



BRUCH

Concerto for violin and orchestra No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26

Max Christian Friedrich Bruch (6 January 1838 – 2 October 1920) was a German Romantic composer and conductor who wrote over 200 works, including three violin concertos, the first of which has become a staple of the violin repertory. Bruch was born in Cologne, where he received his early musical training under the composer and pianist Ferdinand Hiller. At the age of nine he wrote his first composition, a song for his mother's birthday. From then on music was his passion, his studies having been enthusiastically supported by his parents. Bruch had a long career as a teacher, conductor and composer, moving among musical posts in Germany. At the height of his career he spent three seasons as conductor of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society (1880–83), where he met his wife, Clara Tucek. He taught composition at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik from 1890 until his retirement in 1910. His complex and unfailingly well-structured works, in the German Romantic musical tradition, placed him in the camp of Romantic classicism exemplified by Johannes Brahms, rather than the opposing "New Music" of Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner. In his time he was known primarily as a choral composer. His Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26 is one of the most popular Romantic violin concertos. It uses several techniques from Felix Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E minor. These include the linking of movements, as well as omitting the Classical opening orchestral exposition and other conservative formal structural devices of earlier concertos.

The **Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26** was first completed in 1866 and the first performance was given on 24 April 1866 by Otto von Königsloew with Bruch himself conducting. The concerto was then considerably revised with help from celebrated violinist Joseph Joachim and completed in its present form in 1867. The first movement is unusual in that it is a prelude to the second movement and is directly linked to it. It is like a smooth march, yet an anticipatory feeling prevails throughout. A pair of cadenzas serve as an introduction to the main portion of the movement, which contains a strong first theme and melodic second theme. The movement ends as it began, with the two short cadenzas more virtuosic than before, and the orchestra's final tutti flows into the second movement, connected by a single low note from the first violins. The slow second movement is often adored for its powerful melody, and is generally considered to be the heart of the concerto. The rich, expansive themes, presented by the violin, are underscored by a constantly moving orchestra part. The finale opens with an extremely intense, yet quiet, orchestral introduction that yields to the soloist's statement of the theme in brilliant double stops. The second subject is a fine example of Romantic lyricism, a slower melody which cuts into the movement several times, before the dance theme returns with its fireworks. The piece ends with a huge accelerando, leading to a fiery finish that gets higher as it gets faster and louder and eventually concludes with two grand chords.