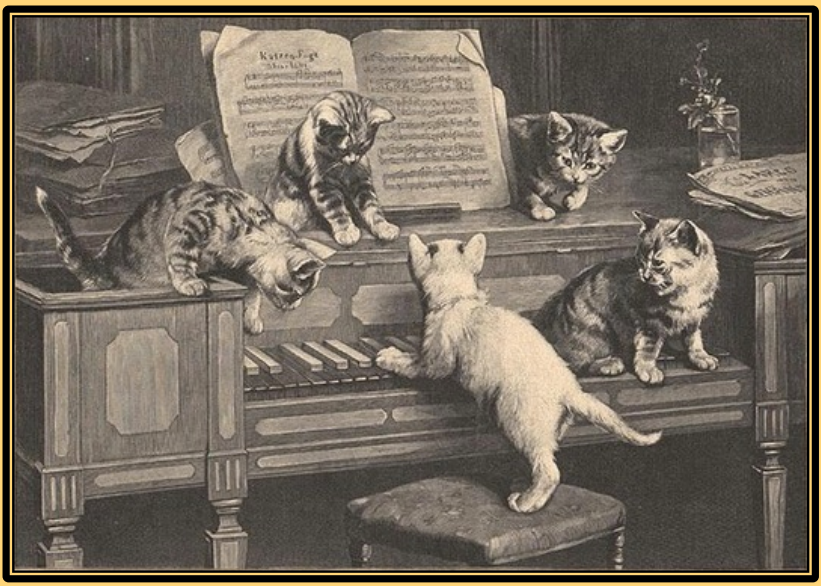
Chiara Bertoglio

The Forgotten Virtuoso

Hidden Gems in the Piano Concerto Repertoire



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C. H. Graun – *Piano Concerto F major*

Carl Heinrich Graun
(b. Wahrenbrück, 7. May 1704
d. Berlin, 8. August 1759)
Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in F - Major

The F-major Concerto is one of the thirty Cembalo Concertos composed by Carl Heinrich Graun. Born in 1703 or 1704 in Wahrenbrück, he grew up in a very musical milieu: his elder brothers August Friedrich (1699-1765) and especially Johann Gottlieb (1702 [1703?]-1771) were both famous and appreciated composers. At the age of ten, Carl Heinrich was admitted to the Kreuzschule in Dresden, where he received a good musical education, and where he was highly appreciated for his beautiful treble voice (he was described by contemporaries as an "extraordinary treble singer") as well as for his seriousness both in the literary and in the musical studies. These gifts made him a very promising candidate for a career as a professional singer: he studied singing with J. Z. Grunding, but at the same time he completed his musical education with cembalo and composition studies (with Christian Pezold and Johann Christoph Schmidt respectively).

These three fields (singing, cembalo and composition) were to be the three main fields of Graun's future activity. He became acquainted with Italian operas when he was a member of the Dresden Oper Choir: here he gave evidence of his extraordinary musical talent when he was able, after only three hearings, to reconstruct the complete score of Lotti's *Teophano* by memory. His activity as a performing musician allowed Graun to meet some of the most important musicians of his time, among which Zelenka and Quantz, whom he got acquainted with in

Prague. His career as a singer was progressing, in the meantime, and he gradually became a soloist at the Dresden Oper, later to become Vice-Kapellmeister there (1727).

These were the years of Graun's first operatic successes: he wrote six operas, and was requested to compose an Italian opera in 1733 for the wedding of Friedrich of Prussia with Elisabeth Christine von Braunschweig. Once again, Carl Heinrich was to follow the path traced by his brother Johann Gottlieb, who was already employed by Friedrich of Prussia: the Prince was pleased to include Carl Heinrich among the musicians of his famous court, thus meeting the hopes of the musician himself. There, Graun became the musical director of Friedrich's orchestra, he continued his compositional activity and participated as a singer to the chamber performances of Italian cantatas; he was also appreciated as a teacher, becoming the music tutor of both the Prince and of the younger composer Franz Benda.

After Friedrich's coronation, Graun was requested by the monarch to travel to Italy, where he was to recruit singers for the newly established Royal Opera. His journey brought him to the principal centres of Italian opera, including Venice, Bologna, Florence, Naples and Rome. It is very likely that this travel not only provided the Royal Opera with Italian singers, but also its Kapellmeister with a thorough and first-hand experience of Italian music. It is not hard to recognise more than a trace of Italian instrumental music in Graun's works: Vivaldi's and Tartini's influence on Graun's concertos is easily discernible in the treatment of the solo/tutti alternation and in the frequent use of echoing effects.

Following the new monarch, Graun moved to Berlin, to become the first musical director of the Opernhaus, the now world-famous Staatsoper, for which he composed no less than

twenty-seven operas. The relationship with Friedrich the Great continued until Graun's death, in 1771, and was marked by a genuine friendship and mutual esteem: Graun taught Friedrich for many years, and was appreciated as a teacher by other great musicians as Kirnberger and Seyffart. He was Johann Sebastian Bach's fellow at the Society for Music Knowledge, and was considered as Hasse's heir as the German representative of Italian Opera in his country. His works, however, cannot be considered simplistically as "fake" Italian operas, as they have a style of their own in which flowing "Italian" melodies are inserted within a polyphonic framework typical of the Northern countries. These elements of Graun's compositional style are found in his Cembalo Concertos as well: the keyboard figurations are typical of the preceding German tradition, whereas other formal elements have a clear southern ancestry.

Among his Cembalo Concertos, a special mention is deserved by his *Concerto per il Cembalo La battaglia del Rè di Prussia* (1740), which is an extremely interesting experiment of descriptive keyboard fantasy. Graun achieved here very dramatic effects, adapting the Concerto form to the requirements of a battle's the musical depiction: this represents an important contribution by Graun to the development of the very concept of Concerto. In the preceding decades, a Concerto was prevailingly the musical expression of the ensemble's inner "harmony", of the pleasure of playing together. It is commonly known that there are two equally acceptable etymologies for the very word "Concerto", which includes the concepts of "concentus", i.e. "playing together", and of "certamen", i.e. "competing against each other". If the earlier concertos represented the musical expression of the "concentus", the Romantic era privileged the opposition and competition of soloist and orchestra. Although Graun's attempt is rather experimental and does not express a ripe musical concept,

his focus on the dialectic possibilities of the solo/tutti opposition is a substantial contribution to the form's development.

Indeed, a "theatrical" attitude shaped Graun's entire concept of music, which had been moulded by his extremely long and constant acquaintance with opera: even his oratorios, among which the Passion Cantata *Der Tod Jesu* (1755) is probably the best known, are indebted with this dramatic viewpoint; the action's rhythm and the characters are vividly brought to life, and the music expresses magnificently the rich emotional palette of the late Baroque era.

J. A. Benda – *Piano Concerto G minor*

Jiří Anton Benda
(b. Staré Benátky, ca. 30 June 1722
d. Köstritz, 6 November 1795)
Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in G minor

Music making was often a family affair, in 17th- and 18th-century Germany. The best-known case is obviously that of the Bachs, whose very family name became a synonymous of "musician" in the common language; however, the Bendas may provide an equally significant example of how the musical profession could be profitably transmitted and inherited. The patriarch, Jan Jiří Benda (1686-1757), was a village musician, although not exclusively: he combined the weaving of sounds with that of textiles. In May 1706, he married Dorota Brixi, who came in turn from a musical family (comprising Šimon, a composer, and his son František Xaver). Their children, namely Franz (1709-1786), Johann (1713-1752), Georg (1722-1795) Joseph (1724-1804) and Anna Franziska (1726-1780), were destined to establish a musical family whose tradition continues to present day.

Georg Anton (or Jiří Antonin), the couple's third son, was born on June 30th, 1722, in the town of Old Benatek (Benátky nad Jizerou), and was educated first at the Piarists' grammar school at Kosmanos (Kosmonosy) and later at the Jesuit Gymnasium in Gitschin (Jičín). When Georg was a teenager, however, the whole family moved to Berlin: they were members of the Czech Brethren Church, and, to their eyes, the religiously tolerant Prussia seemed a better option than their native land, after the consequences of the Battle of the White Mountain (1620).

In Berlin, Georg joined the oldest of his brothers, Franz, who was already employed as a violinist by King Frederick the Great: undoubtedly, the king's love for music influenced favourably his decision to give asylum and employ to the musician's family.

In 1742, thus, following his brother's footsteps, Georg was hired as a chamber musician (second violinist) at the Royal Chapel, where C. P. E. Bach was first harpsichordist at that time: the friendship which was to blossom between Georg and Bach's son would eventually become very important for the development of Georg's own compositional style. He also learnt from such musicians as Johann Joachim Quantz (1697-1773) and Carl Heinrich Graun (1703?-1759), who were among the leading composers and theorists of his time.

As it was often the case, Georg's job as a violinist did not prevent his accomplishment as a performer of other instruments as well: he was an appreciated keyboard and oboe virtuoso too. After following, once more, his brother to Potsdam, in 1750 Georg was hired as Hofkapellmeister by Duke Frederick III of Saxe-Gotha-Althenburg: he was to remain in Gotha for some 28 years, the most important and fruitful of his professional life. At first, Benda's compositional output in Gotha was mostly instrumental, as were his preceding works, since there was no opera company at the Thuringian court; his vocal music was therefore mainly sacred.

In 1764-1765, however, the Duke himself encouraged Benda to undertake a six-month study travel to Italy: here, the composer could meet with some of the major composers and become acquainted with their style. He listened to operas by Paisiello, Piccinni, Traetta and Gluck, in Rome, Florence, Bologna and Venice, and had the opportunity of meeting the great composer Johann Adolf Hasse.

