

## 《樂曲簡介》

### 孟德爾頌【E小調小提琴協奏曲】

Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64

Mendelssohn's E minor Violin Concerto is unequivocally one of the greatest and most recorded violin concertos ever written. No established violinist can exclude it from his or her concert programs or recording repertoire. It has achieved a perfect balance of melodic beauty, romantic expressionism, and lyricism and technical virtuosity that are most suitably displayed by the violin. It is a work most loved by violinists and listeners alike, as its charming melodies are immediately alluring and memorable. The technical challenges of the concerto are never too daunting, but highly idiomatic to the instrument not only due to the fact that Mendelssohn could play the violin, but more so owing to the heavy involvement and advice of the work's dedicatee, violinist Ferdinand David, in the process of composition and revision.

Sometimes people tend to forget that Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) was the most celebrated musical prodigy after Mozart. Some musicologists even rate his compositional precocity higher than that of Mozart at the same age. Mendelssohn wrote his first Violin Concerto in D minor in 1822 when he was thirteen years old, and a double concerto for violin and piano in the following year. His Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64, was on the contrary a mature work and his last large-scale orchestral composition. Most of his later works are for solo piano, or vocal works with piano accompaniment. It is an amazement, despite Mendelssohn's astonishing talent, that the compositional process did not come easy and it took the composer unusually long to complete the job. The inception of the concerto began in July 1838, when Mendelssohn wrote to Ferdinand David, then the Konzertmeister of Gewandhaus

Orchestra of Leipzig: "I would probably like to write for you a violin concerto for next winter; one in E minor is stuck in my head, and the beginning of which gives me no peace." A year later, instead of finishing it, Mendelssohn only wrote back to the David in response to the violinist's urging, that it was no easy task for him, and mentioned that the entire first solo should be on the E string. Apparently, Mendelssohn was still much preoccupied with the conception of the first theme, which would eventually turn out to be a most beautiful and soulful melodic line. In the ensuing years, Mendelssohn remained in close contact with David, with frequent correspondence asking about musical effects and technical feasibility. The first draft was finally finished in September 1844. And after many further revisions, David gave the premiere of the concerto in March 1845 with Niels Gade as the conductor.

The immediate solo violin entry after one and a half bars of accompaniment, without a preceding lengthy orchestral exposition, becomes a special trait of this concerto. This opening theme is one of the most memorable ones among all violin concertos. The orchestra restates the theme after a resolute exclamation of double-stops in octave in the solo part. The 2nd theme is followed by some transitional material, which is not at all mundane, demonstrating the technical ability of the solo. The clarinets introduce a very lyrical 3rd theme which is then reiterated by the violin solo. The development section evolves very smoothly into the violin cadenza which was written out by Mendelssohn, giving no room for any improvisation by the soloist. Towards the end of the cadenza, a violinistic feature – arpeggiated chords over four strings in ricochet bowing – acts as an accompaniment while the main theme re-emerges in the orchestral strings. Excitement escalates towards the end of the first movement as the tempo surges to Presto. The movement ends officially in a magnificent and heroic atmosphere,



which is followed unusually not by a silent pause, but is lingered on by the bassoon playing a long note, leading directly into the 2nd movement. The Andante, which consists of some of the most expressive and poetic lines, is an exemplary testimony of Mendelssohn's musical gift to produce the most beautiful melodies. The middle section is an intimate dialogue between solo violin and the orchestra, while it also examines the soloist's ability of double-stops playing. A short interlude of Allegro non troppo bridges the 2nd and 3rd movements, rendering the whole concerto to be played nonstop. The festive finale is full of energy and wittiness. It showcases the soloist's agility through rapid scales in the left hand and up-bow spiccato bowing in the right. Various motives are masterly juxtaposed between the solo line and the orchestral parts, resulting in intricate interplays between the two forces. The concerto reaches its climactic moment in the coda, when the violin solo dashes in sixteenth-notes with double-stops. Finally, a surging arpeggio goes all the way to the highest E (one of the two highest E notes in the whole concerto) and brings the piece to a triumphant close.