



The Bruckner Journal

ISSUED THREE TIMES A YEAR AND SOLD BY SUBSCRIPTION

Editorial and Advertising: telephone 0115 928 8300
2 Rivergreen Close, Bramcote, Nottingham, NG9 3ES

Subscriptions and Mailing: telephone 01384 566 383
4 LuIworth Close, Halesowen, W. Midlands, B63 2UJ

VOLUME EIGHT, NUMBER ONE, MARCH 2004

Editor: Peter Palmer

MANAGING Editor: Raymond Cox
raymond@cox269.freemove.co.uk

ASSOCIATE Editor: Crawford Howie
acrhowie@blueyonder.co.uk

In This Issue

	page
Concerts	
in Linz, Manchester, Birmingham & London	2
Compact Discs	
Harmoncourt's Ninth	7
Books	
from Germany & Austria	9
Conference: Steyr	13
"Pange Lingua"	
by E.W. Partsch	15
Bruckner & Death	
by Ken Ward	17
String Quintet in F	
by Crawford Howie	20
Letters	29
Chronicle & Diary	32



THE HELLMESBERGER QUARTET

took part in the 1st full public performance of
Bruckner's String Quintet

L to R: Carl Heissler (viola), Matthias Durst (2nd violin),
Joseph Hellmesberger (leader) & Carl Schlesinger (cello)

Copyright in all pieces
remains with the author

Translation on pp.14-15
by A.C. Howie

Silhouettes of Bruckner
& Wagner by Otto Böhler

Linz Bruckner Festival 2003

Complementing Bruckner's music with rarities, novelties and music of our time, the 2003 Bruckner Festival staged eighteen events between September 14 and October 5. The three organ recitals in churches, now in their fourth season, gave some inkling of the effect of Bruckner's own celebrated organ playing, especially in the Linz parish and (old) cathedral churches. In his day Bruckner was the official organist at both these churches. The festival also focused on Dmitri Shostakovich, who undeniably shared Bruckner's lofty artistic ethos and created a comparable sound-world (Fifth Symphony, chamber music). A concert performance of an opera not in the standard repertoire has long been part of the Festival; this time the work was Beethoven's *Leonore* of 1806. The accomplished Linz Bruckner Orchestra, first-rate soloists and the Linz Concert Association Theatre Chorus gave a persuasive and gripping performance under the baton of Dennis Russell Davies.

The Bruckner theme embraced various ways of approaching Bruckner's music and was assigned to a variety of organisations. The Orchestre National de France under its principal conductor Kurt Masur delivered highly pleasing and rewarding results with the Third Symphony (1889 version). Particular features of this orchestra are the accomplished brass players; strings that can execute even the tricky figures cleanly and scrupulously (bowing methods); and the supple woodwinds. The conductor paid scrupulous attention to the acoustics (pauses), shaped the musical phrases very clearly and handled the challenging climaxes with care. This orchestra, according to Masur, loves Bruckner, and it constructed an overwhelmingly lucid symphonic edifice of gigantic proportions. The contrasts and the pungent harmonies were apt and arresting. Every movement was full of delights. Several examples: the finely delineated poetic passages in the Adagio, the shout of triumph in the Scherzo with its massive folkloristic earthiness, the peerless intensity of the Finale's development, and the mighty crowning explosion in the coda. The great nave was often filled with waves of sound. (Cornelis van Zwol recorded the movement timings as 1. 21'44", 2. 13'29", 3. 7'12", 4. 13'50" = total time 56'15".)

The Fourth Symphony in its first version of 1874 is a somewhat rare guest at the Bruckner Festival. The symphony is wholly independent in its structure and deserves to be well known. Dennis Russell Davies finds it interesting, takes it as it is and proved to be a practised advocate in his performance with the Linz Bruckner Orchestra, who had not played the work before. He shaped the individual movements on the basis of lively tempi. Despite the technical difficulties, the orchestra brought off an outstanding performance, the principal horn in particular. A CD of the live recording is planned. Cornelis van Zwol timed the movements at 1. 19'05", 2. 16'22", 3. 12'32", 4. 19'18" = total time 67'17".

From the end of 1918 onwards, Arnold Schoenberg's Society for Private Musical Performances in Vienna presented "new music", including large-scale works specially arranged for chamber ensemble. Bruckner's Seventh was earmarked for a series in which "classical works that are played often and badly" were to receive high-quality performances. The arrangement for solo clarinet, horn, string quintet, piano and harmonium was made by Hanns Eisler (movements I and III), Erwin Stein (movement II) and Karl Rankl (finale). A series of adverse circumstances thwarted a performance at the time. The arrangement was consigned to the archives, migrating to the USA and then back to Vienna. The Cologne premiere by the Linos Ensemble was followed by a CD (Delta Music/Capriccio 10864). The Bruckner Festival secured the first Austrian performance. The Thomas Christian Chamber Ensemble's whole-hearted performance made a lasting impression through its intensity. The form and content of the original were recreated successfully even though only ten soloists were playing, instead of the usual 80 or so orchestral musicians. The listener needs a little time to adjust to it, because the result is not a like-for-like reproduction but a concentration on what is essential. But characteristic features of the symphony were fully realized, notably in the second movement--and even more so when it was repeated as an encore. The impetuous Scherzo made a firm and solid impression, while animation pulsed through the outer movements.

The vocal ensemble Chorus sine nomine dates from 1991 and is directed by its founder, Johannes Hiemetsberger. This top-class choir's many virtues include a dynamic range from the most delicate *piano* to a powerful *forte*. Its concert in the Linz Old Cathedral offered impressive examples of this in works demanding the utmost in a *cappella* technique. Five Bruckner motets--*Locus iste*, *Ave Maria* (1861), *Os justi*, *Christus factus est* and the less often sung *Vexilla regis*--displayed their spiritual side, moved the listener and blended surprisingly well; the sound could hardly have been lovelier or more rounded. Johann Nepomuk David's *Deutsche Messe* received a natural-seeming performance, while Frank Martin's early Mass for unaccompanied double choir came off effortlessly. The concert was crowned by the encore: Mahler's song "Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen" in an arrangement for unaccompanied 16-part choir.

The Anton Bruckner Quartet, made up of leading players of the Linz Bruckner Orchestra, were joined by Manabu Suzuki (viola) in the String Quintet. This was cultivated and transparent chamber-music playing. The x.IDA Dance Company danced to the music with choreography by Nikolaus Adler designed for seven dancers. Their movements followed the broad outlines of the score rather than its substance and made an aesthetically beautiful impression but were not always in harmony with the music, especially in the Adagio. This was, after all, simply an experiment that was meant to appeal to "non-Brucknerians" as well.

