

# Franz Berwald (1796–1868)

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## The 4 Symphonies

Franz Berwald is the most commanding composer Sweden has thus far produced, and the leading Scandinavian symphonist before Sibelius. Yet he remained in relative obscurity in his own lifetime and only found recognition during the first decade or so of the present century, thanks largely to the championship of such important Swedish figures as the conductor-composers Tor Aulin and Wilhelm Stenhammar.

Why did Berwald's music make so little headway either in his native country or anywhere else in Europe, and why was he given the cold shoulder by the Swedish musical establishment of his day? First, there is the fact that he absented himself from Stockholm during crucial periods of his career (from 1828 to 1842, and from 1846 to 1849); secondly, it is worth recalling that the Berwald his countrymen encountered was the composer of operettas such as *Modehandlerskan* (The Modiste) and *Jag går i kloster* (I Take the Veil) and cantatas including *Konung Carl XII's seger vid Narva* (Charles XII's Victory at Narva), all heard during his return to Stockholm between 1843 and 1846. These works give a very different picture of the composer than that formed by posterity from the four symphonies on which his reputation now chiefly rests. Moreover, in the 1840s and '50s, there was no really first-class symphony orchestra in Sweden to play the symphonies, indeed no permanent orchestra at all apart from that of the Royal Opera, Stockholm, and no effort to put symphony concerts on a regular footing until the 1870s. Small wonder that Berwald strove so hard to gain acceptance as an opera composer, particularly in view of his youthful experience in the Royal Opera Orchestra: he composed (or planned) at least twelve works for the stage. And (as seen in Erling Lomnäs's documentary biography published in 1979) in his dealings with others, Berwald did not always serve his own best interests: Mendelssohn met him in Berlin in the early 1830s and mentions his arrogance in a letter to the Swedish composer Adolf Fredrik Lindblad.

Berwald was born in Stockholm the year before Schubert's birth, and died in the same year as Rossini; thus his career encompassed those of Chopin, Bellini, Schumann, Mendelssohn and, save for one year, Berlioz. The family was of German stock and has been traced back to Bärwalde in der Neumark, south of Stettin. Berwald's father, Christian Friedrich Georg (1740-1825) studied with Franz Benda in Berlin and during the 1770s settled in Stockholm, where he played in the Royal Opera Orchestra. In his youth Franz also joined the Royal Opera as a violinist; but his gifts were multi-faceted and, possessing a fertile and resourceful mind, he spent many of his productive years on non-musical projects. He founded an enterprising and successful orthopaedic institute in Berlin (1835-41), based on the most advanced techniques of the time – some of the apparatus that he himself devised for the treatment of patients was, in all practical essentials, still in use as a basis for therapy until the present century. (It is worth noting that Berwald had no scientific training and, indeed, precious little formal education of any kind.)

All four symphonies, as well as the five orchestral tone-poems including *Elfenspiel* (Play of the Elves) and *Ernste und heitere Grillen* (Serious and Joyful Fancies), are from just after this period (1842-45). Following his years at the orthopaedic institute and his marriage to Mathilde Scherer, one of his employees there, Berwald seemed to take on a new lease of life. He went to Vienna, where success – albeit short-lived – released a burst of creative energy. There his symphonic poems, and in particular *Elfenspiel*, were heard with appreciation and admiration. He went back to Vienna again in the latter half of the decade with Jenny Lind, who sang his stage cantata *Ein ländliches Verlobungsfest*

*in Schweden* (A Rustic Betrothal Feast in Sweden) at the Theater an der Wien. The esteem in which he was held in Austria is evident in his election to honorary membership of the Salzburg Mozarteum.

After his return to Sweden in 1849, Berwald was passed over for two important posts to which he felt himself entitled, conductor of the Royal Opera in Stockholm and director of music in Uppsala. He had recourse again to making his living outside music, and during most of the 1850s was manager of a glass-works and a saw-mill in Sandö, Ångermanland, in the north of Sweden; he even briefly ran a brick factory. He was also active as a polemicist on a wide variety of social issues showing his progressive vision and sympathies. His hostility to the conservative Swedish musical establishment (and theirs to him) was such that when, in the very last year of his life, he was appointed to the chair of composition at the Royal Music Academy in Stockholm, the opposition turned out in sufficient strength to unseat him briefly on a second vote!

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Only one of Berwald's symphonies, the *Sinfonie sérieuse* (1842) was performed in his own lifetime: his masterpiece, the *Sinfonie singulière* (1845), had to wait 60 years to be heard. However, the *Sérieuse* was not his earliest effort at symphonic composition. A Symphony in A, composed in 1820, was performed in Stockholm on 3 March 1821 in the same programme as his Violin Concerto in C sharp minor, but survives only in fragmentary form. In a letter from Berlin in 1829, Berwald disowned all his previous works save for the Serenade for tenor and chamber ensemble (1825) and the Septet in B flat (1828), so that to all intents and purposes we must regard the *Sérieuse* as his first symphony. It is clear that Berwald himself did so, since the autograph score of the Symphony in E flat bears the number 4, not 5.

## **Sinfonie sérieuse (No 1) in G minor**

1. *Allegro con energia*
2. *Adagio maestoso*
3. *Stretto*
4. *Finale: Adagio – Allegro molto*

There are Beethovenian touches in the 1820 symphony, and in the *Sinfonie sérieuse* echoes of the “Eroica” surface in the second thematic group of the Finale. Yet, as so often in Berwald, what one at first takes for resonances of earlier composers turns out on closer examination to be prophecies of things to come – in the *Sérieuse* a suggestion of Bruckner in the slow movement, and Dvořák in the main idea of the Finale's G minor section. Nevertheless, much of this music sounds like no-one else. The symphony plunges in directly, without any introductory preamble – a procedure Berwald would follow again in the *Sinfonie singulière*. The title *Sérieuse* need not be taken too literally: there is nothing particularly solemn or grave about the work, although it does tap a deeper vein of feeling than the *Capricieuse* or E flat symphonies. It also has greater contrapuntal interest than its companions, as the opening movement's first subject shows. This movement has an unusual tonal plan: its home key is G minor, and the bridge subject which plays an important role in the development appears in the subdominant before modulating to the relative major, B flat, where the second group begins. At the reprise the first group is restated in A minor, and the tonic major is established only with the second group. The slow movement, like those of Berwald's other symphonies, follows a more or less ternary outline; and the scherzo, too, again like those of the other works (except the *Sinfonie capricieuse*, where there is none) is laid out along traditional lines. At the start of the Finale, the material of the slow movement returns, and, though the movement proper is in sonata form, the beginning of the reprise telescopes the first subject.

The autograph of the *Sinfonie sérieuse* contains the inscription “Vienna, 1842”, so it was presumably finished before mid-March when Berwald returned to Sweden. Although the work was played only a year after its composition, under the baton of Berwald’s cousin Johan Fredrik Berwald (1787-1861), the under-rehearsed performance did nothing to advance his cause.

## **Sinfonie capricieuse (No 2) in D major**

1. *Allegro*
2. *Andante*
3. *Finale: Allegro assai*

The *Sinfonie capricieuse* in D major has a more complex history than the others. The bound volume of the autograph disappeared at the time of Berwald’s death, but a short score survives whose title-page bears the titles “Sinfonie singulière”, “Sinfonie pathétique” (both crossed through) and finally “Sinfonie capricieuse”. Its date (“Nyköping, 18 June 1842”) corresponds with an entry in Mathilde Berwald’s diary referring to its completion. The *Capricieuse* was the last of Berwald’s symphonies to reach the public: a performing edition prepared by Ernst Ellberg was played in Stockholm on 9 January 1914, conducted by Armas Järnefelt, Sibelius’s brother-in-law. A subsequent edition by the doyen of Berwald scholars, Nils Castegren, was prepared for Berwald centenary celebrations in 1968, and it is this text that is now in general currency.

The opening *Allegro*, like the first movement of Schumann’s Piano Concerto (first performed publicly in 1845), is virtually monothematic: its two main ideas are so closely related rhythmically that they can hardly be regarded as independent. The slow movement, though it may at first seem to belong to the world of Mendelssohn, has a distinctive eloquence, its chromaticism producing a specifically Scandinavian flavour; and the *Finale* contains some powerful and individual writing.

## **Sinfonie singulière (No 3) in C major**

1. *Allegro fuocoso*
2. *Adagio – Scherzo: Allegro assai – Adagio*
3. *Finale: Presto*

The autograph of the *Sinfonie singulière* is dated March 1845, though, as we have seen, this was not the first time Berwald toyed with the idea of using this title. However the designation here is no misnomer: the opening of the symphony is quite unlike any other music of its time – or, for that matter, of any other. The harmonies may not be in advance of Mendelssohn or Schumann, but their use reveals a fresh and novel sensibility. And it is not too fanciful, I think, to attribute the transparent textures to the quality of light in the northern latitudes. There is no doubt as to Berwald’s keen classical instincts: the influence of Beethoven can still be discerned in the transitional passages where he hammers away insistently at a short pregnant motive. Berwald enfolds the light and mercurial *Scherzo* within the body of the slow movement, an experiment that he first tried in the *Septet* (1828) and then developed still further in his *String Quartet in E flat* (1849), where both the slow movement and *scherzo* are embedded in the first movement. The *Finale* has tremendous fire, and its robust, spirited main theme makes a splendid contrast to the languid poetry of the *Adagio*. There is a refreshing vigour that is far removed from the pale atmosphere of the Swedish musical world of the 1840s and from the more academic, German orientation of such Scandinavian contemporaries as Niels Gade. Tor Aulin gave the first performance of the *Singulière* in Stockholm on 10 January 1905.

