

BHS Bratislava Music Festival

56th Year

BRATISLAVSKÉ HUDOBNÉ SLÁVNOSTI | MUSIKFESTSPIELE BRATISLAVA
FÊTES DE MUSIQUE DE BRATISLAVA | FESTIVAL DE MÚSICA DE BRATISLAVA



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Friday, 24th September

7.30 p.m. Concert Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic

Slovak Philharmonic

Pinchas Steinberg, *conductor*

Javier Perianes, *piano*



Ján Cikker Symfonietta, Op. 16, No. 1

Maurice Ravel Piano Concerto in G major

Igor Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*

The oeuvre of **Ján Cikker**, with which he enriched the Slovak music, is exceptionally generous. Not only did he write 10 operas, he also proved himself to be a competent and unusually prolific symphony writer. By opening the Bratislava Music Festival 2021 with his work we commemorate the 110th birth anniversary of the composer.

In 1928 the French composer **Maurice Ravel** realized a fourth-month concert tour in the USA. The compositional offspring of this American journey was a playful, although extremely exacting for the performer, Piano Concerto in G major, which secured a permanent fame for the author. Tonight the concerto will be played by the Spanish pianist **Javier Perianes**, praised by critics with the words '*precision and speed of his fingerwork can be quite shattering... such a combination of evident modesty and utter brilliance*'.

Stravinsky's ballet *The Rite of Spring*, Pictures from Pagan Russia (1913), has become one of iconic opuses of the 20th-century symphonic music and to this day it captivates both experts and audiences. Delivered by the Slovak Philharmonic under the baton of the conducting magician Pinchas Steinberg the programme of the BMF's opening concert is a promise of an extraordinary music experience.

Saturday, 25th September

4 p.m. Small Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic

Chamber Concert: Works for Winds by Slovak Composers

Ladislav Fančovič, *saxophone*

Jozef Eliáš, *clarinet*

Albert Hrubovčák, *trombone*

Tomáš Nemec, *piano*

Albrecht Trio

Matúš Veľas, *oboe* / **Jozef Eliáš**, *clarinet* / **Peter Kajan**, *bassoon*

Evgeny Irshai Monologue for baritone saxophone

Peter Zagar Intermezzo for clarinet and piano **premiere**

Jozef Podprocký Divertimento for oboe, clarinet and bassoon, Op. 45

Milan Novák Music for trombone and piano

Evgeny Irshai Silhouettes for clarinet and baritone saxophone

Juraj Hatrík Due movimenti per tre

Chamber music for winds enjoys a long and extremely rich tradition in the Slovak music. Besides solo pieces the composers of our music modernism (Moyzes, Suchoň, Cikker, Kar-doš, Jurovský, Holoubek) dedicated themselves with great enthusiasm to the genre of a wind quintet. The opportunity to show off their performing mastery has been offered to the leaders of the wind section of the Slovak Philharmonic. The fabulous pianist **Ladislav Fančovič** will present himself in a new role of a concert saxophonist in two pieces by **Evgeny Irshai**, the origination of which he has motivated.

Sunday, 26th September

4 p.m. Concert Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic

Organ Concert

Thierry Escaich, *organ* **Romain Leleu**, *trumpet*

Vassily Brandt, Reinhold Glière, Louis Vierne, Camille Saint-Saëns, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Erik Satie, Amilcare Ponchielli

For centuries organ and trumpet have lived in a perfect harmony. In the past they were an ideal instrumental duo for presenting sacred reflections in the church, celebrating divine perfection and transcendental heights. Today they work together also on concert stage. However, it is not only original works that come into being; this pair of distinctive instruments lures many musicians to witty arrangements as well.

The composer and organist **Thierry Escaich** is a skillful improviser. At concerts he uses these skills in a combination with his own compositions. His frequent onstage partner is **Romain Leleu**, one of the most remarkable young European trumpeters.