Benda's own operas had however to wait for ten more years before being produced: it was only in 1774 that Gotha established an operatic theatre, were Benda's operas, singspiels and melodramas (*Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Medea*) were eventually to be staged. The following years saw his consecration as a celebrity: his operas would be of the highest importance for the establishment of the 19th-century German romantic opera, and a musician such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was among his devout admirers. On November 12th, 1778, Mozart wrote to his father from Mannheim, on the subject of Benda's melodramas: "Both are truly admirable. You are aware that of all the Lutheran Capellmeisters Benda was always my favourite, and I like those two works of his so much that I constantly carry them about with me". A few years later, in 1784, Benda was similarly praised in a fundamental musical treatise, the "Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst" by Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart (1739-1791), where he was celebrated as one of the greatest composers ever.

Notwithstanding that, when Benda, at 56, resigned from his duties at court, he was unfortunate in his job search: after two years of efforts, he settled in Gotha where he lived in a self-imposed seclusion until his death (November 6th, 1795, in Köstritz). His retirement years were consecrated to revision and publishing of six volumes of his collected works, the "Sammlung vermischter Clavierstücke für geübte und ungeübte Spieler". This series, comprising mostly works for solo and accompanied piano, as well as several songs, enjoyed an enormous success: its 2,000 subscribers were an extraordinary result for 18th-century editorial standards. As pointed out by Warwick Cole, however, it is remarkable that only few of the keyboard works by such a "skilled keyboard player […] achieved wide circulation during his working life".

As mentioned before, Benda's instrumental output was important both in quantity and in quality: he wrote symphonies, sonatas, works for four-hands piano, and at least eleven keyboard concertos (unfortunately it is very likely that several works have been lost).

Benda's interest in operatic music, and his knowledge of and love for the Italian opera show themselves very clearly in his instrumental music. Indeed, many overtures to his own operas are thematically indebted to the following arias, thus establishing a vocal style in his instrumental works.

The influence of operatic music onto Benda's instrumental output is thus observable both at the macroscopic and microscopic level. In the broadest possible sense, opera was the first musical (and cultural) genre in which a pre-Romantic subjectivism showed its features. Both *Sturm-und-Drang* and *Empfindsamkeit*, the two musical expressions of Benda's time, were marked by the individual's feelings and emotions: Benda's instrumental works (and particularly his keyboard concertos) have the soloist "on stage", similar to a vocal soloist in a theatrical composition. As concerns the details, moreover, we will find in Benda's concertos (and especially in the g-minor Concerto) several musical gestures, which are typical of operatic language.

Besides opera, the other great inspiration for Benda's Concertos came from those written by his friend C. P. E. Bach: with his output of more than 50 keyboard concertos, and with his fundamental innovations in the concerto-form, the younger Bach could be considered as the torch-bearer in this field, and as the true forerunner of Mozart's later works.

Benda's own keyboard concertos were composed, as mentioned earlier in this preface, between 1748 and 1778, over the

three decades encompassing his Berlin and Gotha years; the scores of seven among them are stored at the Sächsische Landesbibliothek in Dresden. They are all written for a keyboard instrument (probably the harpsichord) with accompaniment of strings only. The style of the orchestral writing suggests the possibility of performance with a very reduced number of players; possibly even with a string quartet or quintet, given their chamber-music quality and the continuous interaction between strings and keyboard.

Although the key signatures of Benda's surviving concertos rarely exceed the two sharps or flats, his compositional language is marked by daring harmonies, with an extensive use of diminished sevenths and modulations.

It can be safely assumed that most of Benda's keyboard concertos were written for his own performance: the distinction between works for the "ungeübte" (i.e. the "non-accomplished") and for the "geübte" (accomplished) players, which was highlighted in the title-page of his solo works, is nowhere to be found in his Concertos. However, the virtuosity displayed in these works is never overwhelming, and it never destroys the genuine pleasure of making music together.

The g-minor Concerto is one of the finest and most beloved of Benda's keyboard Concertos. It is characterised by an uncommonly frequent use of syncopation, which was attributed by Zdeněk Nejedlý (1878-1962) to a possible folkloric inspiration. In all of the three movements we find a fascinating blend of languages: a clear Italian atmosphere, which is indebted to great concerto composers of the Baroque and early classical era; an operatic and dramatic use of pauses, broken phrases, frequently interrupted gestures; an intimate and touching sensitivity, especially in the dark and sombre second movement, that suggests

a striking analogy with the slow movement of Mozart's KV 271 Concerto. The third movement is a brisk and energetic piece, which contrasts the interesting harmonies and daring melodic intervals of the first movement with a tight thematic writing, with constant interweaving of fragments from the opening refrain.

F. J. Haydn – *Keyboard Concerto C major*

Franz Joseph Haydn
(b. Rohrau, Lower Austria, 21 March 1732
d. Vienna, 31 May 1809)
Concerto in C Major
For Piano (Cembalo) and Strings
Hob.XVIII/5

Although Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) is unanimously considered as one of the greatest musicians of his time, it is striking that his works in the Concerto form are very rarely performed, with the important exception of the concertos for cello and for trumpet[1], and of one or two of his keyboard concertos. In comparison with Mozart, indeed, Haydn's reasons for writing keyboard concertos were less motivating. Mozart was well known as a keyboard virtuoso; and especially during his Vienna period, his Concertos had the double objective of enhancing his fame (with the aim in view of obtaining operatic engagements) and of giving scope to the composer's dramatic vein, when it could not express itself in theatrical works. Neither of these reasons applied to Haydn, whose life was mostly spent at the Esterhazy court, and whose virtuoso skills were not among the most admired of his musical gifts. It has been pointed out, furthermore, that most of Haydn's masterworks are built on "the extensive working out of a small amount of thematic or motivic material into a fairly substantial movement"[2]: this attitude is completely different from the dramatic and dialectic approach required by Concerto composition, and may have been the cause for the composer's relatively scarce interest for the form.

Most of Haydn's Concertos (a total of thirty-five) were composed during his youth (1756 to circa 1761), with just a few

later Concertos dating from the last two decades of the 18th century; some of his Concertos feature very unusual instruments in the role of soloists, among which Esterhazy's favourite baryton and the extremely rare "lire organizzate", an odd instrument (somewhat similar to a hurdy-gurdy) played by Ferdinand IV, King of Naples. Another Concerto (Hob. XVIII/6) features two soloists, piano and violin, and was probably composed for Haydn himself and for his concert master, "the same artist for whom he wrote so many solos in the symphonies of this early Esterhazy period"[3]. As concerns his keyboard concertos, the debate is still open, among musicologists, on how many can be doubtlessly attributed to him, and on their intended sound: a certain agreement has been reached on the fact that many had been conceived for the organ. Probably, in this case, the Concertos had been intended for the composer's own use, when he performed at the church of the Barmherzige Brüder or when he was Count Haugwitz's organist[4].

It was not unheard-of, especially in certain regions (Austria, Bohemia and southern Germany) to insert organ concertos within the liturgical framework of the Catholic Mass, and this is probably the origin of most of Haydn's early keyboard Concertos: once again, the semantic ambiguity of the German word "Klavier/Clavier" is apt to mean organ, harpsichord, or both[5]; the not too virtuosic technical demands of these Concertos may be considered as a possible evidence of the liturgical destination of the works[6]. A similar religious concept may be behind another of Haydn's keyboard Concertos, the one known as Hob. XVIII/4, which was performed in Paris, at the*Concerts Spirituels* by the famous blind pianist Maria Theresia von Paradies, the dedicatee of Mozart's Piano Concerto KV456.

Some of the stylistic features of these Concertos can be traced back to the derivation of keyboard concertos from those for

the violin: the virtuoso or brilliant fragments are almost always assigned to the right hand, which has also the "monopoly" of melody, whereas the left hand performs accompaniments, often doubling the continuo.

In some of these Concertos, as e.g. the C-major Concerto Hob. XVIII/1, the presence of a larger orchestra gives a rather symphonic quality to the work; whereas other Concertos, often classified as Divertimenti, are exquisite examples of chamber music works: some can be performed as Piano Quartets (for example the two C-major Concertos Hob. XVIII/5 and XVIII/10). The latter, in Hinson's words, "represents the type of easily playable, small solo concerto accompanied by a string trio"[7]. This practice echoes what is commonly done with certain of Mozart's Piano Concertos (KV 413, 414, 415 and 449), which the composer himself had conceived as works for a flexible ensemble.

The stylistic differences between Haydn's later Concertos and his symphonic works or quartets of the same period has provoked doubts about their composition date, or the surmise that the "public" destination of the Concertos discouraged Haydn from attempting too audacious compositional experiments in this genre; it has been maintained, however, that such compositional choices were deliberate decisions, and not "limitations on Haydn's imagination or his prowess as a performer[8]".

The time has come, however, for a wider dissemination of Haydn's Concertos, some of which can constitute an excellent introduction to ensemble playing and to the Concerto form for young musicians; notwithstanding this, they are worthy of the utmost attention from accomplished performers, whose repertoire will be enriched by their beauty, elegance, fantasy and humour.

Notes

[1] Cf. Simon P. Keefe, *The Cambridge Companion to the Concerto*, pp. 75ff.
[2] Michael Thomas Roeder, *A History of the Concerto*, p. 169.
[3] Maurice Hinson, *Music for Piano and Orchestra: An Annotated Guide*, p. 125.
[4] Cf. Caryl Clark, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Haydn*, p. 101.
[5] Cf. Sandra P. Rosenblum, *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music: Their Principles and Applications*, p. 6.
[6] Cf. Karl Geiringer, *Haydn: A Creative Life in Music*, 1982, p. 217.
[7] Hinson, *op. cit.*, p. 125.
[8] Cf. James Webster, Georg Feder, eds., *The New Grove Haydn*, p. 67.

