



Concerto Budapest 2022-2023 season (2nd semester)

Péter Eötvös, Máté Szűcs and Concerto Budapest

March 26, 2023 Sunday 19:30

Béla Bartók National Concert Hall, MÜPA

special discount 50%

WAGNER: Siegfried-Idyll

PETER EÖTVÖS: Respond – Hungarian premiere

- intermission -

IVES: Symphony No. 4

Máté Szűcs viola, **Péter Kiss** piano

ELTE Béla Bartók Choir

Concerto Budapest

Conductor: **Péter Eötvös, Gergely Dubóczy**

A birthday gift composed for small ensemble by Richard Wagner who generally thought in terms of symphony orchestra, the viola concerto by Péter Eötvös rearranged for reduced line-up with solo by Máté Szűcs, and the symphony by Charles Ives employing two conductors composed for grand orchestra and performed in Hungary only once before. All this is in the Concerto Budapest concert under the baton of Péter Eötvös, during which proof is given that as regards musical quality, size is not a consideration.



On Christmas Day 1870, Richard Wagner awakened Cosima, whose birthday it was, with music, providing a morning serenade with small ensemble at the door to the bedroom of his wife: Siegfried Idyll parades key themes from the third act of the opera, including the melody accompanying the awakening of Brünnhilde, Siegfried's horn signal, and the song of the forest bird – instead of drama, pure tranquillity and equilibrium. Similarly to the Wagner work, Péter Eötvös's cello concerto Respond is a reworking of an earlier composition, which is being performed in its current form for the first time in Hungary. Eötvös rearranged his 1998 creation Replica in accordance with the pandemic: this resulted in the 49-member orchestra being reduced to 32 musicians, and parallel with this the work has been expanded with new musical concepts. With regard to the viola concerto that has multiple associations with his opera Tri sestry (Three Sisters), and its title, the composer had the following to say: "Answers only serve to raise further questions. In the dialogue thus created, a wide variety of arguments are made, and like shards of a shattered mirror one receives the reflection of an image whose original can only be guessed at." Likewise, the music of American Charles Ives can be compared to virtually nothing

else. The composer who made a living as an insurance agent went his own way and his innovations put him ahead of his time. From 1910 and for nearly 15 years, the experimental composer worked on his most complex piece, Symphony No. 4; however, the complicated work calling on the resources of a large orchestra was first heard in its entirety only in 1965. It has never been performed in Müpa Budapest, and only once in Budapest, in 2001, also under the baton of Péter Eötvös, so the Concerto Budapest concert promises to be the occasion for a thrilling discovery (or for some, a reacquaintance)..

Hungarian Gems 4

April 20, 2023 Thursday 19:30

Ceremonial Hall, Pesti Vigadó

BARTÓK: Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra, BB 121

- intermission -

LISZT: Dante Symphony

Fülöp Ránki, Mihály Berecz piano, Zoltán Rác, Boglárka Fábry percussion

Concerto Budapest

Conductor: **János Kovács**



The 2022/23 season of Hungarian Gems closes down with two grandiose masterpieces in this entertaining concert. The programme is a pick from the oeuvres of the two most globally recognized masters of Hungarian music. Béla Bartók's Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra (1940) is the offspring of his sonata for two pianos and percussion of three years earlier, and in its rearranged form the three-movement work also gives a lead role to percussionists. In the second half of the programme conducted by

János Kovács, it is the turn of one of the highpoints of the Liszt symphonic oeuvre, the 1855–56 Dante Symphony, for the performance of which the composer originally visualized projected images and a wind machine. "No! No! Not that! Away with it! No majestic Lord God! Keep the gentle, noble, floating finish!" These words were from the dedicatee of the symphony, Richard Wagner, in trying to convince his friend (and future father-in-law) to rewrite the pompous finale; presumably spurred by these comments, Liszt put forward two kinds of endings for the performers of his three-movement work.

