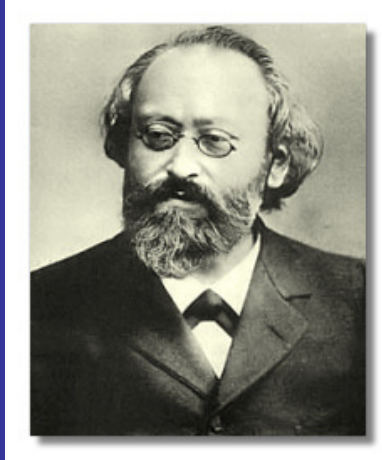


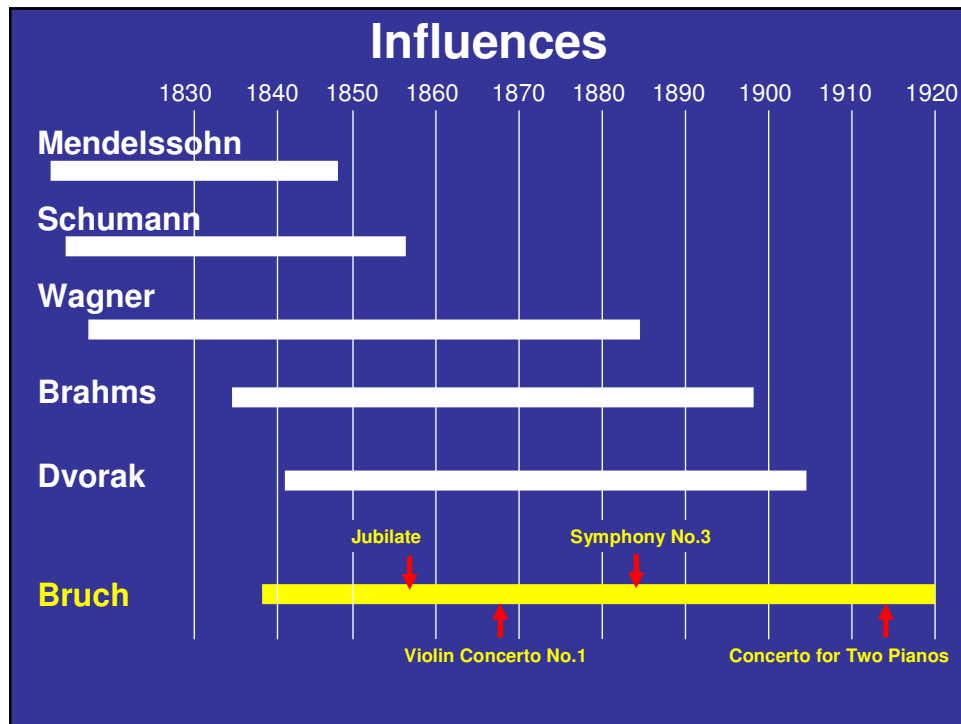
Marlow U3A Music Appreciation Group, Jan 2010

Max Bruch (1838-1920)