B. E. Scholz – *Piano Concerto op. 57*

Bernhard Ernst Scholz
(b. Mainz, 3. March 1835
d. Munich, 26. December 1916)
Concerto for Piano and Orchestra op. 57

Bernhard Ernst Scholz was a German conductor, composer, theorist and pedagogue, who is also remembered as the father of Hans Scholz. His music education took place under Heinrich Esser and the celebrated pianist Ernst Pauer; however, he also studied counterpoint and composition with Siegfried Dehn and was a pupil of the famous singer Antonio Sangiovanni. He had also studied lithography in Paris, to obey his father's wish, and undertook travels in Southern Europe as part of his artistic education. His teaching activity started at the Conservatory of Musich, where he became Professor of theory in 1856; later he taught at the Conservatories of Kullak and Stern. He was also a leading figure in the music life of his time, being the music director at the Operas of Zurich and Nuremberg, and, later, the assistant of Marschner in Hanover, the director of the Società Cherubini in Florence and a celebrated conductor in Berlin (Philharmonic Concert, Caecilian Society).

He had been a member of the most important cultural circles in the Germany of his time, being a friend of the Schumanns, Brahms, Dilthey and many others. In 1860, he had been associated with Brahms in the unfortunate crusade against the new German music style represented by Liszt and his epigones, whose "new and senseless theories" were contrary to "the innermost spirit of music". In the original plan, a numerous group of intellectuals would have signed a manifesto against the new artistic vogue, which was planned not to appear until after the

festival of Zwickau. However, during the revision process undertaken by Brahms and Joachim, a copy of the manifesto reached the enemy field, and an unmerciful parody of the text was published on the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (May 4th, 1860); two days later, a mutilated copy of what had been meant to be just a provisional text was published by the *Berliner Musik-Zeitung Echo*, signed only by Brahms, Joachim, Julius Otto Grimm and Bernhard Scholz.

Although the result of the operation was very far from what had been planned and expected, the *fiasco* did not discourage the Brahmsian field; however, they did not give further textual contributions to the quarrel, and followed Ferdinand Hiller's thoughtful advice: for him, "the best means of struggle would be to create good music". And this was what they constantly strove to accomplish, encouraging each other in their compositional activity.

Bernhard Scholz was actually one of the most active friends who sought to persuade Brahms to write symphonies, and who supported him in the most difficult moments of his compositional career.

In 1871, Scholz had become the music director of Breslau's Symphony Orchestra, and therefore he regularly invited his friend Brahms and featured his works in the concert programmes. It should be pointed out, however, that in Scholz's very first appearance as the music director in Breslau, the most modern work was by Wagner instead of Brahms, notwithstanding Scholz's "conservative" fame. The programme actually included an overture and the Seventh Symphony by Beethoven together with Wagner's *Lohengrin* Prelude and Mendelssohn's Scherzo from the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. In March 1876, however, Scholz

included Brahms's *First Piano Concerto* in the musical programme of Breslau's Symphony Orchestra.

Another famous work by Brahms is clearly attributable to Scholz's encouragement. Brahms had been awarded a honorary doctorate by the University of Breslau, but, at first, he had shown his gratitude merely through a postcard. Upon Scholz's insistence, however, Brahms eventually decided to dedicate a work to the University: the*Academic Festival Overture* was the result of Scholz's efforts, and the letters between Brahms and Scholz testify upon their common quest for a suitable title (*Viadrina*, the Latin name of Breslau's river Oder had been one of the options).

Scholz's own compositional activity was by no means a minor side of his artistic life, as documented by his victories in composition competitions. Scholz's *String Quartet* in G op. 46 was awarded the Florentine Quartet Prize in 1877; in the same year, his *String Quintet* in E minor op. 47 obtained the second prize (first not awarded) at a competition organised by the Society for Chamber Music in St. Petersburg. It should be mentioned that young Gustav Mahler had been one of the candidates, and had probably participated in the competition with his exquisite *Quartettsatz* for piano and strings. On the other hand, Scholz's operas (among which*Carlo Rosa, Anno 1757* and *Mirandolina*) did not enjoy a comparable success, although Scholz was very appreciated for his symphonies, chamber works and *Lieder*.

Two years earlier, in 1875, Scholz's *Piano Concerto* which constitutes the object of the present publication had been premiered by no less than Clara Wieck, who was by then one of the most famous and appreciated pianists and pedagogues of her time. Piero Rattalino has pointed out that Scholz's *Piano*

Concerto was the most modern work she included in her repertoire, which did not follow the vogues of the time.

When, in 1883, Scholz became Raff's successor as the director of the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, Clara defined the fact as a true "revolution", since Scholz was thought to be an "archconservative" and Raff had been a keen supporter of Liszt and Wagner. Actually, this label did not correspond to reality. Since the very first years of his compositional activity, Scholz had been truly "Romantic", as even Dilthey had pointed out. And although his fugues were skilful and famous, they were not mere archaisms, and had a genuinely modern taste. Even later, Scholz's models were Mendelssohn and Brahms rather than the Classicist composers: the former's influence is clearly discernible in such works as Scholz's famous *Requiem*, the latter in the equally celebrated *Variations op. 54* for two pianos. Moreover, as it has been pointed out earlier, Scholz was not prejudiced against performance of Wagnerian works and included them in his concert programmes; it should be highlighted, furthermore, that the famous manifesto was, by then, more than twenty years old.

Nonetheless, the opposition between the two parties was still deeply felt; and Scholz's appointment contributed to the establishment of Frankfurt as the conservatives' fortress. In disagreement with the new director, some members of the Conservatory's faculty resigned, thus leaving free space to a monopoly of the conservative party, and founded a competing Conservatory which was polemically christened as "Raff Conservatory". Bülow's pointed remarks against Scholz and Clara Schumann did not calm things down, until, eventually, in 1890, Humperdinck was the first member of the Wagnerian party to be reappointed at the Hoch Conservatory.

Scholz kept the appointment until 1908, when, after having resigned, he passed the years of his retirement travelling to Florence and Munich. Among Scholz's other activities there was also the direction of F. W. Rühl's *Choral Union* (from 1884), and the promotion of music among the working classes: Scholz founded the first German *Volkschor* in 1897, testifying of his patriotic and social concerns.

Scholz is also remembered as an innovative pedagogue, as he created methods for the musical education of children from the age of eight, which where inspired by the forms and principles of humanistic education.

The complex net of musical and cultural interests and influences which marked Scholz's life and compositional experience are discernible in the *Piano Concerto*, which is rightfully thought to be one of his masterpieces and which bears witness of his powerful treatment of the form and of his architectural skills, which he constantly used to convey the deep emotional content and passionate style of his music.

F. X. Scharwenka – *Piano Concerto n. 3*

Franz Xaver Scharwenka
(b. Samter/Posen, 6. January 1850
d. Berlin, 8. December 1924)
Piano Concerto No.3 in c sharp Minor op.80

Both Franz Xaver Scharwenka and his older brother Ludwig Philipp (16.2.1847-16.7.1917) acquired an international renown during their lifetime, and represented two of the leading figures in piano teaching, performance and composition of their era. Xaver was born in Samter (now Szamotuły, in Poland), on January 6th, 1850; their mother was a musician who provided her sons with their first music education: Xaver started playing the piano when he was only three.

Notwithstanding that, he had to wait for many years before receiving regular music lessons: when he was fifteen, the family moved to Berlin, where he studied at the Akademie der Tonkunst with famous pedagogue Theodor Kullak, who had been Czerny's student; another of Czerny's former pupils, Liszt, gave Scharwenka some lessons when both were in Rome.

After only three years, however, Scharwenka was already so accomplished as a pianist that Kullak invited him to teach at the very same institution. The following year, 1869, was a particularly important one for the young musician: he per- formed at the Singakademie for the first time, and had his first three opus numbers published by Breitkopf & Härtel: op. 1 was a Piano Trio, op. 2 a Violin Sonata, and op. 3 was a collection of Polish National Dances, the first of which was to become immensely popular (we have even a recording of Scharwenka himself performing his best-known work).

These first results of Scharwenka's compositional activity show already some of the characterising features of their creator's style: a central but not exclusive focus on the piano (which is always present but often participates in ensemble music making), and a Polish vein which will never be denied by Scharwenka.

The compulsory military service caused an intermission within the young pianist's career; however, when he came back, he was invited to teach at the Singakademie in Berlin. He was very busy as a teacher, a performer and a composer, but engaged himself also in managerial activities: the concert series he organised every year with Gustav Holländer and Hein- rich Grünfeld became a true landmark of Berlin's musical life. Moreover, since 1886 he organised and realised important symphonic concerts dedicated to Berlioz, Liszt, Beethoven and other major composers, while his own performance activity continued brilliantly in cooperation with such musicians as Hans Richter and Joseph Joachim.

In 1881, Scharwenka was ready for another professional challenge: he founded a piano school of his own in Berlin, which was to become a reference point for young musicians of the late 19th century. Ten years later he undertook his first concert tour in America, and opened a New York branch of his piano school, the "Scharwenka Music School". He lived in the US for seven years, during which (in 1893) his Berlin school and the Klindworth Conservatory joined forces; when he eventually came back to Europe, in 1898, he became the director of this important institution.

In 1910 and 1913, Scharwenka accepted to trust his performances to recording, for the label Columbia; moreover, his interpretations have survived on Welte-Mignon piano rolls. Both these and the testimonies by his contemporaries allow us to appreciate the greatness of Scharwenka the pianist: Eduard

Hanslick defined his style, in 1880, as "dazzling without charlatanism" ("Blendend ohne Scharlatanerie"), praising his powerful octave technique, the flowing lightness of his passageworks, the sweet quality of his ornamentation as well as the expressive quality of his trills. His "singing legato" and refined pedalling were equally admired.

Similarly, Scharwenka's importance as a teacher was unanimously recognised: José Vianna da Motta was one of his most successful students, and Scharwenka's manuals enjoyed a great approval: his essay on finger technique was highly praised by Breithaupt. His edition of works by other composers were systematically adopted in many Conservatories, in Europe and in the USA, and his Etudes contributed to the technical development of generations of pianists.