7.30 p.m. Small Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic

A Letter to the Immortal Beloved

Jana Kurucová, *mezzosoprano*

Juraj Hollý, *tenor*

Robert Pechanec, *piano*

Martin Huba, *narrator*

Ludwig van Beethoven Adelaide, Op. 46

 Six Songs, Op. 75

 An die Hoffnung / To Hope, Op. 94

 Four Ariettas and A Duet, Op. 82

One day after **Beethoven** died a letter to an immortal beloved was discovered in the secret drawer of his writing desk. To this day no one has found out to whom the composer wrote this winsome declaration of love, which has become the object of interest of writers of thousands of articles, studies and books. Among at least ten potential addressees the most remarkable are the sisters Therese and Josephine Brunswick and their cousin Giulietta Guicciardi, who were Beethoven's pupils of piano playing in the manor in Dolná Krupá close to the town of Trnava.

Martin Huba, a member of the Drama Company of the Slovak National Theatre, will read from perhaps the most famous letter in the world cultural history. His reading will alternate with Beethoven's marvelous songs about love, rarely heard in Slovakia, delivered by the Slovak singing stars **Jana Kurucová** and **Juraj Hollý**, known mostly from prestigious German opera stages.

Monday, 27th September

7.30 p.m. Small Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic

Piano recital **Claire Huangci**

Johann Sebastian Bach/Ferruccio Busoni

 Toccata and Fugue in D minor, BWV 565

Ludwig van Beethoven Sonata No. 21 in C major, Op. 53 'Waldstein'

Franz Schubert Sonata No. 21 in Bb major, D 960

Three works which are a constant embellishment of the world piano literature. **Bach's** Toccata and Fugue in D minor in an exceptionally magnificent transcription of **Ferruccio Busoni** is followed by the well-known Waldstein Sonata by Ludwig van Beethoven, '*an archetype of Viennese and Beethovenian classic*' as the German critic Joachim Kaiser stated. The programme is crowned with Franz Schubert's last piano sonata from 1828.

The young American pianist **Claire Huangci**, the winner of the Mozart Prize at the Géza Anda International Piano Competition (2018), *'continuously captivates audiences with her gradiant virtuosity, artistic sensitivity, keen interactive sense and subtle auditory dramaturgy'* (Salzburger Nachrichten).

Tuesday, 28th September

7.30 p.m. Concert Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic

Tango Evening with Astor Piazzolla

Slovak Nuevo Quinteto

Tomáš Valíček, *accordion*, **Stano Palúch**, *violin*, **Robert Ragan**,
double-bass, **Peter Solárik**, *percussion*, **Eva Varhaníková**, *piano*

Astor Piazzolla

selection from works

Peter Špilák

... with Astor Piazzolla from the cycle

Letters of Composers

premiere

The festival programme of this year cannot ignore the commemoration of the centenary of Astor Piazzolla, whose name is inseparably bound with the history of the South-American tango. Following the virtuoso ensemble Triango, heard by the BMF visitors several years ago, comes another ensemble dedicated to the works of the Argentinian composing genius.

In their project five well-known Slovak musicians forming the ensemble **Slovak Nuevo Quinteto** have decided to focus on the works of the maestro who merged the world of tango with classical music in his compositions in an original way. The instrumental line-up reflects a combination of several 'Piazzolla's ensembles'.

Wednesday, 29th September

7.30 p.m. Concert Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic

Slovak Philharmonic

Emmanuel Villaume, *conductor*

Slovak Philharmonic Choir

Jozef Chabroň, *choirmaster*

Dinara Alieva, *soprano*

Olesya Petrova, *mezzosoprano*

Stefan Pop, *tenor*

Dmitry Belosselskiy, *bass*

Giuseppe Verdi

Messa da Requiem

The French conductor **Emmanuel Villaume** leading the **Slovak Philharmonic**, **Slovak Philharmonic Choir** and a quartet of excellent soloists from abroad will perform **Verdi's** monumental work, which ideally harmonizes with the conductor's performing nature. Requiem originated in 1874 as a remembrance ceremony for Alessandro Manzoni, the top representative of the Italian literary Romanticism, whom Verdi held in high esteem. The premiere took place on the first anniversary of Manzoni's death in Milano's St Mark Church under the baton of the composer himself. The work soon set out on a triumphal journey through European concert stages.