## Sinfonie “No 4” in E flat major

1. *Allegro risoluto*

2. *Adagio*

3. *Scherzo: Allegro molto*

4. *Finale: Allegro vivace*

Berwald completed the *Symphony in E flat major*, his last, only a month after the *Singulière*, in April 1845. It is the only one without a title; though he did at one point consider calling it “Sinfonie naïve”, the autograph is inscribed “Symphony no. 4 in E flat”. Berwald tried to interest Auber in the score through the Swedish embassy in Paris, but it remained unperformed until the composer Ludvig Norman, a loyal champion of Berwald’s music, conducted it in Stockholm on 9 April 1878.

The Symphony in E flat is one of the sunniest of Berwald’s scores, and its invention is both fertile and subtle. The opening *Allegro risoluto* is spirited and brilliantly scored. It begins with stuttering B flats, and the first subject is a succession of rising thirds followed by a gentle chromatic descent – all typical of Berwald. The delicately witty second subject exemplifies Berwald’s fondness for syncopation. The *Adagio* is based on a theme from an unpublished keyboard work of 1844, *En landtlig bröllopsfest* (A Rustic Wedding). Its symmetrical phrases reflect something of the well-regulated emotional climate in which Berwald’s inspiration was conceived, yet at the same time radiating great warmth and humanity. The *Scherzo* reveals his sympathy for the Viennese classics and has a Haydnesque lightness of touch and textural clarity unusual at that time. There is a stroke of considerable novelty in the finale. At the beginning of the recapitulation, when one expects the first group to be restated, Berwald surprises us with an entirely new theme. Although the formal innovations of Berlioz, Chopin and others often occur just at this structural point, the first subject being telescoped or the order of the two main themes reversed, this particular device of Berwald’s has few, if any, precedents.

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However interesting his departures from convention may be, it is the quality of Berwald’s thematic invention, his transparent textures and expert orchestration that engage us as listeners. His musical world is not one in which the heroic or epic play a major part; not for him the white heat produced by Berlioz’s *Romeo* or *Harold* symphonies – his emotional orbit is more carefully circumscribed. Yet his was an original voice and a thorough and compelling technical mastery, and any history of the symphony in the nineteenth century would be incomplete without him.

*Robert Layton*

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## The Symphonies

Franz Adolf Berwald was born in Stockholm in 1796 – one year after the death of that ‘Anacreon’ of Swedish parody song-writers Carl Michael Bellman and one year before the birth of Franz Schubert. Berwald’s father, Christian, who had studied the violin with Benda in Berlin, settled in the Swedish capital as a member of the Royal Opera Orchestra in 1773 (several years before Joseph Kraus) and married the daughter of a Stockholm brewer in 1789. Franz followed in his footsteps and made rapid progress on the violin – performing concertos by Pleyel and Viotti in Uppsala at the age of eleven and joining the Royal Opera Orchestra five years later. His earliest compositions date from 1817 – two lost works (an orchestral Fantasia and a Septet) and a rather naïve concerto for two violins. Three years later he composed a more substantial Violin Concerto (in C sharp minor!) and wrote his first

symphony. Considering his training and background, it is not surprising that Berwald composed some wonderful chamber music – the two late String Quartets (1849) and the surviving Septet in particular. It is strange, however, that Berwald's writing for violin is not particularly idiomatic and is often extremely difficult (as can be seen in the taxing first violin part of the early symphonic fragment).

### **Symphony in A major (1820) (fragment completed by Duncan Druce)**

All that remains of the first Symphony (in A, 1820) is an autograph manuscript score of the first movement from which the ending has been torn off. Since the musical argument of this fragment is so strong (and even substantially longer than the first movements of any of the four existing symphonies) I approached my friend and colleague Duncan Druce to make a completion for me. His task was not helped by the abrupt ending of the torso just as Berwald was introducing some new violin figuration. Nevertheless the final sixty-six bars he has added (to the 425 or so of Berwald) make subtle and appropriate use of the composer's previous material and provide a satisfying whole for our consideration.

The Symphony in A received its first (and presumably complete?) performance together with the Violin Concerto on 3 March 1821. The commentator in the *Argus* gave a damning account of the concert and chastized Berwald in the strongest terms for his misplaced originality. (In fact Berwald suffered the same fate in the *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* on 6 December 1843 after the first performance of the *Sinfonie sérieuse* and there were no further performances of any of his symphonies during his lifetime.) Berwald was clearly incensed by the earlier review, yet he was in no way deterred and wrote a challenging reply. Nevertheless it must have contributed to his growing disenchantment with the conservative Stockholm musical establishment and might explain why he left Sweden for two substantial periods (1828–1842 and 1846–1849), travelling to Berlin as well as Paris and Vienna.

The eleven bars of *Adagio* introduction to the A major fragment set the harmonic germ of this sonata-form movement – a tritone between A and D sharp, which also initializes the *Allegro moderato* first theme and becomes a clever enharmonic pivot which we would more closely associate with Wagner. This is put to good effect in the tutti which precedes the closing third idea of the exposition (and consequently again towards the end of Duncan Druce's completion) and even more surprisingly in three sustained pianissimo woodwind chords near the close of the development section. The introduction of the folk-like (and eminently whistle-able!) third idea is certainly original – clarinet and bassoon in octaves and then with flute entertainingly in canon. It is derived from a repeated Beethovenian dotted motif and reappears just before the recapitulation and in the completion. (Berwald does something rather similar in the first movement of the E flat symphony where a third idea is also introduced at the end of the exposition.) At bar 65 there is a brief passage which one could only describe as strikingly evocative of Mendelssohn were it not the case that the latter was still a child of eleven. Furthermore the real second subject (cellos, bar 93) strongly anticipates the parallel cello second subject from Schubert's 'Unfinished' Symphony which was written just two years later! Time after time again in Berwald's music we will encounter these condensed prophecies of things to come.

Despite his own defence of the A major Symphony, Berwald wrote to his sisters in December 1829 from Berlin making clear that of the music he left behind in Sweden only the Septet (revised or composed the previous year) and a Serenade (1825, but only a fragment remains) should be performed. Clearly Berwald destroyed some of his compositions made in the 1820s but fortunately a *Konzertstück* for bassoon (1827) has survived intact and deserves revival. Berwald spent over ten years in Berlin – he met Mendelssohn who disliked him (although he was praised by Liszt) – and in 1835 opened an orthopaedic institute which flourished for six years. Apart from some minor stage works he composed very little, especially in comparison with the early 1840s. At this point a parallel

might well be made with Schumann. In 1841, having completed his opera *Estrella de Soria* in Vienna, Berwald married Mathilde Scherer (one of his employees from Berlin) which clearly sparked his creative imagination. He was inspired to compose four symphonies in as many years, in addition to five orchestral tone poems.

## **'Sinfonie sérieuse' Symphony No 1 in G minor (1842)**

1. *Allegro con energia*

2. *Adagio maestoso*

3. *Stretto*

4. *Finale Adagio – Allegro molto*

In March 1842 Berwald returned with his wife to his native Stockholm and on 2 December 1843 his cousin Johan Frederik conducted a benefit concert for the composer at the Royal Opera which included the premiere of his *Sinfonie sérieuse*. This highly original work, which he now called his First Symphony, is bursting with fresh and innovative ideas. Although the autograph score is headed 'Vienna 1842', tests have shown that these words were added later, and the discrepancies with a manuscript second horn part indicate that the last movement was later revised and that this fair score was actually made after the first performance. Having finally enjoyed a more favourable press in Vienna (for his tone poems, and especially *Elfenspiel*) and having been made an honorary member of the Salzburg Mozarteum, Berwald probably hoped that the new work would be well received in his home city. Sadly the performance was badly prepared and it received the most appalling notices. With hindsight we can see why, since in many ways Berwald was ahead of his time. His public would have been more at home with the Mannheim School rather than this 'old musician-of-the-future' (as an astonished Hans von Bülow described him). Berwald was after all a fine craftsman – he wrote an interesting textbook on composition – and was not primarily concerned with being popular. In reality he had many gifts outside music, as is evident by the lasting success of his orthopaedic techniques, and from his versatility as manager in the 1850s of a sawmill and glass works in northern Sweden, in addition to his being an active pamphleteer on social issues.

All of the significant characteristics of Berwald's style can be found in the *Sinfonie sérieuse*. The opening two-note figure (which he uses often) is unexpected and Berwald capitalizes on this Haydnesque shock at the reprise and the start of the recapitulation. This two-note motif reappears in the *Adagio* and in the *Finale*, but there are other thematic links throughout the work. All four movements begin with a scalar theme which rises to the sixth note and then generally falls away, encouraging diminished harmonies and sinister overtones. Berwald tends to make excessive use of sequential repetition: we find short melodic motifs and rhythmic patterns from which an entire movement is developed. In contrast we find occasional melodies with a timeless sweep – like the second subject group in this first movement (as also in the 'Golconda' overture) clearly conceived directly in orchestral sound. The dangers of repetitive squareness are sometimes evident (noticeably in the *Sinfonie capricieuse* and *Sinfonie singulière Finale*) but generally relieved by frequent use of three-bar phrases, syncopation in all manner of contexts, a developed chromaticism and unusual harmonic juxtaposition. The orchestration is innovative (especially the use of the brass and timpani) extending to melodic and even solo use of the trombones. There are numerous fleeting allusions to the sound-world of other composers: the surprise and daring of C P E Bach and Haydn, the 'hammer' motifs of Beethoven, a tremendous tension and irregularity which we associate with Berlioz, an *Adagio* with a hint of Bruckner, a classic Mendelssohnian scherzo and a *Finale* (introduced by material from the slow movement) with episodic touches of Brahms, Dvořák and Tchaikovsky!

