

BRUSSELS PHILHARMONIC

EIN HELDENLEBEN



A Hero's Life

BRUSSELS PHILHARMONIC PRESENTS

A BUCKET LIST CONCERT

CONDUCTOR **KAZUSHI ONO**

CONCERTMASTER **HENRY RAUDALES**

MISE EN SCENE **FANNY GILBERT-COLLET**

WITH THE SUPPORT OF BESIDE TAX SHELTER AND THE BELGIAN TAX SHELTER



Vlaanderen
versterkt samen



flagey

YOUR CONCERT NIGHT

19:00 **PERFORMANCE: O SUPERMAN** STUDIO 2
(For Massenet, Laurie Anderson 1981)
Kelly Poukens & María Gil Muñoz (voices),
Jean-Luc Plouvier (Ictus - keyboards &
arrangement), Stef Van Alsenoy (sound)

19:15 **LECTURE** STUDIO 3
prof. Laurent De Sutter: We don't need
another hero - about heroes &
anti-heroes (EN)

19:30 **INTRODUCTION** FOYER 2
Jasper Croonen & Kazushi Ono (EN)

20:15 **CONCERT** STUDIO 4
(without intermission > 21:45)
WOLFGANG APP available (NL/FR/EN)

RICHARD STRAUSS
Don Juan, op. 20 (1888)

RICHARD STRAUSS
Serenade voor Windblazers in Es, op. 7 (1881)

RICHARD STRAUSS
Ein Heldenleben, op. 40 (1898)

conductor: Kazushi Ono
concertmaster: Henry Raudales
regie, concept & light:
Fanny Gilbert-Collet
soundscapes: Stef Van Alsenoy

21:45 **AFTERTALK** STUDIO 2
Jasper Croonen & Kazushi Ono (EN)

PROGRAMME NOTES

Richard Strauss (1864–1949) is known as the composer of the symphonic poem — a romantic genre composed of a single movement for symphonic orchestra, in which the composer depicts a story in musical form. At the end of the 19th century, Strauss developed this genre into a stand-alone composition that no longer required any external text or explanation. One of the innovative things about his approach was the overarching dramatic tension and organic structure, which unfolds as the story unfurls.

Strauss composed more than nine Tondichtungen (tone poems), of which Don Juan was the one that heralded his breakthrough as a composer in 1889. With this work, he also broke away from his youthful, more classically inspired style and focused on modern compositions, with Wagner and literature as his greatest sources of inspiration. Debussy, no less, called *Ein Heldenleben*, Strauss' penultimate symphonic poem, 'a picture book, even cinematography'. So eloquent was Strauss' imagery, that he claimed a programme was not necessary: 'It is enough to know that it is a hero battling his enemies.' The work reads as the composer's artistic life story, but dig deeper and behind the ironic layer you will discover a universal theme: the individual's struggle for freedom in the face of a complex external and internal world.

BREAKING WITH TRADITION

Strauss was barely eighteen years old when he composed the *Serenade Op.7* for thirteen wind instruments in 1881. The influence of his

father, first horn in the orchestra of the Bavarian State Opera, is clearly audible: not only does the music evoke fragments of the music the young Richard grew up with, but the horn as an instrument also plays a prominent role. Based on own Strauss' words, his father's musical tastes were quite conservative: 'His musical trinity was Mozart (above all), Haydn and Beethoven. To these were added Schubert, as songwriter, Weber, and, at some distance, Mendelssohn and Spohr. To him Beethoven's later works, from the Finale of the Seventh Symphony onward, were no longer "pure" music (one could begin to scent in them that Mephistophelian figure Richard Wagner).'

Strauss modelled his serenade on the classical sonata form as in Mozart's Gran Partita, but was already casting a glance into the future in the vocals and melodic lines. The rich timbres, lyrics and passionate melodies that are so characteristic of his later works start to surface here. The work premiered on 27 November 1882, under the direction of Franz Wüllner (who conducted, among other things, the premieres in Munich of Wagner's *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*), and was immediately picked up by the influential conductor Hans Von Bülow. He liked Strauss' serenade so much that he put the work on the programme for the European tour of the Meininger Hofkapelle and a few years later even asked the young composer for a new composition for the same combination of instruments.

TRAGIC FATE

From 1885, Strauss took a different approach. After meeting Alexander Ritter, a well-known composer and violinist and the husband of one of Richard Wagner's nieces, he focused

on composing large-scale works with literature as one of the main sources of inspiration. Between 1886 and 1888 he composed the four-part *Aus Italien* and *Macbeth*, only to break through one year later with *Don Juan. Tondichtung (nach Nicolaus Lenau) für großes Orchester, op.20*.