Péter Eötvös and Concerto Budapest – Ligeti Ensemble

April 27, 2023 Thursday 19:30

Budapest Music Center

MARTIN CHRISTOPH REDEL: Les Adieux, op. 61 Hommage à Györgi Ligeti (2006)

PÉTER EÖTVÖS: Dodici per sei

- intermission -

EDGAR VARÈSE: Déserts

(accompanied by motion pictures by Bill Viola)

Concerto Budapest - Ligeti Ensemble

Conductor: **Péter Eötvös**

Ligeti Ensemble, formed under the aegis of Concerto Budapest, gave their first recital in 2018. The primary objective of the formation is to showcase the most significant works of the 20th and 21st centuries, with particular emphasis on new Hungarian works. Their BMC concert in April is conducted by Péter Eötvös, who acquaints the audience with important works by Martin Christoph Redel and Edgard Varèse.



The German composer, Martin Christoph Redel gained national and international recognition early on. His work *Les Adieux* was composed in 2006 as an *Hommage à György Ligeti* for the Portugal-Tournee 2007 of the string orchestra Junge Kammerphilharmonie NRW.

Although of French-Italian descent, Varèse spent a large part of his life in America. Sound, timbre and rhythm. These are the primary organizational elements of works by the artist known as the father of electronic music. The work *Déserts* (1950–54) by the composer, who had a huge influence on his contemporaries and artists who came after him (for example, Frank Zappa was one of his devotees), applies not only wind and percussion but audio tape as well: the title refers not only to the deserts of the world but the deserts of human souls as well, “distant inner space no telescope can reach, where one is alone”. The performance of *Déserts* originally made as music for a Modernist film is here accompanied by motion pictures by contemporary American video artist Bill Viola. Between the works of Redel and Varèse is Péter Eötvös’s own work *Dodici per sei* for six cellos, debuted by 12 cellists of the Berlin Philharmonic, which takes on and progresses the structure and material of his *Cello Concerto Grosso*.

Mikhail Pletnev and Concerto Budapest
May 3, 2023 Wednesday 19:30
Béla Bartók National Concert Hall, MÜPA

SIBELIUS: *Pelléas and Mélisande*, op. 46
SIBELIUS: *Violin Concerto in D minor*, op. 47
- intermission -
RACHMANINOV: *The Isle of the Dead*, op. 29
SCRIABIN: *The Poem of Ecstasy*, op. 54

Amira Abouzahra violin
Concerto Budapest
Conductor: **Mikhail Pletnev**

Although relations between Finland and Russia were, to put it mildly, rarely free of conflict, this concert featuring world-famous pianist-conductor Mikhail Pletnev and Concerto Budapest is solid proof that the music and culture of the two nations sit quite happily alongside each other, and what is more, the works performed at the concert are pieces from the most fertile periods of Sibelius, Rachmaninov and Scriabin all dating from the turn of the century.

Swedish-speaking Jean Sibelius who lived to a ripe old age was the greatest national musician of the Finns, who enjoyed huge respect, indeed near cult status in his lifetime, and his works inspired by the culture of his homeland made him one of the most original national composers of the fin de siècle and first half of the 20th century. However, the two works heard in today's concert do not draw on Finnish traditions since his 1905 incidental music was made for the Maeterlinck drama, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, from which came the nine-movement suite, one of his most popular concert works. On the other hand, this is not the most frequently performed composition of the Sibelius oeuvre; that title goes to his next opus, the D minor violin concerto written in 1904 and revised a year later. The passionate concerto also has a Hungarian connection: the dedicatee of the reworked version was the then 12-year-old wunderkind, Ferenc Vecsey. Today, Sibelius's Violin Concerto is a mandatory repertory piece in the armoury of all violinists, and on this occasion the solo is played by the similarly youthful musician (born in 2005), Egyptian-Hungarian Abouzahra Amira, who was also 12 when he won the 2017 Virtuózok talent show. Composers and works appearing in the second half of the concert are linked in several ways: Sergei Rachmaninov and Alexander Scriabin were classmates before they developed wildly different music approaches. The *Isle of the Dead*, the symphonic poem inspired by the painting by



Arnold Böcklin, or more accurately its reproduction in black and white, dates from 1908. After the composition also working up the *Dies irae* melody, there is another work similarly completed in 1908, one of the most important pieces – *Poem of Ecstasy* – by Scriabin, the synesthete, a person associating colours to sounds, which uses the composer's famous mystic chord and which, according to the artist, is "the joy of liberated action".