## 'Sinfonie capricieuse' Symphony No 2 in D major (1842)

1. *Allegro*
2. *Andante*
3. *Finale Allegro assai*

The background to the *Sinfonie capricieuse* is surrounded in mystery. A sketch survives of a symphonic short score in D and dated 'Nyköping 18 June 1842' and this is confirmed in Mathilde's diary one week later. The apparent full score of this work went missing at Berwald's death and, despite a reward offered in 1910, it has never been found. There is absolutely no clear evidence to link the surviving short score with the missing full score, but in 1914 the first performance was given in Stockholm from orchestral material prepared by Ernst Ellberg. A more stylish re-working of the symphony was made in 1968 by the noted Berwald scholar Nils Castegren, and it is his edition (published with the facsimile short score in 1970) which we perform on these discs.

Although there is no scherzo, the usual characteristics are all present. The opening *Allegro* is virtually monothematic and based on short motifs often in three- or five-bar phrase lengths. Further use of syncopations and hemiolas, chromaticism and unexpected harmonic progressions help to sustain the momentum. There is an eloquent slow movement with a developed contrasting middle section followed directly by a lengthy tarantella-like *Finale*. The latter movement is in grave danger of outstaying its welcome, but somehow it keeps afloat, thanks to Berwald's freshness and spontaneity.

## 'Sinfonie singulière' Symphony No 3 in C major (1845)

1. *Allegro fuocosso*
2. *Adagio – Scherzo: Allegro assai – Adagio*
3. *Finale Presto*

It is precisely these qualities which imbue the *Sinfonie singulière* with such life and beauty, and it is Berwald's individual treatment of otherwise simple harmonies which makes the opening *Allegro fuocosso* so remarkable. The autograph is dated March 1845, although it was not performed until 1905. After the optimistic vision of the first movement, a more sombre *Adagio* follows which itself encloses a mercurial scherzo. The syncopated opening of the *Finale* heralds an unusually extended movement, mostly in the tonic minor (except for a reprise of the *Adagio* material in the dominant) but concludes in a whirlwind of C major.

## Symphony No 4 in E flat major ('Sinfonie naïve') (1845)

1. *Allegro risoluto*
2. *Adagio*
3. *Scherzo Allegro molto*
4. *Finale Allegro vivace*

Only one month later Berwald completed his Fourth Symphony (originally titled 'Sinfonie naïve') in E flat. A call to attention from trumpets and horns introduces a magical phrase of rising thirds in cellos that gently descends chromatically – any hint of 'Eroica' being transformed into *Symphonie fantastique*! This movement has great propulsion (perhaps helped by the lack of exposition repeat and strongly hemiolic second-subject group) but most unusually closes with quiet reminiscences of a lyrical dotted melody, which also reappeared above a twenty-four-bar A flat pedal in an astonishing harmonic transformation just before the recapitulation. After each movement of his symphonies Berwald wrote an approximate timing in the score. Initially this would appear helpful when deciding upon a suitable tempo (for example, the common time *Allegro* movements should generally be taken *alla breve*) but since they do not represent an accurate timing of an actual performance they should not

be taken too literally. The *Adagio* of this symphony is a particularly unreliable example – a proposed nine-and-a-half minutes would produce an unbearably slow tempo. The choice of D major for this movement makes a wonderful contrast and not surprisingly the theme (based on an unpublished tone poem, *A Rustic Wedding* for organ) has taken on the status of a national song.

The *Scherzo* is Haydnesque and the *Finale* too is full of humour and the ending unexpected, bringing to a close a work which finally earned the composer real critical acclaim at its first performance (albeit ten years after his death).

## The overtures

### Overture to 'Estrella de Soria' (1841)

On 9 April 1862 Berwald finally saw his opera *Estrella de Soria* performed at the Royal Opera. It was quite well received and played five times before disappearing without trace from the repertoire. The brief introduction to this tragic overture gives a foretaste of Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* but there is no official concert version and the overture runs directly into the first scene. Several proposals have been written for a loud concert ending but I have opted for one which concludes with the reflective music from the end of the whole opera: the love-stricken Estrella, Countess of Soria, stabs herself as her lover Salvaterra sails away with her rival, the beautiful Moorish princess Zulma.

### Overture to 'The Queen of Golconda' (1864)

The attractive overture to *The Queen of Golconda* (his last opera) was completed in 1864 although it was not performed on the stage until the centenary of Berwald's death in April 1968. The overture however has become quite a repertoire piece and it contains an interesting passage for four solo cellos (not dissimilar to Rossini's *William Tell*) as well as eight bars where the first trumpet is required to 'flutter-tongue'.

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Clearly, the 1946 and 1968 celebrations have brought Berwald's music to a wider public and his name was adopted for the concert hall built for the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra in the 1970s. There is no doubting his status as an extremely interesting historical figure and the 'sérieuse', 'singulière' and 'naïve' symphonies deserve to be much more popular. I personally find the A major fragment quite an extraordinary apprentice work. As Robert Layton has written (in his superb *Guide to the Symphony*): 'It is the quality of Berwald's thematic invention, his transparent textures and expert orchestration, and the generosity of spirit that informs his musical personality that make his music engage both our sympathies and our affection.'

During the past few years I have had the pleasure of conducting several orchestras in Sweden and have been surprised by a certain lack of pride displayed by some Swedish people towards their own culture. I have even been told that 'typically Swedish' might imply something rather dull and boring and the word 'Osvensk' (meaning 'un-Swedish') may be used as a compliment for something foreign and therefore by definition more interesting! Whatever the reason, it seems strange to me that Norway, Denmark and Finland have managed to capitalize on the popularity of Grieg, Nielsen and Sibelius whilst Sweden at the moment seems to promote Danish and Finnish music more than its own. This applies as much to contemporary music as to music of the past – from Roman and Kraus to Alfvén, Stenhammar and beyond. Since the advent of the CD this situation is being steadily rectified and I hope the present recordings will further that cause. I shall never forget my astonishment when I first



heard the opening bars of the *Sinfonie singulière* as a student some twenty-five years ago! Little did I realize then that the composer's two-hundredth anniversary might be such a cause for celebration.

Roy Goodman

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## The Four Symphonies

The Berwald family was German; but at some point during the 1770s Berwald's father, Christian Friedrich Georg Berwald (1740–1825) settled in Stockholm. He had studied composition with František Benda among others and would earn his living in Sweden as a violin player in the Royal Opera Orchestra (now the Royal Swedish Orchestra), at that time the only professional orchestra in the country. **Franz Adolf Berwald** (1796–1868) was the oldest son in his second, Swedish marriage and showed signs of musical talent at a very early age. When he was only ten, he made his début as a violinist. Later he studied with the conductor of the Royal Opera, Édouard Dupuy, and himself became a member of the Opera Orchestra in 1812. Apart from two periods of leave, he stayed there until 1828.

In 1817 the young Berwald began to show his talent as a composer, writing an orchestral fantasia (now lost), a concerto for two violins and a septet. The last-mentioned work was described by the Stockholm correspondent of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* as 'modulating often and sometimes in a manner that leaves one wishing that this young and undoubtedly talented composer would acquaint himself more thoroughly with the rules of harmony and composition'. Whether he was right is not easy to determine, as the 1817 septet is lost, at least in its original form, and only exists – if at all – as material reworked for the much better-known Septet in B flat major from 1828.

In 1819 Franz Berwald toured Finland and Russia together with his brother Christian August Berwald (1798–1869), who was also a violinist, likewise working in the Royal Opera Orchestra. When Dupuy passed away in 1823, Berwald's cousin Johan Fredrik Berwald (1787–1861) was chosen as the new principal conductor of the Royal Opera Orchestra, and he did not in any way favour Franz's music.

### Konzertstück für Fagott und Orchester (1827)

*Allegro non troppo – Andante (con variazioni) – Tempo 1°*

Despite these difficulties Franz kept composing, among other works a **Konzertstück for bassoon and orchestra** (1827). It was first performed in a Stockholm church on 18th November 1828 by Frans Preumayr (1782–1853), bassoonist in the Royal Opera Orchestra. The *Andante* section is a quotation of *Home, Sweet Home* by Henry Bishop (1796–1855), from his opera *Clari, or the Maid of Milan*, staged in London in 1823. Berwald makes use only of its first sixteen bars, i.e. without the refrain.

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In 1829 Berwald gave up Swedish musical life and moved to Berlin, where it also proved difficult to get his music performed. Being multi-talented, he then changed his focus and founded an enterprising and successful orthopaedic institute. In 1841 he married Mathilde Scherer, one of his Berlin employees, and moved to Vienna where they spent the following year before moving back to Sweden.

### Sinfonie sérieuse (No. 1) in G minor (1842)

1. *Allegro con energia*

2. *Adagio maestoso*

### 3. *Stretto*

### 4. *Finale. Adagio – Allegro molto*

Berwald's four finished symphonies were all written during the first half of the 1840s, altogether his most productive decade. The *Sinfonie sérieuse* is dated Vienna, 1842, which means that the work must have been finished by the time Berwald returned to Stockholm in April of that year. It was not, however, Berwald's first symphony. Back in 1820 he had written a symphony in A major which had its first and only performance in Stockholm on 3rd March 1821. It survives only in fragmentary form.

The *Sérieuse* was the only one of Berwald's symphonies that the composer ever heard played. The performance, by the Royal Opera Orchestra under the direction of his cousin (on 2nd December 1843) was under-rehearsed and unenthusiastic. It won him a rather unpleasant review: 'This composition is very ambitious and is best characterized as being incomprehensible. The most bizarre and unusual tonal relations chase one another unceasingly, and the ear tries in vain to find some comforting and refreshing little melody in all this musical or, rather, unmusical chaos.'

