



The Bruckner Journal

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What does Bruckner's 7th look like?

MY FIRST Bruckner 7 was on LP, in one of those Deutsche Grammophon folding sleeves with stitched borders, light cream with the wide yellow vertical band down the centre. It had the look of quality and seriousness of purpose. Thereafter there were CDs with mountainscapes, details of church architecture, conductor portraits. The sound emerged from the copper coloured mesh of my father's electrostatic loudspeaker; outside, through the leaded lights of the living room windows, a suburban garden with a lawn and rose bushes was visible.

My first concert performance was in London's Royal Festival Hall, the Philharmonia orchestra in their black suits, white shirts and bow ties, spread out before us, the brass glinting gold in the stage lighting; Otto Klemperer sat like a trembling hawk on a high stool, towering above them.

The printed scores had their characteristic covers, the grey of the Leipzig complete edition, dark blue-green of Breitkopf & Hartel's Haas edition, the yellow Eulenburgs, the light blue MWV Nowak edition.

Nowadays, online, it is possible to see Bruckner's original manuscripts. We can actually see the image of the real thing as the composer wrote and bequeathed it, look at the marks his pen made on the manuscript paper, now slightly browned with age. You can magnify and look closely at the disputed percussion in the Adagio, see the 'gilt nicht' [not valid] that some other hand or hands have written, and try to make up your own mind.

Without doubt, we all have a gallery of images associated with our experience of this Bruckner Symphony - and of course with the other symphonies too. Various artists have created their own images in response to the music, examples are Ferdinand Eckhardt and Jack Ox. In the Bruckner Journal we publicised an oil painting by Edwina Broadbent, *Landscape inspired by Bruckner's 7th Symphony*. And now Gerhard Symons has embarked upon a long journey to create a whole series of artworks built on the numbers, the nationality, the notes and other motifs supplied by the symphonies, aiming to create a full series to celebrate Bruckner's 200th birthday. A work for the first movement of the 7th was unveiled at The Bruckner Journal Readers' Conference in Hertford College Oxford in April 2015 - and he has generously sponsored a full colour centrefold in this issue giving all readers a chance to become acquainted with his work.

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The Bruckner Journal

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The Ninth Bruckner Journal Readers' Conference

Hertford College Oxford - 17/18 April 2015

Hertford College Oxford generously made the Drawing and Dining Rooms of the Principal's Lodging available for the Conference, as the Old Hall, our accustomed venue, was undergoing refurbishment. These rooms made a particularly fine setting for our meeting and *The Bruckner Journal* is indebted to the College and to Dr Paul Coones for their hospitality.

Indeed, we owe a considerable further debt of gratitude to Paul Coones, who not merely provided the musical services of the St Clement's String Quartet for our closing concert, but also a generous supply of wine for a post-concert reception, which rounded the Conference off very nicely indeed.

Many delegates took advantage of Bed & Breakfast facilities in Oxford Colleges, and those who stayed at Wadham and Christ Church reported warmly on the quality of the rooms and breakfasts. Although numbers attending were slightly down on previous years, there were several new faces and some younger faces, which gives encouraging signs that interest in Bruckner and our Conference is being continuously regenerated.

After welcoming those attending, the sombre duty fell to me of recalling those Brucknerians who had died since last we met: Franz Zamazal and Dr Erich Wolfgang Partsch, who were both contributors to *The Bruckner Journal*, Tony Newbould, Dr Theophil Antonicek, and our founding editor, Peter Palmer.

The first paper to be delivered on the Friday evening was my own, entitled *Bruckner's Vision*, in which I explored the paradox that although there was little evidence of Bruckner having any great visual sense - he's rarely if ever reported as having expressed any reactions to landscapes, architecture, art - those who listen to him, write programme notes, together with designers of LP and CD covers, frequently present images, primarily mountains and cathedrals. I concluded that images were a mixed blessing that tended to moderate the characteristic strangeness of the music.

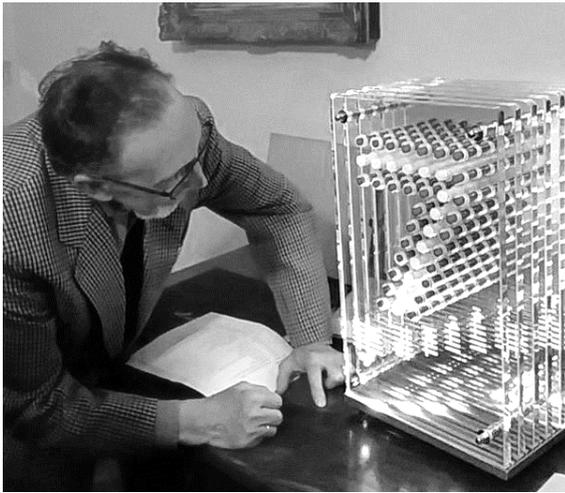


Prof. Paul Hawkshaw

Three papers were presented by those involved in editorial work on the New Complete Bruckner Edition, who each gave a glimpse into the manifold problems that arise from detailed examination of the manuscript sources. Dr Dermot Gault went into some detail about his work on the Fifth Symphony, listing sources and chronology, making a close comparison between the principal manuscript source and the critical editions already published. Dr Crawford Howie gave an insight into his work on the Mass in D minor, discussing amongst other things some changes Bruckner made in 1876 and in 1881/82, as well as the handling of a few orchestral string parts marked 'solo' which, he believes, are in fact intended to be genuine solos, not group solos; and Dr Thomas Röder from Würzburg University talked about his work on the 1st symphony manuscripts, on which various entries in hands other than Bruckner's can be found, difficult if not impossible to identify or date. What was a revelation to those of us not involved in this sort of work was the immense amount of very precise examination of the sources that is required - one wondered at the sheer logistics of comparing so many sources - and the difficulty of making editorial decisions on the basis of often contradictory and nebulous information.

Prof. Paul Hawkshaw's paper, *Bruckner's Will in the 21st Century*, charted his own progress from being a strong supporter of Haas's interpretation of Bruckner's will as having significant implications with respect to the versions of the symphonies; whereas now he has come to the conclusion that the will says nothing on that subject beyond what Bruckner expected his publisher Eberle to do. Bruckner could, at any time, especially when he added a codicil about arrangements for his burial, have added some specification about exactly which manuscripts

were to be given to the library, or what he expected his editors to do with them. Hawkshaw cited attorney Rolf Keller's assessment of Bruckner's legal priorities in this order: a) to ensure his burial was according to his wishes; b) to ensure that posterity would recognize his position as a notable composer whose manuscripts should be in the Vienna Court Library; and c) to provide for his long-time housekeeper Katharina Kachelmeier and for his siblings. But it was not an instrument to speak to posterity about versions and editions.



Dr Crawford Howie takes a close look at the Bruckner200 7th Symphony piece unveiled at the Conference.

Dr Paul Coones talked to us about performing Bruckner's String Quartet, giving considerable, and entertaining, insight into the challenges it presented the St Clement's Quartet (an amateur quartet in which Dr. Coones plays the cello). Dr Andrea Harrantdt, from the Music Collection at Austrian National Library, Vienna, and the International Bruckner Society, presented a richly illustrated lecture titled, *Bruckner – a simple man but a great composer*, on the sort of man and composer Bruckner was, and was seen to be.

Prof. Eric Lai examined in some detail retouchings of Bruckner's Eighth Symphony done by conductor Clemens Krauss, some of which suggested a knowledge of the first version of 1887, although this was hardly likely. The final paper was from Prof. William Carragan, who unfortunately was unable to attend, so the paper was read to the Conference. It was titled, *Conductorial Traps in Bruckner* and examined mainly considerations of tempo relations between A, B and C themes in Bruckner's first and last movements.

On the Friday evening Gerhard Symons unveiled a three-dimensional artwork celebrating the first movement of Bruckner's 7th Symphony, part of an ongoing project culminating in 2024, BRUCKNER200, (see the colour centrefold of this issue). Other works in the series can be seen on www.bruckner200.com.

On the Saturday evening the St Clement's Quartet played Bruckner's String Quartet - as predicted by Dr Coones, it proved quite a challenging work for them - and Bach Brandenburg No.3; and Crawford Howie gave splendid performances of Schubert Impromptus and works for solo piano by Bruckner, closing with an impressive and moving performance of *Erinnerung*. KW (photographs from @bruckner200 + Dermot Gault)



Dr. Thomas Röder and Dr. Crawford Howie in conversation at the reception

Fitzwilliam String Quartet

The long awaited recording by the Fitzwilliam String Quartet of Bruckner's Quintet, Intermezzo and String Quartet, played using strings replicating those of Bruckner's time, has now been scheduled for release on a Linn Records CD in October 2015.

The FSQ plan to launch the CD with live concerts. Alan George, the quartet's viola player, will in the near future be contacting all those who generously donated towards the venture.

Franz Zamazal (15.8.1932 - 26.2.2015)

The world of Bruckner scholarship, friends and acquaintances were confronted totally unexpectedly at the end of February by the death of Franz Zamazal, one of the most distinguished experts on the Upper Austrian music scene, on the music history of the region, and above all on the biography and works of Anton Bruckner. He was well known as a journalist to many cultural aficionados. He was a valued critic in the *Upper Austrian News* and in the *Upper Austrian Culture Chronicle* and his academic contributions about Anton Bruckner were read with great interest. Very few, however, knew much of his life-story.

He was born on 15 August 1932 in Linz. After elementary school he attended grammar school, passing his school-leaving examinations in 1951. After graduating in Business Studies in Vienna he worked until his retirement (1992) in Chemie Linz AG. But already by the end of the 60s Zamazal was active as a cultural journalist. He wrote on all forms of music from Upper Austria. But his special preference was for Anton Bruckner. This was also the reason that he was a founder member of the Anton Bruckner Institute Linz and from the beginning a supporter of the interests of the Institute. This support continued right up to the time of his sudden passing away.

The Anton Bruckner Institute Linz owes Franz Zamazal a great debt of gratitude. He won lasting respect through his scholarly publications, and will also always be remembered in his restrained modesty as a friendly counsellor and selfless assistant.



Bruckner Conference, Kremsmünster

Anton Bruckner's Music for Piano

Academic Conference took place on 11 - 12 June 2015, Schloss Kremsegg, Kremsmünster

Unlike other composers of the time, Anton Bruckner created very few works for piano. What there were, were mainly dedication pieces or teaching material. Nevertheless, in some of these works that were created up until 1868 the maturing composing can already be recognised. This year's Bruckner Conference dedicated itself not only to the piano works of Anton Bruckner, but also threw light on the contemporary context of these works. Thereby Bruckner as teacher entered into the discussion as well as his composing for piano, and the instruments available to Bruckner were investigated. Transcription and reception were also not neglected. Considering that many of Bruckner's works received their premieres in versions for piano, and that his symphonies are nowadays being heard again in piano transcriptions, this aspect seems to be quite important.

The conference included a performance of works by Bruckner and his contemporaries on historical instruments, performed by Mario Aschauer, Wolfgang Brunner and Matthias Giesen.

Speakers included Peter Maria Krakauer, Salzburg; Klaus Petermayr, Linz; Rudolf Flotzinger, Graz; Sandra Föger, Kremsegg/Linz; Mario Aschauer, Huntsville (Texas); Matthias Giesen, St Florian/Wien; Peter Donhauser, Klosterneuburg; Karin Wagner, Linz/Wien; Wolfgang Brunner, Salzburg. The conference was chaired by Johannes Leopold Mayer.

Dr. Klaus Petermayr
Academic Director, Anton Bruckner Institute Linz

Trans. kw

www.bruckner-online.at

This splendid new Austrian web-site gives the best access to Bruckner original manuscripts on-line. The site is in German, but if on the home page, HANDSCHRIFTEN is selected, then WERK-DATENBANK, then use the dropdown menu in "WAB auswählen", choose the work by its WAB number, click on SUCHEN, the manuscript sources appear below (often necessitating scrolling down to find them). Clicking on the open book symbol in the details column will provide details of the source, and if it has been digitalised (i.e. scanned in so that it can be seen on-line) there will be a camera symbol to click on which opens the file and you will be able to see Bruckner's original manuscript - something which for decades had not been available to other than a select few.

Interpretative Traps in Bruckner

William Carragan

Read at the Ninth Annual Bruckner Journal Readers' Conference

Oxford University, April 18, 2015

Revised for publication June 2, 2015

Musical traditions originate and develop in many ways. J.S. Bach's forty-eight preludes and fugues, intended for harpsichord or clavichord and not published in his lifetime, became popular as piano music at the time of Haydn and Mozart. The result seems to have been more appropriate on the fortepianos of their time than it is on the modern concert grand. Thus in due time, a new tradition of performance on harpsichord and clavichord developed, with different phrasing and unequal tuning which its adherents claim bring out beauties in the music not accessible to pianists. This revolution was not brought about without difficulties, and is incomplete today. In another environment, the tradition of retouching of music in embellishment and orchestration was widespread a hundred or more years ago - examples abound from Mozart to Mahler - but in a different musical tradition, one is today much more likely to hear both piano and orchestral music rendered with strict fidelity to the sources, sometimes with an ungracious rigidity. In a higher criticism, we should not be surprised to find that decisions are often made through adherence to principles rather than through a balanced interpretation of the evidence we have as to the composer's intention, and to the beginnings of the traditions, whether they were faithful to the composer's intentions or not.

The performance tradition of Bruckner's music had a difficult beginning. His own conducting of the premieres of his First and Second Symphonies were praised, although in both cases the critics were bemused by the pieces themselves. It was a great tragedy that Johann von Herbeck did not live long enough to conduct the premiere of the Third, as he was a skilled and prestigious leader who would almost certainly have scored a success. Later advocacy by Richter and Levi and the young Nikisch consolidated the beginning of the tradition, but it is very difficult to know what they did with the music, although Nikisch almost certainly took the *ritardandos* in the finale of the Seventh. But we do have evidence of the treatments by Bruckner's students, the Schalk brothers and Ferdinand Löwe, who in the first editions of his symphonies saw to it that their ideas were entered into the score. This evidence needs to be treated with the utmost respect, despite the fact that it is sometimes associated with a debatable degree of adventurism with respect to the musical text itself, especially in the cases of the Fifth and Ninth Symphonies. How much we would like to know how Mattheson and Handel, or Haydn and Mozart, played Bach, or indeed how Schopenhauer would have translated Kant into English! Under the circumstances, we must make do with what we have, not dismissing the early tradition on principle, but humbly seeing what it delivers to the logical and effective unfolding of the musical experience.

The particular evidence which I would like to discuss here is that concerning the tempos of the first movements and finales of the eight Vienna-period symphonies, which in all sixteen cases have expositions of three themes. The decisions to be made concern the tempos of the three themes - whether they are equal, or whether the B theme is slower than the A and C themes, or whether some other specific scheme is specified. It is probably correct to say that the default system is that the A and C themes should be at the same tempo, with the B theme somewhat slower. But we find numerous performances from modern conductors which do not follow this practice, or follow it to such an exaggerated extent that the music loses integrity and forward mobility. In several cases, the first editions come to our rescue.

One of these cases is the first movement of the Sixth Symphony, which begins with a rapid ostinato on the high violins, containing triplets, accompanying the A theme and marked "*Majestoso*" but usually performed with a considerable amount of spirit. In due course the second or B theme is marked "*Bedeutend langsamer*", or "significantly slower", and by most conductors this is interpreted to be a tempo where the triplet quarters of the B theme are equal to the ordinary quarters of the A theme. That would mean that if the A theme were conducted at half note = 60, the B theme would be at half note = 40. Both tempos seem quite vigorous, and the transition from A to B is seamless. The ornate C theme, on the other hand, has no specific tempo indication in the Collected Edition score published for the first time in the 1930s, and accordingly conductors often direct it in a tempo not much faster than the B theme. But in fact the rhythm includes the triplets reminiscent of the A theme ostinato, and in the first edition we find the indication "*Gemäßigtes Hauptzeitmass, etwas breit*", or "moderated original tempo, somewhat broad", which would seem to indicate a tempo between 52 and 56. To hear this effect, one should listen to the three performances by Kubelík, or the one by Dohnányi, or the old one by Henry Swoboda, or the one from 1966 attributed to Swarowsky. In all of these a very animated C theme brings back the vigor of

the beginning and gives the exposition, and eventually the whole movement, a coherence and integrity not found in the performances in which the C theme slowly lumbers along as it does in the two Klemperer performances.

Here are the tempos of the A, B, and C theme for several conductors. First the good guys:

Swoboda, 56, 40, 55
"Swarowsky" 62, 45, 62
Kubelík Bavarian 61, 39, 55
Dohnányi 57, 38, 57
Venzago 65, 39, 61
Young 58, 37, 50
Naito 62, 45, 54

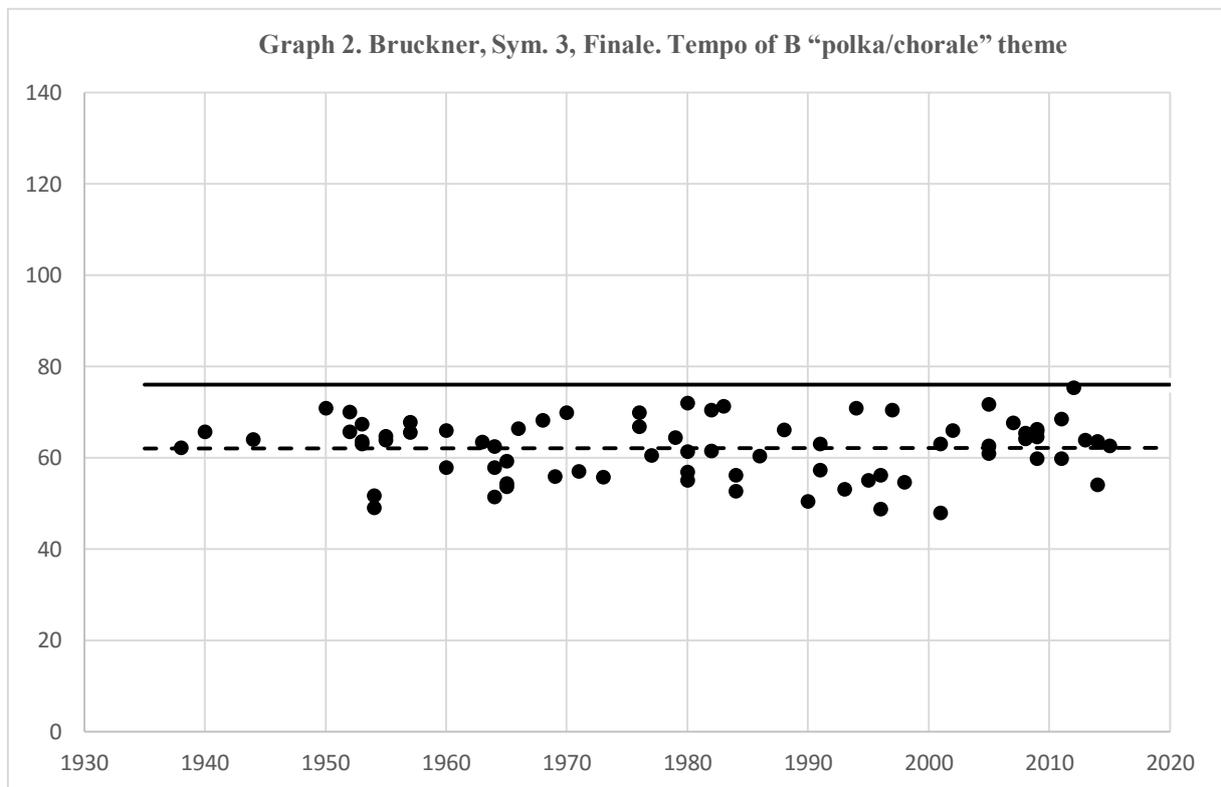
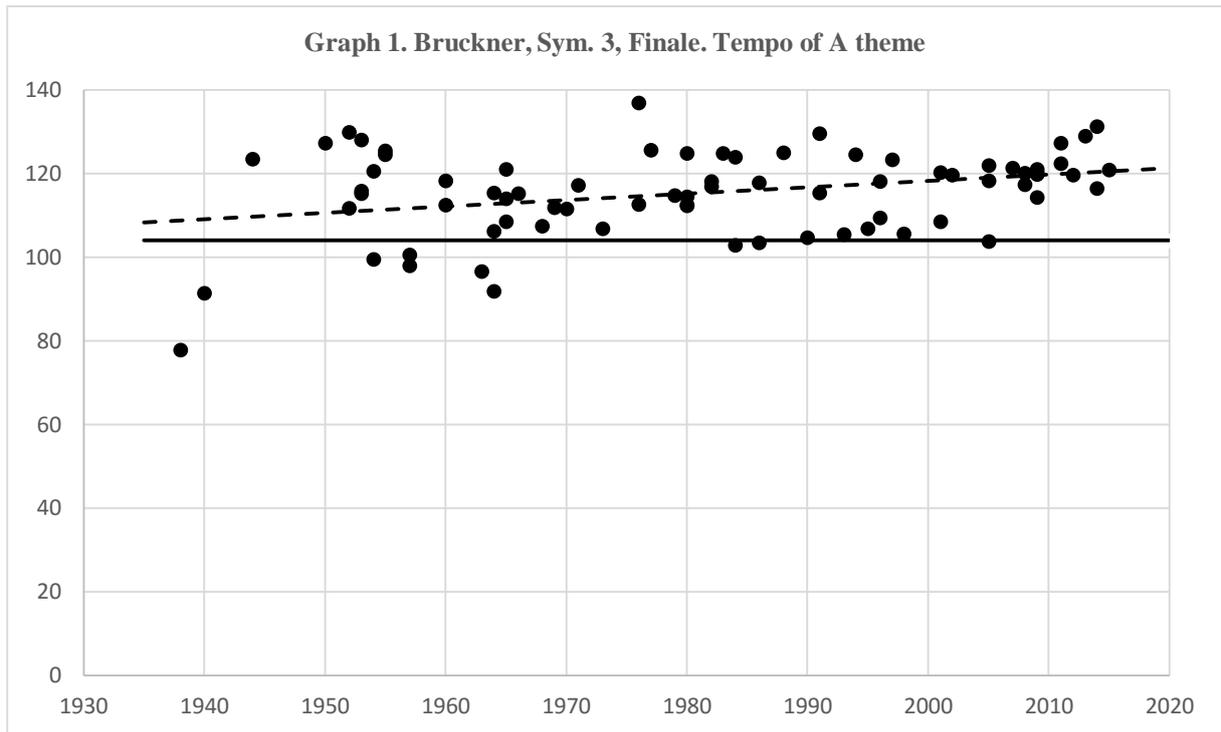
And now these, representing many others:

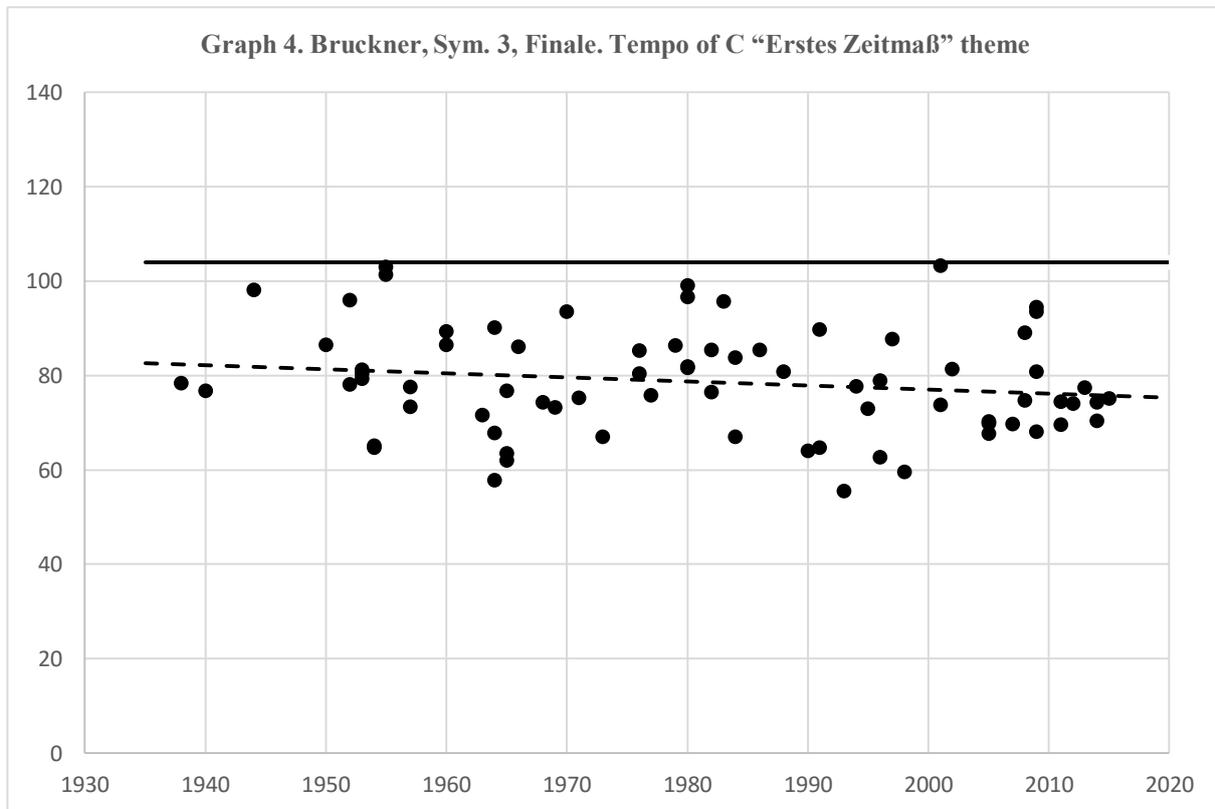
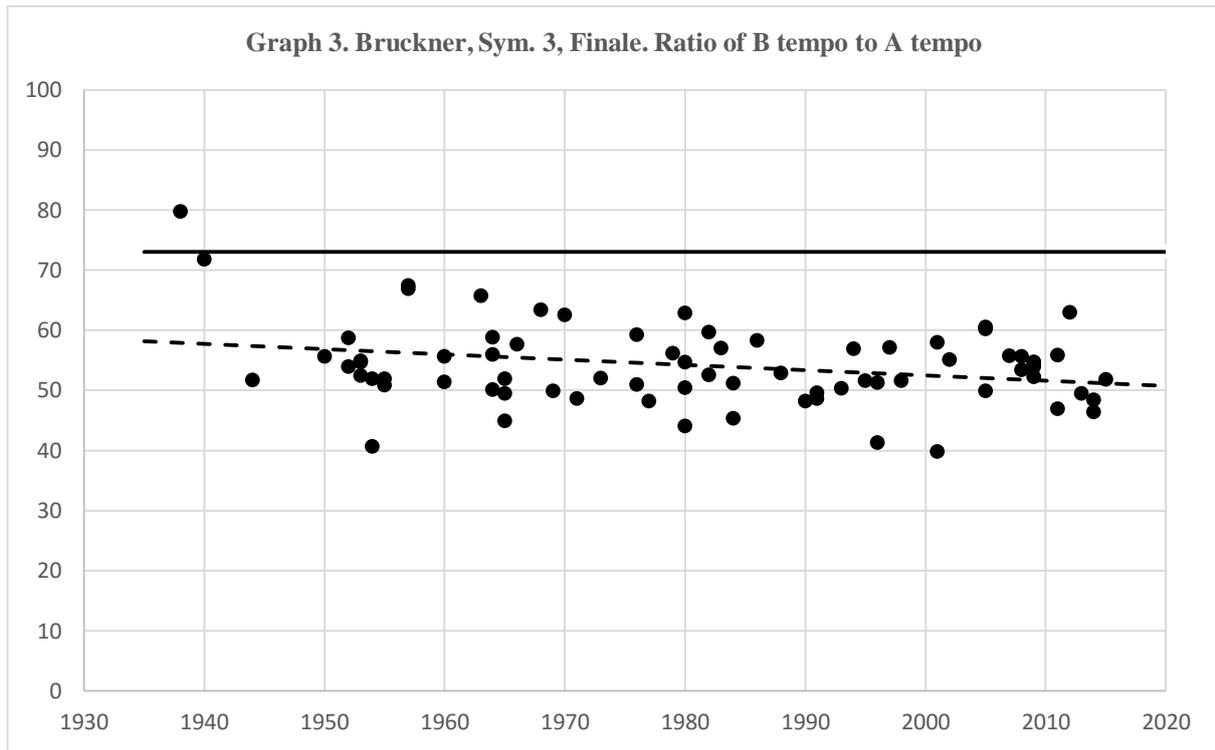
Klemperer New Philharmonia 47, 37, 41
Wand 56, 40, 44

How is it that these traditions developed, in opposition to each other? In fairness to the second group, which in my sample is much larger than the first group, it must be said that the Collected Edition used as a guiding principle that no indication would be entered except those in the manuscripts. The implication is of course that no other indications were necessary, indeed that the study of the music itself would make everything clear. But these symphonies are not like other music of the period; they represent a substantial enlargement of the idea of a symphony, beyond that developed from the work of Schumann and Mendelssohn harking back to Beethoven's middle-period work. For other symphonists like Brahms, Dvořák, Raff, and Draeseke, symphonies were 40 to 50 minutes long and had tidy, highly-integrated expositions with a continuous unfolding of thematic material, while Bruckner's outer movements are quite sectional, and for him the entire symphony is an hour long or quite a bit more. But the correct relationships among the sections, essential to the sense of unity of the movement, is by the Collected Edition often left up to the conductor.

Should the conductor be equal to the challenge? Perhaps, and maybe in that expectation Bruckner was very reluctant to indicate tempos in his music. That is not because he had any doubts as to what the tempos should be, but instead because he felt inwardly that the music could be played no other way than what he knew to be right. This is no conjecture: in the Second, which he conducted in both 1873 and 1876, there are numerous tempo indications added to the score and to the parts, sometimes by the copyist Carda and sometimes by the players themselves. Clearly Bruckner was giving necessary instructions from the podium to supplement what was already in the parts, and the players felt they needed to keep a record. And we must remember that both of these performances were praised by the critics for the quality of the conducting. Also, before Nikisch's first performances of the Seventh, Bruckner was nervous about the ritardandos in the finale, writing to the conductor that he must be careful to observe them, adding in his polite way that he was sure that Nikisch in his genius would have thought of that on his own. Well, Robert Haas for political reasons left them out of his 1944 edition of the Seventh, and there have been a lot of otherwise intelligent and sensitive conductors who following that edition did not observe them. So it really is true that conductors need musicologists and editors to consider these matters carefully, taking full and condign notice of whatever evidence from Bruckner's time that there is. And for the ritardandos, there is the score once owned by Bruckner's young friend the conductor Karl Muck, in which Bruckner made insertions and suggested detail changes for Muck to use, but never cancelled the ritardandos or the percussion or any other distinctive feature of the first edition.

Our next case is the finale of the Third. This movement contains the famous superposition of the polka and the chorale in the second theme group, which Bruckner himself, in a well-known story, said were to reflect both the joy of life and the solemnity of death, and in which he felt so strongly that the chorale should predominate, that his pencil cut through the paper of the score in which he was writing that down for the conductor to read. The opening theme, marked *Allegro*, is typically taken at half note = 108 to 126 or higher, more often than not in the upper part of that range, producing an effect which my highly-perceptive friend Paul Nudelman used to refer to as "crickets". This is shown in the accompanying Graph 1, where the dashed line indicates a slow drift with time toward faster tempos. Then the B theme is taken at a much reduced tempo, although merely marked "*Langsamer*" or "slower", some conductors being astonishingly in the 40s; the Graph 2 shows the scatter and the trend. The third theme is clearly marked "*Erstes Zeitmaß*", or "opening tempo", without qualification, but there is hardly any attempt by conductors to do that; see Graph 4 with its downward trend, opposite to that of the A theme. This is because the C theme is virtually impossible to render cleanly at a speed over half note = 108. Conductors seem to be dedicated to





the “crickets” tempo for the A theme, though, and so they simply throw up their hands and conduct the C theme at any tempo that occurs to them, and the situation is getting worse. Two notable exceptions are Roger Norrington and Osmo Vänskä. Norrington begins the movement *in modo cricketi*, and hauls the orchestra along in the C theme at some approximation to that, with chaotic results; Vänska does the same thing, but at a much more moderate tempo which makes his performance relatively successful. If the opening theme is taken at about half note = 104 to 108, there will be majesty instead of entomology, and with discipline the C theme can be rendered at a comparable speed as Bruckner asks in all versions. As for the B theme, the slow tempos taken by many conductors have their charm, but they do not contribute to the integrity of the movement. Chorales can be taken at any reasonably solemn speed, so probably the best way to arrive at a tempo is to concentrate on the polka, which if performed at the speed in which the well-known polkas of Smetana, Dvořák, and Weinberger are rendered, will be at a tempo of half note = 76 to 80. And at that speed the chorale will come into its own as a melodic element, while the polka will be the chattering accompaniment that Bruckner seems to have envisioned. The solid lines on the graphs show these “ideal” standards for comparison. I’d love to hear this piece done that way.

In detail: the tempo of the first theme of the finale does not have to be fast to be effective. The oldest recordings we have of the Third, that of Hans Weißbach conducting a combined Berlin-Leipzig orchestra in 1938, and a fragment of a performance by Fritz Lehmann and the Berlin Philharmonic from 1940. Lehmann’s opening tempo is a deliberate and forceful 90, and Weißbach’s is an astonishing 78. These numbers are not sufficient to establish a trend (see the graph), but heard in context they absolutely show that the A theme can be played with grandeur and determination and plenty of vigor at speeds much slower than conductors use today. Even Celibidache is faster; in my group his three performances are at 105, 106, and 115. At these slow speeds the movement takes on something of the monumental character of the beginning of the finales of the First and the Eighth. And the third theme can be played at the same tempo as the first theme.

The Smetana polkas are the one which is an episode in the tone-poem *Vltava (The Moldau)*, and the one at the end of the first act of the opera *Prodaná Nevěsta (The Bartered Bride)*, the Dvořák is the Slavonic dance op. 46, no. 3, identified as a polka by the composer, and the Weinberger is the hilarious, uproarious polka and fugue from the opera *Švanda dudák (Schwanda the Bagpiper)*. All of these are familiar to everyone. The slowest and most ornate one is the *Moldau* polka, which is taken at about 76 by most conductors; the Dvořák and the *Bartered Bride* polkas are less detailed and are taken at 80 to 88, or when the polka is choreographed and actually danced in the opera, as fast as 100. The Weinberger is unique, and usually makes its drunken, reeling progress close to 90. But Graph 2 shows that the Bruckner polka, which is no more detailed than the *Moldau* polka, is taken by just about everyone at a speed which would result in a sad, morose shuffling, or the spraining of many ankles by the dancers. As for Bruckner’s wish that the chorale predominate, this is certainly a matter of dynamics, and he considerably enhanced the lightly-scored chorale of 1873 in the revision of 1877, and beefed it up even more in 1889. It is really quite improper to make the chorale rule by slowing the dance down to the point where it cannot be danced. We know from many anecdotes that Bruckner really enjoyed having a good time, and it is all right for us to let him do that here.

Graph 3 shows the relationship between the B theme and the A theme. There seems to be a tendency to take the B theme at half the speed (50% on the graph) of the A theme, and indeed that relationship is specifically called for in the finale of the Fourth in the 1888 edition and almost certainly applies to the 1880 version as well. But here such a relationship would result in inappropriate tempos for both the A and B themes, unless one is willing to go as slow with the B theme as Knappertsbusch and Skrowaczewski, in whose performances the theme has its lyrical beauty without the slightest hint of a dance. The tempo relationship in the first movement of the Sixth is explicitly 67%, and here the ratio between my suggested ideal tempos of $A = C = 104$ and $B = 76$ is 73%, and that is where the “ideal” horizontal line lies. In this connection one should remember that in the First and Second there is no indication in either the first or last movements to take B slower than A, and we can surmise that the idea of doing that came to Bruckner in stages.

Then, what is to be said about the fact that nearly all conductors play the C theme much slower than the A theme, even though the specific admonishment “Erstes Zeitmaß” is present in every edition for all to see? It has to be wrong, but the tradition to do that dates from a long time ago, as the Graph 4 shows. Indeed in Graphs 1 and 4 you can see that nearly all the A theme tempos are above the ideal line of 104 many of them far above it and drifting upward with time, while all the C theme tempos lie below it and drifting downward: not good news. Remarkably, the two earliest performances, by Hans Weißbach and Fritz Lehmann, both pre-

war, are reasonably observant of Bruckner's marking. In the case of Weißbach, one can credit that to the stern and magnificent tempo he chose for the A theme. But Lehmann's A theme is faster, but he is still able to return to it with real coherence. (It is very sad that this fine performance is preserved only as fragments of the finale, but what is left is still sufficient to establish the tempos of the three themes with confidence.)

The sources of the finale of the Eighth contain all the information that one would need to make a well-integrated performance. The opening tempo, specified in every edition at half note = 69, is demonstrably the speed of a horse's gallop, corresponding to Bruckner's avowed concept, the pomp and panoply of the Dreikaiserbund of 1884, the meeting of the three greatest temporal leaders of the world, for which he had such enthusiasm. The B theme is at half note = 60, not much slower, and the C theme, though not indicated in the manuscript, is given in the first edition as "Erstes Zeitmaß" just as in the Third Symphony finale, which should not surprise us. What does surprise me is that once again conductors mainly do not do that, preferring instead to conduct the opening theme much faster than Bruckner's tempo, and the second theme much slower than Bruckner's tempo, notwithstanding that the authentic tempos are staring them in the face. Working as a consultant to Benjamin Zander of the Boston Philharmonic, I was able to get him down to about 74 for the opening theme and the third theme, and up to an honest 60 for the second theme. The result was very satisfying to all concerned. In that context, one must remember that almost nobody today is familiar with the sound of one horse galloping, although Bruckner in the day of horse-drawn transportation must have known that sound well even though he would not have quite heard it in the roar of the festival. And the piano score by Schalk says 76 anyway. People say that this movement sprawls and does not hang together. Maybe so, but one must not make the mistake of blaming that on the composer.

The finales of the Eighth and Ninth contain in their second theme groups enclaves of different-sounding material, which in the Eighth is clearly specified to be at a slower tempo, though without a metronome mark. Most conductors follow that suggestion, and if the main tempo of the second theme is not too slow, quite effectively. In my completion of the Ninth I have also asked for a slower tempo; the passage is in F sharp major, which is one of the subordinate tonalities of this interesting movement and indeed of the whole symphony, and it needs emphasis and nuance. What is essential here is that the basic tempo of the second theme group be not too slow, so that these short passages of abated tempo and greater lyricism might not drag.

The outer movements of the Seventh Symphony do not follow this basic concept of A = fast, B = a bit slower, and C = A. In the first movement, there are specific metronome indications: A is half note = 58, B is quarter note = 108 which is a bit slower, and conducted in four for greater nuance, and the C theme is remarkably specified at quarter note = 96, slower still. When you hear the music, in most performances the relationship between B and C is much as Bruckner specifies, and looking at the textures, one can see why. But the A theme is never conducted at that tempo. Conductors regularly lead it at less than 50, sometimes less than 40. Now this is a beautiful melody. Bruckner said it came to him in a dream. And dreamy is the way you hear it, with great sentimentality, often to the extent of self-parody. On the evidence of the exposition, it is hard to condemn this practice, and everybody loves a good tune. But when the development comes, difficulties arise. There the A theme is integrated into the symphonic structure, and it is inevitably played much faster than at the beginning. In one place, it is marked by Nowak as "*molto animato*", and in the first publication as "*Tempo I*" or "*Tempo I. (molto animato)*". Anyone who has heard this passage at half note = 58 will agree that that tempo is indeed quite animated. And it should be so at the recapitulation as well, and at the beginning too. If the movement is performed at these tempos, its duration will be about 17 minutes, and it will sound like a well-integrated symphonic allegro. But many performances these days go over 20 minutes, even 23. One imagines that conductors expect that Bruckner enthusiasts will be very tolerant. And indeed they are. But among historic performances, only Horenstein in 1928 plays the A theme that fast, and even he goes faster in the B theme, even though Bruckner's metronome marking says to get slower. One should remember that the B theme is derived from the B theme of the Adagio of the Fifth Symphony, and should be done with gentle grace and attentive nuance. And if it is beaten in four, it will be substantially slower and more intimate. Again, I'd love to hear it done that way.

The finale of the Seventh also has an anomalous tempo structure, with the first theme, containing the ritardandos, at half note = 63, and the second and third themes both indicated at half note = 52. The triple-arched structure, a tremendous advancement based on the highly-innovative finale of the Quintet and building on the architecture of the contemporaneously-composed Te Deum, provides that A = C in melodic contour, if not in basic tempo. But the use of the ritardandos in the A theme, which go well below 52 in the capable, experienced, and determined hands of Jochum, Klemperer, or von Matačić, provide a connection in weight and tempo which helps to integrate the musical structure. There are 10, or perhaps 12 ritardandos, but only a

few of them are debatable - those at the beginning, and those in the development where the theme is inverted in A minor. The others are fully provided for in the tempo indications of all editions, and everyone does them. As for the chorale, extending throughout the second theme, the tempo needs to be relaxed but energetic, never dry or churchy. Those of us who have had the opportunity of hearing the recording made by Toscanini from so long ago, know why it has never been released. His interpretation is more than acceptable. It is full of eloquent nuance, giving the lie to the too-often-told story about his attitude toward Bruckner. But in the finale, for some reason he rescored the chorale completely and made an utter hash of it. It is too bad.