The Slovak Philharmonic – BMF dedicate Verdi's Requiem to the memory of all victims of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thursday, 30th September

7.30 p.m. Concert Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic

Wiener Philharmoniker

Alain Altinoglu, *conductor*

Gautier Capuçon, *cello*

Antonín Dvořák

Cello Concerto in B minor, Op. 104

César Franck

Symphony in D minor, FWV 48

The guest performance of the **Vienna Philharmonic** led by outstanding world conductors at the BMF has become a tradition without which we cannot imagine the programme of our

top music festival. This time one of the most renowned European orchestras has prepared a programme consisting of two essential works of music Romanticism. The most famous cello concerto coming from the time of **Antonín Dvořák's** stay in America is supplemented with a poetic and at the same time passionately pulsating Symphony in D minor from 1889 by the French-Belgian composer **César Franck**.

The French conductor **Alain Altinoglu** will perform in Slovakia for the first time, whereas the soloist of the concerto, **Gautier Capuçon**, is well known by the BMF audience. It was also his victory at the International Forum of Young Performers New Talent (2001) that contributed to the outset of his radiant career. He is an artist *who can bring out 'the score's every technical and emotional aspect in a performance both commanding and highly subtle'* (Chicago Sun Times). Gautier Capuçon plays L'Ambassadeur, a precious Matteo Goffriller cello from 1701.

Friday, 1st October

7.30 p.m. Collumn Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic

Slovak Chamber Orchestra

Ewald Danel, *artistic leader* **Andrea Vizvári**, *soprano*

Ladislav Kupkovič *Cantica slovacca*

Béla Bartók *For Children*, arrangements of Slovak and Hungarian folk songs (orchestration by Leo Weiner)

Roman Berger *Songs from Zaolzie*

Wojciech Kilar *Orawa*

Vítězslav Novák *Slovak Songs*, a selection
(arranged for strings by Ewald Danel)

Ilja Zeljenka *Musica slovacca*, for violin and strings on folk songs
from Čičmany

The festival performance of the Slovak Chamber Orchestra this year is characterized by a balanced programme consisting of first-rate arrangements of international folk songs by Slovak composers and authors from neighbouring countries. Also this way – with music – the BMF will symbolically commemorate 30 years of the existence of the V4 group. The popular *Musica slovacca* by Ilja Zeljenka cannot be missing, as it has been fascinating the listeners for almost 50 years.

Saturday, 2nd October

7.30 p.m. Concert Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic

Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra

Slovak Philharmonic Choir

Ondrej Lenárd, *conductor*

Adam Sedlický, *choirmaster*

Eva Hornyáková, *soprano* **Terézia Kružliaková**, *mezzosoprano*

Gustav Mahler *Symphony No. 2 in C minor 'Resurrection'*

'The final movement of my Second Symphony is finished! It is the most important work I have ever composed. The closing gradation is colossal!' Thus wrote **Gustav Mahler** to his friend Arnold Berliner in July 1894. Although it may seem that the work on it was quick, the five-movement symphonic colossus had been brought to existence unusually slowly, it took him years and much strength. The premiere in Berlin Philharmonic in March 1895 was not accepted by the audience and the critical responses were devastating. Today this monumental opus belongs to Mahler's most representative works and conductors decide for it at the acme of their artistic career.

Since long ago **Ondrej Lenárd**, the doyen of our masters of the baton, has had a close relationship with Mahler's music, and he is the guarantor of its authentic performance.