His obituary on "The Musical Times" (1.3.1925) stated that he was "universally considered one of the leading pianists of his time", with a "beautiful tone" and "interpretations […] [which] were those of a musician". These sentences confirmed those that had been published on the same review more than thirty-five years earlier (1.7.1879), when Scharwenka (a young pianist at that time) had been praised as a musician of "exceptional artistic qualities", whose "poetic warmth of interpretation" was "combined with great executive skill" and an "individuality of style" which was "entirely free from obtrusiveness".

The above mentioned Obituary did not fail to mention the triumphs of Scharwenka the composer, who "won prominence with his four Concertos". Indeed, this "epigone of Chopin and Liszt" (as Reinhold Sietz defined him) obtained an enormous success with his First Piano Concerto (op. 32, in B-flat minor), which was composed in 1874 and premiered the fol- lowing year;

it had been dedicated to Liszt, who performed it in Berlin, and had been highly praised by Hans von Bülow.

The popularity acquired by this Concerto is testified by the performance of its Scherzo in a two-piano transcription at the Crystal Palace in London (1.6.1879), with Scharwenka and his student Anna Mehlig at the keyboards. His second Piano Concerto (op. 56, c minor) came in 1881, the foundation year of Scharwenka's Berlin school. It was performed by the composer at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig that same year, whereas eighteen years had to elapse before the composition of the Third Concerto (op. 80, in c-sharp minor).

This work was premiered in Berlin, in January 1899, with the composer at the piano: it was his greeting to his homeland after the seven years he had spent in America, and as such it was received; the work was enthusiastically applauded and enjoyed a great success. His fourth and last Concerto (op. 82, in f-minor) was premiered in Berlin, at the Beethovensaal, by one of Scharwenka's most brilliant students, Martha Siebold; the orchestra was conducted by the composer. Scharwenka himself was to be the soloist at the New York premiere of this work, in November 1910, when the baton was taken by Gustav Mahler, in one of his last public appearances before his death.

Besides the four Concertos, Scharwenka's compositional output included chamber music works, among which an impressive Piano Quartet whose style alludes to Brahms. Scharwenka, however, was open to all the major stylistic streams of his time, and traces of Wagnerism can be found in his Symphony; he also composed an opera, "Mataswintha", which was staged in Weimar and at the Metropolitan in 1897.

The Third Piano Concerto is a majestic work: as Martin Eastick states, it is "symphonically much stronger than the second, where the emphasis is very much on the soloist. Here the piano and orchestra are much more integrated". Since its very beginning, a musical gesture of great momentum is proposed first by the full orchestra, and then by the piano in a particularly rich musical writing (on four staves!). The polyphonic concept of the piano part is certainly indebted to Liszt, but one is reminded also of Busoni's organ transcriptions and of Cajkovskij's use of keyboard's complete range.

After the solemn and virtuoso opening, the Concerto continues with a cantabile section where an admirable counterpoint in the orchestra is accompanied by very refined and composite arpeggios in the piano. This dreamy passage soon is transformed into a grandioso octave section, contrasting the evolution of the first themes in the orchestra.

Later we find a rhapsodic moment, where more than hints of Chopin and Liszt's influence are recognisable; however, virtuosity and expression are never strictly separated, in Scharwenka's writing, and his singing themes are always technically demanding, whereas his most brilliant passages are never devoid of elegance and depth. The piano writing has numerous noteworthy effects, as for example the magic and Mendelssohnian passage in piano at letter D of the first movement, with its enchanted trills and brilliant pianissimo and staccato octaves. Those same octaves build up the great climax at E-F, fol- lowed by a Cadenza where the main thematic material of the movement is recalled. Once more, the piano writing is gorgeous and rich in effects and sonority.

The recapitulation offers many interesting surprises to the hearer, and is concluded with a brilliant coda with a wealth of octaves and full chords.

The second movement, in Mendelssohn's favourite key of E major, reminds the listener of his enchanted atmospheres, as well as of Brahms's complex writing (both as concerns rhythmical patterns and polyphonic structures). The interaction between piano and winds is particularly fascinating, and the main intimate mood does not prevent the building of a powerful climax (letter N of the score), followed by an enchanting section with beautiful tremolos in the piano part. The thematic unity of the Concerto is created through frequent references to the main motives of the first movement, which are reworked and underpinned in the following movements (lyrical variations in the second movement, rhythmic alterations in the third).

Once again, a virtuoso section with generous octaves leads to a climactic moment, which connects the second with the third movement. The finale's theme is rhythmically fascinating: the alternation of shorter and longer values which characterises Polish dance rhythms is cleverly used, so that the overall effect is of a rhythmical unpredictability within a strict and exciting dance pulse. The three-beat bars invite Scharwenka to make use of waltz-like and mazurka-like rhythms as well, building a frenzied and enthralling piece.

The "Meno mosso", quoting once more the thematic material of the preceding movements, constitutes a moment of relative calm: the long piano solo is followed by a lyrical section with a beautiful dialogue between piano and orchestra, culminating in a majestic and powerful expressive passage. The tension is masterfully built, and followed by the return of the "Allegro non troppo" with its dance themes and rhythms: Scharwenka is

particularly clever in his building of the dynamic waves, in order to create a series of "peaks" preparing the final coda. It is prepared by a return of the "Meno mosso", with its breadth of expression: the "Maestoso" refers once more to the first movement's atmosphere, and the last "piano" at letter T act as a springboard for the grandioso conclusion.

A. Urspruch – *Piano Concerto op. 9*

Anton Urspruch
(b. Frankfurt am Main, February 17, 1850
d. Frankfurt am Main, January 11, 1907)
Concerto for Piano and Orchestra op. 9

Anton Urspruch's vocation to art came probably as no surprise: there was a creative vein in his family which showed itself soon in the composer-to-be. Anton was born on February 17th, 1850, in Frankfurt am Main. His father, Carl Theodor, was a jurist and a writer, who worked as a redactor at the Frankfurter Journal; among Anton's ancestors, however, there was a famous actor, Philipp Jakob, as well as a celebrated soprano, Antonietta Helene Succarini, who had probably sung under Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's baton in 1790. Carl Theodor's family came from a Protestant tradition, whereas his wife was Jewish (although she was baptized in 1845). Indeed, Anton's first artistic efforts were not in the musical field: he dedicated himself to painting before realising that his greatest talent was as a musician.

Thus, he began his musical education under Martin Wallenstein, followed by Ignaz Lachner (1807-1895), principal conductor in Frankfurt at that time, and eventually by Joachim Raff: Anton met him in Wiesbaden, before Raff's appointment as a Professor of Piano in Frankfurt. Their first lessons took place privately in Wiesbaden, and their relationship was always characterised by mutual friendship and esteem. Such was Raff's concern for Anton's future, that he first promoted his career through concerts in the surroundings, and later introduced him to Liszt, who had been Raff's own teacher.

In turn, Urspruch was to become one of Liszt's favourite students: on May 24th, 1871, Anton wrote from Weimar to Hassel-Barth, the Frankfurt concertmaster, describing Liszt's incredibly warm welcome. Liszt's commentaries were indeed very gratifying for Urspruch, who received high praise both for his playing and for his own compositions. During Urspruch's stay in Weimar, he went to his teacher's every day, and they played together at length (up to six whole hours!). Urspruch dedicated to Liszt one of his first compositions, a "Sonate quasi Fantasia" for piano duet: in August of that same year 1871, Liszt performed it with Frau von Mackharoff, thus showing how highly he thought of his young student.

Urspruch participated in Liszt's Weimar master classes for five years, during which he met with many international fellow students, performed for friends and colleagues and gave public concerts (his performance of Schumann's *Symphonic Studies* in 1872 was memorable and was enthusiastically commented by the Weimar elite).

In 1873, Liszt taught at the Hofgärten thrice a week; Urspruch met at his courses other pianists such as Laura Kahrer, Martha Remmert, Kathie Gaul, Georg Leitert, Berthold Kellermann (who would later teach music to the Wagner family), Josie Bates and a young American, Amy Fay. When Vincent d'Indy reported his memories about that time in Weimar, he mentioned the mornings, when lessons, debates and discussions took place; the afternoons and evenings, spent "in the company of the twelve apostles", one of whom was Urspruch.

Young Anton had barely finished his education under Liszt's supervision, when his former mentor Raff invited him to teach at the famous Hoch Konservatorium in Frankfurt, where he was the director, in September 1878. At first, the twenty-eight-year

old pianist was appointed a Professor of piano (the piano faculty was led by none other than Clara Schumann, to whom Urspruch would later dedicate his Cello Sonata); among his colleagues, there was another very young teacher, Carl Fälten, and a disciple of Wagner, namely Josef Rubinstein. Thus, representatives of the Lisztean school such as Urspruch and Bernhard Cossmann were placed side by side with exponents of the opposing party such as Clara Schumann and Julius Stockhausen.

Fälten and Urspruch, who were among the youngest faculty members, promoted the insertion of "new music" within the walls of the rather conservative institution; it should be said, however, that Clara Schumann was in turn responsible for the promotion within the Conservatoire of works by Scarlatti, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Brahms and by her late husband.

Moreover, under Raff's direction, the Hoch Konservatorium had sought to propose a complete and thorough musical education to its students: Raff deprecated the supposed "ignorance" of some of his great contemporaries (Wagner to name but one), and wished to raise a generation of cultivated and creative musicians.

A little time later, Raff requested Urspruch's assistantship for his own class of music theory and composition, in consideration of the noteworthy results that his former student had already obtained as a composer as well: his first important works (among which a Piano Trio, a Symphony and the Piano Concerto) were unanimously recognised as the first fruits of an undoubtedly talented musician.

