



Franz Joseph Haydn - Symphony in C major Hob:I:97

Haydn's first six 'London' symphonies saw the light between 1791 and 1792 during the composer's stay in the English capital. Last of the first series, the Symphony n. 97 in C major made its debut in London in May 1792 at the Hanover Square Rooms conducted by Johann Peter Salomon - impresario, conductor and organizer of Haydn's successful English tours - and with the same author on harpsichord. Like the other sisters of the group, the Symphony n. 97 opens with a solemn Adagio that introduces the Allegro, where an energetic and bold first theme stands out. The Adagio but not too much is in the form of the theme with variations, finely instrumented; the Minuet maintains the polite tone of the court dance, while the final movement amused by sound wit and humor-rich timbral solutions, closing the score in the sign of brio.

Franz Joseph Haydn - Concerto in C major for oboe and orchestra Hob:VIIg:C1

In Haydn's copious catalog, among the dubious works is the Concerto for oboe and orchestra in C major, attributed to him in the last century after the discovery of a manuscript on which the name of the illustrious master had been added. Some scholars today tend to attribute the concert to a student of Michael Haydn, brother of Franz Joseph, without however being sure. The discussed authorship of the work, however, does not affect the value of the concert which is of excellent compositional invoice. Probably made in 1784 and designed for a public use, given the addition of trumpets and timpani in the ensemble, the concert exploits the entire expressive range of the oboe, also called upon to juggle some openly virtuosic passages.

Maurice Ravel - *Le valse*, choreographic poem

For years, Ravel had been cherishing the idea of creating an orchestral composition dedicated to the waltz, a symbolic dance of nineteenth-century Vienna. After the piano experience of the *Valses nobles et sentimentales* (1910), between 1919 and 1920 he composed *La valse*, a choreographic poem intended for Sergej Djagilev's Ballets Russes. It was the founder and impresario of the historic dance company who asked Ravel to compose a page that celebrated the quintessence of the Viennese waltz, but, after listening to it, Djagilev bluntly cut off the work by defining it unsuitable for dance: "it's a masterpiece, but it's not a ballet." Then *La valse* was performed in concert on 12 December 1920 at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris and, only years later, in 1929 it was brought onto the stage by the dancer Ida Rubinstein. The work is divided into two large sections where various waltz motifs follow one another which, despite the fascinating and bewitching Ravelian writing, are loaded with sinister meanings. In the *Valse* the light and carefree tone of the dance is continually cracked by dissonances, rhythmic irregularities, distressing sounds. It is the portrait of a shattered world which, according to the author, rotates to the rhythm of a waltz like "a fantastic and fatal whirlwind".

Richard Strauss - *Der Rosenkavalier*, suite

Performed in Dresden on January 26, 1911, *Der Rosenkavalier*, a musical comedy by Richard Strauss to a libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, marked one of the artistic peaks in the composer's long career. The success was such as to induce Strauss to extrapolate some pages that were reworked for concert performance. In 1945 it was he himself who designed the Suite op. 59 which collects some of the most well-known and loved musical moments of the opera. The Suite opens with the passionate music of the introduction starring La Marescialla and the young lover Octavian after the night of love spent together. This is followed, without interruption, by the masterfully crafted piece that accompanies Octavian's entry with the silver rose into the palace of Sophie, betrothed to the clumsy and vulgar Baron Ochs von Lerchenau. Love at first sight breaks out between the two young people, underlined by the vibrant expectation of Sophie and the sonorous ecstasy that accompanies the delivery of the rose. After Ochs' waltz, from the second act, the music of the final trio - lyrical climax par excellence imbued with sweetness and nostalgia - the Suite approaches its conclusion with a waltz step.