Jonathan Biss and Concerto Budapest 1.

May 13, 2023 Saturday 19:30

Grand Hall, Liszt Academy

LIGETI Concert Românesc

BEETHOVEN: Piano Concerto in G major, K. 453

- intermission -

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: Scheherazade - Symphonic Suite for Orchestra based on "One Thousand And One Nights", op. 35

Jonathan Biss piano

Concerto Budapest

Conductor: **András Keller**

"Good and bad at the same time." This was György Ligeti's assessment of the quality of his youthful work *Concert Românesc* (1951), and even if we can understand why the composer handled the work – of its era and evoking echoes of its models (for example, Bartók's *Romanian Folk Dances*) – with reservations, this composition still more than stands its ground in concert halls today, something that

can hardly be said of the majority of similar pieces from the 1950s. There was no shadow of doubt about the artistic merits of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major, the opening solo of which was debuted by the composer himself, whereas for this occasion the American Jonathan Biss, a true Beethoven aficionado, is at the keyboard. Finally, Concerto Budapest play the Scheherazade suite, a classical music hit with fabulous orchestration and equally fabulous theme under



Kossuth Prize conductor András Keller. The 1888 Rimsky-Korsakov work based on One Thousand and One Nights recreates an inimitable magical atmosphere even for those listeners who are totally unaware of the adventures of Sinbad or the figure of Sultan Shahryar.

Jonathan Biss and Concerto Budapest 2.
May 14, 2023 Sunday 19:30
Grand Hall, Liszt Academy

LIGETI Concert Românesc

MOZART: Piano Concerto in G major, K. 453

- intermission -

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: Scheherazade - Symphonic Suite for Orchestra based on "One Thousand And One Nights", op. 35

Jonathan Biss piano

Concerto Budapest

Conductor: **András Keller**



Primarily representative of the national classicist trend of the fifties in Hungary although in some places it anticipated the stylistic motifs of György Ligeti. This is the 1951 Concert Românesc, whose dominant folk divertimento tone eventually descends into a kind of distraction scene: "good and bad at the same time", as the highly self-critical composer himself put it. The early Ligeti work is followed by a mature Mozart

masterpiece, the Piano Concerto in G major (1784), with solo by Jonathon Biss who besides his piano playing skills is also active as a music writer, teacher and festival director (Marlboro Music Festival). It is customary to wheel out an anecdote in connection with this piano concerto, according to which Mozart's favourite pet starling was capable of whistling the melody of the third movement. On the contrary, the closing number of the concert compiled and conducted by András Keller justifies mention of an entire collection of fairy tales because the symphonic suite (1888) with lavish orchestration by Rimsky-Korsakov is based on One Thousand and One Nights as it conjures up the figures of Scheherazade and Sinbad the sailor.

Hidden Treasure of French Romantic Opera

June 3, 2023 Saturday 19:30

Grand Hall, Liszt Academy

Works by Joncières, De Grandval, Godard, Massenet, Thomas, Gounod, Fourdrain, Offenbach

Gabrielle Philiponet, Anaïs Constans soprano, **Anna Dowsley** mezzo-soprano, **Michael Arivony** baritone

Concerto Budapest

Conductor: **György Vashegyi**



Let's not deny it, here in Hungary French opera is represented by only a few hit works on the repertoire and in the public mind, so it's good if the Tales of Hoffmann or Samson and Delilah end up fitting into this narrow range along with Carmen and Faust. The fact is, however, that this operatic tradition is so much richer than this, as numerous productions put on by György Vashegyi in recent years have convincingly proved. Now

we have him and his ensembles, as well as prestigious foreign singers regularly appearing in Hungary to thank for the chance to become acquainted with the hidden treasures of French Romantic opera. The gala includes opera fragments by composers whose names are not even familiar to our ears, for instance, Victorin de Joncières and the female composer Clémence de Grandval. In addition, arias, duets and tercets from the operatic oeuvres of Massenet, Gounod, Offenbach and Thomas, honoured and renowned masters of Gallic music, are also performed.