

NAXOS

BRUCH

Violin Concertos Nos. 2 and 3

Maxim Fedotov, Violin
Russian Philharmonic Orchestra
Dmitry Yablonsky



Max Bruch (1838–1920)

Violin Concertos Nos. 2 and 3

Today Max Bruch is generally known only as the composer of works for the violin. In addition to the *Violin Concerto in G minor*, the popularity of which continues, and, to the annoyance of the composer, eventually overshadowed much of his other work, we hear from time to time the *Scottish Fantasy* and the *Second Violin Concerto*. The fact that Bruch, in his day, was famous for his large-scale choral works is forgotten. Between 1870 and 1900 there were numerous performances of works such as *Odysseus*, *Frithjof* or *Das Lied von der Glocke*, earning for the composer a reputation that momentarily outshone that of Brahms.

Max Bruch was born in Cologne on 6th January, 1838, in the same year as Bizet. He studied there with Ferdinand Hiller and Carl Reinecke. Extended journeys at home and abroad as a student were followed by a longer stay in Mannheim, where his opera *Loreley* was performed in 1863, a work based on a libretto by Geibel and originally dedicated to Mendelssohn, which brought him to the attention of a wider public. Bruch's first official appointments were as *Kapellmeister*, first in Koblenz from 1865 to 1867, and then in Sondershausen until 1870, followed by a longer stay in Berlin and a period from 1873 to 1878 in Bonn, when he dedicated himself to composition. After a short time as director of the Stern'scher Sangverein in Berlin, in 1880 he was appointed conductor of the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, where he succeeded Julius Benedict, leaving England in 1883 to become director of the Orchesterverein in Breslau. In 1891 he moved finally to Berlin and took over master-classes in composition, Respighi being one of his pupils. He retired in 1911 to devote himself to composition, although now essentially writing in a traditional style

that seemed to have passed. He died in Berlin on 2nd October, 1920.

With his famous *Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor*, *Op. 26*, Bruch, in 1864, embarked on a genre that was new to him, couched in an unusual form and dedicated to Joseph Joachim, who gave the first performance in 1868. By 1874 he had completed the first movement of a projected second violin concerto. In the event he decided to leave it as a separate work of one movement, and the actual *Violin Concerto No. 2 in D minor*, *Op. 44*, was first heard in 1877 when Pablo Sarasate played it in London. The new concerto was written with Sarasate's playing and particularly by his performances of the earlier concerto, which he made part of his concert repertoire and performed with Bruch, who made his first appearance in England in October 1877 with Sarasate and the increasingly popular first concerto. It was at the Crystal Palace in London that, in early November, Sarasate gave the first performance of *Violin Concerto No. 2 in D minor*, with Bruch again conducting, on his return from his first engagement in Liverpool. It was possible, after this, for Bruch to take advice for any revisions to the work, in consultation with the violinists Sarasate, Joachim and Robert Heckmann, before its publication by Simrock.

The new concerto was unusual in its dramatic form. It seems that Sarasate had suggested a programme, opening with a scene from the Spanish Carlist Wars, a battlefield where the dead and wounded lie, after the combat. A woman seeks her lover and there is a funeral march and a burial. Cast as an *Adagio*, a choice that brought criticism from some, notably the somewhat abrasive Brahms, the movement contrasts the principal theme of the opening and a more lyrical

secondary theme heard first in F major and, finally, in recapitulation in D major. The shades of war and death intervene, but all ends in serenity. The second movement is in the form of a *Recitative*, proposed by the solo violin after the brief orchestral introduction. The dying fall of the horn, with which the movement ends, is taken up in the rapid *Finale*, which is said to depict the cavalry. The movement begins in B flat, the key of the second movement, modulating to D major in music that offers further opportunities for technical agility and is impelled forward to a brilliant conclusion. Bruch himself was particularly pleased with the first movement and had to be persuaded by Sarasate not to present the *Adagio* as a separate composition.

Bruch's *Violin Concerto No. 3 in D minor, Op. 58*, expanded from an original single movement, was completed in 1891. Here Bruch took advice on the violin writing from Joachim, to whom the work was dedicated. Joachim, with whom there had been earlier coldness during the latter's divorce – Joachim's wife, the singer, Amalie Joachim, had the support of a number of friends of the couple and had often performed in concerts with Bruch – arranged rehearsals at the Berlin Hochschule and was the soloist at the first public performance, given in Düsseldorf in May 1891. The concerto was thereafter regularly included in Joachim's concerts. Bruch seems to have preferred Sarasate's playing, but had personal reservations about both violinists. The first movement, marked *Allegro energico* and more conventional in form

than either of the opening movements of the earlier concertos, starts with an orchestral exposition, the strongly marked first subject leading to a more lyrical second, before the entry of the soloist with a flourish, followed by an emphatic statement of the first theme, linked to the soloist's statement of the subsidiary theme, first in octaves and then on the lowest string of the violin, before proceeding to a lyrical A major. The thematic material is developed, making full use of the resources of the solo violin in characteristic concerto figuration. The second movement, a B flat major *Adagio*, is introduced by the soloist, the orchestra following with a full statement of the principal theme, which the soloist then takes up, going on to offer material derived from it, with varied figuration, in music that brings a mood of gentle tranquillity, after the demands of the *Allegro energico*. The concerto ends with a *Rondo*, its D minor triplet principal theme accompanied by the strongly accented rhythms of the orchestra and of a continuing passage in D major. The first episode, in F major, calls for double stopping. The main theme returns, followed by a further episode of virtuoso display, before the return of the theme in the orchestra. The movement proceeds to a triumphant conclusion, ending a technically demanding work that deserves more attention than it now generally receives.