Urspruch's period at the Hoch Konservatory thus marked the development of his compositional activity, with piano works, Lieder cycles and a series of Variations and Fugue on

a Theme by Bach for two pianos: Liszt appreciated his student's output, and (in a letter dated 23.2.1873) he encouraged him not to despise this youthful works. These were highly valued also by the publishing market: Urspruch's first compositions were printed by Schott, Breitkopf, Steyl & Thomas and by the Hamburger publisher Alwin August Cranz. He was to become, in March 1881, Urspruch's father-in-law: at 31, Anton got married with Emmy Cranz, to whom he was to dedicate his Symphony op. 14. In the following years, the couple had four daughters: it has been reported that his family was Urspruch's raison d'être and that he was a very loving father and husband.

In 1882, after Raff's death in June, the Directorship of the Hoch Konservatorium was left vacant for a while; the names of Franz Wüllner and Max Bruch were taken into consideration, but eventually Bernhard Scholz was chosen. His musical concept was radically conservative: Urspruch, who had succeeded Raff as Professor of Composition, was requested to leave the class to the new director. The ensuing disagreement with Scholz, as well as their different musical concepts, brought Urspruch (together with some of his colleagues, i.e. Max Schwarz, Maximilian Fleisch, Gotthold Kunkel and Bertrand Roth) to leave the Conservatoire.

In April 1883, a new and rival institution had been founded by Fleisch and named after Raff; Bülow was its honorary president. Urspruch left the Hoch Konservatorium for this newly established "Raff Konservatorium", where he would remain as a teacher until his death. His teaching activity was impressive: among his many famous students, we shall mention Alfred Hertz, a celebrated conductor, as well as Walter Damrosch and Marco Grosskopf.

The musical life in Frankfurt seemed to profit from the two Conservatories' rivalry: in 1885 young Richard Strauss had just arrived, on Bülow's invitation, and wrote to his father that

conductor Fritz Steinbach and Urspruch were among the first acquaintances to whom he was introduced.

We can get an idea of the inspiring atmosphere at the artistic salons in Frankfurt by briefly mentioning a gathering which took place on November 13th, 1894, at Clara Schumann's home: the musical elite of the city had been invited to celebrate Johannes Brahms' imminent departure from Frankfurt. Urspruch, who at that time taught musical theory to Schumann's grandson Ferdinand, was among the guests; the company included most of the faculty of both Conservatories (Ernst Engesser, Lazzaro Uzielli, Iwan Knorr, Hugo Heermann, Naret Koning, Gustav Erlanger and Johann Hegar, according to Ferdinand Schumann's witness). Julia Uzielli sang some of Brahms' Lieder; Schumann's works for clarinet and piano were performed, with Clara Schumann (who was 76 years old!) accompanying Richard Mühlfeld; eventually, Mühlfeld and Brahms performed the two Clarinet Sonatas which Brahms had recently composed and dedicated to Mühlfeld himself.

Ferdinand Schumann also reports that Brahms shared Urspruch's viewpoint on the principles of music education: both criticised "conservatories in which practically only piano-playing was taught", and they maintained that this approach could not educate "real musicians".

In the meantime, Urspruch was writing some of his masterpieces, most of which included singing. He maintained that the human voice was the most perfect of all instruments, and the only that could achieve the fullness of musical and artistic expression. Thus he composed "Frühlingsfeier", op. 26 (1890), whose text was one of Klopstock's Odes, scored for solo tenor, choir and orchestra: contemporary reviewers write of an

"enthusiastic" and "most favourable reception" of this work in its several performances.

His first operatic attempt had been "Der Sturm" (1888), on a libretto by Pizzarri based on Shakespeare's *Tempest*; Otto Dessoff had conducted the première in Frankfurt. By unanimous consent, however, Urspruch's theatrical masterpiece was the comic opera "Das Unmöglichste von allem", on the composer's own libretto inspired by a play by Lope de Vega. The work was premiered in 1897 in Karlsruhe, under F. Mottl's baton: a great success greeted both the opera and its composer in this occasion and in the following performances, in such venues as Darmstadt, Leipzig, Cologne, Prague etc. The puzzling title corresponds to the play's moral, i.e. that nothing is more impossible than to control a woman who is in love; Urspruch's music reflects the composer's eclectic and wide-ranging culture, with influences by Wagner and Verdi recognisable within a Mozartean theatrical approach.

In the following year 1898, Urspruch's Oratorio "Ave Maris Stella" op. 24 was performed in Düsseldorf with great success: its dedicatee was Johannes Brahms, to whose musical ideals Urspruch was certainly very close – although, as we have seen, he was by no means hostile to Liszt and Wagner.

Indeed, Urspruch's greatest source of inspiration was gradually becoming more and more clear: it was to be traced in the ancient Christian music, from Gregorian chant to 15th-century polyphony. It was rather uncommon, at his time, for a Protestant Christian to have such a great interest in Catholic Church music: he was frequently to be seen in the Catholic Cathedral of Mainz, attending services and giving his expert advice to the Cathedral Choir.

We can get a glimpse of his position by reading his own words on music and modernity, published by the Berliner Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung: "Modern people, modern artist – a sad-sounding word! It reminds us so strongly of our transience. For only what has its origin in fashion – this fashion stigmatized by Schiller as impudent – is 'modern', and fashion is fashion today because yesterday it was not and tomorrow it will not be. Therefore, everything based on fashion is not modern, it is decaying. So, be not so proud, modern musician, of your present-day music1".

Urspruch's increasing interest in Catholic Church music was encouraged by his friendship with father Gregor Böckeler, a monk at the famous cloister of Maria Laach, who had formerly studied under his guide.

Thus, Urspruch's musicological research unveiled important treasures of ancient music, which he studied at Maria Laach and at the abbey of Beuron; he participated in an important Choral Congress in Strasbourg, and eventually published a seminal paper on Gregorian chant and choral music (1901), which was to become enormously influential in the following years. Suffice it to say that it was translated into Italian and given by Cardinal Respighi to Pope Pius X, who invited Urspruch and his family to a private meeting in Vatican to discuss the perspectives of renewal in Catholic liturgy; the Pope presented him with a medal, witnessing to the Pontiff's esteem for the German composer.

Such travels to Italy became regular for Urspruch, who went there almost once a year, and remained in contact both with the highest Catholic prelates and with many of the most important Italian musicians of the time (among whom Sgambati).

Those closest to Urspruch maintained that his interest on Church music was due not only to aesthetic reasons, but also to his profound religiosity: his nature had been a deeply spiritual one since his youth, and he constantly read and studied books on religion and philosophy during his whole life.

Urspruch's two major unfinished works are significantly linked to religious themes: he was composing a four-part Kyrie for a mass, in which he wished to create a new musical language out of the interaction of Gregorian plainchant and ancient polyphony; and he had just completed the instrumentation of his third and last opera, "Die heilige Cäcilie".

At the end of 1906, Urspruch had had a heart attack, from which he had apparently recovered; he was visited by Siegfried Ochs, conductor of the Berlin Choir, who came to discuss the possible performance of the opera's first act in oratorio form. Sadly, however, Urspruch died a few days later, on January 11th, 1907, after another cardiac arrest.

Urspruch's personality was complex and fascinating: he could move with the utmost ease between comic operas and deeply religious subjects; his immense culture included an impressive knowledge of international literature in several original languages (he could quote by memory from Shakespeare, Calderón de la Barca and Lope de Vega) and he had an endearing personality, with a mild character and the tendency to be as kind with the others as he was strict with himself.

His musical style is characterised by a similar eclecticism and by his deep knowledge of both the old and the contemporary repertoire: one of his first important works was an homage to Bach, whose influence remained crucial during the whole compass of Urspruch's life. Notwithstanding this, his own language is not a

merely conservative one: his tone palette is rich and brilliant; his mastery in the compositional technique is neither Brahmsian nor Wagnerian, although he was inspired by both; some of his passages sound like anticipations of Rachmaninov and Skrjabin. In short, he successfully created his own style and his own language, where a blend of virtuosity and spirituality express the very soul of the late-Romantic era.

His Piano Concerto is one of his first successes as a composer. In the letter to Hassel-Barth quoted above, where Urspruch narrated his exciting meeting with Liszt, he added in a post-scriptum that the Concerto was to be premiered the following year, at the Karlsruher Musikfest, with Liszt conducting. Eventually, the premiere took place in Kassel, but Liszt showed his esteem and encouragement in a few friendly lines dated June 12th, 1872; four months later, in October, the Concerto was performed in Leipzig and Amsterdam, always with great success.

Although the form is very classical (from the initial *tutti* framing the canonical three piano solos to the cadenza of the first movement), the style is all but old-fashioned: the piano part is extremely difficult and conspicuous, with a totally idiosyncratic use of the piano technique. Doubtless, Urspruch made use of several Lisztean technical solutions, but he combined them in a very personal approach; the frequent use of scales and broken chords does not create monotony by virtue of the work's serene brilliance and expressive mood. The instrumentation (as well as the piano writing) is rich and luxuriant: once more, Urspruch managed to combine a formal mastery reminiscent of Mendelssohn and Brahms with a sound palette typical of his more recent time.

B. Stavenhagen – *Piano Concerto op. 4*

Bernhard Stavenhagen
(b. Greiz, 24. November 1862
d. Geneva, 25. December 1914)
Concerto for Piano and Orchestra B-minor op.4

Bernhard Stavenhagen was born in Greiz on November 24th, 1862. His first music education took place in his native town under Wilhelm Urban; at the age of 12, when his family moved to Berlin, he studied with Theodor Kullak and was exceptionally admitted to the Hochschule, where he studied composition and theory with Fiedrich Kiel and piano with Ernst Rudorff. Being an offspring of Reinecke's piano school, Rudorff had a rather conservative approach to piano technique, promoting the principle of the "calm hand". During his Berlin period, Stavenhagen was awarded the Mendelssohn Prize for his pianistic activity (1880).

