

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

**Friday, 14 January 2022**

**Jaume Santonja**  
**Andrei Korobeinikov**, piano

**Sergei Rachmaninoff**  
*The Isle of the Dead*, Op. 29

Duration: around 22 minutes

**Dmitry Shostakovich**  
Concerto for piano and orchestra No. 2, Op. 102

*Allegro*  
*Andante*  
*Allegro*

Duration: around 20 minutes

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**Jean Sibelius**  
Symphony No. 1 Op. 39 in E minor

*Andante, ma non troppo – Allegro energico*  
*Andante (ma non troppo lento)*  
*Scherzo: Allegro*  
*Finale: Andante*

Duration: around 38 minutes

**Sergei Rachmaninov** (1873-1943) composed his symphonic poem *The Isle of the Dead* in Dresden in 1908. His work was inspired by a black-and-white reproduction of the painting of the same name by the Swedish symbolist Arnold Böcklin, which Rachmaninov saw at an exhibition in Paris in 1907. Seeing the original color painting later, Rachmaninov was deeply disappointed, saying: If I had seen the original first, I would probably never have composed my *Isle of the Dead*. I only liked it in black and white.

The composition is considered a classic example of late musical Romanticism in Russia in the early 20th century. The sinister title and content of the artwork, with five different versions depicting a forlorn stone island with tall cypress trees and an approaching boat with a coffin, left a strong impression on the composer. The music begins in the deepest registers of the orchestral instruments in pianissimo stroke. The musical flow reaches several expressive culminations and returns to the initial silence.

Of **Dmitri Shostakovich's** six concertos (1906-1975) for solo instruments and orchestra, two were composed for piano. While the first was actually written as a double concerto for piano and trumpet with equally important parts for both solo instruments, the second has a classical formal pattern. The two piano concertos are more than 20 years apart. Shostakovich composed his **Second Piano Concerto** in 1957, for the 19th birthday of his son Maxim, who premiered it at his graduation concert at the Moscow Conservatory. Since Shostakovich's compositions had been censored countless times, the author, wanting to prevent any unpleasant critical responses, characterized the work as unpretentious and without any exalted artistic dimensions. The unusually cheerful tone of the Second Piano Concerto is not characteristic of Shostakovich's oeuvre. The concert's outer movements are similar in structure - clear solo themes contrasting with orchestral themes with military overtones. The melancholy second movement is reminiscent of Chopin's nocturne, while the third movement of dance character through pentatonic motifs and unusual rhythms brings the reminiscence of school days - parts of Hanon's technical exercises woven into Shostakovich's original musical fabric.

**Jean Sibelius** (1865-1957) wrote his **First Symphony in E minor, Op. 39** in 1898 at the age of 33. That same year, the symphony was premiered by the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by the author. The strict symphonic framework is characterized by a pronounced musical narrative with a strong national stamp. The first movement follows the late Romantic tradition of shifting the dramaturgical focus from the exposition to the reprise, while the second movement is replaced by a rondo, which is more reminiscent of a variation form. The three-part scherzo is in the typical scherzo spirit with a break in the middle. The thematic material entrusted to the clarinet from the beginning of the first movement of the symphony, transformed, finds a place in the introduction of the finale, marked as a *quasi una fantasia*. In that sense, the musical material shows a certain degree of similarity and the manner of its development is completely specific and different from the classical sonata form. That is why this symphony is unique, not only in Sibelius' oeuvre, but also as the first work of this genre in the oeuvre of any composer, not at all immature or elementary, but with its own unique stamp.