

Belgrade Philharmonic
Season 2021-22
We Have Really Missed You

Friday, 17 December 2021

Daniel Raiskin
Leticia Moreno, violin

Joaquín Turina
La procesión del Rocío, Op. 9

Duration: around 19 minutes

Astor Piazzola
Four Seasons of Buenos Aires

Autumn
Winter
Spring
Summer

Duration: around 25 minutes

Béla Bartók
The Miraculous Mandarin, suite

Duration: around 20 minutes

Giya Kancheli *NU.MU.ZU (I don't Know)*

Duration: around 22 minutes

The artistic poetics of the Spanish composer and pianist **Joaquín Turina** (1882-1949) are characterized by a combination of romantic and impressionist elements and Spanish folklore idioms. His oeuvre encompasses various musical genres, and among the most famous achievements is his first orchestral composition, the symphonic poem *The Procession of Our Lady of El Rocío* (***La Procecion del Rocío***). Turina composed this piece soon after he graduated in 1913, and it was premiered in the same year by the Madrid Philharmonic with such success that it was repeated on the spot in its entirety. The premiere of *La Procecion du Rocio* positioned Turina as one of the most important Spanish composers.

The original score contains an accompanying text in which the author describes the atmosphere of the composition. Turina gives an exotic and picturesque portrait of an old custom that takes place every summer in his native Seville: in honor of Our Lady Rocío, a procession of pilgrims goes to the Seville suburb of Triana. The work consists of two connected sections characterized by a typically Spanish folklore overtone. The first part brings scenes of festive mood and various songs and dances, while the second presents the procession itself - a ceremonial march imbued with religious hymns. The end of the procession of pilgrims is announced by church bells, after which trumpets play the Spanish royal anthem.

Vivaldi's famous cycle was an inspiration for other authors who gave their vision of the seasons in a similar form. **Astor Piazzolla** (1921-1992), the Argentine master of the new tango (a combination of classical tango with elements of jazz and the musical language of the 20th century) composed ***The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*** between 1965 and 1970. In 1996-1998 a Russian composer, Leonid Desyatnikov, took the original composition, which consisted of violin, piano, guitar, double bass, and bandoneon, and prepared it for solo violin and string orchestra and today this version is the one most often represented in the concert repertoire.

In addition to the title, Desyatnikov changed the form to be similar to Vivaldi's three-movement structure, using his quotations. He made an interesting connection, for example, by inserting a quote from Vivaldi's *Winter* in the position of Piazzolla's *Summer*. In that way, he connected the different geographical climates from which the two composers hailed - when it is summer in Argentina, it is winter in Italy.

Three works by **Béla Bartók** were composed for the stage - his only opera *Bluebeard's Castle* (1911-12), the ballet *The Wooden Prince* (1914-16) and the pantomime ***The Miraculous Mandarin*** (1924). While the first two works show the rapid development of his style, with the clear influences of Stravinsky and Debussy, *The Miraculous Mandarin* is the culmination of the maturity of his compositional skills. All aspects of the score, harmony, rhythm, and orchestration, were completely close to the efforts of the composers of the Second Viennese School. Although the content is a typical expressionist story, the brutal details of the script with a clear sexual connotation from the pen of Melchior Lengyel shocked the public at the time. The premiere performance in Cologne in 1926 caused a scandal, after which the work was immediately banned. Perhaps it was the poor reception of the audience that led to the fact that Bartok shortened the score and adjusted it to a concert performance in the form of a suite. In the chaos of the big city, three tramps force a girl to attract people to her room, where she seduces them with a saucy dance, only to be robbed and chased away later. After two unsuccessful attempts to get money, the girl finally seduces a rich Chinese man, a Mandarin, who, completely enchanted by her, loses control of himself and attacks her. The tramps chase him around the room (that's where the suite ends) and manage to rob him, but as he doesn't stop attacking her, they kill him. Despite the story, which was not received with approval, the music was gradually accepted, so that today *The Miraculous Mandarin* represents an orchestral masterpiece. The music is written according to the dramaturgical currents of the text, and the high interpretive demands placed on the performers, as well as the barbaric, primitive energy, place this work in the rank of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*.

Georgian composer **Giya Kancheli** (1935-2019) was commissioned by the Belgian National Orchestra and the Seattle Symphony Orchestra to write a work that would be performed on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, in 2015. The work expresses the composer's struggle with understanding the concept of violence and hopes for a better future.

Nu.Mu.Zu means I don't know in Sumerian, a language that no longer exists, and was used in the area of Mesopotamia, or today's Iraq. Kancheli said about the work: *The illusions that I know something have gradually disappeared and it turns out that, approaching the age of eighty and living a life full of contradictions, I am completely confused. What is happening in the world, gradually, step by step, destroys the last hope in my consciousness, and without*

hope, for all of us, life loses meaning. "I don't know" what will happen in the future. Yet, although I have lost hope, I still dream of a world in which fanaticism, religious conflict, and violence are no longer the dominant structures of the world order.

Nu.Mu.Zu premiered at the Center for Fine Arts (BOZAR) in Brussels on October 16, 2015, under the direction of Andrzej Boreyko (Belgian National Orchestra), and then in Seattle, on November 5 of the same year, when it was conducted by Ludovic Morlot (Seattle Symphony Orchestra).

Asja Radonjić, M. Sc.