The *Sérieuse* was also the first Berwald symphony to be published. A promotional edition was issued in 1875 at the initiative of the Musikaliska Konstföreningen in Stockholm and the composer-conductor Ludvig Norman (1831–85), and was distributed to various concert societies in Sweden and internationally. A new, critically revised edition by Lennart Hedwall appeared in 1974 as part of the complete Berwald Edition. This is the version now generally in use.

## **Sinfonie capricieuse (No. 2) in D major (1842)**

### 1. *Allegro*

### 2. *Andante*

### 3. *Finale. Allegro assai*

The *Sinfonie capricieuse* was the last Berwald symphony to reach the public. It had its first performance in Stockholm on 9th January 1914, conducted by Armas Järnefelt. The first time we meet with this symphony is in June 1842: it is mentioned in Mathilde's diary and we also possess a sketch dated Nyköping, 18th June 1842. Unfortunately this is all we possess, because the bound, finished manuscript apparently disappeared from the composer's shelves very shortly after his death. In 1910 the newly formed Franz Berwald Foundation (Franz Berwald Stiftelsen) initiated a search, offering a reward to the person who would return the score. As this proved fruitless, the Foundation instead commissioned Ernst Ellberg, a teacher of composition at the College of Music in Stockholm, to produce a complete orchestral score on the basis of the sketch, and this is the piece that Järnefelt and his forces premièred. This version was printed in 1945.

In 1968 a new version by Nils Castegren was prepared for the Berwald centenary celebrations. It was published in 1970 as part of the complete Berwald Edition and has become the version normally played and recorded nowadays. Most of the conjecture involved concerns the brass and timpani: especially the timpani part required numerous editorial decisions, as all we have in the sketch is a tuning notation at the beginning of each movement and a few entries in the last section of the finale. Castegren indicates the roughly contemporary *Sinfonie sérieuse* as his main source of comparison.

## **Sinfonie singulière (No. 3) in C major (1845)**

### 1. *Allegro fuocoso*

### 2. *Adagio – Scherzo. Allegro assai – Adagio*

### 3. *Finale. Presto*

The manuscript of Berwald's next symphony, *Sinfonie singulière*, carries the annotation 'Stockholm, March 1845'. This manuscript was purchased by the Musical Academy in Stockholm in

1870, but the first performance did not take place until 10th January 1905, conducted by the composer Tor Aulin (1866–1914) who was then the chief conductor of the Stockholm Concert Society. Aulin took some liberties with Berwald's score, such as giving the first two bars to the timpani instead of the double basses. Some of these liberties were retained in the first printed edition by Wilhelm Hansen (Copenhagen, 1911) which was made at the instigation of the Berwald Foundation. In 1965 the complete Berwald Edition published a critical version, prepared by the conductor Herbert Blomstedt, which is now generally accepted.

That Berwald himself calls this symphony 'peculiar' or 'unusual' is perhaps partly rooted in the fact that he enclosed the scherzo within the slow movement – a procedure which was, however, not unique in his own production: we find similar cases in the B flat major Septet and in the E flat major String Quartet (1849). After the première in 1905 the Swedish composer-reviewer Wilhelm Peterson-Berger (1867–1942) singled out the Adagio as something 'absolute ly wonderful in its lovely, albeit unsentimental beauty' and called Berwald 'our most original and most modern orchestral composer'!

### **Symphony 'No. 4' in E flat major (1845)**

1. *Allegro risoluto*
2. *Adagio – attacca –*
3. *Scherzo. Allegro molto*
4. *Finale. Allegro vivace*

Berwald's **Symphony in E flat major**, sometimes subtitled *Sinfonie naïve* (the composer himself considered this title but later abandoned it) was completed only one month after the *Singulière*. In October 1847 Berwald wrote to the Swedish envoy in Paris: 'With the profoundest respect, I wish to take this opportunity of most humbly conveying to Your Excellency my sincerest gratitude for the great kindness which Your Excellency has shown, not only to myself but also to my little wife. Through the latter I have been given to understand that it should be possible for me to have one of my symphonies performed by the Conservatoire. I am therefore enclosing my Symphony in E flat, which has not only been written out and checked but is in fact the best work of its kind that I have ever written.'

The director of the Conservatoire was François Auber who, according to a letter from Mathilde Berwald, had given his word of honour that he would perform the symphony, but never did. The first performance did not take place until 9th April 1878, when Ludvig Norman conducted it in Stockholm at a commemoration concert, ten years after Berwald's death. The Symphony in E flat major was first printed in 1911.

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After travelling widely in Europe in the years 1846–49, the Berwald family settled permanently in Sweden. Franz was, however, passed over as a candidate when his cousin retired as conductor of the Royal Opera Orchestra. Neither was he made Director of Music in the university town of Uppsala. He then chose to manage a glass works and a sawmill in northern Sweden, and only in the very last year of his life was he appointed professor of composition at the Musical Academy in Stockholm. He died on 3rd October 1868, impoverished and bitter, and was buried in the German Church in Stockholm to the strains of the slow movement of his own *Sinfonie sérieuse*.

*Knud Ketting*

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## Symphonies

The Swedish composer Franz Berwald was the most distinguished of a musical dynasty of German origin. Johann Daniel Berwald, who died in 1691, served as a town musician in Neumarkt. His son Johann Gottfried, born in 1679, was Kunstpfeifer in Königsberg, and his own son, the flautist Johann Friedrich Berwald, after appointments in Copenhagen and Hohenasperg, joined in 1770 the Mecklenburg-Schwerin orchestra in Ludwigslust and fathered a number of musicians among the twenty-five children from his four marriages. One of his sons, Johann Gottfried, born in Copenhagen in 1737, studied with Franz Benda and served as a violinist at Ludwigslust before moving to St Petersburg, where he settled until his death in 1814. Another son, Christian Friedrich Georg, born at Hohenasperg in 1740, also studied in Berlin with Benda and in 1772 settled in Stockholm as a violinist and member of the Court Orchestra from 1773 to 1806. A third brother Georg Johann Abraham, a violinist and bassoonist, born in Schleswig in 1758, joined the Swedish Court Orchestra in 1782 and continued there until 1798, when he left for a concert tour, after which he settled in St Petersburg. His son Johan Fredrik, born in Stockholm in 1787, won early distinction as a violinist and as a composer. He accompanied his father to Russia and from 1808 to 1812 was soloist, in succession to Rode, with the Russian imperial orchestra. In 1814 he returned to Stockholm to serve in the court orchestra as a violinist and from 1823 to 1849 as Kapellmeister.

Franz Berwald was born in 1796 in Stockholm, the son of Christian Friedrich Georg. His younger brother Christian August served as a violinist in the court orchestra from 1815 and as its leader from 1834 to 1861. Franz Berwald followed family tradition as a violinist, a pupil of his father, and joined the court orchestra in 1812, continuing there until 1828. He also appeared as a soloist and in 1819 toured Finland and Russia with his brother Christian August. Meanwhile he was winning something of a reputation as a composer, in particular with a symphony, now partly lost, and a *Violin Concerto in C sharp minor*, written in 1819, following his earlier *Theme and Variations* for violin and orchestra, composed in 1816, and a *Double Violin Concerto* that he had performed with his brother. In 1827 he completed his *Konsertstycke* for bassoon and orchestra and turned his attention to an opera on the subject of *Gustaf Vasa*, a work that he never finished, while other attempts at the form from this period were either left incomplete or are now lost.

In 1829 Berwald was at last awarded a scholarship for study abroad and moved to Berlin, where he took lessons in counterpoint, but at the same time developed his interest in medicine. The early 1830s found him occupied abortively with operatic composition, but in 1835 he opened his own orthopaedic institute, an enterprise that enjoyed some success during the next six years, until he decided in 1841 to sell the institute and move to Vienna. There he continued to pursue his medical interests, while turning his attention to a new opera, his tenth attempt at the form, *Estrella de Soria*. In 1842 there was a successful concert of his music in Vienna, with new works, *Minnen från Norska Fjellen* (Memories of the Norwegian Mountains), *Elfenlek* (Elves' Play) and *Ein humoristisches Capriccio*. In hope of similar success, he returned in the same year to Stockholm, where he staged a further concert of his music, including parts of his new opera.

It was now, in Stockholm in the 1840s, that Berwald turned his attention seriously to building his reputation as a composer. This was the period of his four surviving symphonies, the first, the *Sinfonie serieuse*, first performed with indifferent success in Stockholm in 1842 under the direction of his cousin Johan Fredrik, no better received than the operetta *Jag går i kloster* (I will enter a convent) or, in the following year, the operetta *Modehandlerskan* (The Modiste). He returned to Vienna in 1846 but his three years there led to nothing, although he was appointed an honorary member of the Salzburg Mozarteum and won some occasional successes with his compositions.

In Sweden again in 1849 Berwald failed in his attempt to secure a position as director of music at the University of Uppsala and was equally unsuccessful when he sought to succeed his cousin as conductor of the court orchestra. 1850 brought a further change of direction, when he became manager of a glass factory at Sando in the north of Sweden, a position offered him by a friend. He later extended his business interests to include a sawmill, but was able to spend some of his time in Stockholm, where he could continue to pursue his musical interest, in particular by the composition of chamber music, and, in 1855, a *Piano Concerto* for his pupil Hilda Thegerstrom. In 1859 he gave up his work at the glass factory and was now able to devote more time to music and to varied occasional writing on a variety of subjects. As a composer he turned largely to chamber music. His opera *Estrella de Soria* was in 1862 staged at the Royal Opera, where it won modest success, and two years later he completed his last opera *Drottningen av Golconda* (The Queen of Golconda). He died in Stockholm in 1868.