The finale of the Fourth, in the versions of 1874 and 1878, has a simple tempo structure: A = fast, B = slower, C = fast. In particular the second theme group has two brief melodies, one, B1, first presented in C major, and right after that another, B2 in G major. The entire second theme group is devoted to the interplay of these two cheerful ideas. But in the version of 1880, retained in 1888, Bruckner introduced a new, quite slow element at the beginning of the second theme group, which for the sake of consistency in analysis I call B0, "B-zero". (This is not the first time the concept of "zero" has been applied to Bruckner's music.). Tempo indications are not given in detail in 1880, but in 1888, they are, with B0 beaten in 4, with the notation "the quarters as previously the halves". The tempo referred to is the tempo of the great unison theme, indicated at half note = 66, "*Hauptzeitmaß*" or "main tempo", while the beginning, later referred to as "*Zeitmaß wie zu Anfang*" or "tempo as at the beginning" is faster at half note = 72. Thus B0 is explicitly intended to be at quarter note = 66. Then, in due time when B1 and B2 enter the discussion, they are marked respectively "*belebter*" or "livelier" and "*noch belebter*" or "even more lively". This would put B1 at perhaps 72 and B2 at 80. Whether these tempos could be back-applied to the versions of 1878 and 1874 could be argued, but one could do worse. This word "*belebter*" or its derivatives occurs in no manuscript of which I am aware, except the elusive backup of the edition of 1888; it seems to be part of the linguistic arsenal of Bruckner's students. But it still expresses a tempo structure which works, and which is from Bruckner's lifetime.

The foregoing is not the only problem in this movement. One of the innovations of 1880 is a new section in the A theme group, following the great unison, which is used again as a new C theme, replacing the scalewise motive of 1874 and 1878. At the tempo of half note = 66, this new idea, which I call A3, is very active and quite difficult to play. And when it reappears as the C theme, it is even more detailed. Too many conductors play it in a heavy and labored manner, as they do the C theme of the first movement of the Sixth. But in his extremely valuable recording Marek Janowski sails into it full steam ahead, in accordance with the first-edition tempo marking "*Im Hauptzeitmaß*" even though he might not have been aware of that stipulation as it is sadly not in the Collected Edition. For him it was probably sufficient that the music should sound the same at measure 155 in the third theme group as it did at measure 51 in the first theme group. One wishes other conductors would do the same. This tempo is clearly half note = 66, established in the first edition at measure 43; nobody could play it at the half note = 72 of measure 1. Still, hearing it done that way is thrilling, and of course contributes to the consistency of the whole movement.

Urgency is given to the cases of the finales of the Third and Fourth, as in their revisions, in the Fourth dating from 1880 and in the Third from 1889, the forms became technically defective, that is, they no longer contained material essential to their possession of classic sonata form. That does not mean that they were made inferior, but it does mean that certain internal cues, understood by all podium masters, aren't there anymore. Whenever Bruckner started a symphony, the first version always had a formal perfection, to which nobody could take exception. But at least in these two cases, that formal perfection was abandoned, and the piece becomes episodic and to the ungodly, capable of being declared formless. This is all the more reason why related themes should be played with consistency and integrity so as to bring out the unity which is still present in style even if not in structure. Perhaps the Liszt tone poems were what he had in mind, although Bruckner could do only so much to transform the movement by re-writing as well as cutting. It is significant that in performing the Fourth, Gustav Mahler, who was adamantly opposed to the 1889 revision of the Third, cut out all of the loud music of the finale of the Fourth except the unison near the beginning and the end of the coda. Not many people would have the nerve to do that today. And Mahler himself would have never done something like that in his own compositions.

In the astonishingly ambitious and detailed first movement of the Fifth, where the first edition was published without Bruckner's oversight, there is a curious omission of tempo indications in the thematic catalogue which begins the recapitulation. At measure 325, the *fff* material of the development, being played at the regular *Allegro* tempo of the A theme, is suddenly cut off and the winds quietly play the chorale of the B theme in legato chords, which had been heard in the exposition only as pizzicato. There is no pause before

the wind chords, but conductors often make an *Auftakt* or significant reset at that point, continuing in the tempo of the second theme even though there is no indication to do so, not even in the first edition. There are four measures of the chorale, then two more measures of the *fff* development material, then seven more quiet measures of the B theme in detached wind chords followed by pizzicato strings. Then there is a recall of the great chorale of the exposition, massive brass chords with the theme played by the bass trombone and the newly-introduced contrabass tuba. After that, matters continue much as they did in the exposition, except the music leads directly to the loud statement of the A theme. For none of this is there the slightest tempo indication. But the style of the music, and the logic of its development, require utterly that the tempos of these themes as they were first presented also be used here. If this argument is accepted, and I do not see how it cannot be, we see once again that Bruckner is totally capable of leaving out essential tempo directions. This is a composer whose articulations and dynamics are always entered in his holograph scores in meticulous redundancy, to leave no doubt as to his intentions. Nobody can really explain why only the tempo indications are incomplete, but wisdom arises from the understanding that they are.

Two other cases will bring our discussion to a close - the first brief, the second not. When I made the historical tempo study of the Sixth, in which I measured over one hundred recent recordings of the first movement, I also studied the more idiosyncratic finale to see what the customs and trends might be. I could not determine any overall error or misconception that could be identified and handled, but I still had an undefinable sense of better work here than there. In particular the Klemperer performances, so strangely ill-defined in the first movement, were truly excellent in the rest of the symphony. The tempo relations are difficult, but seem to be well covered by the indications, particularly in the C theme which in the exposition begins with a recall of a segment of the A theme and continues with a new motive which is derived from an idea in the main theme group of the Adagio. The one particular need seems to be that the conductor must truly believe that the strange oscillation between F minor and the potential of A major, with which the symphony ends, is effective and appropriate. And some do that well, and some do not.

The Third Symphony entered my world in the early 1950s, first through the Remington recording of the 1889 version by Zoltan Fekete and the Mozarteum Orchestra, and then by the Royale recording of the 1878 version by Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt and his NWDR (recently identified as such by John Berky, although at the time the conductor was only represented to us as the mysterious Gerd Rubahn). At the time I was very bemused by this work; many details were undetected in these early recordings, played on our inadequate reproduction apparatus, yet I always felt that something in those long silences was still propelling the music forward. In writing this work, Bruckner took what he had learned from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in composing his own Second Symphony, and brought it even closer to that daunting archetype, not just in his choice of tonality. But instead of Beethoven's manic first-movement energy, where the music hurtles forward on its vast discursive track straight to the end, Bruckner brings us unison outbursts and pregnant pauses with gentle, lyrical chorale-like phrases which often seem to interrupt the forward motion. Very moderate speeds are nearly always used for this music, especially in the A2 (unison) theme. And when the A1 (trumpet) theme comes back *fff* in the tonic key in the middle of the development, a taboo by any standard, the music rolls on as if nothing untoward had happened, and the analyst is left in the dust.

Something makes this movement work, despite its discontinuity of texture. The contrast between the unison passages, in which hardly anybody tries to maintain a true Allegro pulse, with the other passages of considerable consistent momentum, may itself be the intellectual source of motive power. The passages of continuous motion include not only the opening passage with the trumpet melody both in exposition and recapitulation, but also the far longer gradual buildup of the development from the patient dialogue at its beginning, moving from F minor up through G minor and A minor to a long preparation for the loud and highly unconventional tonic statement of the trumpet theme. The motion continues even after the trumpet theme, until a hush is followed by the obligatory late-development discussion of the B theme which for Bruckner nearly always precedes the recapitulation. One could imagine that a movement with so many contrasts could be basically narrative, like Liszt's *Hunnenschlacht* where the vigorous, rhythmic surges of the full orchestra representing the might of Attila and his horsemen and chariots, is faced down by the gentle harmonium representing the quiet and confident prayer of Pope Leo. But Bruckner puts this contrast squarely into a robust, balanced, and intellectually satisfying sonata structure which needs no accompanying story.

Conductors react to this movement differently, with durations from less than 18 minutes up to more than 32, suggesting a greater than usual disagreement as to how the movement should go. Beyond the opening indication, "*Mehr langsam, misterioso*" or "rather slow, mysteriously", there are no other significant tempo

indications for the entire movement of 651 measures except for “*Schnell*” or “fast” for the coda. In particular there is no indication that the A2 or unison theme should be slower than the A1 or trumpet theme. However, almost all conductors slow down for the unison and the quiet passages following it, sometimes as far down as two thirds of the initial tempo. This tradition is very well established, although there is no basis for it in any source. When you hear a conductor like Paul Hindemith or Dean Dixon or Sakari Oramo *not* slow down, it is a shock, although perhaps a welcome, exciting shock. On the other hand, in Stanisław Skrowaczewski’s many valuable performances of the Third, where the first movement varies in length from less than 19 to more than 22 minutes in length, one always hears a vigorous, broadly-nuanced trumpet theme and a unison theme only three-quarters as fast which despite that has plenty of energy. It is also true that the conductors choosing a slower initial tempo do not slow down as much for the unison theme, perhaps because they really can’t without bringing the movement to a halt. The B theme, coming shortly after the second appearance of the unison theme, is usually played at the tempo of the unison, slower than the opening speed. But Sergiu Celibidache, with movement durations ranging from 22 to over 28 minutes in his own work, is not afraid of getting slower, with a treatment of the lovely B-theme gestures which can only be described as sentimental.¹ It seems to me that the concept of an allegro movement should somehow be maintained through the unison outbursts, the carefully-measured pauses, the quiet chorales, and the lyrical second theme; this can be done even while observing the initial stipulation “Rather slow”. Several conductors achieve a feeling of latent energy by articulating the various rhythms of the unison very precisely; others let them droop, and the energy dissipates. It is difficult to make a general recommendation beyond what is said here, but one must remember that neither in the exposition, nor in the recapitulation, nor in the dialogue between A1 and A2 at the beginning of the development, is there any request to slow down for the unison and the chorales. The thought emerges that one way or another, this movement should probably be presented with a greater unity, and quite a bit more vigorously, than one normally encounters.

I hope I have stimulated listeners and readers to apply these criteria to performances that are encountered in the concert hall and in collections. It is always interesting to listen to what a new performance brings to this music, but it is reassuring when different interpretations cluster around a central tradition which can be shown to be consistent with what we know of the composer’s expectations. In some cases, like the first movements of the Sixth and Seventh, and the finales of the Third and Eighth, it is pretty clear that the present traditions do not serve the music as Bruckner designed it. In other places, it is difficult to develop an effective guideline for performance, and in still other cases, like the first movement of the Fourth, we can delight in the fact that it is nearly always played well. And there is this, that like the music of Bach, so often played in a manner which would greatly surprise the composer, Bruckner’s music is so strong of itself that it can withstand quite a bit of conductorial idiosyncrasy and still fill us with delight and renewal.

In his own program notes for his recording of the Third Symphony, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, whose distinguished career began in the performance of eighteenth-century works in a studiedly authentic or historically observant manner, has this to say: “I had to fight against this experience [of traditional performance tempos] at rehearsals, since there are certain passages that are interpreted in identical ways by virtually every conductor. I’m thinking, for example, of the decelerandos, especially in the slow movement of the Third Symphony; the answers in the orchestra are almost always taken twice as slowly as the questions. There isn’t the slightest indication in the score that this is how these passages should be taken. And yet orchestras are used to playing them like this. But when a composer like Bruckner writes even the tiniest changes of tempo into the score and when he prescribes even the least expressive nuance by means of footnotes and explanations, I’m tempted to agree with him and inclined to clear away all this encumbrance (diesen Ballast wegzuräumen).” Granting that Harnoncourt overstates the abundance of tempo indications in the Bruckner manuscripts, still we have sufficient evidence to establish the tempo structures Bruckner had in mind in all these cases. And we know that conductors, by and large, do not follow them today, and in fact, the situation is probably getting worse, as shown by the trend lines in the Third Symphony finale graphs, and the trend lines in my 1996 Manchester paper on the tempos of the Fourth. Bruckner scholarship has advanced considerably in the last sixty years, since the re-founding of the Collected Edition under the cautious Leopold Nowak, and it is time for performers and enthusiasts alike to look again at what can be said about Bruckner’s concepts concerning the rendering of his symphonies based on all the evidence we have, and act on it.

¹ In one of the Celibidache recordings, the tray card says, instead of “*Mehr langsam*”, the amusingly appropriate error “*Sehr langsam*”. One could hardly have planned that better.

Handwritten Parts of Bruckner's Sixth Rediscovered

AFTER Anton Bruckner had finished his Sixth Symphony, a set of handwritten parts was copied which were to be used for a read-through of new repertoire by the Vienna Philharmonic (6 Oct 1882) as well as for the ensuing first performance of the Adagio and Scherzo, which was directed by Wilhelm Jahn (11 Feb 1883). This set of parts was believed to be entirely lost, as confirmed by Leopold Nowak in his Critical Report (1986, p. 49). To his own surprise, Benjamin-Gunnar Cohrs found a remnant of it in the archive of the Monastery of St. Florian - a part for Bassoon I in the hand of a copyist, with autograph annotations, and with the pencil indication "Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde Wien" on the first page by an anonymous hand. Cohrs's further research in the Archive of the GdM in Vienna then brought to light the full set of parts, with only the Bassoon I part missing which is today in St. Florian. Earlier researchers had overlooked it, perhaps because it is held under the same signature as the dedication copy (XIII 37.730), but stored at another location in the archive stacks. The set of parts comprises all the wind instruments, timpani, and strings in single copies (except the viola, of which six copies survive!). The copyist responsible has yet to be identified. Most of the parts reveal autograph corrections as well as some pencil annotations by orchestral players (added dynamics etc.).

Dr Benjamin-Gunnar Cohrs 18. 05. 2015

Bruckner's Fifth Symphony <Original Concepts>

Edited by Takanobu Kawasaki (2008) revised (2015)

Takanobu Kawasaki has revised his edition of the Fifth Symphony "Original Concepts 2008", an edition that seeks to reveal as much as possible of Bruckner's first plan for the symphony, some of which is still visible in the manuscript, mostly in the Scherzo and Finale. This revision (2015) follows an even more thorough reading of the sources which has brought about more than 100 changes - one example being a fortissimo timpani stroke to finish the tremolo at bar 50 of the first movement, as opposed to the pianissimo stroke in bar 51 in the earlier edition. It allows greater prominence to the string diminuendo in bar 50. Introducing his 2008 score, Kawasaki commented:

"My edition has been presented as the closest adaptation of what Bruckner's Original Concepts of the Symphony No. 5 would be. Like some of Robert Haas' work, it is an amalgamated edition which uses more than one version to bring together a unified and musically pleasing edition. In my case, I have amalgamated two versions in an effort to keep the lost first version alive from few sources which exist. It brings to the listener segments of Bruckner's early work on the Symphony No. 5 that would otherwise never be heard."

This score will receive its premiere in a performance on 24 July 7pm, in the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Space. The Tokyo New City Orchestra will be conducted by Akira Naito.



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NEW AND REISSUED RECORDINGS March to June 2015 Compiled by Howard Jones

This compilation sees the probable completion of van Zweden's cycle for Challenge Classics/Exton with Sym. No. 1 and a further addition to Simone Young's cycle for Oehms Classics. Pentatone Classics reissue Janowski's OSR cycle as a boxed set and Skrowaczewski's 1990s cycle with the Saarbrücken RSO makes a further appearance. A compilation of 15 motets in chronological order by Musica Saeculorum has been issued.

CDs and Downloads

*first issue

SYMPHONIES

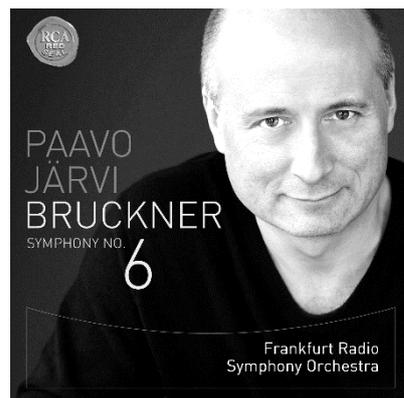
- Nos. 00 to 9 Skrowaczewski/ Saarbrücken RSO (1991-2001) OEHMS CLASSICS 12 CD set OC 025 (47:59, 60:56, 46:01, 59:02, 55:20, 70:32, 73:23, 56:53, 68:45, 60:03 + 22:19, 61:21) includes Overture in G minor & Quintet Adagio transcribed string orchestra.
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- No. 3 (1889) *Skrowaczewski/London PO (London, 14/3/14) LPO LIVE CD LPO 00084 (56:15).
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- No. 7(Gutmann) Böhm/Vienna PO (Vienna, 4 to 6/6/43) PRISTINE AUDIO CD PASC-435 (Pitch corrected) (67:19) and Download.
- No. 7 (Nowak) *Young/Hamburg PO (29 to 30/8/14) OEHMS CLASSICS SACD OC 688 (66:32).
- No. 8 (Haas) *Fukushima/Orch.der Aichi Festspiele (26/10/14) KAMOCS 2 CD set OAF 1410 (94:26) with Wagner & Bach.
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KLASSICHAUS RESTORATIONS CD GSC 052 (11:25 & 13:25)
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- Mass No.2, Psalm 150 & Te Deum Rilling/ Stuttgart Gächinger Kantorei & Bach Collegium (7 to 9/9/96)
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CD Reviews

Bruckner - Symphony No. 4 (Nowak 1878/80)

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra / Manfred Honeck

Reference Recordings FR713SACD SACD/CD Hybrid 5.1 Surround & 2.0 Stereo [Reviewed in surround]

Total time: 66.07 - 18:29 15:52 10:11 21:32

Recorded live in the Heinz Hall for the Performing Arts, Pittsburgh, PA, USA: December 6-8 2013

FOR A COLLECTOR such as myself with, as friends call it, 'a starter collection' on my shelves of only eleven recordings of this symphony, the present (12th) recording has to fulfil two roles. First it must be worth listening to as a performance and never mind the recording - more of that below - and second it must rise to the challenge of SACD surround and sound like a decent facsimile of an orchestra in my listening room. Reference Recordings exist to make good recordings that, as they put it, serve the music. They are refreshingly honest in saying how many omnidirectional microphones were placed around the Heinz Hall (5, one per channel), but more reticent about the number of 'spot mics' used to clarify detail. I like the way they consulted the orchestral musicians themselves as well as the conductor, on their way to a final balance. To my ears, on my system, they have succeeded triumphantly. This is the best surround recording I have heard of this piece. It preserves the considerable dynamic range of the performance without the quiet passages ever disappearing below audibility and it paints a thrilling picture of Bruckner's wonderful brass writing, for example at the end of the first movement.

Without a score to hand I can't be very precise about Manfred Honeck's handling of Bruckner's instructions.

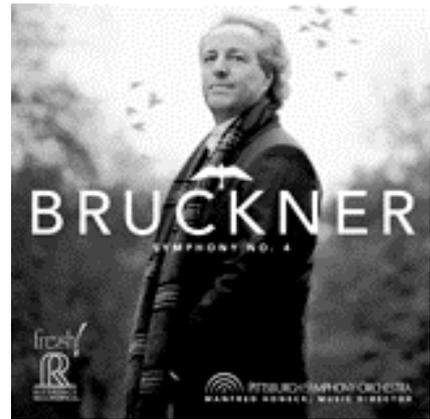
“it paints a
thrilling picture”

It has always stuck in my mind that Bruckner should not be rushed and that using his climaxes as an excuse to accelerate was to be frowned on. Simpson remarks that, “impatience is always damaging to Bruckner's music.” Honeck is, to some extent, guilty of this sin but in that he is not alone. In my 'starter' collection Jochum is similarly guilty. Honeck's 66 minutes is little different

to Böhm and within three or four minutes of Karajan and Wand. I don't recollect Klemperer hanging around over this symphony either. At first I was uncomfortable with Honeck's willingness to indulge in rubato but so often it came out sounding right. When combined with the lovely playing of the Pittsburgh orchestra, especially

their horns, I soon found I was much too absorbed in the performance to care about such details. This is a very exciting rendering and must have brought the good townsfolk of Pittsburgh to their feet cheering at the end. The recording does not preserve the evidence of this but it is obviously a series of live performances because the occasional noise does register. No intrusive coughing but just a sense of reality in the background, quite different to the antiseptic silence of a modern recording studio.

