



## **Claudio Monteverdi - *Lamento d'Arianna*, SV 107**

According to the accounts of the time, there was no house at the beginning of the seventeenth century in which a copy of *Lamento d'Arianna* was missing. The well-known scene was part of *L'Arianna*, the second opera by Monteverdi, made in Mantua on the occasion of the wedding celebrations between Francesco Gonzaga and Margherita di Savoia in 1608. Of the work, unfortunately lost, only that one was preserved a piece that alone, however, was enough to guarantee undying fame to its creator. The scene of the *Lamento* had been the topical moment of the performance and Monteverdi himself considered it the "most essential part", so much so that he later decided to publish it also in the reworked version for five voices and basso continuo in the *Sixth book of madrigals*. An iconic page of the musical literature of the seventeenth century, the *Lamento* expresses the torment of Ariadne betrayed and abandoned through harmonic audacity and repeated chromatisms, starting from the famous opening - "Lasciatemi morire" - modeled on a descending melodic line full of pathos.

## **Franz Liszt - *Orpheus*, poema sinfonico n. 4**

*Orpheus* is the fourth of the twelve symphonic poems composed by Liszt in the decade 1848-1858. His birth is closely linked to Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice* that Liszt directed on February 16, 1854 at the court of Weimar, where he was *kappelmeister*. For that occasion he wrote two pieces to add to the score: an overture and a final postlude. The musical success of the overture was such that Liszt, a few months later, decided to transform it into a symphonic poem and with the title of *Orpheus* he gave it to the press in 1856. In Liszt's poem Orpheus is portrayed musically in his peculiar features: the artist par excellence that with the sweetness of its song manages to charm men and animals. Orpheus is the symbol of the civilizing art that brings beauty and harmony to humanity, and in this way Liszt's writing unfolds luminous with wide melodic spans and crystalline instrumentation, where the long solo violin and the arpeggios of the two harps that refer to the sound of Orpheus' lyre.

## **Igor Stravinskij - *Perséphone*, melologo in tre scene**

In 1933 the dancer and choreographer Ida Rubinstein involved Igor Stravinskij in a project that wanted to combine poetry, dance and music. The text chosen by Rubinstein was by André Gide and was inspired by Homer's *Hymn of Demeter*, which narrates Persephone's descent into the Underworld and the consequent birth of the seasons. The fruit of the joint work of the three artists was *Perséphone*, a melologist in three scenes which debuted on April 30, 1934 in Paris. In this particular type of show - where the poetic text, partly declaimed and partly sung, is interspersed with musical pieces that serve as a comment - the relationship between poetry and music is fundamental, which must pursue the same goal in total harmony. But Stravinsky and Gide had different ideas and tastes, so much so that the poet, shortly before his Parisian debut, decided to step aside. The misunderstandings were mostly due to the different conception of the show. Gide considered his poetry sacrificed in the reduction of some characters of the poem to exclusively danced roles but, above all, in the musical treatment reserved for him by Stravinsky, who had preferred an intonation of the verse more attentive to sonority than to meaning, that is, far from any realistic intent. Divided into three sections, *Perséphone* deploys a rich vocal team in the field - a reciting voice, a tenor, a mixed choir and a children's choir - flanked by a large orchestra where the piano also appears.