***Masterful works by Wilhelm Berger***

Like most of the other composers from the circle of the so-called Berlin academics, Wilhelm Berger developed a masterly compositional skill. Stylistically, his music is close to Johannes Brahms, but through occasional use of dissonant harmonies and a preference for contrapuntal compositional techniques, it also points ahead to Max Reger, who succeeded Berger as Meiningen Court Kapellmeister. Considering his short lifetime, the composer's catalog of works is very extensive, with over 100 opus numbers, and his output was highly respected long after his death. His concert piece op. 43a remained unprinted - or cannot be acquired in print to this day. It is by no means a virtuoso concerto that places the piano soloist and his technical abilities in the sole spotlight. Instead, the composer sees the piano as an orchestral, i.e. polyphonic, instrument that can independently create both voluminous and dense movements. Ten years after the concert piece, Wilhelm Berger put the finishing touches to his most extensive orchestral work to date, the First Symphony in B flat major, op. 71, which was to bring lasting success.