Honeck contributes an essay to the booklet entitled "Bruckner's Fourth Symphony: A Tone Poem in the Robe of a Symphony?" In this he discusses his view that the 4th is the work of a folklore musician "who regularly played light-hearted music." Whilst acknowledging the profound religious nature of the last three symphonies he feels the 4th occupies a much more secular world and, explicitly eschewing all but the occasional spirituality in the music, Honeck proceeds to explore the events of the 'Romantic' using Bruckner's own hints of a programme. So we get the full medieval city at dawn and the knights, forests and hunting parties. Simpson's view, and of much commentary since, that all this is trivial, amusingly naïve and in any case *ex post facto* is thus rejected. Fortunately the music as performed on this SACD comes over just as Simpson says it



“This disc should be heard by all Bruckner lovers”

does; “so much more than this!” Honeck is very detailed in his written analysis of the score, yet more reason for having one to hand, (which I didn't), and for me the links he draws with the late romantic music of Mahler in particular, are interesting. This essay provides the first time I have seen any reference to Vivaldi in a Bruckner commentary! As is sadly traditional in Bruckner performance, Honeck admits to touching up one or

two details. Even as a mere listener there were moments where things seemed somehow 'different', but nothing like the shock of Franz Welser-Möst's use of the Korstvedt edition in his 2012 recording at St Florian.

This disc should be heard by all Bruckner lovers, not all will appreciate the slight wilfulness of Honeck, but I would expect all to get caught up by the excitement and by the wonderful sound of this very fine Pittsburgh orchestra.

Dave Billinge

From the Reference Recordings web-site:

"This is an edge-of-the-seat performance in exceptionally warm, resonant and well-focused, sound, with a wide dynamic range...I can confidently add Honeck's thrilling performance to my list of favorites."

Stephen Greenbank, *MusicWeb-International*

"A jaw-dropping performance of Anton Bruckner's Symphony No. 4 in E-flat major ("Romantic") that is engrossing and thrilling...Honeck and the musicians of the PSO beautifully imagine the portrait of Bruckner's Fourth Symphony and achieve something even more glorious than what is written on the pages of the score. The result is a compelling, intriguing and truly romantic version of this great symphony."

Henry Schlinger, *Culturespot.com*

"Two earlier Reference Recordings issues have demonstrated what the Soundmirror engineers can achieve in the Heinz Hall for the Performing Arts, Pittsburgh, but here they have excelled themselves and produced a recording that is quite exceptional in its dynamic range, clarity and spaciousness...Overall Honeck's interpretation could be best described as supple and alive rather than coldly marmoreal...this distinctive, some might say revelatory, account of Bruckner's 4th Symphony should not be missed."

Graham Williams, *SA-CD.net*

"I can honestly say that Honeck and the superb Pittsburghians have given us a performance in phenomenal - underline that - surround sound that launches this rendition to the absolute top of the pile. The extraordinary caressing of phrases, perfection in the finely-graded chordal building blocks so fundamental to any genuine presentation of this music, and the fearlessness that the conductor displays in his willingness to contradict accepted tradition while still manifesting a healthy respect for it, make this experience one that will not easily be matched any time soon... An essential recording!"

Steven Ritter, *Audiophile Audition*

Bruckner Symphony No 5

London Symphony Orchestra / Georg Tintner

Testament SBT 1502 - c72 minutes BBC studio broadcast June 1970

Bruckner - Symphony No. 5

Schubert - Symphony No. 8

New Philharmonia Orchestra / Otto Klemperer

Testament SBT 1485 - c78 minutes BBC recording Royal Festival Hall, London, March 1967

WHEN Georg Tintner arrived in England in 1938 he was horrified to learn that Bruckner was almost unknown. (Musicologist Cecil Gray regarded Bruckner as a ‘continental aberration’.) In Tintner’s early years in Vienna Bruckner had been performed often. Later, he found a similar situation in Australia and New Zealand to that in England. At the time of this recording Tintner (aged 52) had only performed Bruckner’s Mass in F minor and the Fourth and Seventh symphonies, so this was his first performance of the Fifth - and indeed, it was the LSOs first of the original version, having previously played Franz Schalk’s cut version (which Tintner described as ‘bowdlerised’).

Georg turned up for the first rehearsal on his bicycle, in casual dress - baggy shorts! The musicians frowned... (Charles Dutoit once arrived for rehearsals at Symphony Hall in Birmingham in a long workman’s overall!) At the end of the recording, though, he was given a huge ovation.

The immediate feature to notice in this recording is the affectionate and sweet-sounding nature of the violins and violas, especially in the first movement. It’s an individual aspect of the performance. They continue in that vogue, revealed nowhere better than with the passage (bars 210 to 236, described as a ‘beautiful miracle’ by Robert Simpson) just before the return of the opening introduction: at bar 220 the cellos and bases clearly gather to themselves a loving embrace around the violins and violas. Whether or not there was an intention with this performance to counteract the harder brass elements and the difficult dichotomies in this movement, it succeeded. The F minor second subject, the quiet *pizzicato*, is not disjointed either, and it is played with care and unhurried. There are no large extrovert gestures. All the episodes are moulded with confidence and the recapitulation is convincing, as Tintner understands the relative introductory nature of this opening movement.

The above characteristics are maintained in the *Adagio*, which moves along without dragging. The second theme is solid and strong, and Tintner observes the instruction to broadly draw out the melody in its third bar. The last, fully elaborated return of the first theme surprisingly opens out with considerable power, offering a

coherent logic while seeming to eschew and revitalise the relative languidity of the opening.

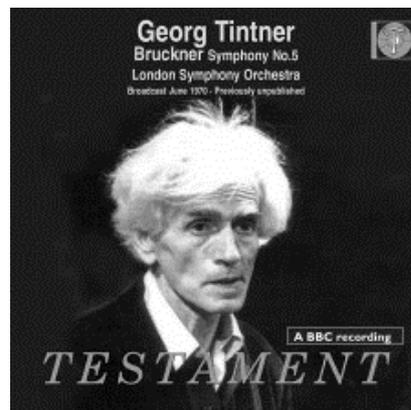
“the great chorale ... was the inevitable accumulation of everything”

The *Scherzo* is a true *molto vivace* and the disparate sections are joined in a natural and exquisite fashion. It is very well played.

The *Finale* was therefore something to look forward to. Here, clarity is a main feature, the inner wind parts clear without being too prominent.

The first appearance of the chorale is certainly considered as an important staging point. Elsewhere *tempo* instructions are observed. The strings’ two second themes have the same sweetness and care aforementioned. When the great chorale sounds out at the end it was the inevitable accumulation of everything, satisfying in its expression and arrives without exaggeration, yet is still powerful. The fact that this performance doesn’t have the dramatic power of some performances by others is no loss. The general structure is firm, giving substance to Tintner’s Brucknerian credentials.

Otto Klemperer had first performed the Fifth in 1927, as music director of the Wiesbaden Opera, and played it in other cities, receiving enthusiastic reviews. Perhaps one clue to his regard for it comes with a story from 1932 when he was director of the Berlin Staatskapelle. He ignored a request from Furtwängler to substitute a different symphony to avoid a duplication with the Berlin Philharmonic in the same season. When the Haas edition restored the original score Klemperer went on to substantially relearn the work. But there was the same problem as for Tintner for the reception and performance of the symphony away from European audiences, particularly in America in the 1930s, and Walter Legge at the Philharmonia in the 1950s, who couldn’t get to





grips with it. Legge felt that the British public - concert-going or record-buying - only wanted symphonies 4, 7 and 8. Klemperer would have performed the Fifth with the Philharmonia earlier but for this hesitation. This 1967 live performance followed a recording the previous week.

As expected, the structure is taut. The first movement is slow and stately and the quieter, more meditative passages peaceful. The characteristic emphasis on wind instruments is there, but is not as distinctive as with other Klemperer recordings. Tutti have sharp and brittle brass, particularly noticeable in the last chords of the movement.

The winds are distinctive in the *Adagio*, particularly in the later elaborations of the opening theme, yet they bring a plaintive feeling. In this movement Klemperer is quicker than Tintner. Its distinctive characteristic is a calm ambience. The *Scherzo* is steady indeed and it sounds somewhat

tired. The *Trio* seems likewise spiritless.

In the *Finale* architectural strength seems hardly to compensate for a plodding *allegro* following the introductory résumé of earlier themes, here undistinguished. But this is Klemperer and it somehow seems to work. The string passages of the second theme retain the feeling, but the second of these has a refined aspiration. The brass is again sharp with the same brittle quality as at the end of the first movement. The difference here is that it follows the magisterial culmination of the whole work and reveals a logic which Klemperer nearly always provided in his performances. Such formal strength, which overrides other considerations can sometimes tend to produce a rather impassive picture. The question to ask, particularly for such a fascinating work as the Fifth Symphony, is whether the abstractions and discontinuities, combined with the emotional components, are balanced with the necessary structural coherence. Klemperer was one conductor who could find this intellectual unity, with his sharp outlines and cool light.

“Klemperer could find this intellectual unity”

These two re-mastered mono recordings make for an interesting comparison as they are quite different. Perhaps the more interesting is Tintner’s. Some allowance has to be made, of course, for the sound quality of both these early recordings. This is a secondary consideration when two leading Brucknerians of the earlier years can be heard here.

Raymond Cox

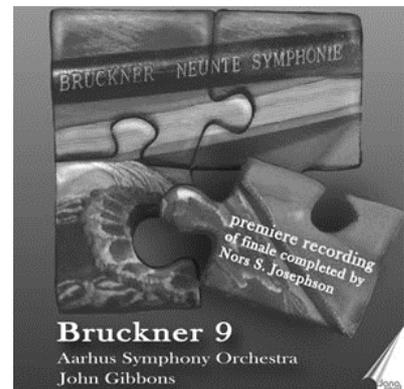
Bruckner - Symphony No. 9 (with finale completion by Nors Josephson)

Aarhus Symphony Orchestra / John Gibbons
Danacord CD - DACOCD 754

total time: 80'33 - 24'25, 10'12, 25'30, 20'22

WHAT impressed me immediately about this performance was the ‘leanness’ of the sound: the orchestra displays a remarkable precision, articulating the frequent semi-quavers (sixteenth notes) in the double-dotted rhythms with real crispness. Together with this clarity of articulation you get a sense of clarity of conception on the part of the conductor, the series of motives that make up the first theme group laid out with a firm, inexorable pulse. And this impression of clarity is enhanced by the clarity of the recorded sound. This is all very fine and contrasts with Sir Simon Rattle’s much-acclaimed performance with the Berlin Philharmonic, where the orchestral sound is much ‘thicker’ and the conductor’s conception is, to my mind, less focused.

“...a performance worthy of comparison with the best”



Come the *Gesangsperiode*, John Gibbons and the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, rather like Gerd Schaller’s approach with the Philharmonie Festiva, avoid the extremes of Mahlerian emotional display that I hear in Rattle and Nicolas Couton’s performances. That is not to say that it lacks expressive power, but that its emotional content is less febrile, a sadder, more ‘inward’ lyricism. As with all such descriptions, this is a very subjective, personal response, and others may not hear it like this, but I was moved enough to think this is a performance worthy of comparison with the best.

I was particularly taken with the first violins' pizzicatos in the Scherzo, quite forwardly recorded, and with a crescendo to the top of the phrase, which gives added eloquence. The hammering fortissimo tutti are transparent enough to be able to hear the inner parts. The Trio is fleet-footed, without a trace of sentimentality - no slowing down in the second section, which is how I feel it should be. Couton is even faster in the Scherzo and the sheer riskiness of his approach is very impressive, but maybe because the orchestra is at the limit of its virtuosity, the power isn't fully achieved.

For similar reasons as with the first movement - clarity, leanness, inexorable pulse - I find the Aarhus performance of the Adagio amongst the best I know, and refreshing to hear after the relentless thick sostenuto playing of the Berlin Philharmonic. The Aarhus strings have a thinner and, to me, more eloquent sound, the woodwind and brass less smoothly blended. Whereas the Berliners' is an outward facing music, a magnificent performance where the sheer sound is to be admired, and Schaller's Adagio is a performance of great and moving nobility, with John Gibbons the music seems to speak of inner vulnerability, the lonely grief of isolation that mounts as Bruckner makes his farewell to life.

The reason I have made reference to performances conducted by maestros Couton, Schaller and Rattle is that in common with those performances this Ninth comes with a completed fourth movement. I have written before that performances with a fourth movement will alter how the previous movements are interpreted, the Adagio especially not being subject to a long drawn out ending. It seemed obvious when I wrote it, but I begin to wonder if it is quite as self-evident as it seemed - even with a Finale it might be possible to perform the Adagio as though it were the last word, so that the pianissimo drum roll and the emergence of the Finale is even more of a miracle. Gibbons, however, refuses to linger over those last pages of the Adagio.

So far so good - in fact very good - but with Nors Josephson's finale things become problematic. It's well enough performed, and does in the first part achieve the feeling that it's fashioned out of the same stuff that the first three movements are made of, which is something you don't always feel with the other performances

“...with Nors Josephson's
finale things become
problematic”

of other finale completions, and it maintains a sense of momentum that eludes Couton, whose performance of Letocart's finale becomes somehow directionless through the second part. But in comparison to those completions that have some pretensions to scholarly integrity - as opposed to that by Peter Jan Marthé who could dispense with philology because he

was aware of Bruckner's presence dictating the finale to him - Josephson's is perhaps the least convincing. It's not merely that Josephson seems wilfully to ignore the information about the actual size of the gaps he is to fill, so altering the internal dimensions of the movement as Bruckner had laid it out, but the quality of the music that fills those gaps seems to my ears occasionally inadequate - I think especially of the fugue, where SPCM found enough material stemming from Bruckner's sketches but which doesn't sound contrapuntally quite busy enough, and where Carragan manages a very effective sense of continuing contrapuntal purpose and complexity, Josephson's sounds particularly trite. Another miscalculation seems to me to be withholding the full dynamic power of the chorale theme until its repetition; maybe it's just because I'm so used to its triple forte entry in other versions that this seems disappointing. There are other decisions of Josephson that seem to wilfully ignore the findings of scholarship, and to try and synthesise aspects of Bruckner's manuscripts that can hardly be seen to belong together.

But, as in all completions, the crunch comes with the coda. There's precious little from Bruckner, and what little there is Josephson ignores. Not everyone thinks that the most recent, and final, incarnation of the SPCM finale as recorded by Rattle, is their best attempt at the coda, but it's pretty powerful and I like the use of the rising trumpet motive from the Adagio in the final paragraph. I think the great Carragan moment, the augmented Adagio theme rising up above all on the trumpet is an inspired solution, and has the great quality of taking on the suffering of the Adagio and transfiguring it. Josephson starts by facing in many directions, and seems to coalesce around a quotation of the first movement coda and then you end up - like everyone else - in triple forte D major with plenty of triplets and fanfares. Obviously, in common with other completers, Josephson must be convinced his creation sounds like something Bruckner might have done, or at the very least is an appropriate close to this symphony - I find it unconvincing, which only goes to show we all have a different Bruckner in each of our heads.

In the insert booklet, Dominic Nudd repeats the outdated information that Levi was so afraid to tell Bruckner of his rejection of the 8th symphony that he had to ask Josef Schalk to break the news. Levi's letter to Bruckner has long been available. The notes, even the brief paragraphs from Nors Josephson, also refrain from mentioning John Phillips's work on and publication of the unfinished finale, as though those involved in this venture were determined to remain ignorant of the contributions of scholars to the study and publication of the sources after Orel in 1934, nor is there any commentary to explain why Josephson has taken the particular decisions that lead to the creation of his finale in the way that it is.

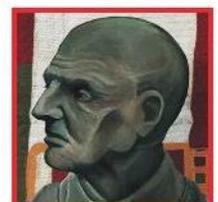
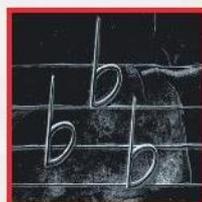


At the heart of Bruckner 200 is a portfolio of fine art prints and unique sculptures, which celebrates the music of Anton Bruckner (1824-1896).

A series of prints are dedicated to Bruckner's symphonies, and sculptures in stone and glass are part of two innovative collections: Bruckner 200 Classical and Bruckner 200 Contemporary.

As of June 2015, four prints are dedicated to Bruckner's No.1, No.2, No.5, and No.7 symphonies. Two sculptures in stone and glass are dedicated to Bruckner's No.7 symphony.

In development is a major new stained-glass window, dedicated to Bruckner's No.3 Symphony, and available in August 2015.









The concept for Bruckner 200 started in Spring 2012. I conceived and designed a print for Bruckner No.7 symphony to commemorate two days in June 2012.

On the 14 and 15 June 2012, I travelled to London and Vienna to listen to the London Symphony Orchestra and Staatskapelle Dresden both play Bruckner's No.7 symphony on consecutive days.

The experience inspired the collection of classical and contemporary pieces.

The first public exhibition of Bruckner 200 took place in April 2015 at Hertford College, Oxford, at the 9th Biennial Bruckner Journal Readers' Conference, with a display of the Glass Bruckner 7 Sculpture.

For more information, please visit: www.bruckner200.com

So I would heartily recommend this recording for the first three movements, a refreshing and deeply moving take on the music, but have considerable doubts about the finale. What is interesting about listening to a variety of different completions is that, through slowly identifying the music they all have in common, you begin to hear what must categorically be Bruckner's own, and from that you can begin to evaluate the music that has been supplied to supplement what wasn't available from the manuscripts. Another way, of course, is to follow John Phillips's score of the unfinished Finale - but that can be challenging, especially when completers like Josephson do not always respect the number of missing bars that Bruckner's numbering dictates should be there. And then, as you listen to the various codas, maybe you begin to see the wisdom of Jacques Roelands' approach which attempts to fill in the gaps, but refuses to supply a coda on the grounds that on the basis of the information we have, it can't be done.*

kw

* Roelands' reconstruction has not been publicly performed, but a computer generated rendition is available on www.abruckner.com, search 'Discography Documents' for 'Roelands'.

Bruckner - Symphony No. 9 (ed. Cohrs 2000)

Philharmoniker Hamburg / Simone Young

Live recording 25-27 Oct. 2014, Laieszhalle Hamburg; 24'32, 11'50, 22'36 total 59'01

OEHMS Classics SACD OC693

Conductor Simone Young does not, on the whole, incline her interpretations towards the gravitas and monumentality you might hear in the mighty performances by earlier generations of Bruckner conductors, the likes of Klemperer, Giulini, and Karajan. But if this sort of grand and heavy statement is to be avoided, there must be something equally impressive to replace it, whether it be lyrical beauty, relentless energy, uncompromising severity, valedictory sentimentality - or some other revelatory realisation of the potentialities of the written score. I found myself unable to detect in Young's encounter with this music an alternative view of the symphony such as might endow her performance with much in the way of special eloquence or insight. Sometimes the expressive palette seems impoverished, for example in the 'farewell to life' descending chorale on Wagner tubas in the Adagio, from bar 29 (02:41), where note values at the ends of phrases seem skimmed, as though the full power is to be avoided.

The first movement second theme, the *Gesangsperiode*, is impressively done, with plenty of rubato that tends to split the music into two and four bar phrases, a little unsettling when first heard, but effective and convincing as time goes on. And it is all very expressive, the strings glowing, and in fact it is so expressively powerful that the first theme group, normally a shattering and unforgettable build to its implacable climax, had far less intensity and fades from the memory under the emotional onslaught of this second theme. When the first theme returns in the second part it rises through a frenetic accelerando to its climax, everything becoming somewhat feverish and ungrounded. (At 13:04, during this elaboration of the first theme group the five timpani strokes, in pencil on the score and included *ad libitum* by the editor of this most recent edition, can be heard, bars 299-301).

Listening to the recording on stereo CD player, the sound was not wonderfully clear, the horns and trombones sometimes difficult to locate in the tutti passages, and in the great stomping fortissimos of the Scherzo the trombone and trumpet entries, though audible, seem suppressed either by the conductor or engineers. This makes for a rather monolithic effect, which is quite powerful. The trio scampers off at a wonderfully fast pace, suddenly subject to a severe ritenuto to usher in the descending string phrases, slow and glistening, at bar 53 (04:53), ignoring the admonition of the editor that this passage should be in the same tempo. In the discredited first printed edition, edited by Löwe, the marking *Etwas ruhiger*, [somewhat calmer] was added for this passage, but there is nothing by Bruckner to suggest he wanted this effect. Even so, many conductors feel the music calls for it, though I much prefer the relentless unmodified tempo of the score.

It's a fine performance of the Adagio, though once again it doesn't quite carry the expressive weight or profundity of utterance that comes across from many other performances, and the closing pages are perhaps a touch prosaic, no valedictory emotion being indulged here, almost as though it was performed with a view to ushering in a fourth movement...

