STJEPAN ŠULEK

Pavle Dešpalj

Stjepan Šulek, the great Croatian composer, was above all a versatile artist. After abandoning very early his career of a violine virtuoso, he devoted himself entirely to composing. In his impressive body of work, he relies mostly on the Late Romantic style, combining with it the Neo-Baroque, Neo-Classicist and the Neo-Romantic elements. He is a very skilled in the composition technique and unmatched in orchestration. The music of Šulek originates from his enormous musical gift and creative energy, from a firm belief in his own mission and artistic ideals but also from his inexhaustible musical invention and an exquisite sense for the sound and interpretation. Šulek was truly one of the greatest interpreters of his age, and his interpretations, especially those as a conductor of the Zagreb Chamber Orchestra, are ranked among the worlds' best. He was also an excellent teacher. As an expert arbitrator in the issues of musical esthetics, he represented a mainstay to his students. Even those among them who later explored entirely different ways are looking at him today with unreserved respect and remember him with awe.

Stjepan Šulek was and has remained the key personality of the 20th-century Croatian music, which he replenished with all it lacked, and we are therefore always indebted to him.