Keith Anderson

Maxim Fedotov



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Moscow State Conservatory and since 2002 has been President of the Association of Laureates of the International Tchaikovsky Competition. In 2003 he became professor and head of the violin and viola section of the Russian Music Academy and principal conductor of the Russian Symphony Orchestra, in addition to guest conducting engagements. He has served as a jury member for various international violin competitions, and has given master-classes in Germany, Spain, Japan, Croatia, Australia and elsewhere. Maxim Fedotov was the first violinist to give a recital on both the violins left by Paganini.

The violinist Maxim Fedotov is a People's Artist of Russia, soloist of the Moscow State Academic Philharmonic Society, and laureate of many international competitions including the International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, the Paganini International Violin Competition and the Tokyo International Competition. Acclaimed by the press as a Russian Paganini, he performs all the main violin repertoire, and has appeared in the principal concert halls of Russia, and in Western Europe in Milan, at the Salzburg Mozarteum, in Madrid, Leipzig, Berlin, and Vienna, as well as in Japan and elsewhere. He has performed with all the major orchestras of Russia, Europe and Japan, and has a repertoire of more than fifty concertos. From 1998 to 2001 he served as a Professor of the

Russian Philharmonic Orchestra

The Russian Philharmonic Orchestra is firmly rooted in Russia's rich musical traditions, and has achieved an impressive and outstanding musical quality by drawing its musicians from the highest ranks of Russia's most famous orchestras such as the Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Russian National Orchestra and the State Symphony Orchestra. The Russian Philharmonic Orchestra was originally formed as a recording ensemble and has gone on to receive high acclaim also for its concert performances. In addition to regular recordings for leading international companies, the orchestra has also undertaken tours to Turkey, Austria, Germany, China, Taiwan, Finland and elsewhere. Dmitry Yablonsky was appointed Music Advisor to the orchestra in 2003. In 2006 the orchestra won a Gramophone Prize for their recording of Shostakovich on Deutsche Grammophon.

Dmitry Yablonsky



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Dmitry Yablonsky was born in Moscow into a musical family. His mother is the distinguished pianist Oxana Yablonskaya, and his father Albert Zaionz has for thirty years been principal oboist in the Moscow Radio and Television Orchestra. Dmitry began playing the cello when he was five and was immediately accepted by the Central Music School for gifted children. When he was nine he made his orchestral debut as cellist and conductor with Haydn's *Cello Concerto in C major*. In Russia he studied with Stefan Kalianov, Rostropovich's assistant, and Isaak Buravsky, for many years solo cello of the Bolshoy Theatre Orchestra. Before immigrating to the United States he performed on many occasions in Moscow and many cities of the former Soviet Union. He was finally able, in 1977,

to obtain a visa that allowed him and his mother to move to New York, where he became a pupil of Lorne Munroe at the Juilliard School of Music. In 1979, at the age of sixteen, he participated in the Marlboro Music Festival in Vermont, the youngest to do so that summer. In 1980 he met Aldo Parisot, distinguished cellist and professor at Yale University, where he spent four years, at the same time furthering his interest in conducting. After graduating from Yale, he spent two years in the artist diploma programme at the Juilliard School with Zara Nelsova. Dmitry Yablonsky made his debut as a conductor in Italy at the age of 26, when he stepped in to replace another conductor at the last minute. As a cellist he has played in major concert halls throughout the world, and in chamber music has collaborated with distinguished colleagues. For four years he has been Principal Guest Conductor of the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra and has conducted many other orchestras, collaborating with leading soloists. Dmitry Yablonsky has made more than seventy recordings, many of them prize-winning, as conductor and cellist for Naxos, Erato-Warner, Chandos, Belair Music, Sonora, and Connoisseur Society. He has organized international festivals, including the Wandering Stars Festival, which takes place in different countries each year. He is Co-Artistic Director of Qabala Music Festival in Azerbaijan.

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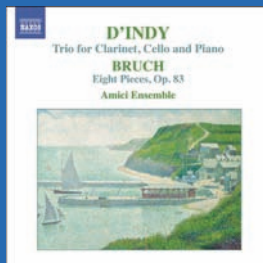
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While Max Bruch's first violin concerto is one of the most popular in the repertoire, his other two remain relatively unknown. The second, dedicated to the virtuoso Pablo Sarasate, opens with a rhapsodic *Adagio* brimming with sublime melodies, its declamatory middle movement leading to a rhythmic finale. In contrast, the third, from 1891, launches heroically, the soloist taking centre-stage in the lyrical *Adagio* middle movement, a *perpetuum mobile rondo* finale capping the work. Maxim Fedotov's recording of Bruch's *Violin Concerto No. 1* can be heard on Naxos 8.557689. His recording of the *Scottish Fantasy* is available on 8.557395.

Max
BRUCH
(1838-1920)

Violin Concerto No. 2 in D minor, Op. 44

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|--|--------------|
| 1 <i>Adagio ma non troppo</i> | 23:24 |
| 2 <i>Recitativo: Allegro moderato</i> | 10:24 |
| 3 <i>Finale: Allegro molto</i> | 3:55 |
| | 9:05 |

Violin Concerto No. 3 in D minor, Op. 58

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|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| 4 <i>Allegro energico</i> | 37:01 |
| 5 <i>Adagio</i> | 17:39 |
| 6 <i>Finale: Allegro molto</i> | 10:42 |
| | 8:40 |



Maxim Fedotov, Violin
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