Simone Young has certainly demonstrated her commitment to Bruckner's music, not least in this now nearly complete recorded cycle (and her forthcoming visit to New Zealand where she will give three



performances of the 1887 first version of the 8th - presumably premieres for this version in NZ). There is much that is refreshing about her take on the music and her espousal of the first versions of symphonies 3, 4 and 8. This 9th is not unaccomplished, but I am not convinced that it wins itself a place amongst the best. *kw*
BUT - Ralph Moore has reviewed this CD (for musicweb-international, and amazon.co.uk) where he awards it five stars...

Bruckner - Te Deum, Psalm 150, Mass No.2 in E minor

Pamela Coburn, soprano; Ingelborg Danz, alto; Christian Elsner, tenor; Franz-Josef Selig, bass
Gächinger Kantorei Stuttgart; Bach Collegium Stuttgart / Helmuth Rilling

Recorded September 1996 CD total time: 76'44
Te Deum 25'18, Psalm 150 09'32, Mass No 2 40'59 (07'12, 08'26, 09'57, 03'00, 06'11, 06'13)
Hänssler Classic SCM CD 98.054

These recordings made in 1996 have since then also appeared on Brilliant Classics but are now repackaged in an attractively illustrated jewel case with cardboard slip-cover - the painting used on the cover is by a contemporary of Bruckner's, Louis Gurlitt (1812-1897), a romantic landscape in the Alban Hills south of Rome. The sound and atmosphere of the recordings is equally attractive and the whole CD a pleasure to listen to, at times very moving, with an always apparent awareness that these are works of religious significance, even if they are being performed in a secular environment.



Helmuth Rilling takes frequent opportunities to slow the tempi down in quieter passages, increasing the pathos and deeply felt meditative quality of the music. This can be very moving but it does undermine the forward thrust of both the Te Deum and the Psalm 150. The manipulation of tempo is especially problematic at the end of the Te Deum, where other performances keep the tension mounting, Rilling diverts the focus into expressive byways to the detriment of the whole.

“These are tremendous performances” Nevertheless, these are tremendous performances, very well recorded. I particularly like the sound of the wind band in the E minor mass, beautifully and expressively played, with an attractive reverberation. Of the three works perhaps the Mass receives the best performance, even though that too becomes dangerously slow at times, but Rilling carries it off splendidly. Here the dramatic changes in tempo and highly expressive interpretation work well.

The soloists and choirs are all very fine, the soloists nicely matched and well balanced within the overall sound, and the slow tempi allow the revelation of often unapparent details which are a delight to hear. If you didn't buy it on one of its earlier incarnations, this newly released CD is warmly recommended. The booklet has texts and translations, and notes by Holger Schneider that make the interesting observation, “How soon would our consistently distorted picture of a naively credulous provincial blockhead have fallen apart had that head been covered instead by a sombrero?” - this with reference to Bruckner having considered taking a post of Court Organist in Mexico. *kw*

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www.sinus-verlag.ch

Pange Lingua - Bruckner Motets

Pange Lingua (1st version), Asperges me, Der Herr, Dir will ich mich ergeben, In jener letzten der Nächte, Totenlieder WAB 47 & 48, Ave Maria, Pange Lingua (Phrygian), Locus iste, Tota pulchra es, Os justi, Christus Factus est, Salvum fac populum tuum, Virge Jesse floruit, Vexilla regis.

Musica Saeculorum / Philipp von Steinaecker

Recorded live at Kloster Neustift, August 2014 total time 48'45
Fra Bernardo limited edition CD fb 1501271

The first motet on this disc is the first commercially available recording of the 1st version of *Pange Lingua*, (composed by the boy Bruckner at around the age of 11, a year or two before his father died and he was deposited with the monks at St Florian), so this alone would make this CD a valuable addition to the discography. The final motet on the disc is *Vexilla regis* Bruckner's last motet, composed in February 1892. In between is a selection of motets, some well known, some very seldom performed or recorded.

The programming of the disc respects the chronology: the pieces are performed in the order of their composition, so the listener can hear the development of Bruckner's compositional style. There is a nice chronology in the insert notes that situates the motets performed with the main events and compositions of Bruckner's life.

It is a recording of a live performance, though only just under 50 minutes taken from a longer concert, making quite a short CD. *Musica Saeculorum* is a small choir of sixteen voices, from South Tyrol, and they sing with clarity and precision - they plan to perform all the motets of Bach and Bruckner. It is a totally different world from that occupied by, for example, Jochum's famous recordings of the motets with the Bavarian Radio Choir where, in comparison to *Musica Saeculorum*, the choir sounds immense and the interpretations very dramatic, with an almost symphonic scale to them. One might compare this present recording more appropriately with that of St Bride's Church Choir on Naxos. The performances are small scale and very attractive. Steinaecker moulds the pieces exquisitely, the tempos measured. The only reservation I had was that the men's voices, at least as recorded in this acoustic, lack some measure of power and resonance, so that the grounding of the harmony is not perhaps as strong as one might wish. But overall the CD delivers beautiful singing in an informative and moving concert which it is pleasure to be able to hear at home. The added 'Amen' that softly closes Bruckner's last motet and brings the concert to an end is very affecting.

The CD is nicely presented, with an Egon Schiele, *Stadt Stein*, small town landscape on the cover, from the Austrian *fra bernardo* label, a label devoted to early music repertoire and repertoire outside the mainstream. The brief notes by Philipp von Steinacker are informative; the texts are included but without translation. kw



Concert Reviews

LONDON

ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

8 FEBRUARY 2015

Mozart - Piano Concerto No. 25 (Paul Lewis)
Bruckner - Symphony No. 3 (Nowak, 1889)

Philharmonia Orchestra / Andris Nelsons

IN SOME ways this was a wonderful concert - the Philharmonia sounded so fantastic, it was an incredibly beautiful sound. And Paul Lewis, who has often been a determinedly unsmiling performer of Schubert and Beethoven, proved himself an absolutely first class Mozartean. So far so good - but Nelsons' way with Bruckner pays scant regard to the structure. He just loves the music so much - it seems - that he indulges in glorious over-exaggeration of many passages and the whole begins to sound incoherent, as formless as some critics would have it that Bruckner is. In Nelsons' hands I felt it lacked a basic pulse and direction. The high point of many high points, all wonderfully done if considered as isolated moments, was for me the Trio of the Scherzo, where the dance had a tremendous lilt to it. kw

Other commentators took a different view: Gavin Dixon on TheArtsDesk.com:

Nelsons brings a valuable sense of immediacy to this music, an interpretative honesty that allows him to go to extremes of tempo and dynamic without ever seeming contrived. He will hold quiet passages at the lowest of dynamics, standing in a half crouched position and relying on the sheer tonal lustre of the strings to support the texture. Elsewhere he'll drive the brass-laden climaxes, pushing the volume ever higher and subtly increasing the tempo to heighten the effect. And it is all done with a seemingly instinctive feeling for the shape of the music... [Referring to this edition of the symphony:] ...there are still some rough edges here and there, and awkward joins between the sections. Or so it seems in most performances, but not here: Nelsons made a virtue of out each of these non sequiturs, integrated them into his narrative. The first-movement coda was one such section. The music here switches from quiet to loud, slow to fast, and has several unexpected break-offs from loud tutti. But Nelsons has such an innate sense of musical drama that he can instil meaning and logic into each of these changes of direction.

Peter Reed on www.classicalsource.com:

The first movement's opening section dissolved magically into the masterly start of the development, which climaxed magnificently in the visionary boldness of the return of the opening material. Nelsons made Bruckner's trajectory of crises thrillingly coherent.

Hilary Finch in The Times, Feb 10 2015, gave 4 stars:

... a remarkable performance of Bruckner's Third Symphony, the best London has heard in decades. Wagner called the composer "Bruckner the trumpet" and maybe it is because he began his career as a trumpeter that Andris Nelsons revealed such a depth of understanding and insight in conducting this mighty work with the Philharmonia.

Martin Kettle in The Guardian, Feb 10 2015, gave 4 stars:

Making coherent sense of this symphony seems to require something more than even Nelsons can bring to it, for it is a something that eludes most conductors, perhaps because the work is just too fractured. Yet the symphony is rarely without interest or moments of lonely beauty. Nelsons' close attention to phrasing, balance and dynamics was characteristically compelling at multiple points in the score, and with the Philharmonia playing with great intensity, there were times when the symphony flowed in ways that it rarely does in other hands.

Bruckner in the Rogue Valley, Oregon

ASHLAND	SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY MUSIC RECITAL HALL	27 FEBRUARY 2015
MEDFORD	CRATERIAN THEATER AT THE COLLIER CENTER	28 FEBRUARY 2015
GRANTS PASS	GRANTS PASS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER	1 MARCH 2015

Wagner - Overture to Act I of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*
Bruckner - Symphony No. 4, "Romantic" (1878/80, Nowak)

Rogue Valley Symphony / Martin Majkut

There are places in the vast American West less populous than Oregon's Rogue River Valley, and more recently settled - but not all that many. To give you an idea of the region's remoteness: I moved here because the high desert of northern New Mexico had become too crowded. We are lucky in sharing with two other Valley towns a professional orchestra, the Rogue Valley Symphony, but even so, I was surprised to open the brochure for the RVS's 2014/2015 season to find that Bruckner's Symphony 4 was to be performed within a 10-minute walk from our house here in Ashland (pop. 23,000). As far as anyone knew, it would be the first time a Bruckner symphony had been performed in the Rogue Valley - or, indeed, anywhere here in the Mythical State of Jefferson, whose long and continued nonexistence has not prevented it from looming large in the local psyche. (Too long a tale to tell here; search Wikipedia for "Jefferson (proposed Pacific state).")

"I decided to attend all three concerts and all five rehearsals" I decided to attend all three concerts and, if I could, all five rehearsals: four for full orchestra, one for strings alone. It would be interesting to hear conductor and orchestra steadily build an interpretation and performance of the music, and to hear the same musicians perform the same work on three consecutive days in three different halls. The conductor, Martin Majkut, agreed, and also was happy to answer some questions.

The concert was part of Majkut's fifth season as music director and chief conductor of the RVS. The concertgoers I spoke with who have lived in the Valley longer than I told me that he has steadily built the orchestra in those years, and has brought them a long way through programs rather heavily weighted toward concertos. However, in his remarks to the orchestra at the beginning of the first rehearsal, Majkut said that this program of Wagner and Bruckner was his "gift" and "thank you" to the orchestra - he felt they were now ready for a large-scale, challenging work of "gorgeous music" in which they did not have to depend on a soloist. During a break in that rehearsal, Majkut told me that though he appreciated such expansive recordings of the Fourth as Celibidache's, for the RVS performances he wanted to "keep it moving." Although the results were a bit fast for my taste, this seemed a wise choice - even the best orchestras can find it difficult to navigate Bruckner's long builds and daunting counterpoint at slower tempi.

The rehearsal process revealed a band with no performance tradition for this music leaping in; at the beginning, things were rough. The violins and violas had the usual trouble strings have with Bruckner's non-idiomatic writing, and while their ensemble playing never perfectly cohered, it steadily improved. Majkut advised them not to play the work's many tremolos at full speed all the time, but to occasionally slow down, to give their right arms a rest. Sure enough, as the rehearsals went on, I saw more and more violinists and violists shaking tension from their fingers during breaks. At the strings-only rehearsal, Majkut reassured them: "Next season, no Bruckner!" (At the first rehearsal, he'd said that, *two* years from now, he'd love to do Symphony 7. Here's hoping.)

Majkut had hired five horns to cover the four scored parts; the player given the solo passages was plagued with clams, and an interpretation of Bruckner's *mezzo-forte* marking for the solo at the beginning of the first movement that was consistently more *forte* than *mezzo* - until, midway through the second rehearsal, Majkut told her that the passage should be heard "as if from a great distance." Done.

Trombones and tuba were virtually flawless from first rehearsal through final concert: beautiful tone, richly blended sound. The timpanist, too, had a precision of attack and dynamics; her rigor and vigor of sound would have done proud an orchestra far better known. It may seem too self-evident to mention, but such rhythmic solidity makes an immense difference in performance: I could better relax into the music, knowing I was in two good hands.

If the woodwinds were never less than correct, they were seldom more than that - their solo passages never quite sang. The celli and double basses were solid without being stolid. At the first rehearsal there were only two basses, but Majkut told the orchestra not to fret; sure enough, over subsequent rehearsals their number increased to seven.

Though Majkut had chosen Nowak's edition of the 1878/80 version of Symphony 4, he mentioned to the orchestra that he was "borrowing" some bits from the 1888 version, particularly some of that final version's many added dynamic markings (see his comments on this below). I am of two minds about this difference in the editions. More often, I prefer interpretations such as Celi's, with their relatively fewer tempo changes and finessings of dynamics; all else being equal, Bruckner's music then has a kind of almost geological inevitability. But the far more detailed interpretive indications - and restructurings and cuts - of the 1888 score, which Bruckner undertook in part to make the work more accessible and more likely to be performed, make at least as much sense, giving the restless musical mind more details, more micro-events to worry or cherish. The latter have sometimes struck me as being as much ornamental as clarifying the work's substance, but this is, after all, a matter of taste - and, as Dermot Gault writes in *The New Bruckner*, "So many of the misapprehensions surrounding Bruckner have stemmed from a reluctance to acknowledge that his understanding might be superior to our own."

Over the five rehearsals, what I heard moved gradually, steadily from roughly generic note spinning to a more refined sound. In the latter half of the second rehearsal, passages and balances suddenly began to cohere as the players began to get the measure of Bruckner's rhythms and voicings. In rehearsal and performance, however, what suffered most from Majkut's determination to "keep it moving" were, of course, Bruckner's great caesuras. This will sound counterintuitive or obvious, depending on one's stance, but I have come to believe that only when Bruckner's caesuras - far longer than mere *luftpausen* - are fully observed does his music *not* suffer from the "episodic" quality of which so many have complained. Only when a pause or fermata or caesura or silence - call it what you will - is given opportunity to fully express itself can it perform what I believe is its true function of transition, in a music that without it can sound, as so many have accused it of sounding, transitionless. Driving through or ignoring the caesuras, as Majkut sometimes did, seemed rather to bump the ends of the sounded music up against each other, creating a seam where otherwise there would have been none, had the seamless transition of unsounded music - the scored silence - been given longer, fuller voice.

“Bruckner’s transitions are effected through an astonishingly eloquent language of silence....”

Again, a matter of taste, but one underlined by the pairing of Symphony 4 with the *Meistersinger* overture of Wagner, who famously identified his as “the art of transition.” The juxtaposition made clear the immense differences between the two composers’ strategies. I hear both as masters of transition, in ways both shared and opposed. What they share, of course, is chromaticism, a more or less constant transition of harmony, of key, of tonality. But Wagner transitions from mood to mood mostly through a continuous sea of sound in which instruments and sections hand off to one another in ways almost undetectable; Bruckner’s transitions, on the other hand, are often effected through an astonishingly eloquent language of silence married to a crystalline clarity of orchestral texture. It’s not that his long caesuras are scored *in place of* sounding transitions; in a paradox of figure and ground, they *are* those transitions.

Back to southwestern Oregon: three days, three different halls, three concerts. The first took place in Ashland, in Southern Oregon University’s 436-seat Music Recital Hall, which is aptly named. That its best use is indeed as a recital hall was demonstrated a week later in a concert by the Daedalus String Quartet: from two-thirds back on the extreme left, the sound was more or less perfect - balanced, full, rich, entirely satisfying, every note clear. The RVS, through no fault of their own, overloaded the hall, particularly in the Wagner, but in the Bruckner as well: The sound was unforgivingly harsh and dry, highlighting the ragged string ensemble. Had I been listening at home to a recording, I would have assumed that my amplifier was being driven into clipping and was distorting. The performance itself was somewhat rough and driven, though the *Adagio* was warm and lovely, with sensitive work from the low brass and low strings. The RSV’s violas played well in all three performances, reminding me of just how many big, exposed passages and statements Bruckner gives them in this work. The celli and double basses were rock solid at all times. This, in combination with the steady quality of the low brass and timpani, provided an always-firm foundation.

The next evening’s concert took place at Medford’s Craterian Theater, a much larger hall (750 seats) with a kinder, more blended sound that put less emphasis on the highs, which made the violins less screechy while making the body of their tone sing more loudly and fully. However, this performance never quite took off - all of the notes were played, but the music somehow went missing. An off night - every orchestra has them.

The final concert was in the Grants Pass Performing Arts Center, also 750 seats but with the warmest, most supportive acoustic of the three halls, and the best suited to Bruckner. Here almost everything fell into place. The sound jelled, the horns played more accurately than before, and the strings made up for their raggedness

“The audience had leapt to its feet...” with a far greater sense of *schwung* or swing; i.e. musicality of phrasing. And here Majkut’s determination to “keep it moving” seemed just the right choice. The first movement began with a genuine *misterioso*, the *Adagio* was deeply felt, the *Scherzo* joyful. The long journey of the *Finale*’s complex argument had clear logic and genuine gravitas - and when the coda began, chills ran up my spine and did not stop until the final blazing *fff* tutti chord. This was real and exciting music making - a group of serious musicians working at the limits of their individual and collective skills, if not slightly beyond those limits, and achieving something special. It can happen anywhere, and on March 1 at 3 pm, it happened in Grants Pass, Oregon. The audience had leapt to its feet at all three concerts, which is de rigueur in the Rogue Valley; this time I joined them, and not out of politeness.

At concert’s end, as Majkut and orchestra took their bows, I spoke to the elderly man seated next to me, a retired auto worker from a very small nearby town. We’d talked in the interval, when he’d admitted both his ignorance of classical music - he’d never heard anything by Bruckner - and his love for it in general. Now I asked him, “What did you think of the Bruckner?” He grinned in delight: “It was *great!*”

In Majkut’s introductory talk an hour before the Grants Pass concert, he had given a brisk, balanced overview of the “Bruckner Problem” of the various editions and revisions, as well as a brief synopsis of the Hanslick/Brahms-vs.-Bruckner/Wagner atmosphere of Vienna in the late 19th century. His remarks were refreshingly free of painting Bruckner as a buffoon or musical idiot savant, and evinced a great respect for his music. One subscriber in the audience asked Majkut why he insisted on programming such difficult and challenging works, and when he might be returning to things “we might actually want to hear.” The questioner’s tone was not at all combative, but Majkut didn’t shrink from confronting its subtext: that many still consider Bruckner, more than a century after his death, to be a composer of “difficult,” “challenging,” and/or “boring” music. Majkut said very clearly that people could always hear the standard repertoire, and for the past century they had; but that there was plenty of great music out there that was much less often performed, and that he was determined to bring it to us, because he was sure we would like at least some of it - that he would “bring us along” with him. He then announced that the next season would include Nielsen’s Symphony 4, “Inextinguishable” -- a work far less often performed than Bruckner 4.

Majkut was born in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia (now Slovakia), and has earned two doctorate degrees in conducting. He studied with Gianluigi Gelmetti at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana, in Siena, and with

Salvador Mas Conde at the Wiener Meisterkurse, in Vienna. He served as Assistant Conductor of the Slovak Philharmonic, has conducted the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Slovak State Philharmonic, and the Slovak Sinfonietta, and was Resident Conductor of the Southern Arizona Symphony, in Tucson, before taking on the music directorship of the Rogue Valley Symphony in 2010.

Some weeks after the concerts, I asked Martin Majkut some questions of my own:

Richard Lehnert: *From your comments to the orchestra in rehearsal, I understood that you “borrowed” from the 1888 version (Korstvedt) the cymbal strokes in the Finale and some of the dynamic markings, and applied them to the 1878/80 version (Nowak) you performed.*

Martin Majkut: I started with the clean 1878/80 version. I think that this version is most popular for a reason. After I was done with the score preparation, I started listening to a number of recordings. I concentrated on recordings done by the Vienna and Berlin Philharmonics, thinking that the Viennese were right at the source, and that through the close cultural and geographical proximity and a frequent exchange of conductors between the two orchestras, Berlin would be “in the know” as well. I was surprised that of all the 1878/80 versions I have heard, only one observed the score to the letter - it was Abbado’s, with Berlin. Everyone else’s performances took cues from later versions even though they “officially” played the 1878/80 version. I was emboldened to do the same. At that point, I had spent dozens of hours with the score of the “Romantic,” and I started feeling confident that I understand Bruckner’s compositional language. Since there is no such thing as “the final word” in Bruckner, I spiced up our version with some of the later cues. I tried to do it tastefully, and I felt that I had the backing of some of the greatest conductors of Bruckner. I was quite happy with the result.