FRANZ ZAMAZAL

MANCHESTER Bruckner's Symphony No. 4 in the Bridgewater Hall,
Thursday 30 October 2003. Hallé Orchestra / Heinrich Schiff

After giving a splendid performance of John Casken's Cello Concerto in the first half of the concert, Heinrich Schiff exchanged cello bow for baton and conducted the Hallé in Bruckner's Fourth. It was memorable for several reasons. First, Schiff had the measure of the work in terms of long-term planning. This was particularly evident in the final movement (the 1880 Finale) which can often sound sprawling but, in his hands, was well paced. He was able to negotiate both the foothills, meandering but purposeful, and the splendid mountain peaks. Second, he drew some fine playing. I have seldom heard the *pianissimo* timpani notes at the end of the slow movement played so 'eerily' (a premonition of the third movement of Mahler's First Symphony), and there was a Mendelssohnian gossamer lightness in the Scherzo. Third, Schiff underlined the 'Romantic' aspects of the work, not least the evocative writing for horns. Finally, he brought out the many contrasts of texture, ranging from the sublime simplicity of the Trio and the quiet opening bars of the slow movement to the massive brass chorales in the outer movements.

Symphony No. 6 in the Bridgewater Hall, Wednesday 19 November 2003. Dresden Staatskapelle / Bernard Haitink

Now in his 74th year, Haitink brings to his music-making a level of concentration and intensity which would be remarkable in a conductor half his age. If this applied to Haydn's Symphony No. 86 in D in the first half, it was even more evident in Haitink's inspired direction of Bruckner's Sixth Symphony. With a technique notable for economy of gesture except at climactic high-points, he had sovereign command throughout.

The Sixth is the most concise of Bruckner's mature symphonies. Yet all the characteristic elements are there: tripartite exposition, development section with contrapuntal interplay of themes, reprise and coda in the outer movements, extremely lyrical slow movement, powerfully energetic Scherzo and contrasting Trio. Not only the key (A major) but also some rhythmical features strongly suggest Beethoven, his Symphony No. 7 in particular. I also perceived - more strongly than on previous hearings - the Wagnerian richness of harmony, especially in the slow movement. Equally remarkable was the rhythmical drive of the first movement, and the melding of the slow movement's constituent parts (first theme for strings with keening oboe, radiant second theme and funeral march-like third theme), all culminating in a coda suffused with gorgeous, albeit bitter-sweet harmonies. The Scherzo looks forward to Mahler with its pounding rhythms and sudden contrasts of major and minor, and it is not surprising that a renowned Mahlerian should emphasize these features. The sense of struggle in the Finale was also underlined, moving inexorably to the ultimate breakthrough as the main theme of the first movement illuminated the coda. The orchestra responded magnificently.

Crawford Howie

WHAT THE PAPER SAID:

Michael Kennedy, reviewing the Staatskapelle's Manchester performance in the *Sunday Telegraph* (23 November), noted that it was more than 35 years since Bernard Haitink had conducted in the city. He described Bruckner's Sixth Symphony as one of the composer's most satisfying, "with a seraphic slow-movement coda". But it was in the "rambling" finale that Haitink excelled most. "His grasp of the essential features and his refusal to dawdle but still to give Bruckner his grandeur" were as evident here as in the magisterial first movement and the vigorous scherzo. The orchestra's chief glory, wrote MK, lay in its sumptuous strings, whose richness never clogged their flexibility. But the blend between strings and winds was also something to marvel at.

BIRMINGHAM Bruckner's Symphony No. 6 in Symphony Hall, Thursday 20 November 2003. Dresden Staatskapelle / Bernard Haitink

Both the concert posters and the programme booklet's header page erroneously stated that Bruckner's Sixth was in the key of A minor. And the programme note had some paragraphs on the various versions of Bruckner's symphonies and the Haas/Nowak question - all this with a symphony where these questions are hardly relevant!

But there was nothing irrelevant about the performance by the Dresden Staatskapelle, which was radiant. Members of the audience coming to the symphony for the first time must be converts now. Not only did the experienced Haitink show his customary understanding of structure, detail and flow; his moulding of many phrases - giving them a beauty and importance often missed by others - was a memorable part of the whole. Dynamics had a wider range than is usual: the soft, reflective opening to the first movement, for instance, delayed any aura of majesty until the entry of the brass. And what majesty it was! Elsewhere, some of the quieter passages were very quiet indeed. They seemed to reveal a significance which can only be conveyed after years of devotion to this music. The playing was superb and the balance to be cherished.

Raymond Cox

LONDON Bruckner's Symphony No. 4 in the Royal Festival Hall, Thursday 9 October 2003. Philharmonia Orchestra / Christoph von Dohnányi

In a concert which remembered Otto Klemperer's daughter Lotte, who died in the summer, the programme of Mozart and Bruckner was apt (Paul Lewis figured in an impressive account of Mozart's C major Piano Concerto, K.503). Equally apt, for this music, was Dohnányi's arrangement of the strings--antiphonal violins with double basses on the left, cellos in front of them. Klemperer used to favour the same layout.

On this occasion the conducting of Bruckner's Fourth recalled Klemperer's great EMI recording with the Philharmonia. With tempos perfectly judged, this was a real symphonic unfolding, alive to changes of pace and mood without unsettling the whole. Dohnányi did have to stop a few seconds into the slow movement because of some electronic interference--no doubt a mobile phone. Once the music had been restarted, there was beautiful viola and cello playing...but someone sneezed in the final bar!

The Scherzo was outstanding, deliberate and trenchant. If the spectral woodwind and dancing brass were suggestive of insects, the Trio's slow lilt suggested a lullaby. The outer movements had power and the most refined of *pianissimi*, along with a crucial sense of direction. The ultimate coda sounded as inevitable as it was splendid, and it capped a compelling performance.

Colin Anderson

Bruckner's Ninth Symphony and Te Deum in the Barbican Hall,
 Sunday 2 November 2003. London Symphony Orchestra / Michael
 Tilson Thomas

MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS conducted Bruckner's Te Deum immediately after the unfinished Ninth Symphony. This worked well in that there was no applause after the symphony's Adagio, nor any to welcome the four solo singers. Of course, the idea of amalgamating the two works like this was Bruckner's own. Time, however, has moved on, and we have more of Bruckner's finale in his own hand than might have been anticipated. Whatever the formal merits of placing the Te Deum as the symphony's finale, it was good to hear it (and a concert "first" for this listener).