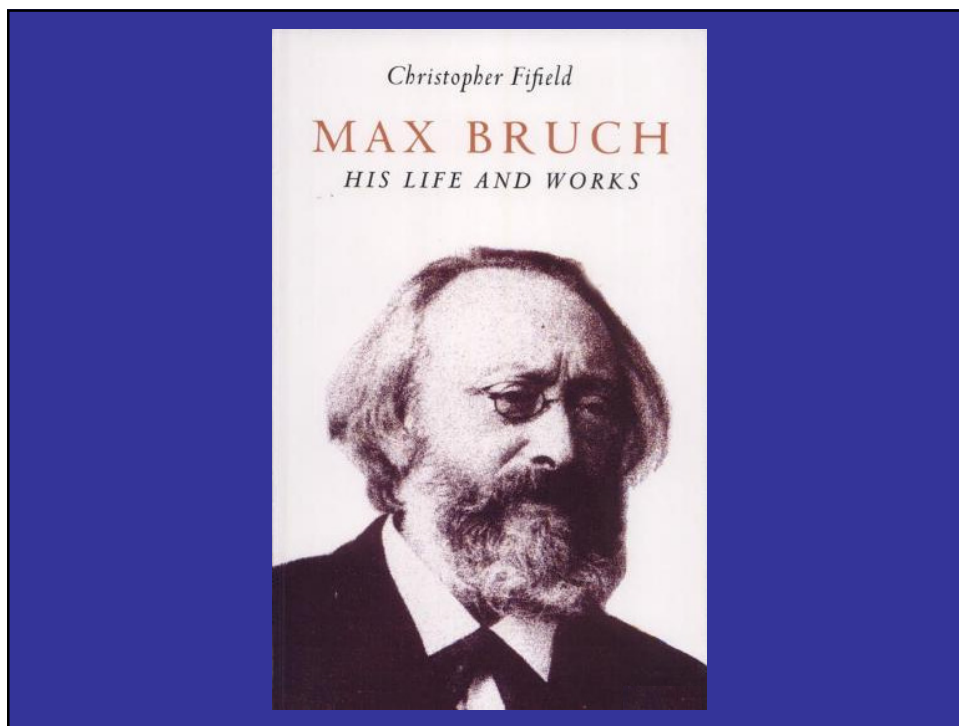
Overview

- ♪ German composer, born in Cologne
- ♪ Renowned during his lifetime as a conductor and teacher as well as a prolific composer
- ♪ He wrote operas, symphonies, choral works, numerous concertos and many shorter works
- ♪ He held positions in Koblenz, Breslau, Sondershausen, Berlin and Liverpool
- ♪ Respighi and Vaughan Williams were among his pupils.



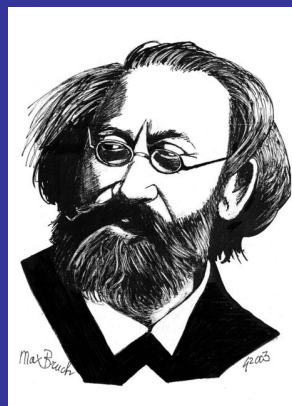
Musical Style

- ♪ Bruch's music shares the heritage of Mendelssohn, Schumann and Brahms
- ♪ His style evolved little from the 1860s until his death in 1920: i.e. mid-19th century romanticism, relying on melodic beauty rather than raucous excitement or deep emotion



Best Works (according to Fifield)

- ♪ *Frithjof (choral)*
- ♪ *Schön Ellen (choral)*
- ♪ *Violin Concerto 1*
- ♪ *Odysseus (choral)*
- ♪ *Das Lied von der Glocke (choral)*
- ♪ *Scottish Fantasia (violin and orchestra)*
- ♪ *Kol Nidrei (cello and orchestra)*



Studies and Early Career

- Studied with Ferdinand Hiller, whose influence continued throughout Bruch's life
- After producing his Opus 1 (Comic Opera in One Act), Bruch embarked upon 5 years of travel to complete his musical education, starting in Leipzig and settling in Mannheim between 1862 and 1864

Jubilate Op.3

- Short work for soprano, chorus and orchestra, written in Cologne in 1856
- The text is a German translation of a poem by Thomas Moore
- The soprano describes a walk in the country, and hears a choir singing a hymn far away beyond a river, woods and meadows



Violin Concerto No.1 in G minor Op.26

- ♪ From 1865 to 1867 Bruch was music director to the court at Koblenz. There he wrote his first violin concerto
- ♪ This is the work with which his name has always been associated - much to his distaste, for most of his other compositions were subsequently neglected.

The most popular classical music in the UK

Musica UK100 list

1. Bruch *Violin Concerto 1*
2. Beethoven *Symphony 6*
3. Saint-Saens *Symphony 3*
4. Rachmaninov *Piano Concerto 2*
5. Mozart *Clarinet Concerto*
6. Mahler *Symphony 5*
7. Elgar *Cello Concerto*
8. Barber *Adagio*
9. *Allegri Miserere*
10. Beethoven *Piano Concerto 5*

based on data from UK performance and CD sales

Classic FM Hall of Fame

1. Vaughan Williams *The Lark Ascending*
2. Rachmaninov *Piano Concerto 2*
3. Vaughan Williams *Tallis Fantasia*
4. Beethoven *Piano Concerto 5*
5. Beethoven *Symphony 6*
6. Mozart *Clarinet Concerto*
7. Bruch *Violin Concerto 1*
8. Elgar *Cello Concerto*
9. Beethoven *Symphony 9*
10. Elgar *Enigma Variations*

based on 2009 Classic FM Hall of Fame

Violin Concerto No.1 in G minor Op.26

- ♪ Bruch felt that the violin “can sing a melody better than a piano, and melody is the soul of music”
- ♪ His friendships with such violinists as Joachim, Sarasate and Willy Hess, and the advice he received from them, inspired this and eight other concerted works for violin
- ♪ Badly advised, Bruch sold the work for a paltry sum, the source of much regret and bitterness in later life.

