



## **Symphony No. 1 in C major Op. 21**

First effort in the symphonic music of the young Beethoven, the Symphony n. 1 in C major op. 21 made its debut at the Burgtheater in Vienna on April 2, 1800. Although the debt towards the models of Haydn and Mozart is undeniable, however, an unusual energy is already present in this work that heralds a new way of hearing music. Keeping in the footsteps of the tradition of Viennese classicism, Beethoven in fact disseminates in the four movements some clues that testify to the desire to renew symphonic language. In fact, from the very first bars of the introductory Adagio, it amazes us. C major, the key of the symphony, is only enunciated after several passages in neighboring keys; an expedient that creates a sense of expectation before the energetic first theme of the Allegro con brio enters. But characteristic and innovative is also the Minuet which, while maintaining the traditional title and formal scheme, is transformed by Beethoven into a more rapid and disheveled dance that already has the characteristics of the Scherzo.

## **Symphony No. 2 in D major Op. 36**

After two years of work, in 1802 Beethoven completed the Symphony no. 2 in D major op.36. The composer spends the summer of that year in Heiligenstadt in the throes of the deepest despair, since the deafness that struck him became so acute that it forced him to definitively abandon his concert career. Nonetheless, his combative temper spurs him to devote himself to composition by multiplying his expressive possibilities. Thus, even if born in a period of terrible anguish, the 2nd Symphony shows no sign of the pain felt but is pervaded with positive energy and at the first performance - which takes place the following year at the Theater an der Wien - it was judged a surprising work, even if it is too long. The symphony opens with a slow and solemn introduction - Haydn docet - which gives way to an Allegro with throbbing vitality where the dialectical clash between a snappy and restless first theme and a second martial theme is tightened especially in the section of the development. This is followed by a Larghetto vibrant with eighteenth-century melancholy and a Scherzo full of rhythm and dynamism. As the last movement Beethoven composes an Allegro in the form of a Rondò, a concentrate of centrifugal energy that first contrasts and then dissolves the tensions accumulated in the previous movements.

## **Symphony No. 4 in E flat major Op. 60**

A strange fate awaits the Fourth Symphony, born as a diversion and forced to "live" in the shadow of the Third - which just precedes it - and of the Fifth, composed in the same period. In the summer of 1806, Count Franz von Oppersdorf had commissioned a symphony from Beethoven. At the time, he was working on the first movements of the Symphony in C minor (the future Fifth), which he initially thought of allocating to the count. However, the processing of the Fifth took longer than expected and so Beethoven preferred to compose a new score from zero: the Symphony n. 4 in B flat major op. 60. Compared to its titanic sisters, the Fourth shows decidedly disengaged features and a more agile and streamlined structure. After the efforts made in the most emblematic pages of his second period, the Fourth represents for Beethoven the right and necessary "relaxing pause". It is no coincidence that Robert Schumann defined her as "a slim Greek girl between two Nordic giants". A fitting comparison if we think of the monumentality of the Third or the warlike energy of the Fifth. In the fourth, instead, a Beethoven emerges with a momentarily placated soul, ready to retrace the beaten paths of the eighteenth-century classical form with a first movement opened by a slow introduction, according to Haydn's model, followed by a second Adagio movement with elegiac tones, a graceful Minuet with Trio and an Allegro finale full of panache.