The Te Deum was performed wonderfully well, but the three-movement symphony was less impressive. Although the mysterious opening measures boded well for the performance, there was no real through-line to the first movement, which didn't gel because of uncertain pacing and came unstuck at the climactic development, to which Tilson Thomas accelerated and then slammed the brakes on. On the other hand his gestures to the brass to play more quietly several times did help the balance and overall clarity. The Scherzo was pushed along a little too urgently, which weakened its heavy-tread violence. The Adagio was engineered a little too carefully. Here the dissonant climax was undermined by a wrong trumpet note en route.

The Te Deum was over in twenty minutes. Maybe Tilson Thomas' straightforward exposition didn't always allow Bruckner's lyricism to flourish, but there was a satisfying internal logic to the whole. The London Symphony Chorus was outstanding, and so were the soloists: Turid Karlsen, Natascha Petrinsky (replacing Christine Goerke and Alice Coote respectively), Anthony Dean Griffey and Peter Rose. Leader Boris Garlitsky provided an eloquent violin solo. The electronic organ, relayed through speakers, was effective enough, and there was genuine elation in the heaven-storming closing bars.

Colin Anderson

Before the concert Stephen Johnson set the scene in the "Discovery Pre-Concert Talk". He argued that the Te Deum was very similar to the conclusion that Bruckner might have composed for the fourth movement.

Sadly, the Barbican Hall was nowhere near full. This was a great pity as the London Symphony Orchestra made some glorious sounds under the direction of Michael Tilson Thomas, who bounced around bending parts of his body which by right should not be jointed. The London Symphony Chorus was also in fine form.

I ignored the score in the Te Deum and relished the sight of the acrobatic maestro leading his musicians further on the quest to obtain the perfect performance of the Ninth. This was not a concert that evaporated between Silk Street and Moorgate. It was exciting, energetic, moving, a feast for the eyes as well as the ears.

Dennis O'Keefe

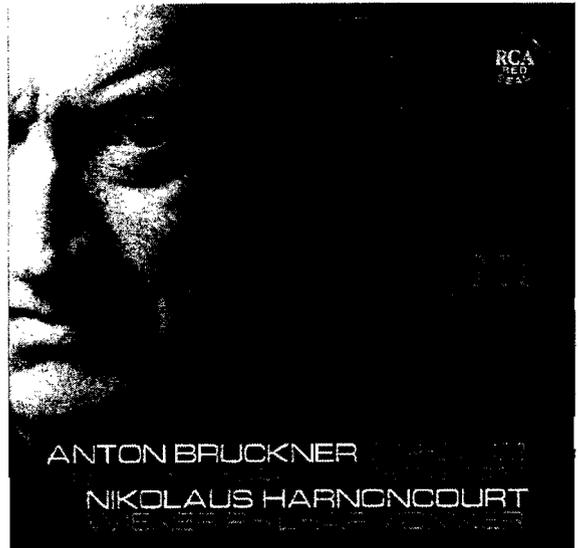
WHAT THE PAPER SAID:

Writing in the *Daily Telegraph* (4 November), Geoffrey Norris noted that the concert struck a sympathetic chord on All Souls' Day. But the performance of the symphony impressed more "through secure structure, good playing and noble gesture" than through spiritual qualities in its interpretation. The idea of appending the Te Deum may have affected the performance's character: instead of "a conclusion cast in a mood of contemplative repose, here it was blazing affirmation that won the day". The adagio seemed to be the weakest part. "There was a certain blatancy here in music that can speak quietly and tellingly of the mystery of faith."

BRUCKNER Symphony No. 9 in D minor; "Like a Stone from the Moon"
- Discussion and Performance of Bruckner's incomplete finale
 Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra / Nikolaus Harnoncourt
 Recorded live, Grosses Festspielhaus, Salzburg, 14-20 August 2002
 RCA RED SEAL 82876 54332 2 (two Hybrid CDs/SACDs)

A neat idea, carried through persuasively. The first CD is a "workshop": the sketches and fully composed parts that Bruckner left for the ultimately unfinished finale are introduced and commented on by Harnoncourt and played by the Vienna Philharmonic. The presentation is in both German and English. "Like a Stone from the Moon" doesn't concern itself with performing versions of the finale but allows us to hear what Bruckner left and how he left it. As Harnoncourt says, there are probably more sections to find, in the possession of souvenir hunters or their descendants.

The performance of Bruckner's three completed movements that occupies the second CD is superb--wonderfully gripping as expression and architecture. Harnoncourt always clarifies details in the score which are seldom heard, and this is the first recording of the New Critical Edition [MWV, Vienna]. Superbly played and recorded, Harnoncourt's account is dramatic, alive, and gives full vent to Bruckner's visionary music. The Scherzo is fierce, the Trio a perfect corollary in terms of both impishness and tempo. The "outer" movements are massive but not ponderous. Although the first has one or two moments of surprising deliberation, there is still a sense of inevitability. The slow movement, while suitably dignified, does not lack volatility or, indeed, a leap of faith, and some unfamiliar tempo relationships are convincing.



Save for a flowing Symphony No. 7, Harnoncourt's Bruckner up to now (for Teldec) has been somewhat disappointing. But here, his attention to detail, use of antiphonal violins and appreciation of Bruckner's individuality add up to an impressive account of this remarkable symphony. It stands with the best of recorded versions. There is a detailed note by Benjamin-Gunnar Cohrs, who provided the new edition.

Colin Anderson

I would fully endorse the above comments. This performance is likely to be in everybody's top ten and in many listeners' top three. The changes wrought by the new critical edition are to a certain extent comparable to those in Jonathan del Mar's editions of the Beethoven symphonies. They may not be immediately obvious to the ear, but they do affect the overall nature of the interpretation, especially with regard to the pacing of the first movement and the Adagio.

Peter Palmer

CD ISSUES NOV 2003-FEB 2004 Compiled by Howard Jones and John Wright

The past year has seen a good many Bruckner releases but none come to mind as recordings that are outstanding. A special mention though should be made of the 1941 Walter #8 issued by M & A (CD-1106) for its very finely restored sound. We continue to leave out from our listing re-issue CD's which are collections where a single, or in the case of choral works, several items, form part of a conductor, orchestral or performing practice portrait. One release not listed but worth a mention for its curiosity value is Symposium SYMPCD1258 which contains the scherzi of #0,1,2 & 3 (c.1928).