Violin Concerto No.1 in G minor Op.26

Hideko Udagawa/LSO/Sir Charles Mackerras



Violin Concerto No.1 – First movement

Introduction – Allegro Moderato

- ♪ There is a short, quiet introduction featuring the woodwind



- ♪ after which the soloist enters

Violin Concerto No.1 – First movement

Allegro Moderato

- ♪ First main subject (violin solo)

1:18



Open and Stopped Strings

- A string played at its full sounding-length without 'stopping' (that is, without touching the string or pressing it down with the finger) is an 'open string'.
- There is a difference between the sound of an open string and the sound of a stopped string sounding the same pitch. Open E string on the violin, for instance, has a different timbre from a note of the same pitch produced by stopping the A string a 5th above.
- Therefore, open strings are generally avoided, and players generally prefer stopped notes except where, for special effect, an open string is specified.

The diagram illustrates the relationship between open strings and stopped notes on a string instrument. It features two sets of five-line staves. The left set shows a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). A vertical line is drawn across the staves to indicate a specific fret position. Notes are placed on the staves: G (top line), B flat (second space), D (third space), and G (bottom line). The right set of staves is labeled "Open strings" in red. It shows the natural pitches of the strings: E (top line), A (second space), D (third space), and G (bottom line). The notes are color-coded: blue for the stopped notes on the left and red for the open strings on the right.

Violin Concerto No.1 – First movement

Allegro Moderato

♪ Second subject (more romantic)

2:25

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the second subject. The first staff begins with a violin (V) part, marked with a triplet of eighth notes and the instruction *espress.*. It then features a crescendo (*cresc.*) leading to a fortissimo (*f*) section with a fermata. The second staff continues with *molto espress.* and includes a fifth-note figure, a triplet, and a trill (*tr*) ending with the instruction *sempre*.

Fade out at 4:10

Violin Concerto No.1 – Second movement

Adagio

♪ The second movement (in sonata form) follows without a break

♪ It has a peaceful but intense main subject:

The image shows the beginning of the main subject in the second movement. It is marked *Adagio* and *3^a corda*. The notation is in 3/8 time and features a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes, a crescendo (*cresc.*), and a fortissimo (*f*) dynamic.

Violin Concerto No.1 – Second movement

Adagio

♪ The second main theme continues immediately as follows:



Violin Concerto No.1 – Third movement

Allegro energico

♪ Strong *bravura* main theme from the soloist:

0:20



ff


A musical score snippet for the third movement of Violin Concerto No. 1. It shows a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The music begins with a dynamic marking of *ff* (fortissimo). The notation is highly rhythmic, featuring many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often beamed together in groups. There are also some longer notes and slurs. A timecode of 0:20 is visible on the left side of the staff.

Violin Concerto No.1 – Third movement

Allegro energico

♪ This is followed by a broad second main theme:

2:15



4ta Corda

con forza

f

Bruch in Liverpool

Bruch was Director of the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra from 1880-1883.

During this period he completed the

well-known *Kol Nidrei* and the premiere of the *Scottish Fantasy* was given in Liverpool. He composed his last symphony during this period.



Symphony 3 in E major, Op.51

- ♪ Some of the material for this symphony came from Bruch's " *freshest and happiest youth*"
- ♪ Bruch wrote: "*This Symphony is a work of joy. It should have the title 'Am Rhein' (On the Rhine)*". So this is Bruch's equivalent of Schumann's Rhenish Symphony
- ♪ The first performance was in New York in 1882.

