

Video

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In collaboration with [VCO Azzurra Tv](#)

**Thursday, August 28 2008, 8.30 p.m.**  
Stresa, Congress Hall



[Thomas Zehetmair](#) □□□□□□□ violin  
[Sally Matthews](#) □□□□□□□□□□□□ soprano  
[Orchestra delle Settimane Musicali di Stresa](#)  
[Gianandrea Noseda](#) □□□□□□□ conductor

**I. Stravinsky, *Violin concerto* □**  
**G. Mahler, *Symphony no. 4***

Where is melancholy and where are smiles in the Concerto for violin by Stravinsky and in the IV Symphony by Mahler? Where we do not expect them.

The forcedly flaunted smile in Stravinsky's score seems like a caricatural expression of certain cardboard masks: sometimes they hide a smile, but mostly they cover a melancholy that does

not want to be evident, or a chaste sadness that needs to be concealed. Aseptic thought seen as a stylistic conquer, rational interpreting, restrained emotions and the mathematical coldness of certain ingenious rhythmical combinations: these masks have often hidden Stravinsky's melancholy, due to his being profoundly Russian but still deliberately in exile in the rest of the world. Often I have wondered why Stravinsky had decided to be buried in Venice: could it be because Venice, with its canals, is the city which mostly resembles Saint Petersburg, his hometown?

Mahler does the opposite. Melancholy is part of his profound nature: even pictures that portray him are drenched with graveness. It could be because of the oval spectacles that hide his eyes – always somewhat half-closed – or else because of his small grimace, almost a twitch of his lips, that looks like a smile's resigned shadow. His music is so similar to him, rich in sublime poetry and in unexpected roughness, in tenderness and force, with military marches and motherly lullabies. These contrasts are surely tied together and sometimes one is the cause or the consequence on the other. To reach the peak it is necessary to be strongly rooted to the ground, tenderness is an expression of force, rhythmical repetition is common both to lullabies and to military marches. If it is true that a smile can lead to melancholy, the opposite journey could bring us to disillusion and dismal.

His IV Symphony ends with that shy and resigned shadow of a smile.

Gianandrea Nosedà



[The Congress Hall](#) , historical venue of the Festival, is situated in the heart of Stresa, few meters from the railway station and from all the most important hotels and restaurants.

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