After the success in Berlin of Liszt's students Friedheim and d'Albert, Stavenhagen moved to Weimar in 1885, where he soon became one of Liszt's favourite students. There he established friendly relationships with other students of Liszt, including Moritz Rosenthal, Emil Sauer and Arthur Friedheim, with whom he visited Xaver Scharwenka in Leipzig. He followed the master in most of his last journeys (including those to Rome, Budapest, Paris, London and Bayreuth), acting as his secretary but also performing many of his works in important venues. Their friendship is documented by several photographs which show the intense affection between the old master and his young student, who was later to write interesting memories about Liszt's performance and teaching, and to record a few of Liszt's piano works, among others the *Hungarian Rhapsody* n.12; on several of these rolls he added the remark "according to personal memory of

Liszt" (1905). His performance of Wagner/Liszt's *Isolden Liebestod* is an important document of the practice of a-synchronisation of both hands in piano performance of the late Romantic Era [1], although Rattalino heavily criticises the nature and extent of Stavenhagen's interventions on the text, in the virtuoso style, as documented by his surviving recordings [2].

On April 10th, 1886, Stavenhagen was chosen as the soloist in Liszt's *First Piano Concerto* during an all-Liszt programme at London's Crystal Palace, which was followed, six days later, by a Liszt-marathon for solo piano marking Stavenhagen's solo debut in London. The impressive programme (especially in consideration of the pianist's young age at that time: he was only twenty-three) included *Funérailles*, *Sposalizio*, the BACH Fantasy and Fugue, both *Legends*, two Paganini Etudes, a Petrarch Sonnet and the *Huguenots* Fantasy. This programme was considered as standing at the crossroads of "two cultures, combining 'abstract' pieces, studies and transcriptions". [3] When Liszt died on July 31st of the very same year, Stavenhagen was at his bedside, and he read the funeral oration at the master's memorial service. He was later to edit many works by Liszt, and it was Stavenhagen who gave the title *Malédiction* to the work by Liszt which is now known with this name.

The following ten years saw Stavenhagen touring central Europe, Russia and North America: he performed the *Konzertstück* by Weber at the Crystal Palace in 1886, being praised for his "rare technical ability". However, there is a funny anecdote about Stavenhagen's habit of changing the titles of the pieces he played more often. When asked by a young lady to write a line on her autograph books, Stavenhagen turned to Rosenthal for inspiration, and he acidly suggested that Stavenhagen, having to write just one line, could simply write down his repertoire [4].

Already in 1887, he was invited again to London to perform Liszt's *First Concerto* at the Crystal Palace: Stavenhagen gradually became one of the most important international virtuosos of his time and was particularly appreciated for his Chopin interpretations: for Hanslick, he was simply "the perfect pianist", and he was highly appreciated by Hans von Bülow, whoconducted him in Beethoven's *Third Piano Concerto* (19 and 23.01.1899), in a programme featuring works by Bizet, Strauss, Wagner, Saint-Saens and a few of Liszt's solo piano works performed by Stavenhagen. The cadenzas written by Stavenhagen for Beethoven's *Second* and *Third* Piano Concerto were highly appreciated at his time and are sometimes used by pianistuntil now.

In 1890 (the year of his marriage with singer Agnes Denninghof, 1860-1945), the first important official recognition came for Stavenhagen, who was appointed the Court Pianist to the Grand Duke of Weimar and received the Order of the White Falcon two years later; in 1895 he became Kapellmeister of the Hofoper, where he premiered six new operas within eighteen months: such artistic choices, which promoted many works of contemporary composers elicited strong disagreement, and eventually led to his resigning in 1898. The very same year, however, he became Court Music Director in Munich, following Richard Strauss' directorship, and maintained the appointment until 1902.

In 1901, he had become Director of the *Akademie der Tonkunst* in Munich, following von Perfall's directorship and preceding Felix Mottl and Hans Bussmeyer; here he taught many students who were to constitute the next generation of performers and conductors, among which Ernest Hutcheson and Édouard Risler, thus handing down the Lisztean tradition into the 20th century. Having left the post in Munich in 1903, from 1904 to 1907 he was active as a conductor and music director in Weimar,

and later in Geneva, where he also became director of the piano master class at the Conservatory. In Geneva, too, he continued his activity in favour of contemporary music, with works by Richard Strauss, Antonin Dvořák, Hanz Pfitzner, Gustav Mahler, Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, Paul Dukas, Ferruccio Busoni (who was a good friend of Stavenhagen), Mily Balakirev, Sergei Taneev and Arnold Schoenberg, among others. Under Stavenhagen's management, which was defined as "splendid", the "Popular Concerts" at Geneva had become "a veritable school of musical education [5]".

His interest in contemporary works is demonstrated by Stavenhagen's foundation of the *Moderne Abende*, a cycle of concerts featuring modern works; the effectiveness of his activity for the promotion of new music is demonstrated by Carl Orff's enthusiasm after having listened to Debussy's *Nocturnes*. He had also been interested in Scriabin's works [6], and had been one of the first to perform Brahms's op. 116 [7]: Stavenhagen's mother-in-law had been a good friend of Brahms during their youth. Stavenhagen remained in Geneva until his untimely death by pneumonia in 1914; his body was later transferred to Weimar and buried there [8].

Although reminiscences of most of the greatest composers of his time are discernible in Stavenhagen's compositional output, undeniably the impact of Liszt's style was the strongest and most influential: his *Piano Concerto in B-minor op. 4* is a perfect example of how the principles of cyclic form and thematic/motivic elaboration had a strong impact on Stavenhagen's style. For Hinson, it is an "impassioned transposition of the spirit of the Liszt symphonic poem to the three movement concerto format [9]". This Concerto, composed in 1893, was the first of three composed by Stavenhagen; however, one of them is lost, and the other survives as a two-piano reduction manuscript. The concerto was performed

together with Mahler's First Symphony at one of the very first performances of the *Titan* (3.6.1894 in Weimar), during a gigantic concert in which other works by Liszt, Rubinstein, Wagner and Bulow were performed. Stavenhagen, as reported by his former student Klaus Pringsheim, had been one of the first German conductors who actively promoted the music by Gustav Mahler.

This concerto is close in style to those by Christian Sinding (op. 6) and Moritz Moszkowski (op. 59); it was published in 1904 by Ries & Erler and Edwin A. Fleischer, lasting approximately 25 minutes. Hinson appreciates particularly the "complex harmonic and structural scheme" which "is cleverly carried out", as well as the "memorable" melodies, especially the "lofty, widespread, almost Brahmsian main idea, which threads through the two outer movements [10]". Stavenhagen's concerto was recorded by the American pianist Michael Pontin in the 1970s for Vox, with other concertos by late Romantic composers. This work, featuring a large orchestra which is masterfully exploited by Stavenhagen in a very refined orchestration, is in a highly virtuoso style which explores the whole range of technical options of the post-Lisztian pianism. Although the work is clearly indebted to Liszt both concerning the formal organisation (evidently inspired by Liszt's B-minor Sonata) as well as the motivic elaboration, Stavenhagen succeeds in reconciling the "modern" approach with elements derived from the style of Brahms.

Throughout the Concerto, an extensive emotional palette is employed by the composer, ranging from the solemn pathos of the opening motif to moments of genuine playfulness, from an important fugato and Baroque-like section to episodes of pure tenderness and religious mysticism.

The second movement, in particular, includes a beautiful chorale which clearly refers to the slow movement of

Brahms's *First Piano Concerto,* and which alludes to the Romantic idea of the Baroque style. Among the numerous exquisite ideas of this piece, Stavenhagen inserted a quotation of Wagner's *Isolden Liebestod*, which was, incidentally, a favourite of his own concert repertoire in Liszt's transcription. The *Leitmotif* technique is extensively used by Stavenhagen and gives extraordinary unity to the Concerto. The third movement, which acts as the "recapitulation" in the gigantic sonata form of the Concerto, is therefore strictly linked to the first movement; it is characterised by a frequent use of chromaticism, often highlighted by octave scales in the piano part, and by many quotations from the preceding movements, including a dreamy fragment inspired by the second movement's atmosphere.

Stavenhagen here employs an impressive range of modulations, some of which are extremely skilful; in the final coda, the homage to the close of Brahms's *Second Concerto* could not be more evident, and once more acts as an ideal link between the apparently opposing worlds of Liszt and Brahms.

Notes

[1] Cf. Kenneth L. Hamilton, *After the Golden Age,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 148.
[2] Piero Rattalino, *Da Clementi a Pollini*, Milan, Giunti/Ricordi, 1983, p. 57.
[3] John Williamson, review of *Franz Liszt* by Alan Walker, "Music and Letters", vol. 81, n. 2 (2002), p. 302.
[4] Cf. Mark Lindsey Mitchell, Allan Evans, *Moriz Rosenthal in word and music: a legacy of the nineteenth century*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2006, p. 109.
[5] Frank Webb, *Switzerland of the Swiss*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901, p. 107.

[6] Cf. Faubion Bowers, *Scriabin, a biography*, second edition, Mineola, Dover Publications, 1996, p. 123.
[7] Cf. Michael Musgrave, Bernard D. Sherman*, Performing Brahms: early evidence of performance style*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 325.
[8] Cf. Elgin Strub-Ronayne, *Berhnard Stavenhagen: Pianist, Dirigent, Komponist und letzter Schüler von Franz Liszt*, in "Das Orchester", n. 3 (1987).
[9] Maurice Hinson*, Music for piano and orchestra: an annotated guide*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1993, p. 275.
[10] Cf. *ibid.,* p. 275.