Symphony 3 in E major, Op.51

- ♪ The 3rd movement is a lively *Scherzo*
- ♪ It is a dance-like movement in *Rondo* form (unusual for Bruch)
- ♪ Whether one hears a wine festival or the bustle of a carnival is left to the listener's imagination
- ♪ The New York Times called it "*bright and original, with a dash about it that is irresistible*"

Symphony 3 in E major, Op.51

- The 4th movement is marked *Allegro ma non troppo* (fast, but not too fast)
- It has a spirited, melodic main theme



Max Bruch and the Sutro Sisters

- In 1911, Bruch heard the American duo-pianist sisters Rose and Otilie Sutro play his *Fantasy in D minor for 2 pianos, Op.11*, and was so delighted that he agreed to write a double concerto for them.
- Bruch gave the Sutro sisters the sole performing rights to the work. Without Bruch's permission, however, they simplified the concerto to suit their pianistic abilities, copyrighting their own version.

Max Bruch and the Sutro Sisters

- ♪ A review of the 1916 performance concluded *“It was not easy to tell what the artistic calibre of the Misses Sutro is. They would appear to be finished and accurate, without passionate intensity or vigour of phrasing”*
- ♪ What the reviewer had heard was the simplified version, which bore scant resemblance to Bruch’s work.

Max Bruch and the Sutro Sisters

- ♪ The Sutros withdrew the concerto after the second performance and never played it again. They never played Bruch’s original version at all
- ♪ In spite of this, Bruch turned to the Sutro sisters for help when in dire financial straits in 1920. He gave them his original manuscript of the famous *Violin Concerto* to sell on his behalf in the USA.

Max Bruch and the Sutro Sisters

- The Sutro sisters kept the manuscript for 30 years, and sold it to a dealer in 1949, long after Bruch's death.
- Rose died in 1957, but Otilie lived until 1970. Some of her papers were auctioned in 1971. From various scores that were sold at the auction, Bruch's original version of the *Concerto for Two Pianos* was reconstructed.

Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra, Op.88a

- Bruch composed two Double Concertos, the other one being his *Concerto for Clarinet, Viola and Orchestra, Op.88*
- Written in 1912, the *Concerto for Two Pianos* is in the unusual key of A flat minor
- Bruch did not write an entirely fresh piece, but reworked music he had been writing for his planned Suite No.3.

Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra, Op.88a



Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra

I. Andante sostenuto

(Quite slow, with sustained notes)

The concerto begins sternly and dramatically with a fanfare tune, said to have been heard by Bruch in Capri

The first piano then begins a *fugato* (like a fugue, but not a full-blown one) on another Capri melody

The second piano joins, then the orchestra, building to a climax combining both themes.

Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra

II. Andante con moto - Allegro molto vivace

Begins, without a break, with a reflective *Andante* featuring violas/cellos, then oboe

A lively *Allegro* follows. The first subject is in galloping triplets

The second subject, announced by a duo of clarinet and second piano, is much calmer

Development and recapitulation of these themes follows

The final passage is marked *stringendo*,
(with more tension, faster, developing towards the climax).

Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra

III. Adagio ma non troppo

(Slowly, but not too slow!)

This movement uses the $\frac{3}{8}$ time signature common to Bruch's slow movements

The tranquil opening builds to an impassioned, melodic climax.

Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra

IV. Andante – Allegro

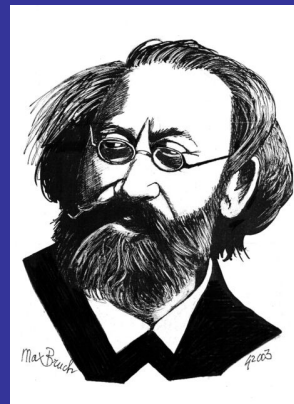
The Good Friday fanfare returns in the introduction, followed by a fantasia

The *Allegro* develops processional themes, including the *fugato* theme from the first movement, in a heroic style

Eventually the music calms down prior to the final flourish.

Legacy

- ♪ (Grove, 1904): *“He is above all a master of melody and of the effective treatment of masses of sound”*
- ♪ (Grove, 1954): *“His music gives nothing to discuss and nothing to quarrel about. It is its lack of adventure that limited its fame”*



Legacy

- ♪ (Tovey): *“It is not easy to write as beautifully as Max Bruch ... it is in fact instinctive for him”*
- ♪ (Hughes): *Bruch “pursued the ideal of absolute beauty – beauty of sound for its own sake”.*

