



Ludwig van Beethoven - *Fidelio*, Overture Op. 72b

The last of the four overtures created for *Fidelio*, the Overture op. 72 b was composed by Beethoven in 1814 on the occasion of the third and final version of the work, thus becoming its official opening symphony. With it the composer replaced the better known *Leonore* n. 3 (made for the second version of *Fidelio* of 1806), a page of broad symphonic scope and with far too dilated dimensions which also summarized the dramatic content of the work. The Overture op. 72 b, more concise and musically less demanding than the previous one, instead respects in its neutrality the traditional introductory function of the operatic symphony, sharing only spiritually the content of the work in the juxtaposition of opposite principles.

Gustav Mahler - *Fünf Lieder nach Rückert*

After the period marked by the close link with *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, the collection of German popular lyrics set to music by Mahler and also incorporated into the movements of the first symphonies, starting from 1901 the composer's interest shifted to the lyrics of Friedrich Rückert, poet late romantic who gave him inspiration for the *Kindertotenlieder* and the *Fünf Lieder nach Rückert* for voice and orchestra. If the former are born as a real cycle to be performed without interruptions, the *Fünf Lieder* instead leave the interpreter, be it male or female, freedom in the order of execution. There are various states of mind described in the five lieder, all however united by the atmosphere of disenchanted contemplation of earthly life: the ecstatic evocation of the linden scent in *Ich atmet' einen linden Duft* (I breathed a sweet scent), the sense of anxious anticipation in *Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder!* (Do not spy in my songs!), the joyful love in *Liebst du um Schönheit* (If you love me for the beauty) - composed for his young wife Alma - the bitter realization of the man who ponders his destiny in his heart of a gloomy night in *Um Mitternacht* (At midnight), as well as the resigned melancholy of the traveler, Mahler's personal homage to Schubert, in *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen* (I am now lost to the world).

Franz Schubert - Symphony No. 9 in C major D. 944, *Die Große*

That Schubert wanted to try his hand at a large-scale symphonic work - in the manner of Beethoven to be clear - was well known during the last years of his life. After the symphonies composed in his youth, a sort of apprenticeship in the highest instrumental genre, Schubert feels ready for a symphony in grand style and in 1828 he signs the Symphony in C major called, precisely, '*The great*'. Offered to the Society of Friends of Music in Vienna, the new composition would have been officially performed that same year if the complexity and length of some passages had not frightened the orchestra, which, judging it too difficult, refused to perform it. The symphony was so returned to the sender that he put it away in a drawer, as has already happened with his other precious musical jewels. Only years after Schubert's death, Robert Schumann discovered it by chance during a visit to the brother of the deceased musician and did his utmost to send it to Mendelssohn in Leipzig, where that hitherto unknown masterpiece regained new life in its first performance in 1839. The Symphony no. 9 in C major owes its name not only to the enlargement of the ensemble, with three added trombones, but also to the language already oriented towards late romantic solutions. While adhering to the classical constructive rules, Schubert modifies the internal balance by toning down the classical thematic contrast in favor of a continuous expansion of the melodic materials used, according to a narrative logic internal to the dilated and digressive composition, defined by Schumann as 'divine length'.