SYMPHONIES

* = new issue

Nos 0-9 Chailly/RSO Berlin/Concertgebouw (Berlin, Amsterdam 2-88,2-87,10-91,5-85,12-88, 6-91,2-97,6-84,5-99,6-96) plus Overture in G DECCA 475 331-2 (10 CD s)
(46:24,11:37,54:27,67:29,56:12,66:14,75:29,57:14,69:06,79:04,62:47)

No. 3 *Knappertsbusch/VPO (Vienna 2-60) ALTUS ALT071 (57:05)
Wildner/Westphalia New PO (Recklinghausen 10-01,1-02) NAXOS 8555928/9
versions of 1877 & 1889 plus 1876 adagio (ex SonArte) (77:44,49:56)

No. 4 Klemperer/VSO (Vienna 1951) ARCHIPEL ARPCD0134 (51:00)
van Kempen/Hilversum RPO (1-50) TAHRA TAH516/7 (62:56)
plus Dvorak #9 mvts 1-2 & Wagner Overtures
Barenboim/BPO (Berlin 10-92) ELATUS 2564 60663-2 (68:23)
*Richter/Berlin RSO (Berlin 11-77) ALTUS ALT068 (73:53)
*Marin/BBC Scottish SO (Aberdeen 11-01) BBC MUSIC BBC MM238 (66:31) *

No. 5 *Albrecht/Czech PO (Prague 11-95) EXTON OVCL00134 (72:55)

No. 7 Frantz/Philharmonie Der Nationen (1997) ALLEGRIA 221071-205 (59:02)
Suitner/Staatskapelle Berlin (Berlin 1-89) BERLIN CLASSICS 0183752BC (63:11)
Furtwängler/BPO (Berlin 10-49) URANIA RM11.911 (62:07)
plus Mahler Lieder (Fischer-Dieskau -VPO)

No. 8 *Böhm/WDRSO (Cologne 9-74) EMI 7243 575944 (73:25)
plus Mozart, Haydn & Schubert
Knappertsbusch/Munich PO (Munich 1-63) LIVING STAGE LS1047 (86:46)
plus Schmidt Variations on a Hussar's Song
*Szell/VPO (Vienna 12-68) LIVING STAGE LS1055 (78:17)
*Suitner/Staatskapelle Berlin (Berlin 9-86) WEITBLICK SSS0034-2 (81:34)

No. 9 Rögner/RSO Berlin (Berlin 2-83) BERLIN CLASSICS 0183782BC (54:17)
Walter/NYPO (New York 2-53) ARCHIPEL ARPCD0144 (50:21)
plus Wagner Wesendonck Lieder (Flagstad)

CHORAL

Mass No.1 Matt/Chamber Chr Europe/Württemberg PO (1-03) BRILLIANT SACD92212 (50:38)
(Hybrid CD)

Masses 2 & 3, Te Deum & 5 Motets Barenboim/John Aldis Chr/ECO/New Philharmonic
Chorus & Orch/Wilhelm Pitz (Peterborough 5-74, Tooting 1-69,6-71,London 11-66)
EMI 7243 585508 (66:01,75:15)

* Cover CD for the February 2004 issue of BBC Music Magazine, which includes a "Listening guide" by David Nice and a "Composer of the Month" article on Bruckner by Stephen Johnson

Bruckners Neunte im Fegefeuer der Rezeption, ed. Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn (Musik-Konzepte 120/121/122), edition text + kritik im Richard Boorberg Verlag, Munich 2003. 245 pp. 26 Euros/CHF 44. ISBN 3-88377-738-2

Christian Martin Schmidt, Wolfram Steinbeck: Brahms/Bruckner (MGG Prisma), Bärenreiter, Kassel, & Metzler, Stuttgart 2002. 207 pp. 14.90 Euros. ISBN 3-7618-1629-4 (B), ISBN 3-476-41045-5 (M).

[This book was generously supplied to the reviewer by John Wright]

HERE ARE TWO paperbacks from Germany of obvious importance to Bruckner lovers and students. One is an off-spin from the music dictionary *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (MGG, the German counterpart to *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*), which Bärenreiter is bringing out at the rate of two volumes a year. Under the collective title of "Late Romantic Masters", the 1980 edition of *The New Grove* yielded a similar off-spin containing Deryck Cooke's Bruckner article, slightly revised. It remains to be seen whether the latest *Grove* articles on Bruckner will also be reproduced in this form.

Triple volume 120/121/122 of the Musik-Konzepte series was conceived in association with Benjamin-Gunnar Cohrs, whose input is very substantial. In addition to writing the short title article on "Bruckner's Ninth in the Purgatory of its Reception", Cohrs collaborates with John Phillips on an admirably detailed "Introduction to the Surviving Sources for the Finale"--including 22 pages of musical text--and on a "Survey of the Performing Versions of the Finale Fragment". This latter article gives a clear picture of nearly all that has been attempted so far (no information could be obtained by the authors about three American finale versions thought to date from the 1930s). Naturally the survey culminates in the Samale/Phillips/Cohrs/Mazucca completion for orchestra in its successive stages. But proper credit is given to earlier toilers in the field. Hans Ferdinand Redlich was one of the first to recognize the full significance of the finale torso, saying that it reflected a "Michelangelesque" imaginative power. Redlich's student Arthur Walker, who worked on a version during the late 1960s, is named as the first scholar to perceive the relevance of Bruckner's metrical numbering. Both William Carragan and Nors S. Josephson (among others) are found wanting in this respect. Phillips and Cohrs are particularly critical of the Josephson finale version, which was performed in Hot Springs, Arkansas in 1997. Out of a total of 645 bars, 190 are reckoned to be Josephson's own composition! The 1984/5 Carragan version, concede Cohrs and Phillips, "indisputably has the merit of being the first to demonstrate the potential of Bruckner's fragment to the public at large within the framework of a whole, completed movement".

Just how crucial are the metrical numbers to reconstructions of Bruckner's music? Privately Cohrs has argued that they belong to Bruckner's incredibly tight organization of his material--the other possible option being a free composition of the themes.

There is an interview with Robert Bachmann, who conducted the RPO in the little publicized London premiere of the four-movement Ninth in May 2000. Bachmann stresses that Bruckner had a worldly side to him and offers a psychological reading of the Scherzo of the Ninth: "it is the demonic nature of Man himself which is being expounded here." Many would agree with Bachmann on the sublimated eroticism in Bruckner's music (see, for instance, the composer and theologian Dieter Schnebel's remarks on Bruckner's Third in the *Musik-Konzepte* double issue 23/24). But it smacks of subjective special pleading when Bachmann wants extra decibels in Bruckner performances. At all events, this conductor's London reviewers have criticized not so much the elemental effect of his Bruckner as an over-emphasis on the brass. And if you play Bruckner as loudly as possible, then what do you do with certain passages in Mahler?