Martin Majkut Photograph by Christopher Briscoe Photography

RL: *In the first movement, m. 13 - 16, you had a slight crescendo and then decrescendo in the strings’ tremolo. One often hears this in recordings of any version, but in 1878/80 Bruckner marks this passage “ppp sempre (ohne Anschwellung),” which would seem to prohibit, doubly and emphatically, any change in dynamic throughout. In a footnote on that page, Nowak indicates that the parenthetical remark is indeed Bruckner’s own.*

MM: I actually only emphasized the moving lines: cellos in m. 12 - 15 and second violins in m. 15 - 16. Otherwise those delightful lines would have been buried in the unchanging texture of the rest of the string ensemble.

RL: *Also in the first movement, m. 501 - 503, in the first and second violins: In the first four sets of tied eighth-notes (G - C), you had the violins lean heavily into the G. So while in 1878/80 this entire passage is marked ppp, in performance the G/C were more like f/pp or mf/pp. This really stood out for me - I hadn’t heard it done before, and thought it worked very well.*

MM: The G sounds louder because it is the open string - the lowest note on the violin. But I thought it added interest to the texture and it balanced out the constant Cs in double basses. This is something that is done in orchestras all the time - you usually don’t want the long passages to be “flat,” and so you add some internal dynamics. We do it all the time in Mozart, Beethoven, etc.

RL: *In the Finale: I know that the cymbal crash in m. 76 is from 1888, and I recall that in an early rehearsal you also tried the two cymbal strokes pp in m. 507 and 511 (m. 473 and 477 in 1888), toward the beginning of the coda, but quickly abandoned them. I much prefer the cymbals in the adagios of Symphonies 7 and 8 (if only because for decades I heard no recording that omitted them!), but I’m ambivalent about the cymbals in Symphony 4 - they can work very well indeed, as they did in your performances, but if they’re not there I don’t miss them, all else being equal. I wondered why you decided to include them, and then why you decided to drop the two soft cymbal strokes in the coda. In rehearsal, I don’t think your percussionist ever played them with quite the delicacy this hushed passage requires - like a small tam-tam struck with great gentleness with a soft mallet - which was perhaps why you said to him, “They just sound too weird!”*

“I was really torn about the cymbal crash ... I just could not let it go.”

MM: If I had had more time, I would have experimented with the soft cymbal strokes some more. Next time, hopefully! I was really torn about the cymbal crash - and I still am. On one hand, it is highly unusual to have an instrument playing a single note in an 80-minute-long symphony. I felt that it was inauthentic. But I just could not let it go - it is so incredibly powerful exactly because it comes only once!!! Consider this my guilty pleasure, a sweet-tasting transgression.

RL: *I also heard you tell the orchestra that you took from 1888 a number of timpani strokes and rolls that don't appear in 1878/80. Was that done throughout all four movements?*

MM: If I recall correctly, it was only in the fourth movement. Again, I was taking cues from some Vienna and Berlin recordings.

RL: *How were you drawn to Bruckner's music? Has anything in your appreciation of his music changed over time? Is this the first orchestral work of Bruckner's you've conducted?*

MM: I feel that there is no rush for a young conductor to get to the heavy Romantic repertory. I have a great amount of respect for Bruckner, Strauss, Mahler, and the likes. I took my time, and this was indeed the first time I dared to conduct Bruckner. I felt I was ready. After conducting the "Romantic," I am an even greater fan of Bruckner than I was before. I was born in Central Europe, and this music acquired a special significance for me after I moved to the U.S. - so much of it sounds like home. I felt a bit homesick, actually, while rehearsing this symphony.

RL: *What general thoughts and/or feelings do you have about Bruckner's music, and about how it might differ from the rest of the standard repertoire, whether in itself or in the way it must be approached?*

MM: Bruckner is unique - that is why he has stood the test of time. There is simply no other music like his.

The challenge for the conductor is the one of pacing. You have to draw some very long lines and think about music that is coming 20 minutes from now and make sure that it all creates a perfect whole. For the orchestra, Bruckner's works are notoriously tiring for strings due to the constant tremolo and also figurations that are easy on a keyboard but really awkward on a violin. However, it is all part of the uniqueness of the sonic landscape of Bruckner.

The length may be a challenge for the audience. I believe that it is way more satisfying to hear Bruckner live than to listen to a recording, because the audience is left without the possibility of distraction. Once you get drawn in, you don't want to get out, and you forget about the time entirely.

RL: *These concerts seem to have been the first performances of a Bruckner symphony here in the Rogue Valley. What led you to program a work by Bruckner at this time, and specifically Symphony 4?*

MM: I programmed it precisely because it was never heard here before. The musicians really enjoyed it. They love being exposed to new material. I waited a few years, until I felt that I had the right blend in the orchestra and that we knew each other really well - I wanted to make sure this was a success. I wanted to start with the most popular of his symphonies. It was the gateway drug for people who were not familiar with Bruckner!

RL: *Are there other conductors, past or present, whose approaches to Bruckner you particularly admire, or that have perhaps influenced your own?*

MM: I really like Karajan and Barenboim. It is also fascinating to see how their interpretations differ over time. I was mesmerized by the "extreme" take on Bruckner 4 by Celibidache.

"There were many Bruckner converts after our three-day weekend with Symphony No. 4!"

RL: *Bruckner often seems placed in a class of his own, in which his music is either venerated or dismissed. Among the major composers of the standard repertoire, such a position seems unique to Bruckner. Why do you think this is so? And have we at last entered an era in which Bruckner's music can be played, accepted, and understood on its own terms, without apology?*

MM: I believe that there are two composers in that class: Wagner and Bruckner. And yes, I do believe that in both cases, we are entering an era where their compositions are perceived purely on musical terms. They both stood the test of time and they are not going anywhere!

RL: All three Rogue Valley Symphony performances of *Symphony 4* sold out. Do you think this might be part of a change in the American reception of Bruckner's music - have you noticed such a trend?

MM: I think that this has more to do with the relationship that we at the RVS have developed with our audiences. I was quite surprised to learn how many people, even regular concertgoers, were not familiar with Bruckner. But because we have successfully nurtured a wonderful relationship with our patrons and because they came to believe in my programming choices, they came even if they did not know the piece or the composer. There were many Bruckner converts after our three-day weekend with the *Symphony No. 4*!

Richard Lehnert was for nine years the music editor of Stereophile magazine. A poet and a freelance editor and copy editor of books and magazines, he has lived in Ashland, Oregon, since 2011. His record reviews can be read at www.stereophile.com/writer/114. His feature article on the recordings of the various completions of the fourth movement of Bruckner's Symphony 9 has been posted at www.tinyurl.com/yb92ug2.

LONDON

BARBICAN HALL

28 FEBRUARY 2015

Bach - Motet: *Jesu, meine Freude*

Bruckner - Motets: *Locus iste; Os justi meditabitur; Christus factus est; Ave Maria (1861)*

Bruckner - *Symphony No. 8 (1890 Nowak)*

BBC Singers / James O'Donnell

BBC Symphony Orchestra / Leif Segerstam

WHEN BRUCKNER in his early 40s decided he was going to be a symphonist, although he didn't turn his back entirely on sacred choral music, his overwhelming and ceaseless endeavour was to produce abstract symphonic music for the concert hall. His greatest completed work, in terms of aspiration and duration, is the mighty 8th symphony, a work of such towering proportions that it is often best presented as the sole item in a concert programme. But it seemed an inspired idea of the BBC programmers to include in the first half of the concert some of Bruckner's short, unaccompanied motets. In the event, dragging these little jewels from their intended ecclesiastical context into the concert hall provided a rather clinical context, the meaning of the words hardly able to signify anything that might give us pause for thought. But they were very beautifully sung, the dynamic range extensive with climaxes loud and strong enough to have come from one of his symphonies, and the quiet endings in each case hushed and exquisite. They were preceded by the extended Bach motet which, for all its beauties and moments of dramatic virility, as in the forceful clarity of *Trotz dem alten Drachen* [Despite the old dragon], seemed like a sermon that outstays its welcome, belying its title by having precious little that was joyful until its very last phrase.

What a contrast and such an exciting buzz to return to the hall after the interval and find the little choir replaced by a stage crammed full of musicians, the three harps that Bruckner requests 'if possible', and a full array of brass, plus Wagner tubas, triple woodwind, large string sections, all loudly tuning up. In what turned out to be a courageous evening they performed like heroes. I have rarely heard the BBC SO perform Bruckner so well since the days of Günter Wand. Right from the very opening, at a simple gesture from Leif Segerstam, a closed fist suddenly opened, pianissimo string tremolo and horns came in precisely together. This is so rare, as the horns usually take a moment to sound and the opening is often ragged. And then, after the statement of the theme in bass, the oboe comments with a falling phrase, encouraged by Segerstam with open arms to expand its expressive potential towards the deepest of tragic laments: it was apparent that this was to be a performance that was to endow this music with widest spectrum of profound emotion. Oboeist Richard Simpson, throughout his recurrent telling solos in this movement, gave us music-making of heartfelt eloquence.

With the entry of the rising, lyrical second theme on violins, it was hard to believe that we weren't in the presence of one of the continental European orchestras famed for their Bruckner. The rich, dark sound was something I didn't know was possible in the Barbican acoustic, and the orchestral playing from all sections was near flawless over the immense and ultimately exhausting span of this work. Segerstam had slowed down immensely through the development section of the Finale - indeed, he was very slow at the heart of the other movements too - which gave opportunities for really well defined rhythmic attack from the woodwind and brass, and the flute and clarinet ornamentations of the finale second theme were spelt out beautifully - flautist Daniel Pailthorpe exemplary throughout. The brass, even though required to play at times long and slow, were magnificent and rhythmically taut, their 'Annunciation of Death' climax in the first movement shattering in its dramatic impact.

“He didn't mind how long it took - and it took a very long time”

Segerstam's interpretation was unapologetically uncompromising. He didn't mind how long it took - and it took a very long time - there was no fudging of the issue here, the enormity of the drama with which this symphony concerns itself was confronted full on. Having heard the symphony many times, I have ideas about how it should be done, and Segerstam wilfully offended against nearly all them - but with total conviction. The quiet end of the first movement, following Bruckner's description, should be the remorseless ticking of the clock where a person lies dying - so no slowing down, no diminuendo, and none is marked in the score; but Segerstam did both, so that instead of a clock we heard the dying of the tremulous heart beat as the protagonist expired - a slowing down absolutely perfectly synchronised by the BBC SO violas. The final notes of the whole symphony, the same falling phrase writ loud and large, although marked with a 'rit.', I feel always needs a short crotchet to close, to give an effective finality; Segerstam held it long and firm, and it worked perfectly.

There isn't room here to detail all the extraordinary events that gave this immense performance its overwhelming power, succeeding through suffering, brutality and bereavement to triumphant apotheosis, and not everyone in the audience found themselves able to go along with it - one had felt it worth enduring the whole 100 mins so as to be able to boo loudly at the end - but for me it will stand out in memory alongside other outstanding London 8ths - Horenstein with the LSO, Günter Wand with the BBC SO, Haitink with the RCM SO - not least for the transfigured BBC SO, who responded to Segerstam's exceptional and taxing demands with absolute commitment and astonishing beauty of sound. kw

ST. LOUIS

POWELL HALL

6, 7 MARCH 2015

Fauré - Elegy

Wagner - "Brünnhilde's Immolation" scene from *Götterdämmerung*

Bruckner - Symphony No. 3 (1889, Nowak)

St. Louis Symphony / David Robertson

Though not as popular as his later symphonies, Bruckner's Third marks an important phase in the composer's development. Celibidache, for one, "was especially fond of the Third Symphony," and sees it as "the first manifestation of great, spacious, broad-plane thinking - incredibly extended - representing the essence of his later symphonic writing."¹ Hearing two live performances of this piece, therefore, was a special occasion for me, and the rendition by the St. Louis Symphony under David Robertson will no doubt remain in my memory for a long time.

As the second oldest symphony orchestra in the United States (1880), the St. Louis Symphony is not immune to some of the hardships other orchestras in the country have faced. Having been nurtured by such masters including Walter Susskind, Jerzy Semkow, Leonard Slatkin, and Hans Vonk, SLS nonetheless experienced an enormous budget crisis in the 2000s. It was during this time that David Robertson stepped into the spotlight - through a highly successful 2002 Carnegie Hall concert he had with the SLS (as a last-minute replacement for Vonk), Robertson's future leadership of the orchestra was secured.² In 2005, the year he received the coveted Musical America's Conductor of the Year award, Robertson was appointed Music Director of the SLS after the sudden resignation of Vonk due to health issues. In addition to this appointment, Robertson served as principal guest conductor of the BBC Symphony during 2005-12, and has been chief conductor and artistic director of the Sydney Symphony since 2014.

The SLS is not generally known as a Bruckner orchestra. As far as I know, the number of performances of the symphonies in the last two decades or so was rather sparse,³ and there are only two commercially available recordings.⁴ On the other hand, I was intrigued by the success of a program that features the "Robertson - SLS - Bruckner trio" the year before the maestro's inauguration as Director of the Symphony, as observed by the New York Times critic Bernard Holland:

Worthwhile moments in symphonic life do not happen because of any one conductor or any one orchestra. They happen when the right person meets the right group of people, and it may be happening here...His conducting favors cleanly defined phrases aggressively accented, and yet his conducting of Bruckner's Adagio movement [of the Sixth Symphony] seemed to disgorge this statuesque music in one, long, smoothly shaped breath...Brought to the surface

¹ Claudio Maria Perselli, "A Gigantic Dinosaur's Egg," in *Bruckner 3*, compact disc, EMI 7243 5 56689 2 9 (1988), compact disc, 2.

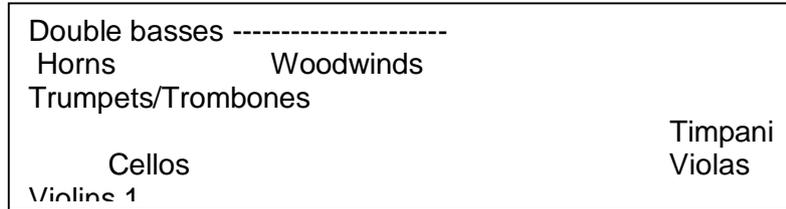
² Robertson's debut with the orchestra, however, dates back to 1999. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Robertson_\(conductor\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Robertson_(conductor)))

³ Although there might be more, performances of Bruckner's symphonies that I have found include the Second (1992, Slatkin), Third (2001, Vonk), Fourth (2001, Vonk), Sixth (2004, Robertson), Seventh (1997, Vonk; 2011, Robertson), and Eighth (2008, Skrowaczewski).

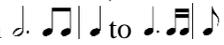
⁴ *Bruckner: Symphony No. 4 in E-flat Major, "Romantic"*, ARCH Media Archives PTC 5186321, (2007); *Bruckner: Symphony No. 7 in E Major*, ARCH Media Archives AM1005 (2000). Both are live recordings under Vonk.

were the underlying dancing qualities that Bruckner's weight and length so easily disguise. Mr. Robertson also accepts at face value the ethereal Brucknerian brass band central to all the symphonies; here it was encouraged to blast away.⁵

I can't resist quoting this, because I witnessed many of Holland's observations in my encounter with Robertson's performances of the Third Symphony. One of the main features of this work lies in the use of contrast, be it dynamics, rhythm, or orchestration.⁶ The result is a dramatic juxtaposition of extremes, which was partly highlighted by the unusual seating arrangement of the orchestra:



Of particular interest is the separation of the horns and trumpets/trombones. By doing this, the antiphonal exchange between the two groups in many passages of the score is brought to the forefront. One example is m. 27ff of the Scherzo, where a horn motive alternates with the trumpet/trombone/timpani chords. Another one is m. 13ff of the Finale, where another idea is tossed between the horns and the trumpets at the beginning (mm. 13-16) and later subjected to different treatments. The result is a highly musical rendition of these passages, an exciting treat that caters to not only the ears, but the eyes and the mind as well.

As a conductor who established himself as a master interpreter of new music at the beginning of his career, Robertson obviously has a propensity for precision and total control.⁷ This aspect of his style is clearly shown in the performances. He was meticulous, and adhered to every detail of the score including articulation, dynamics, tempo, and rhythm. For example, there are many passages in the symphony where conductors would freely exercise their power to slow down or speed up. But that didn't quite happen with Robertson. Instead, he let the music unfold according to its inherent rhythmic profile. One such passage is the transition to the climax (or false recapitulation) of the Development (mm. 321-40) in the first movement, where a rhythmic idea originated from the primary theme undergoes a systematic diminution from  to .⁸ The outcome is a written-out *Steigerung*, one that is effective without the need for external assistance such as *accelerando*. Well, that was exactly what Robertson did, and the music flowed so naturally and, surprisingly, did not sound rigid at all! The rhythmic augmentation/diminution and methodical contrasts brought about by dynamics and orchestration, I believe, are major contributions to coherence in this symphony that produce organic unity in the work.

Robertson, of course, did not just follow the score strictly from beginning to end, but offered his own personal touches as well. The first movement began with a swifter tempo than is customarily done. In addition, a half-note/quarter-note rhythmic motive at mm. 16-17 stood out (first horn, woodwinds added m. 20ff), especially through the way he marked the accented first note that highlights the difference in dynamics and duration between the two notes. This is interesting, because this motive serves as a germinating seed for later passages of the symphony containing contrasting or antiphonal elements, such as those I mentioned earlier. The second theme was executed with great care. However, the closing theme was a little slow for my taste. The Beethovenian coda that begins at m. 591 was quite fast again; perhaps this was done to connect with the tempo of the opening theme. In the second movement, the half-note/quarter-note motive mentioned above returns at the end of the opening phrase with the same pitch interval and articulation (m. 5), thus providing a link to the first movement. The middle section unfolded in a speed that matches nicely the indicated "Andante quasi Allegretto"; the result is a section that does not drag, but moves forward without sacrificing the details. This tempo works well, especially in consideration of the extended length of this section, which fuses the second and fourth sections of the original 1873 version (the central third section being removed). The woodwinds did a great job, in particular the short passage that features chordal fragments in mm. 98-105,

⁵ <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/04/28/arts/music-review-conductor-and-orchestra-match-made-in-st-louis.html>.

⁶ As Constantin Floros has remarked: "The most outstanding characteristic of the Third Symphony must be the enormous abundance of its contrasts. Of all Bruckner's early symphonies, this is probably the one that is most strongly marked by powerful antitheses... There are more frequent instances of abrupt contrasts of ideas and dynamics crowded together in a short space of time" ("The Development of Bruckner's Symphonic Style," in *Bruckner: 9 Symphonies*, Deutsche Grammophon 469 810-2 [1975], compact discs, 10).

⁷ From 1992 to 2000, he was the music director of the Ensemble Intercontemporain—the first American to hold such a post. He also directed the Orchestre National de Lyon from 2000-2004.

⁸ There is also an augmentation of the motive in mm. 319-20.

where they exchange a dialog with the strings and horns. There was also fine balance at the beginning of the final part (m. 154ff), where the woodwinds restate the opening theme against a counter-melody played by the solo horn. This is one of the most expressive moments in the movement, where you could witness clearly the relationship between Robertson's gestures and the sound. The C major outburst at m. 170ff was a fitting testimony to the power and prowess of the SLS's brass.

Robertson's approach to the Scherzo was quite unique. To me, the first fortissimo passage (m. 17ff) borders on violence - a result of the dynamic intensity he put into the triadic theme as well as the following antiphonal exchange beginning at m. 27. The latter passage, in particular, stayed in my head for a while due to its kinetic power and the ongoing composite eighth-note rhythm that magically foreshadows the Trio when the same rhythm reappears in the viola part (m. 3). One doesn't usually hear this kind of connection in other performances, but here it not only enhances coherence within the work, but adds to the enjoyment of the listener. The timpani crescendo in the final measures of the movement, in addition to adding drama to the ending, completes an overarching dynamic structure that stretches from the beginning of the movement. In the Finale, Robertson's adherence to the broad dynamic range *pp-ff* in the first eight bars produced one of the best crescendos I have ever heard of this opening. The theme that follows, needless to say, was full of power. Even though the entire brass section is responsible for the chorale part of the second theme, its division into two groups on the left and the right as mentioned before generated a much broader and even sound that filled up the entire hall. This enhancement notwithstanding, the third theme did sound "uneven" to me, for I was not able to hear its characteristic syncopations, especially for Friday night's performance. It could be related to where I sat, however. Similar to what happened in the third movement, there was a timpani crescendo toward the end at mm. 449-50. Extremely effective, this roll drove the music toward the final peroration, where the opening theme of the symphony reaffirmed its importance in the key of D major.

Overall, Robertson gave two excellent readings of the Third Symphony, although Saturday night's performance is definitely the winner. The orchestra was more responsive and "into" the music than the previous evening, and the playing paid off with the enthusiastic applause, whistles, and standing ovations that ensued. Last but not least, I was impressed by his pre-concert talk on Saturday, in which Robertson gave a non-sense lecture about the music of the composers in the program. For Bruckner, he used a recording of *Locus iste* to illustrate its formal perfection in relation to the symphonies. He also revealed how he had to convince the administration three times before they would allow him to play the Third Symphony.⁹ I applaud his courage to share this with the public. Well, it would be interesting to see how much Bruckner's music will play in maestro Robertson's future programs. He will definitely be someone to keep an eye on as a Bruckner advocate.

