JUNIOR RECITAL

Tina Gao

Max Bruch
Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26

I. Vorspiel: Allegro moderato
II. Adagio
III. Finale: Allegro energico

Tina Gao, violin
Dr. Cherie Khor, piano

PROGRAMME NOTES

Bruch

Max Bruch (1838–1920)
Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26

Bruch's first violin concerto was premiered in Koblenz in 1866. Unhappy with it, he reworked it with advice from the great violinist Joseph Joachim, who premiered the final version in Bremen in 1868. It quickly became one of the most loved violin concertos ever written. So loved, in fact, that Bruch later grumbled that violinists wanted nothing else from him.

I. Vorspiel: Allegro moderato

Bruch called this movement a Vorspiel, or prelude, and it really does feel like an introduction. A soft rumble and a hushed phrase are answered by the solo violin, alone and almost improvised. After a few of these exchanges, the music erupts into a stormy, passionate main theme. Rather than ending, the movement fades away and leads straight into the Adagio without a pause.

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II. Adagio

The heart of the concerto. Over warm, rich harmonies, the violin sings one long melody after another, each rising and swelling a little further. It is unhurried, tender and deeply romantic, and it is the part most people remember.

III. Finale: Allegro energico

After all that lyricism, the finale bursts in with pure energy. The violin launches a bold, dance-like theme in double stops (two notes at once) with a folk-flavoured swagger. A broad, singing second theme offers a moment of contrast before the music races towards a brilliant, triumphant finish.