The *Don Juan* that Strauss evokes in his eponymous tone poem is not the unscrupulous skirt chaser in the popular imagination. Strauss found his inspiration in the unfinished poem by Nikolaus Lenau, which he had come to know during a performance of the play *Don Juans Ende* in 1885, in the company of Von Bülow. In Lenau's poem, the main character is driven by a desire for the feminine ideal. However, when he realises that this desire will never be completely fulfilled, he sees death as the only solution. The music in Strauss' composition evolves from confident and romantic melodies to a lamenting and tragic finale with a wave of brass and percussion. At the end, three pianissimo chords resound: Don Juan's fate is sealed.

When the score was published, Strauss included three fragments from Lenau's poem. However, he himself never foresaw a clear plot description; he preferred to leave that to the listener's imagination. And although a number of lines from Lenau's poem are explicitly erotic, that was not what Strauss cared about. What did matter was the philosophical idea behind the story of this tragic hero: the pursuit of ideal love.

A HUMAN HERO

In the programme notes for the premiere of *Ein Heldenleben, op. 40*, Strauss indicated

that the subject of his tone poem 'sketched not a single poetical or historical figure, but rather a more general and free idea of a great and manly heroism'. Strauss penned the first sketches of this large-scale work as early as 1897, while still composing his earlier symphonic poem *Don Quixote*. He described these first fragments as 'a desire for peace after the struggle with the world; refuge in solitude: the idyll'. He completed the work at the end of 1898 and dedicated it to conductor Willem Mengelberg and the Amsterdam Concertgebouworkest (although the premiere took place in Frankfurt on 3 March 1899). *Ein Heldenleben* consists of six parts, which are played consecutively without a break. Strauss originally gave the parts a title, only to remove them again before the publication of the score. Consecutively, they are as follows: the hero – the hero's adversaries – the hero's female companion – the hero at battle – the hero's works of peace – the hero's withdrawal from the world and fulfillment.

The reactions of the public and the press after the premiere were mixed. Those who read it as an autobiographical work found the composer conceited. According to Strauss, it was 'only partially true' that he identified himself with the hero. In a letter to Romain Rolland, he admitted that he found himself 'no less interesting than Napoleon'. But beneath this self-confident layer are also indirect links to the philosophy of Nietzsche and his concept of the *Übermensch*, an idea that very much preoccupied Strauss. He saw his two symphonic poems *Don Quixote* and *Ein Heldenleben* as counterparts of each other, only to be fully understood when placed in juxtaposition. Whereas the heroism in *Don Quixote* is purely fictional, it is human and worldly in *Ein*

Heldenleben. It reflects the eternal inner and outer struggle of the individual, who seeks solace in love. Strauss said, 'I am not a hero. I don't have the strength for it. I'm not fit for the battle. I prefer to stay in the background, in a quiet place.'

text by Aurélie Walschaert

KAZUSHI ONO, music director

www.kazushiono.com

As of the 2022/23 season, Kazushi Ono is the music director of the Brussels Philharmonic. Ono's musical personality was formed by the cultures of both Japan, where he was born, and Europe, where he studied. His work reflects both influences and crosses styles and forms, from Baroque to new commissions and from orchestral to opera. He has worked in opera houses and concert halls all over the world and recently took over as Music Director of Brussels Philharmonic while also serving as Music Director of Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra (TMSO) and Artistic Director of New National Theatre Tokyo.

HENRY RAUDALES, concertmaster

Henry Raudales has been the concertmaster of Brussels Philharmonic since 2005. Born in Guatemala, the Belgian violinist won the 3rd prize at the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels in 1985 and since then has given innumerable concerts and recitals throughout the world.

Henry Raudales plays a Guaragnini violin from 1787.

FANNY GILBERT-COLLET, stage director

www.fannygilbertcollet.com

Fanny Gilbert-Collet completed her Masters in Fine Arts in Theatre Directing at the University of Ottawa in 2011. Part of the Yulanda Faris Young Artists Program, she was assistant stage director for the 2013-2014 season of the Vancouver Opera, she was also assistant director in Dortmund for two seasons, and since the 2016/17 season, she joined the artistic team of the Opera Ballet Vlaanderen in Antwerp as assistant stage director.

Gilbert-Collet is the prize-winner of awards for Outstanding Production of the Year and New Creation of the Year at the Rideau Awards in 2013, and in 2016, her work was rewarded with the prestigious Richard Wagner Verband grant to go to Bayreuth.