Other contributions by Benjamin-Gunnar Cohrs include a discography up to 2001 and a Bruckner bibliography (not limited to the Ninth Symphony) for the years 1982-2002. Although cautiously described as "select", the discography looks fairly comprehensive with around 100 entries! The bibliography is intended to supplement the list compiled by Barbara Zuber and Rainer Riehn for *Anton Bruckner*, *Musik-Konzepte* 23/24. Here again Cohrs lays no claim to completeness, but one can be grateful for his exclusion of the more arcane Bruckneriana. The presentation is easier on the eye than in *MGG*.

Best of all, however, is Benjamin-Gunnar Cohrs' essay on Bruckner's finale movements. Cohrs considers these problem children from a variety of perspectives. It is good to see the rehabilitation of Ernst Decsey, whom some scholars have never forgiven for co-writing a successful play about the composer. Remarking on audiences' lack of stamina in the face of the Bruckner finale, Decsey suggested that Bruckner's symphonies were best suited to special festival performances, preceded at most by a Handel concerto grosso or a secular cantata by Bach. This idea still has much to commend it. One of the most cogent of Cohrs' own suggestions concerns the similarity between Bruckner's symphonic finales and those organ improvisations which Bruckner gave--mostly in private--until almost the end of his life. The connection was reinforced very recently by the scrutiny of a manuscript in the Austrian National Library. Although catalogued as an early sketch for the finale of Bruckner's Second, which it anticipates, the score contains performing directions relating specifically to the organ. Cohrs goes on to identify in the Brucknerian finale several typical features of the organ toccata. "In particular the main theme and closing period in the finales of the Third and Eighth Symphonies, as well as the closing periods in the finales of the Fourth and Seventh, are prime examples of the toccata style."

The above articles are complemented by John Phillips' solo essay on "fact and fiction" in the reception of Bruckner's Ninth. The persistent view of the three-movement Ninth as a satisfying entity in itself, Phillips observes, derives from Ferdinand Löwe. Although Bruckner's *Te Deum* was appended to the first three

movements of the symphony at its Vienna premiere, Löwe--unlike some other conductors at the time--subsequently omitted this makeshift finale. Phillips proceeds to examine the wider issue of the post-Beethovenian glorification of "absolute music", which (Wagner notwithstanding) was to have major repercussions for 20th-century scholarship, especially in Germany. Where this complex argument is leading becomes clearer in the penultimate section, headed "Bruckner's own conception of the Ninth", and its sequel, "Bruckner's finale as a sore point for orthodox musicology with regard to the canon". In complete contrast to the Schiller ode which underlies the finale of Beethoven's Ninth, it is an "infra-musical" religious idea that informs Bruckner's last symphonic finale.

The latent sub-text, or "spiritual content", of this finale is the subject of Constantin Floros' contribution. Within German musicology, Floros has waged a long and stubborn battle in defence of "hermeneutical" approaches to music: the study of biographical and broader cultural influences. Here his remarks are as pertinent as always. One of the most interesting concerns something that was noticed by Max Auer--the recurrence of the *Totenuhr* figure from the Eighth Symphony in the last movement of Bruckner's Ninth.

It is unfortunate that Floros' zeal should result in a polemical swipe against Wolfram Steinbeck's dictionary article. Steinbeck gave a Berlin paper on Bruckner's religious symbolism in 1996, and this scholar's necessarily condensed Bruckner for *MGG* does recognize the religious element as an essential feature of Bruckner's symphonies. Where they can be seen as "absolute" is by comparison with the programme symphony of Liszt. (Manfred Wagner explored this subject in more detail in a comment which is quoted on p. 91 of Bruckners Neunte.) Nor is Steinbeck guilty of skimming over biographical details, for with the acknowledged help of Elisabeth Maier he devotes 30 pages to Bruckner's life. (Christian Martin Schmidt's Brahms life in the same volume takes up only 20 pages, even though his is the longer essay in total.) "In his symphonies," writes Steinbeck, "Bruckner addressed himself to the problem of the soul, each time solving his own deep conflict anew--and always differently--in the breakthrough of the leading idea" [p. 179, English version by the reviewer]. Steinbeck is plainly on the side of the angels.

In briefer contributions to Bruckners Neunte, Cornelis van Zwol and Franz Zamazal document and discuss the Ninth Symphony's reception in the context of the completions. Manfred Wagner muses on incompleteness with reference to an Ingres painting as well as to Berio and Stockhausen. There is an abridged text of Nikolaus Harnoncourt's concert introduction to the "Documentation of the Fragment". And in an altogether exemplary essay on semantic and formal traditions in the Ninth, Hartmut Krones steers clear of controversy--which is no mean feat.

Peter Palmer

Erich Wolfgang Partsch, 'Anton Bruckner und Steyr', *Anton Bruckner Dokumente & Studien 13* (Vienna: Musikwissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2003)

'Bruckner and St. Florian', 'Bruckner and Linz' and 'Bruckner and Vienna' are all extremely well-documented. To these we can now add Erich W. Partsch's painstakingly researched book which includes a historical survey of 1000 years of music in Steyr, a description of the impact of industrial and technological changes during the second half of the 19th century, a survey of church life in the town during the 19th and early 20th centuries, a discussion of 'Bruckner and Steyr' during his lifetime and the continuing Bruckner tradition from 1896 up to the present day, and, not least, a fascinating appendix with facsimiles of letters and various Bruckner reminiscences.