Berwald's position in Sweden as a composer was never in his life-time secure. He failed to win appointment to the positions he desired in the musical establishment of his time. His four surviving symphonies, one of them realised from an existing short score, occupy an important place in the history of the symphony in the nineteenth century, works that, while essentially classical in outlook, nevertheless look forward, through their harmonic originality, to a new world. His symphonic achievement is echoed in his later chamber music, notably in the two *Piano Quintets* of the 1850s. His life spanned a period of remarkable change. Born a year before Schubert, he died a year before Berlioz, twenty-one years after the death of Mendelssohn, whom he had met and failed to impress in Berlin in 1830.

## Symphony No. 1 in G minor “Sinfonie sérieuse”

1. *Allegro con energia*
2. *Adagio maestoso*
3. *Stretto*
4. *Finale: Adagio – Allegro molto*

Berwald's *Sinfonie sérieuse* was written in Vienna in 1842 and first performed at the Royal Opera House in Stockholm in a benefit for the composer on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1843. The programme included other orchestral works, the *Minnen fran Norska Fjellen*, *Bayaderenfest*, an excerpt from the operetta *Modehandlerskan* and the operetta *Jag gar i kloster*. The concert had only one rehearsal and it was suspected that Johan Fredrik Berwald acted out of jealousy in seeing to it that the performance was unprepared and unimpressive. Critics were well aware of the poor quality of the performance in music that seemed at the time difficult and capricious in its originality. The second movement was played at Berwald's funeral on 14th April 1868, but the whole symphony was not heard again in Sweden until 1871. The last movement had, it seems, been redrafted after the first performance and it is the revised movement that survives in a score apparently copied in 1844.

The first movement of the symphony opens dramatically enough, the first subject of the opening *Allegro con energia* based on the descending scale and leading to a lyrical B flat major second subject entrusted to the strings. The exposition is repeated. The central development is marked by passages of thirds in the woodwind, before the storm and drama of the first subject, a re-appearance of the second subject material and a final recapitulation. The F major *Adagio maestoso* starts with an ascending figure played by violas and bassoons in thirds, and weaves the instrumental groups gently together before a D minor outburst that subsides almost at once, leading to a further burst of sound in F minor, leading to gentle woodwind chords over a running plucked string accompaniment. The *Stretto*, a scherzo like some Mendelssohnian Walpurgisnacht, has a contrasting A major trio section, with an apparently syncopated melody. The finale follows without a break, starting with an

introductory G major *Adagio* before the busy G minor *Allegro molto*, the first material introducing a strongly marked march theme, over a trombone running bass followed by a gentler theme in B flat, marked *Un poco meno allegro*. Excitement increases before a new treatment of the march theme, which later provides quasi-fugal material. Themes re-appear, the gentle yearning of the more lyrical theme and the march with its trombone accompaniment. When all seems over, there is a sudden hushed tremolando from the strings and a final trombone call, before the last chords in a triumphant G major.

## Symphony No. 2 in D major “Sinfonie capricieuse”

1. *Allegro*
2. *Andante*
3. *Finale: Allegro assai*

The *Sinfonie capricieuse* has given rise to some controversy. The original score of the symphony was lost but a D major symphony survives in short score, and it is this work that has been identified by some as the *Sinfonie capricieuse*, using a title that Berwald himself had contemplated and that was mentioned by his wife as early as 1842 as a composition of that year. The short score of the *D major Symphony* has a boxed-in title *Sinfonie capricieuse* at the centre of the head of the first page, and a more tentative boxed *Sinfonie pathétique* to the right. The questions that remain open concern the identification of the surviving symphony in short score with the *Sinfonie capricieuse*, although there seems no doubt that Berwald did orchestrate a symphony of that name. If the *Symphony in D major* is the *Sinfonie capricieuse*, then it would seem he did not follow his usual practice of destroying the sketch in short score once the orchestration was completed. The manuscript bears the date Nyköping 18th June 1842 and the symphony was, therefore, written during the summer months that Berwald spent there with his wife, working at his compositions during the day-time and walking with her in the evenings. The orchestral realisation of the work was undertaken for the Berwald Stiftelsen in 1913 by Ernst Ellberg.

The opening *Allegro* starts with an introductory section before the principal theme is heard and a distinctly capricious secondary theme. The exposition is repeated before the central development is heard and the following recapitulation. The strings start the A major *Andante* with a long-drawn melody. The second violins introduce a new and strongly marked figure, which is then developed, before the return of the first theme in gentle conclusion. The finale, marked *Allegro assai*, starts with a triplet figure in the lower strings, answered by the violins. The triplet figuration provides an exciting accompaniment to what follows, before the appearance of contrasting material in a movement rich in varied motivic and melodic interest.

## Symphony No. 3 in C major “Sinfonie singulière”

1. *Allegro fuocosso*
2. *Adagio – Scherzo: Allegro assai – Adagio*
3. *Finale: Presto*

The *Sinfonie singulière*, in C major, was written in 1845 and given its first public performance on 10 January 1905 under the Swedish conductor, violinist and composer Tor Aulin, who also saw to the work's later publication. The symphony, regarded by many as the best of the four, has an effective first movement, by turns lyrical and dramatic. Its second movement, an *Adagio*, encloses a *Scherzo*. The opening has a finely drawn melody, entrusted largely to the violins, before the burden is passed to the woodwind. A startling drumbeat intrudes, to usher in the lively *Scherzo*, marked *Allegro assai*. The return of the *Adagio* occurs, as in the earlier transition, with a brief string linking passage, but all too

soon the movement comes to an end, to give way to the stormy opening of the final *Presto*, through which the sun soon shines, to lead eventually to final triumph.

## Symphony No. 4 in E flat major

1. *Allegro risoluto*
2. *Adagio*
3. *Scherzo: Allegro molto*
4. *Finale: Allegro vivace*

Berwald's *Symphony in E flat major* was completed in Stockholm in April 1845 but had its first performance in Stockholm only in 1878 under Ludwig Norman, a champion of Berwald's music. The original title of the work, *Sinfonie naïve*, was dropped by the composer, presumably to avoid misunderstanding when he tried unsuccessfully to interest François Auber, director of the Paris Conservatoire, in a performance of the work in Paris, although Auber had been compelled to decline an earlier application. It seems, however, that he had promised a performance of the symphony at the Conservatoire but that this was prevented by the disturbances of 1848 in Paris. Berwald's intended title for the work, *Sinfonie naïve*, had, of course, no pejorative implication, but suggested to him a work that was simple and natural; he had himself used the same word of Mozart.

The first movement follows the traditional tripartite pattern, with contrasting thematic material, a central development and a return to the opening theme, with its ascending cello figure, in recapitulation, followed by the syncopation of the secondary theme. The movement ends with a brief postlude for the strings alone. For the *Adagio* there is a shift of key to D major. The same initial thematic material exists in an arrangement for organ duet from the tone-poem *A Rustic Wedding*, written in 1844. The opening theme of the first violin is taken up by flute and clarinet, answered again by Grieg-like harmonies in the strings. The principal theme is based on a descending figure that is closely related to the ascending cello figure of the first movement, which had there undergone a similar inversion. The key changes to B flat major for the lightly scored *Scherzo*, its initial material based on a descending scale and contrasting with a short *Trio* in E flat, which it frames. The final *Allegro vivace* introduces strong dynamic contrasts. It is not long before the first violins introduce a graceful theme, taken up by flute and oboe. The material is developed and returns in recapitulation, after which the first violins lead the way to a final *Più mosso*, bringing the symphony to a brilliant and triumphant conclusion.

## Overture to Estrella de Soria

The opera *Estrella de Soria* was apparently written in Vienna in 1841, using a German text by Otto Prechtler. Whatever private performances may have been given in Vienna, and Berwald's wife Mathilde records one such performance in the presence of Franz Grillparzer on 11th October 1841, the only public performance of the opera in the life-time of the composer was given in Stockholm in 1862 in a version that was partly revised for the occasion. In a letter to a friend Berwald mentions the fact that Liszt had offered three years before to stage the work in Weimar, but he had preferred to wait for a staging at the Royal Opera in Stockholm. The work was withdrawn after five performances and never became an established part of repertoire. The overture, however, has remained a popular enough element in concert repertoire. Its date of composition is unknown, but it certainly makes use of elements that form part of only the 1862 version of the opera, while in technique and spirit it seems to belong, in general, more naturally to the 1840s. It starts with a dramatic slow introduction, leading to an *Allegro assai*.

The curtain rises on the scene of the encampment of the Castilian army in the half-light. While all sleep, the Moorish prince Muza creeps in, falling to his knees when he sees the sleeping form of Zulma, daughter of a Moorish prince. The overture ends gently, after this *Molto andante* section, with its opening clarinet solo, and the first act begins when the trumpet sounds reveille, rousing the soldiers and their followers.

## Piano Concerto in D Major

1. *Allegro con brio*

2. *Andantino*

3. *Allegro molto*

Berwald's *Piano Concerto in D major* was completed, it seems, in November 1855 for the composer's piano pupil Hilda Aurora Thegerström, later a pupil of Marmontel and Liszt. The work was apparently not played until 1904, when Berwald's grand-daughter Astrid performed it at a Stockholm student concert. It was, however, entered anonymously and posthumously, in 1872, into a competition held by the Stockholm Musikaliska konstföreningen, presumably by Berwald's son Hjalmar. Following the rules of the competition, in which success would have led to publication, the concerto was given a title, *Animus et mens*. Comments by the judges, Julius Rietz, Niels W. Gade and Albert Rubenson, were generally favourable, although the first found an excess of passagework in the outer movements. When the name of the composer was revealed, however, any question of publication came to an end. The association was bound to consider only the work of living Swedish or Norwegian composers.