STEF VAN ALSENOY, sound design

www.stefvanalsenoy.com

Stef Van Alsenoy is a sound designer and photographer. He created surround soundscapes for photographer Stephan Vanfleteren and theatre maker Kris Verdonck, among others. Minimalism and the use of 'found' sounds are the core of his soundscapes, where the emphasis is not on a compelling musical accompaniment.

BRUSSELS PHILHARMONIC

www.brusselsphilharmonic.be

That is the firm belief of the Brussels Philharmonic. As a symphony orchestra founded in

1935 under the auspices of the Belgian public broadcaster, unveiling the symphonic world as best we can is deep in our DNA. By innovating while maintaining full respect for the value of the past, we keep the symphonic music of the past, present and future relevant and inspiring – for ourselves and all of society. We do this from the historic Studio 4 at Flagey in Brussels, together with our music director Kazushi Ono: he shares our open and adventurous spirit and our rock-solid belief in the need for cross-fertilization between art, life and society.

Brussels Philharmonic is an institution of the Flemish Community.

MUSICIANS

CONDUCTOR

Kazushi Ono

CONCERTMASTER

Henry Raudales

VIOLIN 1

Nadja Nevolovitsch ⁽¹⁾, Bart Lemmens ⁽²⁾,
Camille Aubrée, Olivia Bergeot, Annelies
Broeckhoven, Cristina Constantinescu,
Sára Kovács, Justine Rigutto, Kristina
Rimkeviciute, Elizaveta Rybentseva,
Anton Skakun, Alissa Vaitsner

VIOLIN 2

Mari Hagiwara ⁽¹⁾, Samuel Nemtanu ⁽¹⁾,
Anne Balu, Véronique Burstin, Caroline
Chardonnet, Aline Janeczek, Mireille Kovac,
Eléonore Malaboef, Sayoko Mundy, Eline
Pauwels, Julien Poli, Stefanie Van Backlé

VIOLA

Mihai Cocea ⁽¹⁾, Griet François ⁽²⁾, Philippe Allard, Marina Barskaya, Phung Ha, Hélène Koerver, Amalija Kokeza, Agnieszka Kosakowska, Stephan Uelpenich, Patricia Van Reusel

CELLO

Francis Mourey ⁽¹⁾, Karel Steylaerts ⁽¹⁾, Sasha Avramchik, Julius Clément, Barbara Gerarts, Sophie Jomard, Bénédicte Legrand, Emmanuel Tondus

DOUBLE BASS

José Vilaplana Herruzo ⁽¹⁾, Simon Luce ⁽²⁾, Luzia Correia Rendeiro Vieira, Bram Decroix, Thomas Fiorini, Daniele Giampaolo

FLUTE

Lieve Schuermans ⁽¹⁾, Wouter Van den Eynde ⁽¹⁾, Jill Jeschek ⁽²⁾, Sarah Miller

OBOE

Joris Van den Hauwe ⁽¹⁾, Maarten Wijnen ⁽¹⁾, Lode Cartrysse ⁽²⁾, Emily Ross

CLARINET

Anne Boeykens ⁽¹⁾, Danny Corstjens ⁽¹⁾, Midori Mori ⁽²⁾, Severine Sierens

BASSOON

Karsten Przybyl ⁽¹⁾, Jonas Coomans ⁽²⁾, Geovanny De Bock, Alexander Kuksa

HORN

Jimmy Charitas ⁽¹⁾, Hans van der Zanden ⁽¹⁾, Mieke Ailliet ⁽²⁾, Marlies Callebert ⁽²⁾, Robin van Gemert ⁽³⁾, Claudia Rigoni, Lynn Tijssen, Luc van den Hove, Jonathan van der Beek

TRUMPET

Florian Begarie ⁽¹⁾, Ward Hoornaert ⁽¹⁾, Robby Boone, Luc Sirjacques, Diego Hernandez Torres

TROMBONE

David Rey ⁽¹⁾, William Foster ⁽²⁾, Tim Van Medegael ⁽²⁾

TUBA

Jean Xhonneux ⁽²⁾

EUPHONIUM

Clément Roger ⁽²⁾

TIMPANI

Gert François ⁽¹⁾

PERCUSSION

Gert D'haese ⁽²⁾, Stijn Schoofs ⁽²⁾, Gerrit Nulens, Miguel Sánchez Cobo

HARP

Eline Groslot ⁽¹⁾, Emma Wauters

⁽¹⁾ principal

⁽²⁾ soloist

⁽³⁾ double