Bruckner paid a number of short visits to Steyr at different times during his lifetime. The earliest were probably during the 1843-45 period when he was assistant schoolmaster at Kronstorf, and he gave recitals on the Parish Church organ on at least two occasions during the 1870s. But it was the friendship and support of various friends, including Carl Almeroth, a businessman and amateur musician, Leopold Hofmeyr, one of his most reliable copyists, and the two parish priests, Georg Armingier and Johann Aichinger, that caused him to spend more of his summer vacation time in the quiet atmosphere of the Steyr rectory and less time at St. Florian from 1884 onwards. On 1 July 1885, Bruckner wrote to Aichinger: 'I am looking for no more than coolness and quietness, as I have to work very diligently on my 8th Symphony', and notes on the composition drafts and orchestral score of this work in the summers of 1885 and 1886 clearly indicate that the peaceful rectory at Steyr was conducive to hard work. The best known of these handwritten insertions is undoubtedly the note 'Steyr, Stadtpfarrhof 16 August 1885. A. Bruckner. Halleluja!' at the end of the draft of the Finale. Bruckner also worked on the 'Wiener Fassung' of the First Symphony while he was in Steyr during the summer of 1890, and the insertion of two dates in the 'Cracow sketches' for the Ninth Symphony – 'Steyr. 11. August. [1]891' and '21. Aug. [1]891. Steyr' – reveal that he was composing part of the development section and reprise of the first movement during his 1891 stay in the town. Dates on the autograph score of *Helgoland* also suggest that Bruckner, having completed the work in Vienna on 7 August 1893, took the score with him to Steyr for further perusal. Bruckner refers to these 'final corrections' in a letter to Cyrill Hynais (28 August 1893).

In 1888 Franz Bayer was appointed choir director of Steyr Parish Church; he was also artistic director of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* in Steyr for almost twenty years (1899-1918). As a loyal friend and staunch supporter of Bruckner, he was responsible for the first performances in the town of the Phrygian *Pange lingua* (18 August 1892), D minor Mass (2 April 1893 and 5 April 1896) and Requiem, the latter sung at Aichinger's funeral service on 4 December 1895.

Partsch addresses the question of the alleged meeting between young Bruckner and Karoline Eberstaller in Steyr, reported by Göllicher, Auer and others. It has already been called into question by Franz Zamazal in a recent article in *Bruckner-Symposium 1997*. There is certainly no evidence to suggest that Bruckner made Eberstaller's acquaintance in the 1840s and played Schubert piano duets with her. Indeed it is more likely that Eberstaller was living elsewhere during these years and did not return to the town until she was an elderly lady. If a meeting did take place later – and again there is no direct evidence that it did – it may have been during one of Bruckner's summer visits to Steyr in the 1880s and early 1890s. The only truth that can be verified is that both Schubert and Bruckner had very positive memories of this extremely pleasant Upper Austrian town!

Bruckner - Vokal: Internationale Tagung, Stadtpfarrhof Steyr, 23 - 25 October 2003

Bruckner had close connections with Steyr, its parish church in particular. He spent many summers in the town and found its peaceful atmosphere conducive to composing without some of the interruptions he occasionally experienced at St. Florian. After his death Steyr was the first town to erect a monument to the composer (in 1898) and the 'Bruckner tradition' has been strong in this beautiful part of Upper Austria ever since. There was a Bruckner exhibition in the parish church in 1996, and this fine medieval building and spacious church house provided the ideal setting for a Bruckner conference at the end of October last year that was devoted to Bruckner's sacred and secular choral music. It began fittingly in the late afternoon of 23 October with a memorial tribute to the composer by way of a small 'Bruckner and Steyr' exhibition. This was followed by the first conference paper ('Structural Aspects in Bruckner's Motets'), given by the distinguished German organist and scholar, Erwin Horn (Würzburg), and the evening concluded with a performance in the church by the *Collegium Vocale Linz* choir conducted by Josef Habringer. The programme included six Bruckner motets, a motet by the Linz composer and former cathedral music director, Augustinus Franz Kropfreiter (1936-2003), one of John Tavener's sacred music pieces, *Svyati*, in which the solo cello part was skilfully played by Johanna Kreuzhuber, and three of Bruckner's compositions for male-voice quartet (*An dem Feste*, *Ständchen* and *Das edle Herz*) sung by members of the choir.

The snow (it surprised even the Austrians!) which began on Thursday evening continued until Friday morning, giving the town a Christmas-card-like white sheen. The morning session was devoted to Bruckner's church music, with papers on 'Symphonic Elements in Bruckner's Vocal Fugues' by Rainer Boss (Bonn) and 'The Sketch Version of the Te Deum' by Franz Scheder (Nuremberg). Franz Zamazal (Linz) also presented a short paper on his recent archival research, including information about earlier Steyr connections in the Bruckner family. The afternoon was given over entirely to a thorough examination of Steyr's musical history - Karl Mitterschiffthaler (Vienna): 'Musical Life in Steyr from Early Times up to the Counter-Reformation'; Roland Bachleitner (Steyr): 'Music in Steyr Parish Church'; Erich Wolfgang Partsch (Vienna): 'Bruckner's Musical Association with Steyr'; Martin Fiala (Steyr): 'Great Men and Women of Music in Steyr during the 20th Century' - culminating in a round-table session ('Music in Steyr since 1945'), moderated by Erich Partsch, in which further contributions were provided by J. Hack, L. Michl and O. Sulzer. After a guided tour through the parish church in the evening, we had the opportunity of hearing the church organ splendidly played by Erwin Horn. His programme consisted of little-known organ music by 19th-century Vienna *Hofkapelle* organists, Simon Sechter, Pius Richter, Rudolf Bibl, and

Rudolf Dittrich, ending triumphantly with 'Imperial Festival Music', Horn's own arrangement of an improvisation sketch made by Bruckner in Bad Ischl in 1890 combined with themes from the Finale of the First Symphony, the 'Emperor's Hymn', and motifs from Handel's 'Hallelujah' chorus.

The final session of the conference on Saturday morning comprised three papers devoted to aspects of Bruckner's secular vocal music. Paul Hawkshaw (Yale, New Haven, USA) discussed Bruckner's early attempts at song-writing in the 'Kitzler Studienbuch', Angela Pachovsky (Vienna) continued with an analytical survey of the composer's more mature songs, and Andrea Harrant (Vienna) stressed the importance of 'Germanenzug' (1863) and 'Helgoland' (1893) as 'important milestones' in the composer's vocal output.

Austrian hospitality was as warm as ever. Particular thanks must be given to Dr. Erich W. Partsch for his splendid organisation and co-ordination of the conference, Professor Theophil Antonicek for chairing the different sessions so ably, and Father Roland Bachleitner, the parish priest, for being the perfect host and making all of us most welcome.

Crawford Howie



OUR CONGRATULATIONS to **The Wagner Society**, which celebrated its golden jubilee in 2003. The Society's activities include meetings, concerts and master classes in Central London. It publishes two journals - "Wagner" and "Wagner News" - and sponsors the Dame Eva Turner Memorial Lecture. Members are entitled to special booking arrangements for the Bayreuth Festival, and ballots are held for tickets. The U.K. annual subscription is £16 for single members, £20 joint members. Rest of Europe: £20. All other countries: £20 surface mail, £30 air mail. Full-time students under 25 pay half price. Apply to:
THE WAGNER SOCIETY, 16 DORAN DRIVE, REDHILL, SURREY, RH1 6AX.