Eric Lai

BAD KISSINGEN

REGENTENBAU

8 MARCH 2015

Beethoven - Violin Concerto (Inglolf Turban)
Bruckner - Symphony in D minor (Die Nullte)

Philharmonie Festiva / Gerd Schaller

THE TWO works brought together in this programme are very different, not least that the Beethoven Violin Concerto was well known by almost everyone in the audience, but hardly any would have had the opportunity to hear Bruckner's Symphony in D minor, known as the Symphony No. 0, in the concert hall ever before. It is very rarely performed - all the more credit to Gerd Schaller and the Ebrach Music Summer for having programmed it. The demands upon the conductor and players were therefore different for each piece: it was necessary to make the Beethoven sound new and exciting, to find a way of piercing through

**“the performance of the
Bruckner symphony an
unqualified triumph”**

the familiarity of the work so that audience's interest is kindled anew; but after the interval was a work the composer himself has dismissed as “not valid” and “nullified”, the performers' job was to persuade the audience that the composer was wrong, that this was a work worthy to follow Beethoven's masterpiece, and whose place in the Bruckner canon is beyond doubt. Although I was not sure they had succeeded in the first of these aspirations, they

⁹ On the other hand, it is sad to see the over-propaganda on Wagner over the media, including SLS's own promotion, with “Surviving Wagner” as the title of the program notes (*STL Symphony Playbill*, March 2015, 26). As the composer whose work was the most substantial of the program, Bruckner was somehow demoted to a second-class citizen. A review from a major St. Louis paper also reveals this trend, not to mention the writer's own bias against Bruckner (http://www.stltoday.com/entertainment/arts-and-theatre/reviews/music-review-brewer-sls-bring-down-the-house-with-wagner/article_dcc45e27-354b-5524-a8b2-66b1df54224e.html).

fulfilled the second magnificently, the performance of the Bruckner symphony an unqualified triumph.

After the interval it was as if there were before us a completely new orchestra. The violin sound which had been a little thin during the Beethoven suddenly blossomed with the breadth of tone suited to a late-Romantic work, the cellos gave us some glorious rich playing, solos from winds, especially the horn, flute and clarinet, were beautifully presented and a joy to listen to. It was in their quasi-ornamental interpolations that one recognised one of the characteristics that would grace the better known later symphonies by this composer, but more significantly there was a sense of space and of mystery, of music organised over a large span which in this performance made the case for the Symphony No. 0, composed mainly between his first and second, having a crucial place in Bruckner's discovery of his own voice.

The conductor's handling of tempo was masterly, a prerequisite for giving this music a stature that some recorded performances fail to achieve. The first movement opens with a march-like tread and a rhythmic theme, a sort of ostinato, marked *Allegro* (which the Vienna Philharmonic conductor of the time, Dessoff, failed to recognise as a theme at all, and so dismissed the work, perhaps leading to Bruckner's 'nullification' of it two years later). It recurs throughout the movement, and in Schaller's performance you sensed that it was there throughout, underlying the second theme and other thematic features, so endowing the movement not merely with an impressive cohesion and unity, but also a sense of ongoing symphonic discussion. It was in this movement that the wind instrument solos were especially magical as they commented on the nobly played chorales from the brass.

The Andante is not yet a movement with the gravity of the Adagios for which the later symphonies are so renowned, and it would be a mistake to try and load the lighter textures with greater depth. The Philharmonie Festiva strings provided a purity of tone thoroughly in keeping with the delicate palette with which this music elaborates its restrained emotions, and the woodwind choir responded in kind.

The energetic scherzo came over as a precursor of Shostakovich as much as it did Bruckner's later thumping, rustic Scherzos and the Philharmonie Festiva gave it a superb, lively account.

For me, the real surprise came with the Finale which has on occasion seemed a somewhat inadequate movement, but this evening it brought the symphony to a triumphant close and elicited a very enthusiastic response from the audience. Bruckner himself could hardly have conceived that such a thing might ever happen to this symphony he so categorically discarded - though never destroyed! It has an enigmatic slow introduction before the main theme storms in with heavy brass and wide intervals, such as Bruckner went on to use with even greater effect in later symphonies. Sometimes the strident brass has reminded me of Berlioz, the bustling string writing of Mendelssohn, but on this occasion the language seemed to belong uniquely to this symphony. There is a central section in which the main theme receives some fugal treatment, and this was assembled with great clarity and rhythmic verve by maestro Schaller and his orchestra, and they brought off the exciting, blazing coda with complete authority to close a superb performance, demonstrating convincingly that this is a symphony worth infinitely more than the 'zero' its composer wrote on its pages. kw

BIRMINGHAM

SYMPHONY HALL

11 & 14 MARCH 2015

Bruckner - Symphony No. 5

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra / Ilan Volkov

ONE DAY, in Linz, a person ambled slowly towards the Lutheran church. He pulled his hat down over his eyes because he did not wish to be recognized by anybody. He sneaked inside and waited. Was he there to listen to music, perhaps the organ, or singing? Or was he just admiring the architecture?

It was Anton Bruckner, and he really wanted to hear the singing of chorales. Bruckner liked chorales, but they were a Protestant form and not used in 19th-century Austrian Catholic worship. Whether or not he was inclined towards any ecumenical feeling, he knew that chorales were for him. They were representative of a great tradition. It is not, perhaps, too wayward a thought to feel an analogy with this story of the composer's visit to the church that day, in the peaceful devotion brought about by the quiet *pizzicato* chorale in the first movement of the Fifth (from bar 101). It was moulded beautifully here by CBSO guest conductor Ilan Volkov. The first movement as a whole was given air and space, from the beginning, taking time over chorales and other places where less movement and pulse indicated more reflection. The overall conception of the movement was equally strong for its architectural strength, and for the more reflective passages. Such strength is, after all, so significant in this most assured, yet abstract of symphonies, but which also glories in peaceful meditations along the way. The

“It was beautifully
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CBSO”

work is often described and experienced as disparate and incongruous, with its contrasts of tempo, feeling and dynamics.

A conductor with understanding for the work's architecture has to find the balance between pure form and the spiritual/mystical elements. This he achieved quite successfully in the first movement. The two elements come together at last at the end of the Finale, one of the great affirmative closings of all symphonic works, when disparity is finally resolved, and the chorale theme returns in such splendour. Such cumulative sense wasn't quite achieved here, as those last pages gave the impression of being on a kind of automatic pilot. The tempo was a hasty one overall, though not with a sense of actually being rushed. It meant that the chorale in the coda was less than the glorious affirmation it might have been. Earlier the string theme from bar 83, and the return from bar 398, marked to be played somewhat slower, was not given contrast in character or tenderness. Overall, there was just a slight impression that the multifarious nature of the things was not completely resolved by the end.

After the first movement, which can be described as introductory in nature, and which looks back to past times in places, the Adagio merely increases the ambiguities, with two different pulses happening at the same time, the triplets combined with the four-in-bar oboe theme. While the Fifth Symphony in total does not show the more inward-looking composer of the later symphonies, some commentators find this passage desolate - or sad - as they quote from a letter of the composer's to a friend: "My life has lost all its joy and enthusiasm - and all for nothing," a reflection, perhaps, upon his depression at the time, or of the unrewarding years of the 1870s. There was little to suggest this aspect in these performances, the playing being affirmative and solid. The moments of consolation were not so greatly contrasted with the later returns of the theme. The flute soliloquy, from bar 139, was memorable both for the beauty of the playing and its pacing, belying any feeling of reflection but conducive to the structure of the movement. This Adagio has no great brass climax such as is found in other Bruckner adagios; instead the wonderful and radiant elaborations of the theme serve. This performance seemed to emphasize the unfulfilled nature of the movement. It was played here in spirited fashion. The short coda was neither wintry nor sad. In this movement Bruckner was again looking towards the end of the work. As in the first movement he was giving another, but different, taste of the introductory nature of the music so far. The Scherzo was played in a rather heavy demeanour, but without emphasis on the first beat of the bar. This was no Austrian style. There was little contrast in the Trio.

Throughout these performances Volkov was never showy or demonstrative, and the performances were interesting, finely played, with architectural perception, but without the last element of distinction, and with a contrast in style - or of intention, perhaps - between the first and subsequent movements.

It was apt to offer J.S.Bach before the interval, (the Violin Concerto in A minor, BWV1041, played by Ilya Gringots). Perhaps Bruckner had been listening to Bach's music that day in the Lutheran church. He may also have been listening to fugues.

Raymond

Cox

SAN FRANCISCO

DAVIES SYMPHONY HALL

25 MARCH 2015

Bruckner - Symphony No. 8 (1890 version, ed. Nowak)

San Francisco Symphony Orchestra / James Feddeck

JAMES FEDDECK is a young American conductor who has walked off with an impressive number of international prizes over the past half-dozen years. He was the Assistant Conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra from 2009 to 2013, and is now guest-conducting major orchestras around the world. He made his San Francisco Symphony debut with this concert, stepping in for Semyon Bychkov. Feddeck is an unabashed romantic with clear ideas and an understanding of Bruckner's music that, by and large, he communicated effectively to the orchestra. They, of course, know this music from numerous performances under Conductor Laureate Herbert Blomstedt. I found Blomstedt's 8th to be curiously bland in a performance with this orchestra some years back; Feddeck's was anything but.

This performance opened at a moderate tempo - a tad swifter than Haitink's in London last October. Orchestral balances favored the high strings and brass too much at the start (that's Davies Hall speaking), but Feddeck corrected that over time. He utilizes cadential ritards with some frequency to separate larger phrases, but he isn't incessant about it as are some conductors these days. More importantly, he was able for the most part to keep the line taught through these breaks. Little tempo adjustments including subtle accelerations were most effective at maintaining tension, and climaxes were suitably effective. The movement closed with a rather

exaggerated drawing-out of the tempo, but overall it was well done. An energetic scherzo followed, although the relative absence of bass in the balance tended to obscure the pulse at the start. Feddeck's handling of the trio was superb - absolutely lovely, with beautifully-shaped phrasing and meticulous attention to the flow of the melody in the strings. Pauses were well judged: Feddeck has a handle on just how long to wait before picking up the line. Again, nicely done.

The last two movements of the 8th are a challenge. Again, balances are crucial. The pulses in the lower strings at the start of the Adagio were too insistent, tending to break into what should be a seamless flow of sound in the violins, floating above all else. But what followed was marvelous, building as the brass entered with great majesty. Again, phrasing was effective, and Feddeck's knowledge of how the piece goes allowed the music to take flight.

The finale began with a tempo on the faster side, and Feddeck was at his most interventionist in this movement. A slight pause here, an unexpected acceleration there, all contributed to maintaining and ultimately ratcheting up the tension. Again, he elicited glorious sound from both the strings and the brass choir. The coda crept in from almost nothingness, building gradually to the great rhythmic interplay of the timpani and brass at Yy. But then, for the final dozen bars beginning at letter Zz, Feddeck slowed down *dramatically*. He then slowed even more to exaggerate the final ritenuto, a practice that has become commonplace lately, and not to my taste. At least he respected the fact that the final note is, indeed, a quarter note, and didn't hold it excessively.

On balance, I found this to be a solidly enjoyable 8th. The orchestra was in fine form, with characterful winds, clear and clean harps, gorgeous sound from the brass, and a timpanist who neither held back nor overwhelmed. They clearly enjoyed their first encounter with Feddeck, respecting what he asked them to do and giving them their considerable best. Keep an eye on this young man: he could be giving us some special Bruckner in the future.

Neil Schore

NEW YORK

CARNEGIE HALL

26 MARCH 2015

Schubert - Overture from "Claudine von Villa Bella", D. 239
 Bruckner - Symphony in F minor (1863)
 Dvořák - Symphony No. 1 in C minor, "The Bells of Zlonice"

American Symphony Orchestra / Leon Botstein

My jaw fairly dropped when this program was announced: In a season when no one else was scheduling Bruckner at the venerable Carnegie, the adventurous Kilenyi Medal recipient Botstein was including the first performance of the "Studiensymphonie"- here billed as "Symphony 00"- I had encountered in more than 40 years of concert-going. Prefacing it with the unknown overture by the teenage Schubert (from the same year as his 3rd Symphony, with which it shared some notable characteristics, particularly its Italian stylings), was a canny move, underscoring the link from one composer to the next.

Bruckner's "early" (at age 38!) symphony can be tricky, since his individual symphonic voice so often seems tantalizingly within reach but is never quite there - almost as often, particularly in the scherzo and finale, the work looks back at Schumann and Mendelssohn. It comes closest to the mature Bruckner of only a few years later in the radiant, surprisingly large-scale slow movement. Botstein's approach was supple and classical, resorting to fairly brisk but not brusque tempi, relaxing when needed in the lyric passages, scaling very nicely in the Andante and building up big climaxes without trying to make more of the music than what was there. This was simply a fine presentation of an interesting, neglected Romantic symphony. My only regret was the omission of the first-movement repeat, but it was a long program.

“a fine presentation of an interesting, neglected Romantic symphony”

The audience, which was substantial, was also appreciative. But it must be said that they were more appreciative of the 24-year-old Dvořák's maiden symphonic voyage, long thought lost. Its finale may be the most gloriously grandiose thing he ever wrote, even more than "The Hussites"; Botstein and his band played it to the hilt and the audience rose to it. Then again, the neophyte symphonist Bruckner had other things on his mind.

Sol L. Siegel

DALLAS, TEXAS, USA

MEYERSON SYMPHONY CENTER

22 MARCH 2015

Bach - 2 Violin Concerti (Gil Shaham)
Bruckner - Symphony No. 4 (1878/80 Nowak)

Dallas Symphony Orchestra / Jaap van Zweden

I COULD tell this was going to be good from the opening horn call, strong and confident over properly hushed, trembling strings. Pacing was on the leisurely side, but never seemed slow as van Zweden allowed the music to progress, not from one block of sound to another, but organically, as one great arc. I have heard some good live 4ths over the years, but can't recall one with this sense of grandeur and logic. The famous

“...sense of grandeur
and logic”

Scherzo was more hell-for-leather by contrast, but the finale, which is so difficult to pull off, shared the same virtues as the rest, dynamic contrasts carefully gauged to produce the maximal effect at the end.

The conducting was matched throughout - well, almost - by the beauty of the playing. On the basis of this performance, van Zweden has Dallas playing about as well as any American orchestra at the moment: Strings are vibrant, brass is solid without being overpowering, and the woodwinds (which, as most of us know, are only doubled in this symphony) were able to hold their own, in solos and tutti. van Zweden, unusually, places his violas at front right, before the cellos, which offered a further dividend in the slow movement. This was all clearly audible because Meyerson has one of the finest of modern concert halls, both resonant and balanced (and perfectly adjusted for Bruckner!). About the only fly in the ointment was the principal trumpet, who oddly seemed to be having difficulty with his instrument while trying to execute the echo effects in the Scherzo.

Dallas and van Zweden have scheduled the 5th for this October. I just might return. *Sol L. Siegel*

CHICAGO, USA

SYMPHONY CENTER

23, 24 APRIL 2015

Bruckner - Symphony No. 8 (1890 Nowak)

Chicago Symphony Orchestra / Semyon Bychkov

Here was a big, noble, performance that aspired to encompass the entire world. The opening movement, taken at a deliberate but not ostentatiously slow pace, built confidently to its great climax before dying out. The Scherzo, which can be a snooze in the wrong hands, became a wondrous contrast between earthly and heavenly delights, with the Trio an ethereal dance rather than the usual hymn.

The great Adagio stood at the center, of course. Bychkov took about 25 minutes, a bit faster than the norm, but it didn't really seem to take even that long. There was an urgency to it which, however, did nothing to diminish its beauty and sense of timeless yearning. At this point I feel I have to quote the fine program note by Phillip Huscher: "The Viennese who sat spellbound by this great, noble Adagio surely never looked at Bruckner the same way again. They must have been shocked that this undistinguished man, utterly at a loss in the world they so stylishly inhabited, understood things that cannot be put into words."

“this undistinguished man ...
understood things that cannot
be put into words”

The finale, in Bychkov's hands, became a vast tone poem, more episodic than other performances I have encountered (even though, by broadening the opening, he got the tempo relationship between the first two themes right, something that can't always be taken for granted). This was a risky approach, but Bychkov was committed to his vision of the symphony as a self-contained world, and the contrasts - even coming close to a dead stop once or twice - were entirely in keeping. The coda, it goes without saying, was the caper to a long, satisfying journey.

The orchestra played beautifully, of course, though they seemed a bit tired at the second performance I saw (out of four scheduled). It was understandable, given that, including the dress rehearsal, that Friday matinee was their third performance of the 80-plus-minute work in about 30 hours. *Sol L. Siegel*

WARWICK

WARWICK UNIVERSITY ARTS CENTRE

8 MAY 2015

Mozart - Violin Concerto No. 4 (Baiba Skride)
 Bruckner - Symphony No. 7

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra / Andris Nelsons

My seat was on the right side, very near the front with a close view, and prominent sounding, of two double basses, but also a sidelong view of Andris Nelsons who was poised to commence the symphony, crouching forward, his eyes glinting with enthusiasm, looking for all the world as though there was absolutely nothing, *nothing* he'd rather be doing at this time than conducting this orchestra, in this place, in this music, Bruckner's Symphony No. 7. And really, that's how the performance went: his joyful commitment to it all was totally infectious and you would have to have had a heart of stone not to have enjoyed this glorious music-making.

Not that orchestra played perfectly, there seemed to be some moments of scruffy ensemble, but it didn't matter in the slightest: we were all having such a good time. And certainly this was not the most formally coherent of performances, not like the grave Otto Klemperer, where somehow you could feel very securely that you knew exactly where you were and where you were going, and what the proportions of the journey were; with this Nelsons' performance one didn't have the faintest idea of how it all hung together, but there was just one delightful moment of magic and excitement succeeding another, and then another, and then another....

His opening tempo - as with so many performances - bore no relation to the *Allegro moderato* tempo marking, but was unfolded lovingly; likewise the second theme where each phrase was tenderly caressed. Come the third theme things became much more chirpy and animated. These themes seem to respond well to these tempi, even though a literal reading of the score would suggest they were not the tempi intended. The sequence of meditations on the first theme in the winds that opens the development was beautifully moulded, very slow, and the inversion of the second theme and its continuation very deeply felt but almost becalmed. Once again the third theme material came to the rescue, and the development climax where the opening arpeggio theme is inverted fortissimo on violins and brass was played at a true *Allegro moderato* - then a pause, and the recapitulation was suddenly slow again. Well, nothing new here, we're used to this manoeuvre, nearly all performances do the same, and it worked very effectively, but in no edition of the score is there anything to suggest this is what the composer intended.

The first wave of the coda, where the timpani enter for the first time, was magnificently dramatic, the crescendo overwhelming, shaped to perfection, closing with an extended *rallentando* ushering in the *sehr feierlich* crescendo to the triple forte closing pages.

The Adagio was played with great lyrical flow, the Wagner tubas rich and evocative, and the second theme song-like and wistful. The great climax, with timpani but sans cymbal and triangle, was filled with nobility; the Wagner tuba dirge and the following threnody on violins and woodwind desolate and lonely.

The Scherzo was full of life and joy - Nelsons mouthing the double-dotted rhythm to the trumpets; the Trio slow, gentle and very affecting. The Finale was subject to plenty of tempo modifications, ritardandos, accelerandos, mouldings of phrases, the third theme especially weighty, but it all sounded natural enough and worked well, full of interest and vitality throughout, the contribution of the heavy brass trenchant but not overwhelming. Neither of these two movements was as spiky and bright as they can be, but they fitted well with Nelsons' lyrical approach to the work.

In a previous review of this orchestra playing this symphony under this conductor I remarked that it seemed like an interpretation 'in the making'. Since then Nelsons has conducted the symphony several times. I don't think the general approach has altered much, but it does now sound more 'lived in', more natural, a greater sense of on-going flow - even if not of tight architectural cohesion and direction. But when the orchestra and conductor are so full of commitment and enthusiasm, and sheer enjoyment, such considerations seem to be of little consequence.

kw

“...you would have to have had a heart of stone not to have enjoyed this glorious music-making.”

International Concert Selection

July - October 2015

Considerable effort is made to ensure that this information is correct at the time of going to press, but readers are advised to check with the venue or performers before making their arrangements.

