



Max Bruch - Concert in G minor Op. 26 for violin and orchestra

Despite the numerous choral pieces, a copious chamber production, three symphonies and instrumental works of various kinds, the name of the composer Max Bruch remains closely linked to the Concerto for violin and orchestra in G minor n. 1 op. 26. Composed in the 1860s, the Concerto had a first performance in Koblenz in 1866 but the definitive consecration came two years later when Bruch, after having reworked the score with the advice of the famous violinist Joseph Joachim (the dedicatee of the work) he presented it in Bremen in 1868. From that moment the Concerto in G minor entered the repertoire of the major interpreters, quickly becoming a page so well known - even too much according to Bruch - that it overshadowed his other compositions. Inspired by Mendelssohn's Concerto for violin and orchestra, an author particularly loved by Bruch, the Concerto in G minor bears the same articulation in three movements connected without interruption. In the opening Prelude of a rhapsodic character, a writing emerges that is attentive to highlighting the expressive potential of the instrument, often engaged in cadential passages and rapid arpeggios. The central Adagio is characterized by a particularly inspired and persuasive melodic invention while the third and last movement involves an irresistible theme of gypsy flavor which is contrasted by a second sentimental theme.

Gustav Mahler – Symphony No. 5 in C sharp minor

A purely instrumental symphony, the 5th is the work of Mahler's full maturity and represents the watershed between the first symphonies, linked to the fairytale world of the *Wunderhorn*, and the last, marked by the intimate lyricism and mournful atmospheres of Friedrich Rückert's lieder. Mahler began composing it in 1901, a painful year in which the composer, suffering from a hemorrhage, nearly died. The five movements of the Symphony n. 5 form three large blocks recognizable by thematic and expressive affinities and the funereal atmosphere that distinguishes the first block, formed by the first two movements, is clearly a direct expression of the author's private suffering. Opening the 5th is a dramatic and gloomy phrase from the trumpet that triggers a funeral march, reminiscent of the music heard by military garrisons during childhood as well as an indelible mark in the Mahlerian sonic memory. And the second movement, the Allegro, also shares the same desperation with the first, proposing an elaboration of the materials heard previously. However, the heart of the symphony is constituted by the imposing Scherzo which marks the emotional and existential turning point (it was in fact composed in 1902, the happy year in which Mahler returned to Maiernigg accompanied by his young wife Alma). The contrast with the first two movements is very clear: anguish is supplanted by the playful tones of the Ländler, waltz rhythms and nostalgic melodies. The famous Adagietto for strings and harp, which opens the third block, is entrusted with the task of lightening the atmosphere in an interlude of pure ecstasy of sound and abandonment of the things of the world, while the final Rondò, between thematic shots, large choral breath and flight, sanctions the victory of life over pain and death.