Alban Berg

Lyrische Suite | for string orchestra - Work

Introduction

Alban Berg arranged Three Pieces (I, III and IV) from the Lyric Suite (originally for string quartet) for string orchestra in 1927. My arrangement of the three remaining movements (I, V and VI) means it is now possible to perform the complete Lyric Suite for string orchestra as part of a larger concert programme. In orchestrating it, I have kept as close as possible to Berg’s style.

From previous experience (my adaptation of the Sonate op 1 for piano [1908] for orchestra of 1984), I know that the enormous intensity of the music asks for a great diversity of ideas regarding texture and individual part writing. On a more basic, technical level this means that the double stops in the quartet version are usually replaced by solo/tutti-divisi or ordinary divisions. The adding of the double bass line often has consequences for the other parts.

These “six rather short movements of a lyrical rather than symphonic character” (as Berg called it) are easier to perform with larger groups than with a string quartet. The piece is enhanced by the richness of sound and clarification of structure.

Theo Verbey