E. von Sauer – *Piano Concerto n. 1*

Emil von Sauer
(b. Hamburg, 8. October 1862
d. Vienna, 29. April 1942)
First Piano Concerto e-minor

Emil Georg Konrad Sauer, to whose family name the aristocratic "von" would eventually be added in recognition of his artistic merits, was born in Hamburg on October 8th, 1862. He was given his first musical education by his mother, the Scottish-born Julia Gordon. She was a distinguished pianist, who had studied under Ludwig Deppe (1828-1890), and whose father had been a famous painter. Young Emil was undoubtedly a gifted child, but it was not until his twelfth year that he showed the unmistakable signs of a musical talent. He himself recalls the episode in his Autobiography: during a musical evening, he was asked to play Weber's "Polacca"; and, rather unexplainably, the presence of a distinguished audience brought to light the young pianist's personality, and gave him an electrifying feeling. Suddenly, he discovered himself capable of mastering technically difficult passages against which he had struggled for hours without being able to play them neatly, and he found an expressive vein that no teacher could have taught him. "Suddenly", he recalls, "a passionate love of music fired me": and it was to be his life's faithful companion.

Three years later, another climactic event was to happen in Sauer's musical life: in 1877, Sauer listened to Anton Rubinstein's playing, and it came as a revelation for the young musician. "To describe the effect his playing had on me is impossible", he wrote. Although he had recently heard Clara Wieck playing Schumann's Piano Concerto and Hans von Bülow's performance of

Beethoven's last five Sonatas, the impression they made on him was by no means comparable to Rubinstein's: "Scarcely daring to breathe, I listened to this revelation. […] It all seemed as if a new light had broken over the world, a new voice to interpret a hitherto unintelligible world. […] Something seemed to break within me; […] the bonds of my soul were loosened".

Thus, the fifteen-year-old Sauer asked his mother to write to Rubinstein: soon an audition was organised, during which Sauer performed Bach's Italian Concerto, Beethoven's Appassionata, and some Romantic works (Liszt and Chopin). In spite of his admiration for Rubinstein, Sauer found himself not panicked in the least by the great master's presence: "It was no constraint", he recalls, "it was an inspiration. […] After a few minutes, Rubinstein's face brightened; […] as I finished, Rubinstein came forward and kissed me on the forehead". This touching gesture of the famous soloist was to become an everlasting memory for Sauer, almost as a sign of consecration to music. Thus, many years later, when a sixteen-year-old (and at that time a very depressed) Andór Foldes came to Sauer for an audition, Sauer was to repeat the same gesture with the same meaning with him: and it would give Foldes the necessary encouragement for his musical activity.

So impressed was Anton Rubinstein by Sauer's talent, that he recommended him to his brother, Nikolaj, who at that time taught piano at the Conservatory of Moscow, of which he was also the director: Anton had even provided Sauer with free tuition for two years, thus enabling him to study in the Russian capital city. Sauer's time in Moscow was rather difficult, both for financial straits and for Nikolaj Rubinstein's famously difficult nature: nevertheless, Sauer could state later in his life: "Without […] blind hero worship, I can say that Nicholas Rubinstein never had an equal as a teacher". Among Sauer's fellow students there was Siloti, whose friendship Sauer would cherish during his whole life, and

with whom he shared the title of best student at the end of their course in Moscow.

This was determined by their teacher's death, after which Sauer moved West and attempted a professional solo career in England (1882). However, his plans were not crowned by success at first, and the young musician had to earn his life by teaching and giving private concerts; his fortune was to come in the person of Hercules Brabazon (1821-1906). This famous painter, whose works are shown at Tate Gallery, British Museum and Metropolitan Museum of New York, was also a music lover and an amateur pianist himself. When he heard the young pianist playing on an old Broadwood piano at a private party in London, he immediately tried and did his best to help him: it was through Brabazon's mediation that Sauer was introduced to Countess Carolin von Sayn-Wittgenstein, who in turn gave him a letter of presentation for Franz Liszt. The legendary musician was deeply impressed by Sauer, in spite of Sauer's not being at the top of his technical prowess, and immediately invited him to participate in his master classes in Weimar. In 1884, thus, Sauer attended Liszt's courses, together with Arthur Friedheim, Moritz Rosenthal, Alfred Reisenauer, and Siloti, his former fellow student in Moscow. Admittedly, Sauer profited very much from Liszt's teaching, and was thought by many to be Liszt's true heir; however, the young musician did not idolise the master, whom he found too showy (to the detriment of his piano playing). Moreover, Sauer maintained that too many of Liszt's students were devoid of talent, and that what they learnt there was not more than what they could have learnt at any good music college or university; at the same time, this artistic promiscuity did not help the truly gifted musicians to emerge.

This was not Sauer's own case: after a successful debut before the Imperial family and court in Berlin (1885), he undertook

an international career with tours throughout Europe and the US. Among the highlights of his activity, there was an extraordinary performance of Cajkovskij's three Piano Concertos under the composer's baton; an amazing witness of Sauer's pianism has been preserved in the form of a recording (made at almost 80, in 1942) of Schumann's Piano Concerto conducted by Hans Knappertsbusch at the Vienna Philharmonic; a video recording of the same Concerto (directed by Mengelberg and with the Concertgebouw orchestra) realised only two years previously shows us an extraordinary technical and musical accomplishment.

His playing was extremely refined, with stupendous nuances: his fellow student and Liszt pupil Felix Weingartner stated in 1936 that "Liszt's own style was beautiful beyond words. In my opinion, his quality was later approached only by two of his students: Alfred Reisenauer and Emil von Sauer". Even Busoni, whose pianist taste was very exacting, counted Sauer among the only three pianists he admired unreservedly (together with d'Albert and Reisenauer again); and a critic reviewing one of Sauer's performances in Berlin (1911) reported that the audience's enthusiasm and bereavement were absolutely incredible. Even Eduard Hanslick, who had undoubtedly certain prejudices against the Lisztean party, defined Sauer as "a genuine troubadour of the piano".

In 1901, Sauer was called to Vienna, where he was appointed Head of the Master Class for Piano Playing at the Konservatorium der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. The success of his teaching activity (which lasted from 1901 to 1907, and from 1914 to 1922) is witnessed by the level of his students, among which there were Paul Weingarten, Lubka Kolessa, Elly Ney, Stefan Askenase, Helene Morsztyn and Angelica Morales (who was to become Sauer's second wife); the famous conductor Artur Rodzinski studied piano with Sauer, and it is reported that Sauer's

performances acted on a five-year-old Gina Bachauer in the same way as Rubinstein's had acted on him – i.e. showing her the musical path as her vocation in life.

We can get a glimpse of Sauer's extraordinary teaching by reading some of his statements about music education: "The child who is designed to become a concert pianist should have the broadest possible culture. He must live in the world of art and letters and become a naturalized citizen. The wider the range of his information, experience and sympathies, the larger will be the audience he will reach when he comes to talk to them from the concert platform".

In the meanwhile, Sauer was very active both as a concert pianist and as a composer: during his life-time, his works were recorded on piano-rolls by no less than twenty-five pianists, and his Piano Concertos, Sonatas, Concert Etudes, as well as his Lieder and piano works were highly appreciated and rather often performed by his contemporaries. It is significant of Sauer's status as a composer that he was asked to write the music for the Royal Anthem of Hungary (1908-1944). He also edited works by Chopin, Liszt, Schumann, Brahms and Scarlatti: his editions enjoyed an uninterrupted success from the time of their publication to our days. He was also appreciated as an improviser: he was one of the last great classical pianists who publicly improvised transitions and preludes within the framework of his piano recitals.

His literary activity includes his Autobiography (written at the age of 38 only, in 1900), and evidence of his success is provided by the numerous international recognitions he was awarded (the peerage in 1917, the Legion of Honour, the Gold Medal of the Royal Philharmonic Society in London to name but few).

His First Piano Concerto dates from Sauer's youth, when he performed it extensively and when it represented a sample of his technical, musical and compositional accomplishments and achievements. This work, dedicated to "the memory of my great master, Nicholas Rubinstein", was premiered on May 27th, 1900, in Bremen (at the festival of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein); two years later (23.3.1902), it was performed in St. Petersburg under Gustav Mahler's baton (in turn, the premiere of Sauer's Second Concerto was conducted by none less than Richard Strauss in Berlin). At the time of its US premiere (Boston, October 16th, 1908), Sauer's Piano Concerto had reached its eighth European reprint. The US tour when Sauer performed his two Piano Concertos was extremely successful: we may mention the acclaim with which they were greeted at Carnegie Hall, with Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Carl Pohlig.

This majestic, demanding and gorgeous Piano Concerto is a living testimony of Sauer's peculiarity, i.e. the reconciliation of Liszt's virtuoso style and pianistic writing with the deeper inspiration and more intimate character of Brahms' lineage. From the very beginning, indeed, the solo piano's cadenza, after the opening orchestral gestures, is marked by a heroic breadth, with technical formulas inspired by the Lisztean traditions, but with a Brahmsian flavour. The solo piano interweaves long chains of arpeggios to embellish the orchestra's themes, or it takes the lead with expressive solos in the purest Romantic tradition. A variety of atmospheres is evoked in the first movement, whose triple time can suggest in turn a dance-like inspiration, a *scherzando* lightness, a *grandioso* width. The orchestration is lavish and luxurious, with a great variety of colours which testify of Sauer's stature not only as a piano composer but as a truly accomplished artist.

The extremely lively and quick Scherzo (II movement) is clearly inspired by Mendelssohnian atmospheres, with an almost

supernatural lightness alternated with powerful moments and majestic octave passages. The Trio is calmer, with a sweet tenderness and a dancing style, suddenly followed by a thunderstorm of *ff* arpeggios, giving way in turn to light garlands of transparent sextuplets. After the Scherzo's reprise, the third movement (Cavatina) is the expressive core of the Concerto: here the Brahmsian echoes are particularly clear and fascinating, although some harmonies betray their Mahlerian derivation. The melodic breadth is impressive, as is Sauer's mastery in the formal design; the section with the solo piano's broken arpeggios on the orchestra's theme is deeply touching and truly beautiful.