Sunday, 3rd October

4 p.m. Small Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic

Baborak Ensemble

Radek Baborák, *French horn*

Milan Al-Ashhab, *1st violin*

Martina Bačová, *2nd violin*

Karel Untermüller, *viola*

Hana Baboráková, *cello*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Horn Quintet E flat major KV 407

Leone Sinigaglia Romanza Op. 3 for horn and string quartet

Jean Sibelius *Käyrätorvi*, horn quintet in G minor (arr. by R. Baborák)

Johannes Brahms String Quintet in G Major No. 2, Op. 111 (for horn quintet arranged by A. Aslamas and R. Baborák)

Baborak Ensemble was founded by the hornist and conductor Radek Baborák in 2001. Currently the musician belongs among the most important performers playing the French horn. His name is pronounced with respect by the top world conductors with whom he has collaborated as an orchestral musician. For a certain time Baborák was a solo hornist of the Boston Philharmonic, and the legendary Seiji Ozawa, the orchestra's former music director, expressed his highest appreciation for him in his book of interviews about music with the writer Haruki Murakami. Besides his instrumentalist's career he has been dedicated to conducting for a long time, and has recently focused his attention on arrangements of famous as well as less famous works for chamber ensemble with participation of the French horn. The concert programme will culminate in the famous String Quintet in G major by **Johannes Brahms**, which will sound in a new, no doubt attractive arrangement. Since its origination the Baborak Ensemble has been remarkably successful both on domestic stage and abroad; for example one of its latest projects *Orquestrina*, recorded also on a CD, was premiered in the sold-out concert hall of the Berlin Philharmonic.

7.30 p.m. Concert Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic

Konzerthausorchester Berlin

Juraj Valčuha, *conductor*

Julian Rachlin, *violin*

Charles Ives *The Unanswered Question*

Felix Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64

The programme of the concert predestined to become a treat for both the critics and audience is opened by the emblematic composition of the American eccentric **Charles Ives** from 1908. It is based on a dialogue of a solo trumpet asking the eternal question of the meaning of life, and a muted string orchestra that answers. **Mendelssohn's** Violin Concerto belongs to his most popular works. It offers to the soloist not only variegated expressive situations, but also an opportunity to show off their technical brilliance. The concerto will be delivered by the electrifying violinist **Julian Rachlin**, one of the most respected artists of today. He will play the violin 'ex Liebig' Stradivari from 1704. The programme will be crowned with the symphony from 1888 written by the ingenious Russian Romanticist **Tchaikovsky**. Its emotionality always strikes the listener.

Konzerthausorchester Berlin comes with its permanent guest conductor who's been returning to it constantly since the season 2017/2018 – the prominent Slovak globe-trotter **Juraj Valčuha**.

Monday, 4th October

7.30 p.m. Concert Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic

An Evening with Antonio Vivaldi

Ensemble Matheus

Jean-Christophe Spinosi, *conductor*

Jakub-Józef Orlíński, *countertenor*

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For many melomaniacs the ample oeuvre of **Antonio Vivaldi** is the quintessence of Baroque music, to which they listen with a nearly devout respect. In the course of centuries the composer's works have become an object of innumerable arrangements, transcriptions or other adaptations, which do not always harmonize with their original value. We are given a rare opportunity to listen to the works by this Italian master performed in their authentic versions by the Ensemble Matheus.

Ensemble Matheus with its conductor **Jean-Christophe Spinosi** belongs to sought-after ensembles not only on the European music scene. They come to the BMF with the Polish countertenor **Jakub-Józef Orlíński**. This young artist has triumphed on both theatre and concert stages, as well as in recording studios. The live broadcast from the Festival in Aix-en-Provence (2017), where he performed Vivaldi, was watched online by over four million listeners. Successful TV appearances followed in collaboration with the French National Orchestra – a concert under the Eiffel Tower, a concert for the support of the renovation of the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, and many others.

