

Belgrade Philharmonic  
Season 2021/22  
*We Have Really Missed You*

**Friday, 15 October 2021**

**Daniel Raiskin**  
**Alexei Volodin**, piano  
**Jovan Savić**, trumpet

**Sergei Prokofiev**  
*Lieutenant Kijé*, suite, Op. 60

*Birth of Kijé*  
*Romance*  
*Kijé's Wedding*  
*Troika*  
*The Burial of Kijé'*

Duration: about 20 minutes

**Sergei Prokofiev**  
Piano Concerto No. 1 in D-flat Major, Op. 10

*Allegro brioso*  
*Andante assai*  
*Allegro scherzando*

Duration: about 15 minutes

**Dmitri Shostakovich**  
Piano Concerto No. 1 in C minor, Op. 35

*Allegretto*  
*Lento*  
*Moderato*  
*Allegro con brio*

Duration: about 20 minutes

**Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky**  
*1812 Overture*

Duration: about 15 minutes

**Sergei Prokofiev** (1891-1953) wrote the music for the Soviet film *Lieutenant Kijé* in 1935. He took the most interesting segments and prepared a concert suite, which was premiered in Paris in 1937. Today, this music exists in two versions: with baritone or with tenor saxophone, which we will listen to on this occasion.

The suite's five movements follow the plot of this satirical film: *Birth of Kijé* - receiving the morning's orders from Emperor Paul, the clerk makes a clerical mistake in typing two words, thus creating Lieutenant *Kijé*. The emperor learns of the existence of a new officer and issues numerous assignments for him. The officials in the palace have no choice but to carry out the emperor's orders. After that, a light Romance follows - a dramatic intermezzo in which a fictional lieutenant falls in love. *Kijé's Wedding* - since the emperor prefers his officers to be married, the administrators make a fake lieutenant's wedding. The merry *Troika*, the suite's most famous movement, is followed by the *Burial of Kijé* - the officers finally manage to get rid of the lieutenant, informing the emperor that he has died. They are organizing a fake funeral, which finally ends the story of *Lieutenant Kijé*.

**Sergei Prokofiev** was only 21 years old when he premiered the solo section of his **Piano Concerto No. 1 in D-flat Major** with great success in Moscow. In the composer's biography, this performance was recorded as his first performance with an orchestra, and with the same work the author won the Rubinstein Prize for pianists in 1914. Although conceived as a modest concertino, the composition has grown into a significant instrumental form with a very complex piano section. Unusual single-movement structures with the triple appearance of the first theme in waves at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the work, in the concert three classical movements of the concerto with elements of sonata form permeate at the same time. The work is dominated by the original Prokofiev pianism of strong virtuosity, which combines a series of chords with complex acrobatics and a subtle passage etude technique with a wealth of rhythms. The shortest of all four piano concertos brings a classical approach to motif work instead of spreading the thematic material, modernity that dominates the harmonic parameter and treatment of the orchestral sections, rhythmic pulse and toccata elements characteristic of the

slower sections, a lyricism of the *Andante* movement of airy orchestration and a grotesquely playful line that deforms all those previously mentioned and subdues them as the dominant.

The first years of the career of **Dmitri Shostakovich** (1906-1975) as a composer and pianist were marked by successes and international recognition. That is when he wrote his **Concerto No. 1 for Piano and Orchestra**, his first concertante work, characterized as his first attempt to complete the field of Soviet instrumental music, which lacked works of that type. Kabalevski and Khachaturian responded to that challenge very quickly.

Opus no. 35 is designated as Concerto No. 1 for Piano and Orchestra. Although the existence of a section of another solo instrument, the trumpet, often influences the interpretation of this work as a double concerto, the piano part largely dominates the score, which justifies the composer's decision. The section of the solo trumpet is not represented to a large extent, but it gives the composition a specific sardonic character. It was only after a number of years that the composer discovered that his original idea had been to write a concerto for trumpet and orchestra, after which he wanted to add piano making it a double concerto. As the composition process progressed, the work became a concerto for piano and orchestra with solo trumpet. It premiered at the opening of the Leningrad Philharmonic season on 15 October 1933. The piano part was played by the composer, with Fritz Stidri conducting, and Alexander Schmidt playing the trumpet solos. Very positive reviews pointed out Shostakovich's *brilliant* performance, which marked his further career as a pianist and performer of mainly his own works. The performance was repeated on 17 October.

The first two movements follow each other without a break. Due to its short duration, the third movement can be interpreted in two ways – as an introduction before the finale or as a separate movement. However, the concerto is best known for a large number of quotes and auto-quotes that include melodies by Beethoven, Haydn, Austrian and English folk songs, as well as themes from his other works. His main inspiration was the classical tradition to which Shostakovich added elements of jazz and popular music. This kaleidoscope of mood and atmosphere stands in an ideal

balance, to which he added sarcastic and humorous elements. The entire concert exudes Shostakovich's youthful spirit, making it one of his most popular works.

By the age of 40, **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky** (1840–1893) was already a very popular composer who had written some of his most important works, such as his Piano Concerto No. 1 and his first four symphonies.

In 1880 Nikolai Rubinstein commissioned a work to commemorate the successful Russian defense against Napoleon's invading Grand Armée at the Battle of Borodino in 1812. The overture debuted in Moscow in August of 1882 near the then-almost-finished Cathedral of Christ the Savior.

In the **1812 Overture**, Tchaikovsky transformed that historic event into music in an extraordinary way, leaving the listener to visualize the battle between the two armies. The patriotic music includes an Orthodox chant, Russian folk melodies, the Russian Imperial national anthem *God Save the Tsar*, but also the national anthem of the enemy, *La Marseillaise*, which fades away in the final part. The large orchestra includes, among other things, church bells and cannon fire, first five shots representing the Battle of Borodino and eleven more in the grand finale as the French army retreats from Moscow in the freezing winter.

Despite it being called the *1812 Overture*, it was conceived as an independent composition and is not an integral part of a stage production. It was premiered near the almost finished Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow, on August 20, 1882.

Asja Radonjić, M. Sc.