TBJ COMPETITION 2003

The British artist who completed a cast-iron "Homage to Anton Bruckner" for Linz in 1977 was **Sir Eduardo Paolozzi**. His other works range from London Underground murals to a "Millennium Window" in the Resurrection Chapel of St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh.

No answers to the question were received!

Pange Lingua et Tantum Ergo: a first performance 110 years ago in Steyr Parish Church

That Anton Bruckner was a summer guest at Steyr Parish Church for many years is well known. It is commemorated in a memorial plaque unveiled in 1908. Bruckner's close friend, Franz Xaver Bayer, choir director at the church, was also one of his staunchest advocates and gave several performances of his works, notably the lavishly prepared first Steyr performance of the Mass in D minor in 1893. Bayer must also be given credit for another first performance in the parish church, namely the Phrygian 'Pange lingua et Tantum ergo'.

'Pange lingua' ('Praise, tongue') are the opening words of a eucharistic hymn written by Venantius Fortunatus in the sixth century and commissioned by Queen Radegunda of Merovingia to honour the reception of a crucifixion relic gifted to Radegunda's nunnery in Poitiers by the Byzantine emperor, Justin II. In the ninth century the text was given a place in the liturgy for Lent, specifically the Feast of the Elevation of the Cross.

Structurally, the hymn influenced many later ones. The most famous of these is the Corpus Christi eucharistic hymn 'Pange lingua gloriosi corporis mysterium' ('Praise, tongue, the mystery of this body full of majesty'), mostly probably written by Thomas of Aquinas. This hymn was - and is - sung at processions and during celebrations of the Lord's Supper. In the Renaissance period Josquin made use of the plainsong melody in his *Missa Pange lingua*. The fifth verse, beginning with the words 'Tantum ergo sacramentum [veneremur]' ('Therefore let us honour such a great sacrament'), has its own tradition in the history of polyphonic music. Bruckner, for instance, set this text separately on several occasions.

¶Bruckner's autograph, which is now located in the Music Section of the Austrian National Library, Vienna, has the title 'Pange lingua et Tantum ergo für Sopran, Alt, Tenor et Bass' and is dated 'Linz 31. Jänner [1]868'. The work was written during the final year of his position as organist at Linz Cathedral. It is linked to the Mass in E minor insofar as it was originally intended for the consecration of the Votive Chapel of the new cathedral, but was not sung on that occasion. In its simplicity and modest harmonic language the work, which is unaccompanied throughout, suggests a Caecilian orientation (although Bruckner was always critical of the official Caecilian church music reform movement). The composer, well known for his ardent admiration of Wagner and particularly for his harmonic and structural boldness as a symphonist, has deliberately scaled down his resources. It is essentially his own engagement with the 'old' church music of the Renaissance period and with the Palestrinian style.

This was the basic concept, but later there was a fierce 'aesthetic' disagreement with Franz Xaver Witt, the founder of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Cäcilien-Verein. It is described as follows in the August Göllerich/Max Auer biography of Bruckner:

As Bruckner's reputation as a composer grew, Witt felt obliged to ask him to provide a contribution for the musical supplement which subscribers to the association's journal, 'Musica sacra' (1885), received. Bruckner remembered his Phrygian 'Pange lingua' and

responded to the request. It was published in score and parts in 1888 as no. V of a collection of 'Eucharistic songs' by Caecilian composers. When Bruckner received the printed score through the post, his pupil and patron Friedrich Eckstein was present. Immediately the composer, skimming through the score, let out a cry of rage. Without asking permission or sending a correction in advance, Witt had supposedly 'corrected' the ending and, at the 'Amen', had altered the major ninth b in the alto to a harmless octave a. Bruckner was greatly incensed, as he attached great importance to this harmonic boldness; using erasing knife and pen he reinstated the original version, and gave the page to Eckstein as a memento.
(Vol. 3/1, 501f.)

As well as making this prominent editorial intervention, Witt also included further small changes. It was not until Johann Gross published the motet (Innsbruck: S.A. Reiss, 1895) that the original ninth suspension was restored.

¶The 'Pange lingua' was left in abeyance for a long time after its planned premiere in Linz did not materialize. It was Franz X. Bayer who was the first to show interest in the work more than twenty years later. In the summer of 1892 he and Bruckner searched in vain for the composer's early works in Kronstorf. Obviously Bayer's intention was to perform Bruckner's smaller sacred works in Steyr.

The first performance of the Phrygian 'Pange lingua' can be seen in this context. It took place on 18 August in Steyr Parish Church. The occasion was a special festival service for the Emperor's birthday. The following report was printed in the 'local' column in the *Alpenbote* three days later:

It is worth mentioning that Bruckner composed this Tantum ergo in Linz in 1868 - the last composition he wrote there - and that the composer, who was present at the service, heard his composition here for the first time. The performance was so successful that Bruckner expressed his satisfaction and gratitude to the choir director in the warmest terms.

Works by Karl Kempter, Moritz Brosig, Michael Haydn and Robert Führer were also performed at this festival service. It was as a result of the first performance of his work in Steyr that Bruckner described it as his 'favourite Tantum ergo'. According to a letter that Bruckner sent to Father Oddo Loidol in Kremsmünster Abbey on 18 October 1892, he heard the work three times altogether in Steyr, i.e. the premiere and two further performances. The first non-liturgical performance of the work was in 1912 in a concert given by the Women's Choral Association in Vöcklabruck, conducted by Max Auer.

Today, Bayer's own signed copy of the score (in the Austrian National Library) attests to the performance in Steyr Parish Church. It is quite clear that Bayer has copied the musical text from the first print in 'Musica sacra' but has restored the offending suspension. At the end of this copy is Bayer's handwritten comment: 'Dieses Tantum ergo ist in der Musica sacra abgedruckt' ('This Tantum ergo is printed in Musica sacra').