The first movement shows the assurance and maturity that the Musikaliska konstföreningen committee had recognised. The solo entry, after an eight-bar introduction, establishes the dominance of the instrument, which soon leads to a quieter lyrical theme. Busy passage-work is followed eventually by the romantic second subject. The central development leads to the return of the first opening material and the subsequent scampering passage-work that leads finally to the G minor *Andantino*, where the piano remains dominant, ushering in a G major central section, opening with plucked string accompaniment, but returning before long to the key and thematic material of the first section of the movement. The soloist bursts into energetic activity in the last movement, which introduces whimsical contrasting material, moving forward to a brilliant conclusion in a display of bravura that should have made this among the most popular of romantic piano concertos, on a par with the concertos of Schumann or of Grieg.

Keith Anderson

## Tone Poems

The half-century between the premières of Beethoven's Ninth and Brahms's First Symphonies saw the emergence of numerous composers who, even if they failed to achieve the ultimate greatness, left a body of work which is distinctive and thought-provoking. Among the most idiosyncratic of these is Franz Berwald, whose life was a catalogue of passing successes and lasting disappointments, made the more striking, and ironic, by his successful embracing of notably differing careers.

The orchestral works included here provide considerable insights into a creativity which was to extend over fifty years. Born in Stockholm on 23rd July 1796, Berwald was playing in public as a violinist from his tenth year, and in October 1812 embarked on a restless sixteen-year spell as member of the Royal Opera orchestra in the capital. He was already composing apace, and a benefit concert in



January 1818 was a not inconsiderable success. A further such concert in March 1821, however, was far less successful, the criticism aimed at his Symphony in A (of which only a torso of the first movement survives) drawing a typically forthright response from Berwald. His music for Kellgren's Gustaf Vasa had a more positive response in 1828, and it is hard to imagine the Konzertstück for Bassoon and Orchestra, composed the previous year, would not have enjoyed a similar reception.

### **Konzertstück for Bassoon and Orchestra**

First performed by the bassoonist Franz Preumayr on 18th November 1828, the Konzertstück is in three sections. After a sprightly, Mozartian Allegro non troppo with two contrasting themes, the Andante quotes directly the aria 'Home Sweet Home' from Henry Bishop's then hugely popular opera Clari, or The Maid of Milan. Its opening phrase without the second-half refrain, is paraphrased at length, before a resumption of the initial Allegro brings this modest but highly attractive work to a spirited close.

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The restrictions of being a professional musician, coupled with general indifference to his music in Stockholm, led Berwald to quit his home city for Berlin in May 1829. Once again he was to meet with disappointment in the frustration of his operatic plans, none of which came to fruition in this period. The running of an orthopaedic institute, which he founded in 1835, was soon absorbing most of his time, and it was only on his move to Vienna in March 1841, to be followed by his marriage a month later, that Berwald resumed composition as a full-time activity. The ensuing decade saw the composition of almost all of his mature orchestral works, including the four tone-poems included here. At least two of them were on the programme of a Vienna concert on 6th March 1842, when their individual approach to harmony and orchestration afforded Berwald some of the most favourable notices of his career.

### **Elfenspiel (Play of the Elves)**

Elfenspiel (Play of the Elves) begins quietly and ruminatively, after which, a lively but muted music redolent of Mendelssohn emerges as the main portion of the work. A brief and rather dissonant climax on horns and trumpets is reached, after which the main ideas are recalled on the way to the peremptory coda.

### **Ernste und heitere Grillen (Serious and Joyful Fancies)**

As the Berliozian opening infers, Ernste und heitere Grillen (Serious and Joyful Fancies) is a much more demonstrative piece. Its scherzo-like main section is almost relentlessly active, and with a rhythmic agility seldom encountered in music of the period. In keeping with this elusive nature, the sudden ending comes as a not inappropriate surprise.

### **Reminiscence of the Norwegian Mountains**

Erinnerung an die norwegischen Alpen (Reminiscence of the Norwegian Mountains) opens with a searching introduction which only gradually assumes greater momentum. There follows a compact sonata form, replete with purposeful development of its main ideas and a 'false ending' which permits a recall of the opening music to form a pensive close.

### **Wettlauf (Foot-Race)**

Least known of these tone-poems, Wettlauf (Foot-Race) could almost be an alternative scherzo to one of the symphonies Berwald was shortly to write. Although subtly defined, its main themes follow one another almost as a throughcomposed sequence, culminating in a breathless dash to the finish.

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Berwald's industriousness throughout this period was not to be complemented by either frequent airings of his music or critical acclaim. The *Sinfonie sérieuse*, the only one of four symphonies written during this period to be performed in his lifetime, was all but dismissed at its December 1843 première, and response to two operettas was equally cool; the first performance of *Modehandlerskan* (The Modiste) in March 1845 was also its last. A sojourn in Vienna during 1846-9 was less auspicious than its predecessor and, on returning to Sweden, Berwald accepted directorship of first a glassworks, then a sawmill in Sandö, restricting his musical activity to private teaching and the composition of chamber works.

### **Drottningen av Golconda (The Queen of Golconda): Overture**

Ironically, it was the successful assimilation of these pieces into the Austro-German musical canon over the following decade that led to a resurgence of interest in Berwald's music in his home country. In April 1862 the Royal Opera in Stockholm staged *Estrella de Soria*, twenty years after its completion, and the response encouraged Berwald to embark on a second grand opera. Finished in 1864, *Drottningen av Golconda* (The Queen of Golconda) was already in rehearsal when the production was summarily cancelled by the Royal Opera's new director and only heard in its entirety in April 1968. Despite this final setback, Berwald was officially recognised by the award of the Order of the North Star on his seventieth birthday, and was appointed a professor of composition at the Stockholm Musical Academy the following year. There were no more major works, however, before his unexpected and untimely death from pneumonia in Stockholm on 3rd April 1868.

Designated a 'romantic opera', *The Queen of Golconda* is cast firmly in the mould derived from Weber and Spohr, as the overture itself makes plain. Poised between curtain-raiser and anticipation of the drama to come, it alludes to several of the items contained therein, fashioning them into a succinct design which confirms that, in this last creative phase, Berwald had lost none of his expertise in the domains of form and orchestration. Alas that such prowess went, as so often before, unrewarded.

*Richard Whitehouse*

## **Septet in B flat major • Serenade • Piano Quartet in E flat major**

### **Septet in B flat major**

1. *Adagio – Allegro molto*
2. *Poco adagio – Prestissimo – Adagio*
3. *Finale: Allegro con spirito*

Berwald's *Septet in B flat major*, scored for clarinet, bassoon, horn, violin, viola, cello and double bass, was first performed in Stockholm on 10 January 1818, provoking one hostile review. It was repeated on 7 December 1819, after which nothing was heard of the work. A supposedly new *Septet* was performed on 6 December 1828 and this may be presumed to be a revision of the earlier work. Dedicated to Ernst Leonard Schlegel, this work and the *Serenade* are mentioned by Berwald in a letter to his sisters in 1829, urging that no composition of his left behind in Sweden should be performed, except the *Septet* and the *Serenade*. The composer's approval of his *Septet* was justified, since it is a work of great charm, clear in its textures and melodically appealing.

The first movement starts with a slow introduction followed by a Classical *Allegro molto* in which the clarinet has the second subject. The A flat major *Poco adagio* continues in the established style, suggesting comparison with Spohr or Hummel. Its course is interrupted by a lively *Prestissimo scherzo* in E flat major, with a fugal episode by way of contrast. The *Adagio* returns and is followed by a final *Allegro con spirito*, an opera buffa ensemble, with moments of drama that vary the generally ebullient and cheerful mood of the movement.

### Serenade in F major

The *Serenade in F major*, scored for tenor with clarinet, horn, viola, cello, double bass and piano, has been compared to a miniature opera buffa scene. It was written in 1825. A plucked string accompaniment is heard with a horn solo, after which the clarinet leads forward into a passage of dramatic accompanied recitative, mounting in excitement. The singer embarks on his serenade, the first verse of which is followed by an instrumental interlude, in which the clarinet has some prominence, echoing the contemporary idiom of Spohr. The second verse is followed by a postlude and a viola passage, the counterpart of the earlier clarinet interlude, before the piano, in writing of some brilliance, together with the other instruments, provides a prelude to the last verse, in which prominence is given to the final declaration of the victory of love.

### Piano Quartet in E flat major

1. *Adagio – Allegro ma non troppo*
2. *Adagio*
3. *Allegro*

Berwald's *Piano Quartet in E flat major*, scored for piano, clarinet, horn and bassoon, was written in 1819 and first performed at a concert on 3 March 1821, together with the *Symphony in A major* and *Violin Concerto*. As with his contemporary Spohr, there is an operatic element in what contemporary critics saw as an untutored search for originality.

There is a first movement that moves into a histrionic central passage, before a measure of cheerful serenity is restored. The slow movement is introduced by the piano, soon joined by the wind instruments in a sustained cantabile that has suggestions of Beethoven, a composer whose earlier works, at least, had a perceptible influence on Berwald's writing. There is a lively and colourful final *Allegro* in broadly Classical style.

Keith Anderson

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## Symfonier

1800-talets svenska musikvärld förmådde aldrig erkänna Franz Berwald som den mest egenartade och kanske också största kompositör, som Sverige hittills frambringat. Han hade stora framgångar i de tysktalande delarna av Europa och hedrades t.o.m. med att bli invald i Mozarteum i Salzburg, en ära som saknade sin motsvarighet i Sverige. Men i sitt hemland fick han trots det ingen uppskattning.