Tuesday, 5th October

7.30 p.m. Concert Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic

Slovak Philharmonic

Christian Vásquez, *conductor*

Ivan Ženatý, *violin*

Aaron Copland *El Salón México*

Édouard Lalo Spanish Symphony for violin and orchestra in D minor, Op. 21

Silvestre Revueltas *La noche de los Mayas*

The Slovak Philharmonic has prepared an Ibero-American programme opened by the fierce, rhythmically rich symphonic image *El Salón México*, one of the most popular works of the American composer **Aaron Copland**. He wrote it in the 1930s influenced by his visit to the legendary dance hall in the Mexican metropolis. The French **Édouard Lalo** has composed his popular **Spanish Symphony**, which belongs to the basic archive of Romantic violin concertos, for the violin virtuoso Pablo de Sarasate in 1874. We will listen to it in an attractive rendering of the Czech perennial star, the violinist **Ivan Ženatý**, playing the precious violin Giuseppe Guarneri 'del Gesù' from 1740. The night will be closed by the suite *The Night of the Mayas* by the Mexican composer **Silvestre Revueltas**. It was written in 1939 originally as a film score to the eponymous movie. The work later aroused the interest of Paul Hindemith, who arranged it as a concert work after the composer's death. A large group of percussion instruments is used in the work in an unusual way.

The Slovak Philharmonic will prepare the concert under the baton of **Christian Vásquez**, one of the most important Venezuelan conductors of today.

Wednesday, 6th October

7.30 p.m. Concert Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic

Sinfonietta Žilina

Lúčnica Chorus

Zuzana Weiserová, *soprano*

Ján Slávik, *cello*

Oliver Dohnányi, *conductor*

Elena Matušová, *choirmaster*

Štefan Kocán, *bass*

Štefan Bučko, *narrator*

Mirko Krajčí	<i>Prayers and Lullabies</i> for soprano, choir and chamber ensemble on lyrics by Milan Rúfus and folk texts premiere
Antonín Dvořák	Czech Suite in D major, Op. 39
Egon Krák	<i>Tender Light of Stars</i> , sonnets for baritone, narrator, cello and symphonic orchestra on lyrics by P. O. Hviezdoslav premiere

Mirko Krajčí's compositional poetics is characteristic by its inclination towards religious themes and a calm contemplating nature. The work premiered tonight was inspired by emotional poems of Milan Rúfus and folk poetry. Following his impressive Mahler-like meditation in 2011 and Beethovenian reflection in 2020, **Egon Krák** pays his symphonic tribute to the weighty representative of the Slovak poetry, P. O. Hviezdoslav, on the occasion of the centenary of the poet's death. The concert will be enriched with the famous opus of **Antonín Dvořák**.

Sinfonietta Žilina and **Lúčnica Chorus** are artists eager to give premieres of works of Slovak composers; tonight at the BMF again with the conductor **Oliver Dohnányi**.

Thursday, 7th October

7.30 p.m. Concert Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic

Skuta Piano Duo

Miki Skuta – Nora Skuta

Rupert Struber, *percussion* **Kiril Stoyanov**, *percussion*

Igor Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring* / for two pianos

Béla Bartók Sonata for two pianos and percussion, BB 115, Sz. 110

Igor Stravinsky and **Béla Bartók** are two classics of the 20th-century music who are close to each other. Both profit from the rudimentary form of folk music, both are impulsive in their works and compositionally inventive without succumbing to constructivist experiment of their contemporaries. Hardly can we find in music history another pair of works which so brilliantly supplement each other.

For years the **Skuta Piano Duo** has had the chamber version of Stravinsky's famous ballet in their repertory, and every time they astonish with the mastery of their rendering. Bartók's eruptive and rhythmically sophisticated opus from 1937, in which they will be joined by renowned percussionists – the Austrian **Rupert Struber** and Bulgarian **Kiril Stoyanov**, a member of the Slovak Philharmonic – is likewise a promise of an unusually interesting evening.

Friday, 8th October

7.30 p.m. Concert Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic

Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava

Domingo Hindoyan, *conductor*

Kateřina Kněžíková, *soprano*

Antonín Dvořák *Carnival* overture, Op. 92

Maurice Ravel *Shéhérazade*, song cycle for soprano and orchestra, M 41

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov *Shéhérazade*, symphonic suite, Op. 35

An intoxicating song cycle *Shéhérazade* on poems by Tristan Klingsor comes from the early period of **Ravel's** oeuvre. Its origination was inspired by the eponymous suite by **Rimsky-Korsakov** which enchanted the French author with its exotic atmosphere.

