

Tisa Jukić\*

\*In the 2017/18 season, the Belgrade Philharmonic has given selected young musicologists an opportunity to write program commentaries as a way of enhancing their professional training.

Translated by Bojan Drndić