Franz Adolf Berwald föddes i Stockholm den 23 juli 1796. Han tillhörde en tysk släkt, vars medlemmar de senaste 150 åren ägnat sig åt musik. Fadern var den förste, som bosatte sig i Stockholm. Han hade studerat för Franz Benda och blev sedan violinist i Kungliga Hovkapellet och han hoppades, att hans son skulle följa i hans fotspår. Men även om Berwald fick anställning först som

violinist och sedan som altviolinist vid Kungl. Hovkapellet mellan 1812 och 1828, var det inte där, som hans verkliga musikaliska begåvning låg.

Det första tecknet på hans skaparbegåvning visade sig 1817, då han komponerade en numera försvunnen orkesterfantasi, en septett (som åtminstone delvis lever kvar i en senare septett från 1828) och en konsert för två fioler och orkester. Stråkkvartetten i g-moll skrevs 1818 och följdes snabbt av den andra i B-dur, som har försvunnit. Av kammarmusiken, där Berwald hade otroligt lätt för sig, finns tre verk kvar. Av en symfoni i A-dur från 1820 återstår endast delar av den första satsen. Berwald var starkt självkritisk och ytterst förbehållsam. Det är omöjligt att veta, om de felande kompositionerna har förkommit eller förstörts av honom själv.

När A-durssymfonin och violinkonserten framfördes för första gången, år 1820, var kritikerna inte sena att anklaga den unge kompositören för originalitetsjakt och effektsökeri. Överdrivna och sällsamma modulationer, skärande dissonanser och ett allmänt intryck av kaos var vanliga klagomål. Det fanns de som var beredda att medge att Berwald inte saknade talang, men de uppmanade honom att snarast ta lektioner i komposition. Men Berwald struntade blankt i deras råd. Han tvivlade inte en sekund på sin egen kapacitet och år 1829 lät han t ex antyda att när hans opera Leonida låg klar, så skulle den ställa t o m Beethovens Fidelio i skuggan.

Berwald ansökte om stipendier för studier utomlands både 1822 och 1828 men utan resultat. Men med ekonomisk hjälp från sin livslånga mecenat, Prins Oscar, begav sig Berwald till Berlin 1829. Han kände sig som en främling i Sveriges musikaliska och akademiska kretsar delvis beroende på sin egen rättframhet och arrogans, och det var med lätt hjärta han lämnade Stockholm och dess amatörmässiga kritiker. Berlin var en betydande musikstad, och han räknade med att kunna slå sig fram där. Men han hade svårt att dölja sitt förakt för medelmåttighet i musiken, och genom sin arrogans stötte han bort dem, som kunde ha hjälpt honom mest, bl.a. Mendelssohn. Men han blev framgångsrik på ett helt annat område.

Den temperamentsfulle Berwald hade ingen formell utbildning. Han hade som barn en dag i vredesmod lämnat skolan och aldrig återkommit. Men han hade blivit intresserad av möjligheten att behandla rörelsehinder genom träning, och 1835 öppnade han en ortopedisk klinik. Hans intolerans så fort det gällde musik stod i bjärt kontrast till en stor medmänsklig generositet i fråga om allt annat. Han erbjöd de fattiga gratis behandling, uppfann sjukgymnastisk apparatur, som användes lång tid framöver och vann läkarnas respekt genom sina effektiva behandlingsmetoder. Efter 6 år var han en välbeställd man. Han gifte sig med en av sina anställda, sålde kliniken och flyttade till Wien. Det år han tillbringade där blev lyckosamt och fyllt av skaparglädje, och en konsert med hans musik fick ett varmt mottagande.

Efter 13 år utomlands återvände Berwald 1842 till Sverige, i hopp om att hans framgångar skulle följa honom även där. Sorgligt nog lyckades han inte göra något större intryck på hemmapubliken. Även om 40-talet var hans mest kreativa period, då hans fyra berömda symfonier såg dagens ljus, så fick de få verk, som uppfördes i Sverige ett blandat mottagande. Sinfonie sérieuse, den enda av de fyra, som framfördes under hans livstid, dirigerades illa av hans kusin Johan Fredrik Berwald, som inte hyste några varmare känslor för honom och möttes av samma kritik som två årtionden tidigare: originalitetsjakt till varje pris.

1846 flyttade han utomlands för andra gången, och det skulle bli den lyckligaste tiden i hans liv. Ett halvår i Paris ledde inte till något, men desto större blev hans framgångar i Tyskland och Österrike. 1847 valdes han in i Mozarteum i Salzburg. Följande år jämställde en Salzburgkritiker honom med den tidens främsta kompositörer.

Det var omöjligt för Berwald att inte känna sig bitter och besviken, när ekonomiska svårigheter tvingade honom att återvända till Sverige. Och där väntade ytterligare motgångar. Han fick varken en tjänst vid Uppsala Universitet eller posten som kapellmästare vid Kungl. Hovkapellet, som hans nu pensionerade kusin hade innehaft. Ännu en gång fick Skandinavians ledande kompositör söka sitt uppehälle på något annat sätt än genom musiken, där medelmåttor upptog alla platser.

Berwald blev disponent för ett glasbruk i Sandö i Ångermanland 1850 och tre år senare dessutom delägare där. Samtidigt startade han ett sågverk i närheten. Vintrarna tillbringade han i Stockholms mildare klimat, och sällskapslivet där kom honom att ägna sig åt kammarmusik. Resultatet blev i början av 1870-talet två pianokvintetter och tre av de fem pianotriorna. De flesta gavs ut i Tyskland och blev väl mottagna där. Franz Liszt fann mycket att beundra i den andra kvintetten och sade till Berwald: ”Ni äger en sann egenart, men ni kommer inte att få uppleva någon framgång under er livstid. Men ni måste ändå fortsätta på den inslagna vägen.”

Det första formella erkännandet i Sverige kom 1864, när Berwald blev medlem av Kungl. Musikaliska Akademien. Tre år senare förordade hans kollegor honom till en tjänst som professor i komposition, men det blev bara en halv seger. Styrelsen vägrade att godkänna utnämningen och föreslog en annan kandidat. Men under trycket av den allmänna opinionen och Prins Oscars inflytande, fann denne det bäst att avböja. Så den förödmjukade Berwald blev trots allt professor.

Det är omöjligt att säga vilket inflytande Berwald skulle kunnat ha på det svenska musiklivet. Han hade bara fem elever, när han den 3 april påföljande år avled i lunginflammation. Hans finaste verk skulle inte uppföras förrän under 1900-talet, när senare generationer med bland annat Tor Aulin och Wilhelm Stenhammar som förespråkare slutligen skulle ge hans musik det erkännande, som så länge undanhållits den.

Under Berwalds livstid utvecklades och förändrades musikspråket på ett sätt, som nog är utan motstycke i historien. Berwald, som föddes när Beethoven var en ung man och som dog 3 år efter premiären på Tristan och Isolde återspeglar på sitt eget, högst personliga sätt några av dessa förändringar, om också inte i kronologisk ordning. Nationalismen var en sen företeelse i Skandinavien och påverkade honom inte nämnvärt. Man måste gå till den tyska klassiska romantiken, för att hitta ursprunget. I den tidiga musiken märker man inflytandet från Hummel och Spohr, och Berwald hade också Beethovens förkärlek för korta ledmotiv och utpräglat rytmiska mönster, men där finns också helt tydligt något som är Berwalds eget. Redan när det gällde stråkkvartetten från 1818 och violinkonserten från 1820, visste kritikerna inte hur de skulle uppfatta de djärva, till synes nyckfulla modulationerna. Eftersom det svenska musiklivet var konventionellt och oförargligt, måste Berwalds säregenhet ha verkat desto mer förbluffande. Men han hade hela tiden ett högt tekniskt kunnande och en utpräglad skicklighet i kontrapunktik.

Berwald var inre romantiker på samma sätt som Chopin eller Tjajkovskij, och inte heller en förnyare som Berlioz eller Wagner. Trots sina djärva experiment hade han, kanske förvånande, en större närhet till 1700-talets klassicism, som bättre stämde överens med hans egen emotionella jämvikt och ädla humanism. Det nya hos honom bestod inre i att förnya utan i att på ett fascinerande sätt använda sig av det som redan fanns. Detta gäller särskilt hans harmonik, som har en alldeles egen friskhet, men som sällan vågar sig så långt som hos Berlioz, Chopin eller Liszt.

Känslan för struktur är oftast inte särskilt utpräglad inom den romantiska musiken, men det var just här Berwald var som djärvast. Så tidigt som 1828 experimenterade han med idén om strukturell enhet genom att låta den långsamma satsen i sin septett innesluta scherzot. Detta återkommer i hans mest omfattande försök till integration. Där är inte bara scherzot inneslutet i den långsamma satsen

utan den långsamma satsen bildar en del av allegrot och resultatet blir en enda struktur, bestående av en introduktion och fem sammanhängande delar.

Berwalds bevarade musik för orkester omfattar konserter för piano, fagott och violin samt en rad symfoniska dikter men domineras ändå eftertryckligt av symfonierna. Frånsett en tidig symfoni i A-dur, komponerad 1820, av vilken bara första satsen finns kvar, brukar man räkna med fyra symfonier. De två första, de som bär namnen *Sinfonie sérieuse* (dvs ”allvarsam symfoni”) och *Sinfonie capricieuse* (ung. ”nyckfull” eller ”oberäknelig”), komponerades bägge år 1842, de två senare, *Sinfonie singulière* (dvs ”enastående” eller ”ensam i sitt slag” med en liten anstrykning av ”egenartad”) och *Ess-dursymfonin*, tillkom båda tre år därefter, 1845. Det förtjänar att påpekas att alla namnen på symfonierna härstammar från Berwald själv, i motsats till vad som är fallet med många andra kompositörer, där förläggare och andra intressenter i efterhand satt till namn i avsikt att göra verken mer attraktiva.

