

## **Ludwig van Beethoven - Coriolan, overture in C minor op. 62**

The Coriolano Overture op. 62 was initially created by Beethoven as a musical commentary on Joseph von Collin's tragedy of the same name but in truth the work was not performed during the first performance of the drama but only later and in its own way, quickly earning a privileged space in the orchestral repertoire. The overture dates back to 1807, the year in which the Fifth Symphony was also composed, with which it shares the same corrupt key of C minor. A symbolic page of Beethoven's heroic style, the Coriolanian overture is distinguished by the intense dramatic charge already present from the initial incision, a very strong chord that leads to a restless and moved first theme which is contrasted by a second, lyrical and cantabile. The dialectic of the literary source - which sees the hero die suicide because torn between remorse and love of country - becomes a musical dialectic and after a series of thematic conflicts that chase each other for the entire duration of the page, the end is marked by the peremptory engraved initial that goes out in the low register of the strings.

## **Elegischer Gesang op. 118 for choir and string orchestra**

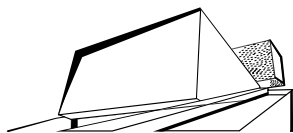
A separate space belongs to the Elegischer Gesang for choir and string quartet op. 118, an elegiac song composed by Beethoven in 1814 to pay homage to the memory of Baroness Eleonora Pasqualati on the third anniversary of her death. The emotional tension of the text finds its form here in the moving intonation of the choir that hovers over the collected accompaniment of the string quartet alone. A stylistic choice that gives this work a chamber flavor of suffused sweetness.

## **Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt op. 112, Cantata for choir and orchestra**

Beethoven had met Goethe, his literary idol, in 1813 in Teplitz. The meeting did not turn into friendship, but despite the coldness shown to him on several occasions, Beethoven continued to have boundless admiration for Goethe, dedicating to him, among other things, the Cantata for solos, choir and orchestra Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt op. 112, composed in 1815 and inspired by the poems Calma di mare and Viaggio felice. The poetic content is well reflected in Beethoven's musical writing careful to underline every descriptive element: the stillness of the sea in a calm day (with the held notes of the strings), the rising of the wind (with the impetuous entry of the winds) and finally the navigation among the fluctuating waves to the rhythm of a barcarola.

## **Choral fantasy for piano, choir and orchestra op. 80**

Composed in 1808 after the Sixth Symphony, the Choral Fantasia for piano, choir and orchestra op. 80 is characterized among Beethoven's works for its singular and heterogeneous nature. A particular page already from the subtitle, 'Friendly Lusinga', in the ensemble, in which the orchestra comes into action little by little while the choir only in the final part, just as the idea of combining instrumental music and choral music was particular, which for Beethoven assumed the subliminal value of a collaboration capable of transforming the world. Furthermore, the Fantasia owes much of its notoriety to the main theme, which Beethoven had taken from a Lied composed years earlier, Gegenliebe, and which he would later develop in the Hymn to Joy of the Ninth Symphony. Articulated in the form of the Theme with variations, the Choral Fantasy opens with the absolute protagonism of the piano which, after a rhapsodic style entry, almost timidly exposes the main theme. This is then taken up by some orchestral instruments: first the flute, then the oboe, the clarinet, the string quartet and finally the whole orchestra involved together with the piano in a series of increasingly concertante variations. In the last variation Beethoven adds the choir (with a solution that anticipates the structure of the Finale of the Ninth) which intones the verses written for the occasion by the Viennese poet Christoph Kuffner, inspired by the theme of love combined with strength.



## **Richard Strauss / Manfred Honeck - Elektra Symphonische Suite for large orchestra**

When in 1980 Manfred Honeck, then professor of orchestra of the Vienna Opera, first played Elektra by Richard Strauss, he was impressed by the power of the instrumental color and the weight assumed by the orchestra. Elektra in fact foresees a huge team, with no less than one hundred and ten musicians; in addition, it is a work with a very complex harmonic language, rich in dissonances and unresolved harmonies considered, at the time of its composition, to be at the limits of understanding. Nonetheless, the idea of creating a symphonic suite accompanied Honeck for years until in 2016, in collaboration with the Czech composer Tomáš Ille, he realized his project. Like Strauss, Honeck also favors opulent instrumentation, since it is precisely the orchestral color that is the privileged means to underline the extreme drama of the story. In what Honeck himself defines as 'a sort of symphonic poem' that tells the story of the tragic heroine Electra, we find all the elements of great emotional impact in Strauss's work. Each character is portrayed in all its psychological complexity: the mother Clytemnestra crushed by feelings of guilt, the traitor Egisto, the caring and defenseless Chrysothemides, the calculating brother Orestes and the tragic heroine Electra, obsessed by the tragic death of her father who transforms his anger in action when he finds his brother. As in the work, also in the suite it is Agamemnon's theme that appears first at the opening, like a seal imprinted in the mind and gestures of Electra. On the death of her mother and Egisto, Electra dances in ecstasy until she collapses completely, remaining motionless at the end. Agamemnon's theme heard in the opening reappears at the end, thus closing the circle.