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Afterglows & Afterimages

Trpčeski / Makedonissimo

Olsztyn ——— 19 November 2025

Trpčeski / Makedonissimo

19 November (Wednesday) ——— 7.00 pm

Warmia-Masuria Philharmonic
named after F. Nowowiejski in Olsztyn
Concert Hall
1 Bartosza Głowackiego Street
Olsztyn

Honorary patronage: His Excellency Jasmin Kjahil, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of North Macedonia to the Republic of Poland

Concert programme ———————————————

Pande Shahov
(b. 1973)
Pletenki (*Plaits*)
transcriptions of Macedonian
traditional music in collaboration
with Simon Trpčeski
(2017)

Plait 1
Pembe
Buvčansko
Berovka
Maleševka
Crnogorka

Plait 2
Čije je ona devojče (dedicated
  to Simon Trpčeski's parents)
Ibrahim odža
Beranče

Plait 3
Filka, moma
Sitna lisa
Staro Čunovo
Ratevka
Dračevka

Plait 4
Ne si go prodavaj
Koljo, čiflikot
Žetvarki
Čučuk

Plait 5
Veligdensko
Piperkovo
Pomniš li libe, Todoro
Janino

Plait 6
Metovo
Pelistersko
Postupano

———

Performers:

Makedonissimo:

Simon Trpčeski
piano

Hidan Mamudov
clarinet, saxophone, kaval

Aleksandar Krapovski
violin

Alexander Somov
cello

Vlatko Nushev
percussion

Trpčeski / Makedonissimo

Music is one of the most durable ways to preserve memories of the past. The rich musical tradition of Macedonia, whose songs and dances have been shaped in everyday and ritual life for centuries, still pulsates with boundless energy. One of the distinctive features of Macedonian musical folklore is its asymmetrical, irregular metre. Although many Balkan countries share similar rhythmic patterns, it is in Macedonian music that they sound particularly natural. The source of this phenomenon can be found in the characteristics of the language – in Macedonian, each syllable lasts the same amount of time, regardless of the length of a given word. Consequently, where in other languages three syllables are rhythmically reduced to two syllables (resulting in a triplet figure), in Macedonian there remains a pause, which gives the music a special, unique pulse. This legacy inspired pianist Simon Trpčeski and his friends, who together created the Makedonissimo project – an artistic journey taking us back to our roots, but also constituting a bold step towards modernity.

At a certain point in his career, Trpčeski, one of the most outstanding pianists of his generation, known for his interpretations of Romantic and 20th-century repertoire, decided to return to the music that had accompanied him since his childhood. A meeting with the composer and arranger Pande Shahov (b. 1973) allowed him to turn a personal longing into a coherent artistic project. Shahov, a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music in London, found a language that perfectly combines tradition with modernity. His arrangements are not limited to simple extracts from folklore – they are full-fledged concert compositions in which classical texture and virtuosity intertwine with the authentic spirit of folk music.

The core of the concert is the cycle *Pletenki* (*Plaits*) – a multi-movement suite the title of which refers to the very idea of weaving: melodies, rhythms, memories and emotions. Each "plait" constitutes a separate sound world and, at the same time, a part of a greater narrative. The subsequent "plaits" are determined by metric patterns.

Plait 1 opens the concert with a colourful array of dances – from *Pembe*, brimming with playful grace, to *Crnogorka*, in which even metres and a strong pulse carry the echo of traditional dance parties and community *oro* dances. *Plait 2* is more intimate – the song *Čije je ona devojče*, dedicated to Trpčeski's parents, becomes a symbolic nod to the family tradition. It is in such moments that the listener realises that the Makedonissimo project is not only a concert, but also a personal confession by the artist. The subsequent movements reveal the richness of Macedonian folklore. In *Plait 3*, we can hear love and dance songs. *Filka, moma* or *Ratevka* (danced in $7/16$ time) are light, lyrical accents, interspersed with livelier rhythms. *Plait 4*, meanwhile, is more reflective. The song *Ne si go prodavaj, Koljo, čiflikot* is a warning not to sell the land of the fathers – a symbol of identity and roots. In this piece, we can find echoes of ancient wisdom: a reminder that culture and tradition are values that cannot be easily renounced. *Plait 5* takes us into the world of festive rites and rituals related to the liturgical year. Such melodies as *Veligdensko* or *Pomniš li libe, Todoro* interweave religious and folk elements, resulting in music that brings shared, communal joy. *Plait 6*, the last one, crowns the entire cycle: it is dance-like, full of energy, at times pensive, as if the artist wanted to say: tradition is still alive, but it should be nurtured for it to survive for future generations.

Makedonissimo is more than a presentation of folklore in a concert arrangement. It is a tale of identity, of family and collective memory, of the power of community expressed through music. Trpčeski's pianism meets string, wind and percussion instruments; together they form a colourful whole, imbued with jazz spontaneity. Due to the artists' improvisations and ease of performance, each interpretation is unique. The language of the songs may be foreign, but the emotions conveyed by music remain universal.

Urszula Nowak

Simon Trpčeski
– founder of
Makedonissimo quintet

Photo credit: Benjamin Ealovega

Simon Trpčeski has been praised not only for his powerful virtuosity and deeply expressive approach, but also for his charismatic stage presence. Launched onto the international scene twenty five years ago as a BBC New-Generation Artist, in an incredibly fast-paced career that recognises no cultural or musical boundaries, Trpčeski has collaborated with over a hundred orchestras on four continents. His fruitful collaborations with EMI Classics, Avie Records, Wigmore Hall Live, Onyx Classics and Linn Records have resulted in a broad and award-winning discography.

Makedonissimo

Makedonissimo produces a unique sound: it fuses the incredible rhythms and haunting melodies of the Macedonian folk music tradition with highly virtuoso, jazz-influenced riffs and harmonies. The Makedonissimo quintet was formed by the acclaimed pianist Simon Trpčeski. After its successful premiere in Germany at the Ludwigsburger Schlossfestspiele, the project travelled to Slovenia, the UK, Poland, the Netherlands, France, Serbia, Montenegro, Romania, South Korea, Macedonia, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Monaco, Canada and Hong Kong. The quintet has featured on the BBC Radio 3 In Tune programme, and has broadcast live on YouTube from South Korea, as well as appearing on other renowned TV and radio stations.

ph Slavco Spirovski

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