It was not by chance that both works have appeared on the programme of the festival concert of the **Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava**, which will be led by another Venezuelan festival guest **Domingo Hindoyan** who is a sought-after conductor on opera and concert stages. The soloist of the night will be **Kateřina Kněžíková**, the laureate of numerous awards: we can mention the Classic Prague Awards (2018), Thália Awards (2019) as well as a successful guest appearance at the world-famous Glyndebourne Festival.

Saturday, 9th October

7.30 p.m. Concert Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic

**Orquesta Sinfónica Freixenet
de la Escuela Superior
de Música Reina Sofía**



Andrés Orozco-Estrada, *conductor*
Arabella Steinbacher, *violin*



Isaac Albéniz	<i>Iberia</i> suite: <i>El Puerto</i> , arrangement Fernández Arbós
Sergei Prokofiev	Violin Concerto No. 1 in D major, Op. 19
Antonín Dvořák	Symphony No. 8 in G major, Op. 88

Four cycles of the piano suite *Iberia* by **Isaac Albéniz** belong to works of Spanish music from the first decade of the 20th century which breathtakingly represent the genius loci of the Iberian Peninsula. The piece *El Puerto/The Harbour - prístav* was inspired by the Andalusian 'city of 100 palaces' close to Cádiz. **Prokofiev's** First Violin Concerto was written in 1917 before the composer's departure for the Western Europe, but its premiere took place only in 1923 in Paris. Symphony No. 8 in G major is one of **Dvořák's** most popular works. The author wrote it as an expression of gratitude for his nomination among the members of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Literature and Arts. The premiere took place in 1890.

This is the tour programme of the university orchestra from the Music School in Madrid. It will certainly bring energy, enthusiasm and esprit, the attributes typical for the Colombian settled in Vienna – **Andrés Orozco-Estrada**, who is a titular conductor of the orchestra. He brought his precision and explosiveness also to the BMF 2019, when he conducted the Vienna Philharmonic. The guest appearance of the German violinist **Arabella Steinbacher** serves as an encouragement for young people, as her performance comprises '*balanced lyricism and fire [...] a finely polished technique and a beautifully varied palette of timbres*' (New York Times), which will fully resound on the instrument 1716 'Booth' Stradivarius.

Sunday, 10th October

7.30 p.m. Concert Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic

Slovak Philharmonic

Daniel Raiskin, *conductor*

Lukáš Vondráček, *piano*

Antonín Dvořák	Piano Concerto in G minor, Op. 33
Dmitri Shostakovich	Symphony No. 7 in C major ' <i>Leningrad</i> ', Op. 60

Whereas **Dvořák's** violin and namely cello concerto belong to jewels of the world concertante literature and are a firm part of the repertory of top world performers to this day, his Piano Concerto from 1876 has remained somewhat in their shade, although unjustly. Dvořák composed the concerto for a gifted Czech pianist Karel Slavkovský, who premiered it in March 1876 in Prague. Later the piece was revived thanks to significant piano performers of the 20th century (Svyatoslav Richter, András Schiff). On BMF stage we will listen to it performed by excellent **Lukáš Vondráček**, the winner of many international competitions: e.g. Grand Prix at the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Bruxelles (2016), to mention only one of the most prestigious. The Seventh Symphony '*Leningrad*' by **Dmitri Shostakovich** belongs to the most important and extraordinary works of the 20th-century Russian symphonic music. The composer started to work on it immediately after the Soviet Union was attacked by Hitler's Germany and its legendary premiere in Kuybyshev (today Samara) in 1942 was reflected worldwide.

The Slovak Philharmonic will close the 56th BMF under the baton of its music director **Daniel Raiskin**.



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During the festival until 7.30 p.m. and on Saturday and Sunday one hour before the concert.

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Tel.: +421 2 20 475 293, e-mail: vstupenky.bhs@filharmonia.sk
www.filharmonia.sk

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