Anton Rubinstein “Moses” op. 112

Performers:

Moses: Stanisław Kuflyuk (baritone)

Pharaoh, the King of Egypt: Torsten Kerl (tenor)

Asnath, his daughter: Evelina Dobračeva (soprano)

Jochebed, mother of Moses: Małgorzata Walewska (mezzo-soprano)

Miriam, her daughter: Chen Reiss (soprano)

Job, old Israelite: Adam Zdunikowski (tenor)

Overseer: Marek Kalbus (bass)

Voice of God: Torsten Kerl (tenor)

Jethro, Midianite priest: Patryk Rymynowski (bass)

Zipporah, his daughter: Irina Papenbrock (alto)

Messenger: Tomasz Warmijak (tenor)

Aaron, brother of Moses: Bastian Thomas Kohl (bass)

Korah: Tomasz Kuk (tenor)

Asnath the slave: Monika Ledzion-Porczyńska (mezzo-soprano)

Military commander: Tomasz Warmijak (tenor)

Hur: Maciej Kasperek (alto)

Joshua: Mikołaj Adamczak (tenor)

Balak, King of Moab: Marek Kalbus (bass)

Balaam, prophet: Aleksander Rewiński (tenor)

Narrator: Jerzy Trela (recitation)

Choir of the National Philharmonic

Bartosz Michałowski – choir director

Artos Children's Choir

Danuta Chmurska – choir director

Polish Orchestra Sinfonia Iuventus

Michail Jurowski – conductor

15 October 2017, 19.00

National Philharmonic in Warsaw

Tickets: www.eBilet.pl, www.bilety24.pl, and at the ticket office of the National Philharmonic in Warsaw

Polish Orchestra Sinfonia Iuventus invites you to the modern world premiere of the religious opera *Moses* by Anton Rubinstein.

It is not common for an audience to witness a modern premiere of a composition by a prominent author, created more than a century ago. And that is precisely the one-of-a-kind event that will take place in Warsaw in October! Thanks to the efforts of Maestro Michail Jurowski, the world-renowned Russian bandmaster, the principal guest conductor of Polish Orchestra Sinfonia Iuventus, the forgotten score was found, arranged, and a performance of the religious opera *Moses* by Anton Rubinstein (1829—1894) was prepared. Rubinstein and his brother Nikolai were among the pre-eminent characters of the 19th c. music scene in Russia and internationally. A celebrated pianist, conductor, and teacher (who, among other achievements, founded the St. Petersburg Conservatory, and had Tchaikovsky among his students) was also a prolific — and very popular in his day — composer. His piano concertos were held in high regard (especially the *Fourth*), and he authored a number of operas. His *Demon* (1871), based on the work of Lermontov, gained special and lasting popularity, especially in his homeland. However, this area of his work had quickly, and undeservedly, fallen into obscurity. Especially interesting are the series of religious operas composed by Rubinstein (with librettos in German, but performed in translations, too) and dealing with Old and New Testament themes. Among these are *Die Maccabäer*, *Christus*, *Sulamith*, *Thurm zu Babel* and *Moses*. It was an expression of a certain fashion which grasped the German speaking countries at the time, and could be explained by e.g. a renaissance of the wonderful set of oratories by Georg Friedrich Händel, which also drew primarily from stories of the Old Testament. During this period, a monumental edition of these works was prepared and they were performed quite frequently, with the audience’s regular praise.

*Moses* was created in 1885–1891 with the libretto by Salomon Hermann Mosenthal. This acclaimed Austrian playwright is remembered today first and foremost as the author of the libretto for the comic opera *The Merry Wives of Windsor* by Otto Nicolai, based on the work of Shakespeare. The success of this piece spread fame to the wordsmith as well. Mosenthal also collaborated with Rubinstein (including on one of the “Biblical” operas – *Die Maccabäer*, 1874, very popular in Russia and Germany), but *Moses* came to be after the writer’s passing. It tells, in eight evocative images, the entire story of the prophet (it was staged earlier by Gioacchino Rossini, and later —by Arnold Schönberg); Moses was also the protagonist of numerous oratories (such as Händel’s *Israel in Egypt*, and Max Bruch’s composition of 1895, contemporary to Rubinstein’s piece, and bearing the same title), utilising an expansive range of means of performance (20 solo parts, a choir, and a large orchestra). The piece maintains an expressive, neo-Romantic style and features a number of magnificent arias and ensembles, and in particular some enchanting group scenes that depict the dramatic episodes described in the Biblical Pentateuch. It has never been publicly performed in full on stage, although it has been prepared for a performance in Prague, at the Neues Deutsches Theater (later the Státní Opera) in 1892; it reached the stage of a closed dress rehearsal when the theatre went bankrupt and all the performances were called off. The fad for religious operas was already waning, and the death of the author, not long after he composed this piece (one of his final works) all but sentenced most of his works to oblivion.

The long-awaited premiere of the concerto version of the opera conducted by Michail Jurowski will take place at the National Philharmonic on 15 October 2017, and will be recorded. The title part features the baritone Stanisław Kuflyuk, born in Ukraine, with close ties to Poland for years, and with world-wide recognition. His mother, Jochebed, will be portrayed by the famous Małgorzata Walewska – a star of the MET, the Royal Opera House, and other prestigious stages. We will also witness the performance of Evelina Dobračeva (Asnath, daughter of Moses), a star of e.g. the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, and Torsten Kerl (the Pharaoh; he shall also be the voice of God Himself), a German tenor who often takes on Wagnerian and Straussian parts. This is but a fragment of the immense cast – aside from a plethora of other excellent soloists, the highlighted group parts will be performed by the National Philharmonic Choir and the Artos Children’s Choir.

The importance of the event is evidenced by the fact that it falls under the patronage of UNESCO, one of the most prestigious honour for cultural events, globally. It can be sought by the organisers of events with international reach, which represent the highest level of artistry and substance, and whose authors and performers need to have significant creative output in their field, and years of activity and recognition. Polish Orchestra Sinfonia Iuventus and its unprecedented undertaking meet those requirements without exception.