## **Symfoni nr 1 i g-moll, Sinfonie sérieuse (1842) (Bärenreiter)**

1. *Allegro con energia*

2. *Adagio maestoso*

3. *Stretto*

4. *Final: Adagio – Allegro molto*

Som tidigare nämnts var *Sinfonie sérieuse* den enda av Berwalds symfonier som kom att uppföras under hans livstid. Anledningarna till detta var många. Hur högt Berwald än stod i aktning hos sina yngre tonsättarkollegor som August Söderman och Ludvig Norman, så var det en uppfattning som ingalunda delades av det musikaliska etablissemanget. Med all rätt, ansåg han detta till stor del bestå av dilettanter och amatörer vars okunskap bara överträffades av deras självgodhet. Och när han träffade på någon riktig sådan där musikalisk viktigpetter hade han svårt att hålla fingrarna i styr. Hans sondotter, Alfhild Arosenius har berättat en belysande episod. Det fanns i Stockholms musikaliska kretsar en man som utgav sig att i detalj känna till varje verk av J S Bach och som älskade att i tid och otid skrodera om det. Till slut blev frestelsen Berwald övermäktig. Han tog en Bachfuga, omfördelade stämmorna, utgav den för att vara av honom själv och förelade den för den store Experten med en hovsam begäran om ett uttalande om dess musikaliska halt. Det kom, och det var kort och koncist: ”Ingen kan skriva fugor som Bach, allra minst herr Berwald.” Men Berwalds pojkestreck blev upptäckt ganska snabbt och experten ifråga lär ha fått utstå åtskilliga välvässade anspelningar på sina kunskaper, något som han absolut inte kunde smälta. Att han aldrig förlät Berwald visade sig när denne blev aktuell för inval i Musikaliska Akademin. Den lurade experten var visserligen sjuk men han lät sig bäras från sin sjukbädd till Akademin, så att han skulle ta tillfälle att rösta mot Berwalds medlemskap! Hur man skaffar sig ovänner i ledande positioner var sålunda inte något som Berwald behövde lektioner i och härtill kom det faktum att han vistades utomlands långa perioder, vilket inte just gjorde det lättare för honom att ta någon av de platser vid olika musikaliska institutioner, som i stället gick till betydligt sämre meriterade sökande.

Konserten (med *Sinfonie sérieuse*) ägde rum på Kungl. Teatern den 2 december 1843 och dess program kan vara roligt att se i sin helhet eftersom det ger en intressant inblick i den tidens konsertliv. Tillställningen var uppdelad i tre delar. Den första innehöll uvertyren till Trollflöjten av Mozart, en duett ur Haydns Årstiderna, Berwalds Minnen från norska fjällen och Bajadärfesten plus en aria ur Modehandlerskan, den andra *Sinfonie sérieuse* och den tredje, slutligen, Jag går i kloster en operett av Berwald som därmed framfördes för första gången i sin helhet. Ett något mastigt och brokigt program, minst sagt.

Det finns en berömd recension ur Dagligt Allehanda där symfonin sablas ner totalt och där det bl a heter:

”Denna komposition är särdeles anspråksfull och dess i det hela mest utmärkande kännetecken är dess *obegriplighet*. De mest bisarra och ovanliga tonförbindelser jäkta varandra utan uppehåll, och örat söker förgäves någon enkel, melodisk sats till tröst och vederkvickelse under allt detta musikaliska eller kanske snarare omusikaliska virrvarr. Någon gång tyckte vi oss märka början eller liksom esquisser av en lugnare sats. Men ständigt bedrog vi oss i våra förhoppningar på lugn, sans och klarhet. Ty om idéerna tycktes vilja börja att reda sig, och en enkel melodi dök upp ur de stormande tonmassorna, var hr B. strax färdig att klippa av dem och med våld åter föra sina åhörare in på sin stora musikaliska öken.”

Innan vi, som ju har fördelen av att ha hört ytterligare tre symfonier av Berwald – däribland de två bästa, gör oss för lustiga över recensentens omdömen, bör det sägas att han tillade:

”Möjligt är att symfonien kan vinna genom ett förnyat åhörande, och till äventyrs var den *nu* ej utförd med den punktlighet och finess eller med den instrumentstyrka, som komponisten önskat.”

Det är lätt att glömma att vi nu genom skivor och annan teknik alltid har lätt tillgång till ett verk och dessutom var av allt att döma framförandet under hovkapellmästaren och Berwalds kusin Johan Fredrik Berwald ett uselt sådant, dåligt förberett med en enda repetition och illa utfört. Ett utslag av avundsjuka trodde Berwald själv och möjligen hade han rätt.

## **Symfoni nr 2 i C-dur, Sinfonie capricieuse (1842) (Bärenreiter)**

1. *Allegro*
2. *Andante*
3. *Final: Allegro assai*

Den andra symfonin, i D-dur med tillnamnet Sinfonie capricieuse är omgiven av mystik. Strax efter Berwalds död försvann partituret under gåtfulla omständigheter och har sedan aldrig återfunnits. Vad vi nu har är en skiss, daterad 18 juni 1842, med tre namnpåskrifter: Sinfonie singulière, Sinfonie pathétique och Sinfonie capricieuse. Möjligen är det bara fråga om olika namnförslag som Berwald lekt med och skrivit ner spontant. Hur som helst kom ju Singulière till användning vid ett senare tillfälle och Pathétique blev så småningom namnet på en symfoni även helt annan tonsättare. Namnet Sinfonie capricieuse är emellertid inramat på skissen och av detta och en del andra omständigheter har man dragit slutsatsen att det verkligen är fråga om samma symfoni vars fullständiga partitur kom bort så mystiskt.

Eftersom den bevarade skissen är mycket ofullständig gjorde professor Ernst Ellberg 1913 en orkestrering som låg till grund för symfonins första framförande den 9 januari 1914, med Armas Järnefelt som dirigent. I den kompletta Berwaldutgåvan ingår en senare version av Nils Castegren och numera är det alltid den som spelas, så också på den här inspelningen.

## **Symfoni nr 3 i C-dur, Sinfonie singulière (1845) (Bärenreiter)**

1. *Allegro fuocosso*
2. *Adagio – Scherzo: Allegro assai – Adagio*
3. *Final: Presto*

Hans tredje symfoni har namnet Sinfonie singulière och även om alla symfonierna bär drag av Berwalds mycket personliga stil, så passar det kanske allra bäst in här. Den uppvisar samma formella särdrag som en gång septetten, med scherzot inneslutet i den långsamma satsen. Sinfonie singulière

brukar anses som Berwalds främsta symfoni. Den uruppfördes den 10 januari 1905, med Tor Aulin som dirigent.

## **Symfoni nr 4 i Ess-dur (1845) (Bärenreiter)**

1. *Allegro risoluto*
2. *Adagio*
3. *Scherzo: Allegro molto*
4. *Final: Allegro vivace*

Även den fjärde symfonin, den i Ess-dur, också den från 1845, hade ursprungligen ett tillnamn, Sinfonie naïve, men det strök Berwald senare själv, förmodligen för att han var orolig att det skulle missförstås. Vad han avsåg med namnet var säkert symfonins ogrumlade air av harmoni och konfliktlöshet, den känsla av välbefinnande och emotionell balans den urstrålar som också tagit sig uttryck i en formell fulländning. Själv höll Berwald den mycket högt och för Sveriges minister i Paris, Gustaf Löwenhielm lär han ha betecknat den som ”det bästa verk jag i den vägen skrivit”. Symfonin omfattar de fyra vanliga satserna och fick sitt uruppförande den 9 april 1878, med Berwalds tonsättarkollega Ludvig Norman som dirigent.

## **Tragisk uvertyr till Estrella de Soria (1841) (Hirsch)**

Operaplaner sysselsatte Berwald under större delen av hans liv, vilket knappast är så konstigt med en kompositör som i sin ungdom tillbringade arr antal år i Kungl. Hovkapellet. Men han var varken den förste eller siste att råka ut för undermåliga librettister. Och även om Estrella de Soria är hans mest lyckade försök, så säger det inte så mycket. Handlingen utspelas i 1400-talets Spanien och är ett kärleks- och svartsjukedrama med åtskilliga intrikata och mer eller mindre trovärdiga turer. Faktum är att det mest positiva med denna och en annan opera, Drottningen av Golconda, är att de inspirerat Berwald till två fina uvertyrer som står sig mycket väl i jämförelse med de av t ex Weber och Schumann.

## **Pianokonsert i D-dur (1855) (Bärenreiter)**

1. *Allegro con brio*
2. *Andantino*
3. *Allegro molto*

Berwalds pianokonsert är ett sent verk och fullbordades i november 1855. Partituret har en anteckning om att ”verket kan spelas utan orkester” och är ovanligt på så sätt att solisten är i elden hela tiden. Den är tillägnad Hilda Thegerström, en elev som Berwald ägnade speciell omsorg och förmodligen också hjälpte till de stipendier som gjorde det möjligt för henne att studera först i Paris och sedan i Weimar för ingen mindre än Franz Liszt. Den senare har med sedvanlig älskvardhet uttalat sig om hennes ”osedvanliga musikaliska begåvning”. Konserten kom dock inre att uruppföras förrän 1904, med kompositörens sondotter Astrid Berwald som solist. Det finns bedömare som betraktar pianokonserten med vänligt överseende som en produkt av en tid då Berwalds självkritik börjat överge honom. Men faktum är att i rätta händer är den mycket intressant. Kanske skulle den ha försetts med samma uppmaning som Berwald en gång försåg A-durkvintetten med: ”Däremot skulle jag vara mycket tacksam om herrar virtuoser som bara spelar med fingrarna och inte med hjärna och hjärta vore vänliga att lämna mina kompositioner ifred.”

*David Nelson/Lars Johansson*