The final Rondo (IV movement), in an Alla Breve tempo, manages to give unity and accomplishment to the preceding movements: it is tight and well-connected, with an ever increasing energy and a lively pulse. The virtuoso passages are numerous – as in the entire concerto, indeed – but never is brilliancy an end to itself. A wide expressive palette is employed, giving full scope to the soloist's qualities: power, fantasy, brightness of touch, cantabile expression, humour: the grandioso ending, with its shining octaves, constitutes a solemn ending, worth of this splendid work.

E. von Sauer – *Piano Concerto n. 2*

Emil von Sauer
(b. Hamburg, 8. October 1862
d. Vienna, 29. April 1942)
Second Piano Concerto c-minor, op. 80

Although we are now used to know him as Emil von Sauer, the German pianist and composer did not come from an aristocratic family. Actually, he was christened as Emil Georg Konrad Sauer, and was born on October 8th, 1862, in Hamburg. His mother, Julia Gordon, who had Scottish origins, and who had been a student of Ludwig Deppe (1828- 1890), the director of Hamburg Music Academy, gave him his first piano lessons, and A. F. Riccius was his teacher of music theory. However, the child did not show the signs of an extraordinary talent; neither was his passion for pianoplaying overwhelming. His father had planned for him a career as a lawyer, and apparently the young Sauer had no objection to that.

The way of Damascus for young Sauer was a concert by Anton Rubinstein. This came as a revelation for him, and he suddenly decided that he would consecrate his own life to music. Sauer's mother wrote to Rubinstein, asking him to audition the child: such was the impression he received from his playing, that Rubinstein wrote in turn to his brother Nikolaj, who taught at and was the director of Moscow Conservatory. He even provided young Sauer with a bursary, which allowed him to study for free in Nikolaj's class for two years (1879-1881).

Although Emil had a very hard time in Moscow, both due to his financial shortcomings and to Nikolaj's tempers, he progressed very quickly and was to become soon the best student

in his class, together with Siloti. In Moscow Sauer also had the possibility of knowing many modern works (among which Grieg's Piano Concerto or Brahms's Paganini Variations), since Rubinstein was keen to promote contemporary works among his students.

At Nikolaj Rubinstein's death, Sauer was forced to come back to Germany, and he tried his fortune as a concert musician in a tour of England. However, the British audience's reception of the young pianist was not warm, and he was forced to consecrate himself to teaching in order to earn his life. It was Hercules Brabazon, a painter and amateur musician, who helped him in this situation; Sauer then left England for a very successful tour of Spain and Italy. Here he met Countess von Sayn-Wittgenstein, who introduced him to Liszt. Their first meeting has been recalled by Sauer himself in his later years: although his extensive touring had limited his practice hours and he was not at his technical best, Liszt was very impressed by his playing and invited him to attend his summer courses in Weimar (1884).

The relationship between the septuagenarian maestro and the young virtuoso was not as smooth as one would imagine. Sauer was very frank in his opinions, which were often rather different from Liszt's (for example, the young pianist praised Brahms's works, which were obviously not Liszt's favourite compositions); and, years later, he admitted that he had expected Liszt's own playing to be much more touching than it actually was. Moreover, Sauer stated that he did not consider himself as a student of Liszt, and that he owed most of his pianistic style to Rubinstein's teaching; he also deplored the low quality and the negative atmosphere among his fellow students at Weimar.

Nevertheless, those who hard heard Liszt's playing agreed that Sauer's performing style was very similar to Liszt's own artistry: Carl Lachmund recalls his "splendid" performances; for

Hofmann, Sauer was "a truly great virtuoso", and Martin Krause defined him as "the legitimate heir of Liszt", stating that he had "more of his charm and geniality than any other Liszt pupil". Reisenauer maintained that Sauer was the most exquisite tone poet in Liszt's entourage, as well as a great virtuoso; and he was especially appreciated in his Chopin and Liszt interpretations. Writing about Sauer the performer, Andor Foldes remembered "that great old man of virtuoso piano playing, […] who brought something of the silvery sheen of the 19th century with him into the concert halls on the Twenties and Thirties. […] His Chopin seemed to come from another world – the touch unbelievably beautiful, the turn of the phrase polished and elegant beyond words. Esprit and nobility were two of his main characteristics" (in "The Musical Times", Dec. 1961).

Since 1886, Sauer's career acquired an international status, and he undertook extensive intercontinental concert tours; in 1889 he interpreted the three Piano Concertos by Cajkovskij's under the composer's baton. On May 27th, 1900, Sauer premiered his own First Piano Concerto (E-minor) at the festival of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein in Bremen; this work, dedicated "to the memory of my great master, Nicholas Rubinstein", received its St. Petersburg premiere on 23.3.1902 with Gustav Mahler conducting. In that same year, Richard Strauss conducted the Berlin premiere of Sauer's Second Concerto, in c-minor.

In 1901 Sauer moved to Vienna: there, he became Head of the Meisterschule für Klavierspiel, and taught, among others, to Paul Weingarten, Lubka Kolessa and Elly Ney. Although his institutional teaching activity underwent a break in 1907, in 1914 he resumed his post for another eight years. In the meanwhile, he continued his performance activity: his 1908 tour of the USA, which comprised some forty public appearances, established him as one of the stars of the piano in the early 20th-century. It was in

the USA that Sauer's own Piano Concertos were to receive their greatest approval and fame: most of their performances took place in America, including a Carnegie Hall concert with the Philadelphia orchestra conducted by Carl Pohlig.

It should be mentioned, however, that Sauer's First Concerto had already reached its eighth European reprint when it received its US premiere in Boston (Oct. 16th, 1908). Indeed, as a composer, Sauer was defined by Reinhold Sietz as "spirited" and full of gallant artistry, and Steven Heliotes points out that no less than twenty-five pianists recorded his works on piano rolls during his lifetime. Farhan Malik praises the "inventive" quality of his compositions, and John France states that, although "most of his music would be regarded as 'light'", it is "coloured by a virtuosic quality that is second to none".

It was only in 1917 that the aristocratic "von" was added to Sauer's family name, when he was raised to peerage; he also was bestowed the Legion of Honour (he was the first German citizen to receive France's highest award) as well as the Gold Medal of the Royal Philharmonic Society in London. Sauer's intensive artistic activity left him time for teaching, for editing many important works by the greatest composers, and for his own creative activity: besides the Two Piano Concertos, he wrote two Piano Sonatas, several minor works, a "Suite Moderne" and many Lieder. His Etudes are a testimony of his own artistic and technical accomplishment and represent a true challenge for their performers. Emil von Sauer died in Vienna on April 4th, 1942.

Sauer's Second Piano Concerto, c-minor, op. 80 is an ambitious work, dedicated by the composer to his mother. The first movement, "Moderato lamentoso", begins with a pleading theme where the sounds of English horn and oboe are finely blended. John France identifies "a definite oriental feel […] which

crops up here and there throughout the work". A few soft arpeggio passages by the piano are alternated with choral-like sections by the orchestra; then, rather abruptly, the "Più mosso" introduces a powerful virtuoso moment, with abundance of octaves and chords in the piano part. The heroic style dominates for several pages, and is followed by a light passage, where the soloist's staccatos are combined with the strings' pizzicatos.

After a short but touching duet between piano and solo trumpet, the tension rises again and a movement of alternating octaves in the soloist's part builds up a great "Molto sostenuto e ritenuto" (nr. 13 of the score), with a solemn and majestic musical gesture. This has however the mere function of leading to the 6/8 Allegretto, which has a clear Pastorale-like characterisation. A broad cantabile in the following "Tranquillo" gives place to a playful Allegro moderato (nr. 16), where the noteworthy technical difficulty is matched by a mounting musical tension, up to the "Impetuoso" (nr. 19), a brief but intense climax. Once more, however, the culmination is immediately followed by a cantabile section, where the piano soon gives his theme up to the winds and assumes for itself the role of an accompanist, with gorgeous arpeggios.

At nr. 22 of the score, the opening theme by oboe and English horn is quoted, paving the way for the coda: a short "Energico" passage connects the first movement to the second. This is a brilliant "Vivacissimo", with a brisk 3/8 rhythm: the hemiolias occurring here and there enhance the overall humorous character of this movement. John France defines it as "an interesting argument between the piano and orchestra", with a "lovely little sequential tune" and a "much harder theme". Once more, Sauer demonstrates his ability in building up tension and climaxes which are often frustrated in order to resume the creation of a new culmination.

The third movement, connected with the second without a pause, is the concerto's highpoint. It starts with a solemn and almost religious chorale by the orchestra, followed by a long Andante by the solo piano, where the broad melodic inspiration is accompanied by opulent arpeggios in the left hand. The fluidity of this section is juxtaposed to a more solid "Tranquillamente", where the soloist's melody is framed by chains of chords in triplets, played by the piano itself, and by long chords in the orchestra: for John France, this section has a Wagnerian quality which brings it close to "Tristan und Isolde". The reference to Wagner is supported by the frequent thematic and motivic allusions which connect and link all four movements.

The third movement then presents a series of contrasting sections, where long choral-like passages are followed by lavish arpeggios and chains of chords. A dreamy conclusion leads up to the fourth movement, an "Allegro deciso". The first theme of this Finale has a naïve style, with a clear rhythmic pattern, in strong contrast with the heavenly ecstasy of the slow movement. The cantabile and espressivo quality is not missing from the last movement, however: at nr. 64 of the score a singing passage adds a romantic feeling to the energetic pulse of this piece. The quick triplets at nr. 66 add to the virtuoso and brilliant passages of the Concerto, leading to another espressivo movement (nr. 68), with heroic culminations and tender passages. The reprise of Tempo I (nr. 71-72) and the quotations of all major compositional elements of this movement lead to the piano's cadenza, a turmoil characterised by increasing speed and intensity. The following "Presto fuocoso", with its references to the second movement, and the "Un poco meno vivace" (alluding to the first) prepare the shining conclusion, a brilliant and imperious ending that will last in the listeners' memory.