

“The solo violin will be shown off to its very best advantage”

With this CD, Antje Weithaas concludes her complete recording of all works for violin and orchestra by Max Bruch



Max Bruch (1838-1920)
Sämtliche Werke für Violine & Orchester Vol. III

VIOLIN CONCERTO No. 3 OP. 58

- [1] Allegro energico
- [2] Adagio
- [3] Finale: Allegro molto

KONZERTSTÜCK FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA OP. 84

- [4] Allegro appassionato
- [5] Adagio, ma non troppo lento

[6] ROMANZE OP. 42 FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA

Antje Weithaas *Violin*
NDR Radiophilharmonie
Hermann Bäumer *Conductor*

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“I can’t listen to this concerto any more. Could it be that I have written only this one concerto?” Bruch complained about his Violin Concerto No. 1. And this work is indeed by far Bruch’s most popular. The violinist Antje Weithaas has taken it upon herself to make his other works for violin and orchestra better known as well, and this third CD of the series completes the challenge. This recording brings things full circle, with two of the three compositions presented here having a direct connection with the programme of the first CD. The Romanze op. 42, though a work in its own right, seems like a free prelude to the second violin concerto. The piece was in fact originally meant to be the first movement, an andante, of the second concerto, but Bruch changed his mind: “After recently [...] orchestrating this andante, I [...] have the impression that it is a complete and finished piece that neither demands nor allows itself to be extended into a concerto. For this reason I have called it ‘Romanze’ for the time being,” he wrote in a letter to the violinist Joseph Joachim.

At the heart of Vol. III is the unjustifiably neglected third violin concerto. There is a very close connection between Bruch’s Adagio appassionato op. 57 (to be heard on Vol. 1) and the Violin Concerto No. 3 in D Minor op. 58. The main theme of the eloquently dramatic scene in the former piece, with its dreamy close that gradually vanishes in the very highest register of the solo violin, is nearly identical to the second theme from the first movement of the third violin concerto – in both cases having all it takes to remain indelibly in the memory. This is not surprising: “Max Bruch also naturally had a talent for coming up with really lovely melodies that stay with you,” says violinist Antje Weithaas. The composer himself was also convinced of this: “But I think that everything is now set right & that the solo violin will be shown off everywhere to its very best advantage in the pathetic and passionate passages as well.”

Finally, the Allegro appassionato section of the Konzertstück in F Minor op. 48 once more encapsulates everything that is typical of this German master of the Romantic violin concerto: double and triple stops, wild leaps and runs – before the mood changes completely in the Adagio, becoming as “simple as a folk song”. And that is no accident: My Little Red Lark of the Mountain is the name of the Irish melody with which Max Bruch bids farewell to the genre in which he wrote his greatest instrumental successes. A homage to the Celtic songs that he so loved, and to melody as the root of all his music.

“An immaculate tonal culture and an unerring feeling for style combine with a well thought-out and sensitive rhetoric free from theatrical extravagances,” the German online magazine “Klassik Heute” has written of Antje Weithaas’s playing. Listeners can hear these characteristics for themselves on the final CD of the series as well, once more with the NDR Radiophilharmonie and the conductor Hermann Bäumer.

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