Argentina

24 Oct 7pm La Plata, Teatro Argentino +54 221 429 1732

Villa-Lobos - Uirapurú

Gianneo - Concierto Aymarà (Federico Mouján)

Bruckner - Te Deum

Marisú Pavón, sop; Roxana Deviggiano, mezzo; Arnaldo Quiroga, tenor; Hernán Iturralde, bass.

Orquesta Estable del Teatro Argentino de la Plata / Ligia Amadio

Austria

4 July 6 pm St Florian, Basilica +43(0)732 776127

Bruckner - Symphony No. 8 (1890 Nowak)

Bruckner Orchestra Linz / Stanislaw Skrowaczewski

25 July 9pm, 27 July 7.30pm, Salzburg, Großes Festspielhaus,

Martinů - Les Fresques de Piero della Francesca +43 662 840310

Bruckner - Mass No. 3

Dorothea Röschmann, Sop.; Karen Cargill, Alto; Christian Elsner, Tenor; Franz-Josef Selig, Bass

Bavarian Radio Choir, Vienna Philharmonic / Yannick Nézet-Séguin

6 Aug 7.30pm, 8 Aug 11am, Salzburg, Großes Festspielhaus,

Bruckner - Symphony No. 8 +43 662 840310

Vienna Philharmonic / Bernard Haitink

ST FLORIAN BRUCKNERTAGE 2015

15 Aug 10am, St Florian, Basilica +43 73277 5230

Bruckner - Windhaager Mass in C major

Bruckner - Ave Maria Alto and Organ WAB 7

Bach - Fugue in E flat, BWV 552/2

Irene Wallner, alto; Matthias Giesen, organ;

Josefin Bergmayr-Pfeiffer & Georg Viehböck, horns.

16 Aug 8pm, St Florian, Marble Hall, +43 73277 5230

Bruckner - Virga Jesse (arr. Erich Kaufmann)

Thomas Mandel - Piano Concerto

Tchaikovsky - Souvenir de Florence

Vienna String Soloists, Elias Gillesberger, piano.

17 Aug 8pm St Florian, Marble Hall, +43 73277 5230

Schumann - Liederkreis op 19, and works by

Schoeck, Wolf and French composers

Alois Mühlbacher, alto; Franz Farnberger, piano

18 Aug 8pm, St Florian, Sala Terrena, +43 73277 5230

Beethoven - String Quartet op 18/6

Debussy - String Quartet **Bruckner** - String Quintet

Minetti String Quartet

19 Aug, St Florian, Basilica +43 73277 5230

Bruckner-Organ Night

8pm Johann Vexo, Nancy / Paris: French organ music

9pm Simon Johnson, London: English organ music

10pm Daniel Glaus, Bern: "The Composer Plays" organ

11pm Giampaolo di Rosa, Rome, organ,

Jürgen Schall, trombone: "Organ Plus"

Midnight Gereon Krahfurst, Merzig: "Bruckner Improvised"

20 Aug 8pm, St Florian, Sala Terrena, +43 73277 5230

Bruckner - Symphony No. 9 (arr. Karl Grunsky, 2 piano-4 hands,

with Finale completion by William Carragan)

Till Alexander Körber & Reinhold Puri-Jobi, pianos.

21 Aug 8 pm, St Florian, Basilica +43 73277 5230

Debussy - Nocturne: *Nuages*

Bruckner - Symphony No. 9

Altomonte Orchestra / Rémy Ballot

22 Aug 7.30pm, Grafenegg, Wolkenturm +43 (0)2735 5500

Bruckner - Symphony No. 8 (1890 Nowak)

Israel Philharmonic / Zubin Mehta

11 Sept 7.30pm, St Florian, Basilica +43 (0)73277 5230

Bruckner - 3 a capella motets **Bruch** - Kol Nidrei

Bruckner - Mass No. 3

Regina Riel, soprano; Angelika Kirchschrager, alto; Markus

Miesenberger, tenor; Yasushi Hirano, bass

Vienna Cathedral Choir & Orchestra / Markus Landerer

13 Sept 7.30pm, Linz, Brucknerhaus +43 (0)732 775230

Qigang - Wu Xing (The Five Elements)

Beethoven - Piano Concerto No. 3 (Zhang Haochen)

Bruckner - Symphony No. 6

Macau Orchestra / Lü Jia

18 Sept 7.30pm, Linz, Brucknerhaus +43 (0)732 775230

Bruckner - Symphony No. 7 (arr. chamber ensemble)

Thomas Christian Ensemble

23 Sept 7.30pm, Linz, Brucknerhaus +43 (0)732 775230

Bruckner - Overture in G minor **Beethoven** - Triple Concerto

Rachmaninov - Symphony No. 2

Moscow City Orchestra / Vladimir Jurowski

23 Sept 7.30pm, Salzburg, Großes Festspielhaus +43 (0)662 873154

Schubert - Symphony No. 5 **Bruckner** - Symphony No. 7

Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg / Leopold Hager

24, 25 Sept 7.30pm, Salzburg, Großes Festspielhaus +43 (0)662 873154

Hager - 2 Psalms, baritone, choir & orchestra

Brahms - Alto Rhapsody (Svetlana Lifar)

Bruckner - Symphony No. 7

Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg / Leopold Hager

30 Sept 7.30pm, Vienna: Musikverein +43 1505 8190

Gubaidulina - Viola Concerto (Antoine Tamestit)

Bruckner - Symphony No. 9

Junge Deutsche Philharmonie / Jonathan Nott

2 Oct 7.30pm, St Florian, Basilica +43 (0)73277 5230

Bruckner - Symphony No. 4

Mariinsky Orchestra St Petersburg / Valery Gergiev

2 Oct 7.30pm Vienna: Musikverein +43 1505 8190

Busoni - Violin Concerto (Renaud Capuçon)

Bruckner - Symphony No. 6

ORF Radio Symphony Orchestra Vienna / Cornelius Meister

Australia

29, 31 July 8pm Sydney Opera House +61 2 9250 7777

1 Aug 8pm Melbourne, Arts Centre+ 1300 136166

Debussy - Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune

Debussy (arr. Brett Dean) - Ariettes oubliées (Magdalena Kožená)

Bruckner - Symphony No. 8

Australian World Orchestra / Sir Simon Rattle

Belgium

23 Sept 8pm Brussels: BOZAR +32 (0)2 507 8200

Beethoven - Fidelio Overture

Schumann - Piano Concerto (Claire-Marie Le Guay)

Bruckner - Symphony No. 4 (1878/80)

Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège / Christian Arming

27 Sept 8pm Brussels: BOZAR +32 (0)2 507 8200

Martinů - Lidice

Hartmann - Concerto funebre (Satenik Kourdoian)

Bruckner - Symphony No. 3

La Monnaie Symphony Orchestra / Hartmut Haenchen

Denmark

17 Sept 7.30pm, Copenhagen, Koncerthuset, +45 3520 6262

Bruckner - Symphony No. 9

DR Radio Symphony Orchestra / Nikolaj Znaider

Finland

12 July 6.15pm, Kuhmo Arts Centre +358 8 652 0936

Works by **Debussy, Mozart & Brahms**

Bruckner - String Quintet

Alexander Sitkovetsky, Sara Etelävuori, vlms; Razvan Popovici, Barbora Hilpo, violas; Martti Rousi, cello

30 Aug 7.30pm, Helsinki Music Centre +358 600 10800

Mozart - Piano Concerto No. 18 (Kristian Bezuidenhout)

Bruckner - Symphony No. 5

Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra / Daniel Harding

16 Sept 7pm Helsinki Music Centre +358 600 10800

Bruckner - Symphony No. 7

Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra / Osmo Vänskä

France

5 July 9pm, Colmar, St Matthieu Church

Bruckner - Symphony No. 4

Radio Symphony Orchestra Berlin / Marek Janowski

9 Oct 8.30pm, P Paris, Philharmonie +33 (0)1 4484 4484

Bruckner - Symphony No. 8

Orchestre national d'Île-de-France / Yoel Levi

Germany

2, 3 July 8pm, München Philharmonie im Gasteig, +49 (0)8954 818181

Wagner - Parsifal, prelude. **Stravinsky** - Symphony of Psalms

Bruckner - Mass No. 3

Anne Schwanewilms, soprano; Mihoko Fujimura, mezzo; Michael Schade, tenor; René Pape, bass; Munich Philharmonic / Kent Nagano

2, 3 July 8pm, Stuttgart Liederhalle +49 (0)711 2027710

Nielsen - Clarinet Concerto (Sebastian Manz)

Bruckner - Symphony No. 9

SWR Radio-Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart / Herbert Blomstedt

6 July 8pm, Saarbrücken, Congresshalle +49 681 3092486

Wagner - Overture, *Der Fliegende Holländer*

Karłowicz - Lithuanian Rhapsody **Bruckner** - Symphony No. 4

Radio Symphony Orchestra Berlin / Marek Janowski

8 July 7.30pm, Passau, St Stephan Cathedral, +49 (0)851 4908310

Bruckner - Symphony No. 7

Bruckner Orchestra Linz / Stanisław Skrowaczewski

9 July 7.30pm, Itzehoe, Theater +49 (0)4821 670931

Bruckner - Te Deum

International Blue Lake Orchestra / Michael Klaue

13 July 8pm, Kassel, Staatstheater +49 (0)561 1094 222

Bruckner - Symphony No. 9 (SPCM Finale)

Orchestra of Kassel Staatstheater / Marc Piollet

21 July 8pm, Freiburg im Breisgau, Konzerthaus +49 (0)761 38 81552

Henze - Erbkönig-Fantasie **Rihm** - 3 late poems by Heiner Müller

Bruckner - Symphony No. 4

Freiburg Philharmonic Orchestra / Nicholas Milton

23 July 7.30pm Worms, Dom +49 06241 6115

Liszt - Missa choralis (Collegium Vocale Worms Cathedral)

Bruckner - Symphony No. 3

Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz / Karl-Heinz Steffens

26 July 5pm, Trier, Hohe Domkirche +49 065197 90779

Durufle - 4 Motets on Gregorian Themes

Bruckner - Christus factus est **Mendelssohn** - Hear my prayer

Trier Cathedral and other choirs / Thomas Kiefer

Bruckner - Symphony No.4

Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz / Karl-Heinz Steffens

5 Aug 7.30pm, Ansbach, Orangerie +49 (0)981-15 037

Bach - Brandenburg Concertos Nos. 3 & 6

Hindemith - Trauermusik

Bruckner - String Quintet (arr. string orchestra)

Tabea Zimmermann, viola, Ensemble Resonanz

9 Aug 3pm, Chorin, Kloster +49(0) 3334 818472

Mozart - Piano Concerto No.23 (Justus Franz)

Bruckner - Symphony No.4

Philharmonia of Nations / Justus Franz

9 Aug 8.30pm, Karlsruhe, Stadtkirche

Bruckner - Symphony No. 9 (trans. organ)

Thilo Muster, organ

24 Aug 8pm, Dresden, Frauenkirche +49 (0)351 65606701

28 Aug 8pm, Eltville im Rheingau, Kloster Eberbach +49 (0)6723 602170

Bruckner - Symphony No. 8 (Haas)

Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester / Herbert Blomstedt

6 Sept 5pm, Ebrach Abbey, +49 (0)9552 297

Bruckner - Mass No. 3, Psalm 146

Philharmonie Festiva / Gerd Schaller

6 Sept 11am; 8, 9 Sept 8pm Kölner Philharmonie +49 (0)221 280 280

Schönberg - Chamber Symphony **Boulez** - Notations I-IV, VII

Bruckner - Symphony No. 4

Gürzenich-Orchester Köln / François-Xavier Roth

10 Sept 8pm, Frankfurt am Main, Alter Oper +49 (0) 6913 40400

11 Sept 8pm, München Philharmonie im Gasteig, +49 (0)8954 818181

13, 14 Sept 8pm, Dresden, Semperoper +49 (0)351 4911705

Beethoven - Piano Concerto No. 3 (Yefim Bronfman)

Bruckner - Symphony No. 6

Staatskapelle Dresden / Christian Thielemann

11 Sept 8pm, Bonn, Beethovenhalle, + 49 (0) 228 5020 1313

Gubaidulina (arr. Schachtner) - Two Paths

Bruckner - Symphony No. 5

Beethoven Orchestra Bonn / Stefan Blunier

22, 23 Sept 8pm München Philharmonie im Gasteig, +49 (0)8954 818181

Brahms - Violin Concerto (Janine Jansen)

Bruckner - Symphony No. 4

Munich Philharmonic / Valery Gergiev

25 Sept 7.30pm, Peenemünde, Im Kraftwerk +49 (0)38378 34647

Bruckner - Symphony No. 7

NDR Symphony Orchestra Hamburg / Thomas Hengelbrock

27 Sept 8pm, Frankfurt am Main, Alter Oper +49 (0) 6913 40400

5 Oct 8pm, Berlin, Philharmonie +49 (0)30254 88999

Gubaidulina - Viola Concerto (Antoine Tamestit)

Bruckner - Symphony No. 9

Junge Deutsche Philharmonie / Jonathan Nott

5 Oct 8pm, Essen, Philharmonie +49 (0)2018122 8801

Brahms - Violin Concerto (Janine Jansen)

Bruckner - Symphony No. 6

Munich Philharmonic / Valery Gergiev

25 Oct 11am, 26 Oct 7.30pm, Lübeck Music & Congress Centre

Strauss - Metamorphosen

+49 (0)451 7904 400

Bruckner - Symphony No. 4

Philharmonisches Orchester der Hansestadt Lübeck / Ryusuke Numajiri

31 Oct 7pm, Baden Baden, Festspielhaus +49 (0)7221 30 13101

Wagner - Die Walküre, Act 1 **Bruckner** - Symphony No. 5

Annette Dasch, soprano, Klaus Florian Vogt, tenor, Liang Li, bass

Bamberger Symphoniker / Jonathan Nott

Israel

24 July 2pm, Tel Aviv, Heichal Hatarbut +972 (0)3 6211777

Mozart - Violin Concerto No. 5 (Itamar Zorman)

Bruckner - Symphony No. 8

Israel Philharmonic / Zubin Mehta

Italy

8 Aug 6pm, Brixen Cathedral

Brahms - Motet: Warum ist das Licht gegeben dem Muehseligen?

Bruckner - Symphony No.9 and Te Deum

Orchester der Musikakademie der Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes / Martin Wettges

Japan

24 July 7pm, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Space +81 3 59851707

Sibelius - Finlandia

Chopin - Piano Concerto No.2 (Philipp Kopachevsky)

Bruckner - Symphony No.5 (2015 Revised Original Concepts, ed. Takanobu Kawasaki)

Tokyo New City Orchestra / Akira Naito

20 Sept 2pm, Yokohama Minatomirai Hall +81 (0)45682 2000

Mozart - Symphony No. 39 **Bruckner** - Symphony No. 4

Kanagawa Philharmonic / Hiroshi Kodama

25 July 3pm, 26 July 2pm Sapporo Concert Hall, +81 11520 1234

Mozart - Symphony No. 34 **Bruckner** - Symphony No. 4

Pacific Music Festival Orchestra / David Zinman

29 July 7pm, Kobe International House +81 (0)78 230 3300

Bruckner - Mass No.3 **Mozart** - Symphony No.34

Yuko Sakaguchi, sop; Setsuko Takemoto, mezzo; Makato Kuraishi, tenor; Yoshi Tanaka, bass

Kansai Philharmonic / Masahiko Kamei

28 Sept 7pm, Osaka, Symphony Hall +81 (0)6 64536000

Liszt - Orpheus **Wagner** - A Faust Overture

Bruckner - Symphony No.9

Osaka Symphony Orchestra / Hiroshi Kodama

30 Sept 7pm, Kawasaki, Muza Symphony Hall, +81 (0)44 520 0200

3 Oct 3pm, Kyoto Concert Hall +81 (0)75711 3090

Mozart - Piano Concerto No.24 (Murray Perahia)

Bruckner - Symphony No.7 in E major

London Symphony Orchestra / Bernard Haitink

30 Oct 7pm, 31 Oct 2pm, Sapporo Concert Hall, +81 11 520 1234

Hisatada Otaka - Symphony No. 1 **Bruckner** - Symphony No. 9

Sapporo Symphony Orchestra / Tadaaki Otaka

Netherlands

17 Aug 8pm, Amsterdam, Concertgebouw +31 (0)20 6718345

Bruckner - Symphony No.5

Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra / Daniel Harding

New Zealand

23 July 8pm, Auckland Town Hall, +64 (0)9 970 9700

Mendelssohn - Violin Concerto (Isabelle Faust)

Bruckner - Symphony No.7

Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra / Lionel Bringuier

28 Aug 6.30pm, Wellington Michael Fowler Centre

2 Sept 7pm, Dunedin Town Hall +64 (0)3 479 2823

5 Sept 7.30pm Auckland Town Hall, +64 (0)9 970 9700

Sibelius - Violin Concerto (Baiba Skride)

Bruckner - Symphony No.8 (1887)

New Zealand Symphony Orchestra / Simone Young

Norway

10 Sept 7.30pm Bergen, Grieghallen +47 5521 6150

Strauss - Four Last Songs (Karita Mattila)

Bruckner - Symphony No. 3

Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra / Marek Janowski

Romania

31 Aug 8pm, Bucharest Grand Palace Hall, <http://festivalenescu.ro/en>

Schönberg - Chamber Symphony No. 1 **Bruckner** - Symphony No.8

Israel Philharmonic / Zubin Mehta

4 Sept 7.30pm, Bucharest Grand Palace Hall, <http://festivalenescu.ro/en>

Enescu - Chamber symphony

Beethoven - Piano Concerto No.3 (Yefim Bronfman)

Bruckner - Symphony No.6

Staatskapelle Dresden / Christian Thielemann

South Korea

29 Oct 8pm, Seoul Arts Center +82 (0)2580 1300

Mozart - Piano Concerto No.23 (Tae-hyung Kim)

Bruckner - Symphony No.1

Korean Symphony Orchestra / Hun-Joung Lim

Switzerland

23 Aug 11am, Luzern, Kultur- & Kongresszentrum +41 41226 7777

Bruckner - Symphony No. 8 (Haas)

Gustav Mahler Jugend Orchester / Herbert Blomstedt

27 Aug 7.30pm, Luzern, Kultur- & Kongresszentrum +41 41226 7777

Mozart - Piano Concerto No.18 (Kristian Bezuidenhout)

Bruckner - Symphony No. 5

Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra / Daniel Harding

8 Sept 7.30pm Luzern, Kultur- & Kongresszentrum +41 41226 7777

Beethoven - Piano Concerto No. 3 (Yefim Bronfman)

Bruckner - Symphony No. 6

Staatskapelle Dresden / Christian Thielemann

27 Sept. 8pm Zürich, Opernhaus +41 44 268 66 66

Bruckner - Symphony No.8 (1887)

Philharmonia Zürich / Fabio Luisi

7 Oct 8pm Geneva, Victoria Hall +41(0)22 418 3500

8 Oct 8.15pm, Lausanne, **Théâtre de Beaulieu** +41(0)21 643 2211

9 Oct 8pm, Montreux, Auditorium Stravinski, 0041 (0)21 962 2119

Schumann - Piano Concerto (Alexander Gavrylyuk)

Bruckner - Symphony No.7

Orchestre de la Suisse Romande / Cornelius Meister

United Kingdom

4 July 7.30 pm, St Albans, St Peter's Church

Bruckner - Mass in No.2 **Dove** - The Passing of the Year

Works by Grainger and Tavener Andrew Leach (organ),

Voix de Vivre, The Jay Singers/ Neil MacKenzie

1 Aug 6.30pm, London Royal Albert Hall 0845 401 5034

Schubert - Symphony no. 4 "Tragic"

Bedford - Instability **Bruckner** - Mass No.3

Luba Orgonášová, sop., Jennifer Johnston, mezzo, Robert Dean Smith,

tenor, Derek Welton, bass

Orfeón Pamplonés and BBC Philharmonic / Juanjo Mena

15 Sept 7.30 London Barbican Hall +44 (0)207638 8891

Mozart - Piano Concerto No.24 (Murray Perahia)

Bruckner - Symphony No.7

London Symphony Orchestra / Bernard Haitink

31 Oct 7.30 London Royal Festival Hall 0844 875 0073

Bruckner - Symphony No.5

London Philharmonic Orchestra / Stanisław Skrowaczewski

United States of America

15, 16 Oct 7.30pm, 18 Oct 2.30pm, Dallas, Morton H Meyerson

Symphony Center +1 214692 0203

Bruckner - Symphony No.5

Dallas Symphony Orchestra / Jaap van Zweden

With gratitude to Mr. Tatsuro Ouchi whose website www.bekkoame.ne.jp/~hippo/musik/konzertvorschau/bruckner.html is the source for much of the concert listing information

www.bachtrack.com



A recommended web-site for worldwide concert listings and reviews

UK concert information also from www.list.co.uk and www.concert-diary.com