Erich Wolfgang Partsch

This article first appeared in Steyr Parish Church's magazine, 'Pfarrgemeinde Aktuell', in June 2002

The Shadow of Death in Bruckner's Symphonies

by Ken Ward

AT VARIOUS TIMES in his life Bruckner developed a morbid interest in death. He had "an unhealthy interest in corpses" (Hans Redlich) and was "strangely fascinated by public tragedies" (Robert Simpson). This did not, however, intrude obsessively upon his work as a composer. His compositions are not littered with those references to the "Dies irae" plainchant which one finds in Liszt and Rachmaninov; nor are the symphonies constructed around massive funeral marches like several of Mahler's. But there is in Bruckner's symphonic output a recurrent concern with death that seems to move towards an ever closer confrontation with the dreadful certainty of mortality.

Bruckner's first major work was the Requiem of 1849, a lovely piece of heartfelt music in memory of his friend and benefactor, Franz Sailer, and he quotes the "Osanna" from it in the finale of Symphony No. 0. The quotation can hardly be regarded as a reference to death other than in the most oblique manner. But in the Third Symphony there is explicit reference to death. It is reported that Bruckner told a friend that the slow-movement second theme, *Andante*, was written in memory of his mother, who had died some twelve years earlier. It is a gentle, calm and flowing theme which rises, arch-like, with some passion, but which by the measure of characteristic Bruckner themes is quite moderate in its expression. It is introduced on the violas, repeated on cellos and double basses, and thereafter alternated with the evocative, halting *misterioso* theme and subjected to increasing decoration, varied orchestration, and inversion. (I have in mind primarily the 1873 version.) It takes its place as an effective musical element and seems to be Bruckner's evocation of a memory rather than a meditation on his mother's death or an expression of bereavement.

In the finale of the Third Symphony there is the famous combination of funeral chorale with a polka. Göllerich's story goes that he and Bruckner were walking together and heard the gay music of a ball from inside a house. "Nearby was the Sühnhaus where lay the body of the cathedral architect Schmidt. Bruckner said, 'Listen! There in that house is dancing, and over there lies the master in his coffin--that's life. It's what I wanted to show in my Third Symphony'" (cit. Robert Simpson). It makes an interesting comparison with Mahler. The equivalent story is of Mahler as a child running in terror from a brawl between his parents and being immediately confronted by a hurdy-gurdy man in the street playing "O du lieber Augustin". The conjunction of trauma and banal vulgarity has been seen as underpinning those ironic juxtapositions within Mahler symphonies where, during moments of deep passion, elements of vulgarity burst in. The comparison with Bruckner highlights one of the many differences between these two great Austrian composers. Considered intellectually, the combination of polka and funeral chorale may be ironic, but the musical experience of it in the Bruckner finale is totally devoid of irony. It is rather presented as just a matter of how life *is*: there's dancing and there's death, and it can all be held within the pattern of a grand and beautiful music. Far from ironically undermining each other, the two themes complement one another perfectly. So to the degree that the Third touches on the subject of death, this is not presented as something so dreadful as to challenge the formal structure and coherence of this profound D minor symphony.

The Sixth Symphony is, by the composer's reckoning, the cheekiest ("die keckste"). But it is a cheekiness that includes within the ambit of its misty soundscapes and life-enhancing magnificence a deeply moving funeral march. This march appears as the third theme of the Adagio, a theme of great nobility with *pianissimo* drumbeats. The funeral march in the slow movement of Elgar's Second Symphony inhabits a similar world, but in

the Elgar work it is of a piece with the whole valedictory atmosphere of the movement. Bruckner's *Adagio* is certainly sombre and heartfelt, opening with a heart-rending oboe lament. The second theme is equivalent in some degree to the *Andante* theme from the Third Symphony--a falling interval followed by a rising sequence--and has a similarly gentle, lyrical atmosphere. But it rises with passionate fervour and ecstatic power, with none of the restraint of the *Andante* in the Third. Then follows the funeral march which ends the exposition paragraph. There is something in this emotional dynamic, from lament through lyrical ecstasy to sombre funeral music, that evokes an atmosphere of nostalgia--possibly the loss of a dream rather than the agony of bereavement, let alone the presence of death itself. Bruckner's funeral march is not an enormity, not a dreadful grief that threatens to tear the symphony apart. Rather, it is a balanced formal element which completes a triad of themes: very moving, certainly, but not such as to unsettle this symphony's proportions.

In the Seventh Symphony death is a real death, that of Richard Wagner, and there is true bereavement. It affects principally the *Adagio*, whose sombre opening is burdened with grief. "One day I came home and felt very sad. The thought had crossed my mind that before long the Master would die, and then the C sharp minor theme of the *Adagio* came to me" (cit. Hans-Hubert Schönzeler). But by the fourth bar, the three-note rising motif that was to become "Non confundar in aeternum" in Bruckner's *Te Deum* strikes a note of affirmation. Apparently, in the chronology of the composition, Wagner had not yet died. Bruckner reported that he heard of the death just after writing the blazing C major climax: "I had just got this far when the telegram from Venice arrived; and I wept --oh, how I wept--and only then did I write the true music of mourning for the Master" (cit. Markus Waldura, Arte Nova Classics CD 74321 27771-2). It is an elegy featuring Wagner tubas, a heavy, grief-laden sound capped by the agonised cry of *fortissimo* horns at the close. There follows a very sparsely orchestrated dialogue between first violins and solo woodwinds with intermittent *pizzicato* in the lower strings: a desolate meditation on the hurt that has been suffered. The healing moment arrives by subtle transformation when the sombre opening phrase returns on the Wagner tubas but is taken over by the horns and extended into a peaceful and untroubled closing motif. And with the morning cockcrow of the Scherzo, the things of darkness are banished.

Unlike the examples from earlier symphonies by Bruckner, this death takes over a whole movement. It is not a public funeral march, as in the "Eroica" Symphony, but a deeply personal song of sorrow. The moment of deepest grief required something formally unique--not a thematic element to be developed or repeated but a dramatic section all of its own which, were it not for the mighty affirmation of the preceding climax, could have unbalanced the movement and risked disintegration. As it is, the elegy with Wagner tubas falls as though it were the very shadow of the sunlit mountain that preceded it, and the journey leads out to the gentle meadows from which to greet the morning. Bruckner's response to the death of his musical hero enabled him to build a masterpiece that can give us the solace which comes from the expression of bereavement, and signals the possibility of healing. What Bruckner's Seventh might have been without Wagner's demise it is impossible to know. But certainly that death facilitated a leap in Bruckner's creative development to the magisterial level of the final three symphonies, in which we encounter both mighty dread and transcendent glory.

The main theme in the first movement of the Eighth Symphony announces the presence of death. The coda is like the ticking clock continuing remorselessly as life ebbs away. Bruckner himself said that when the trumpets and horns insist implacably upon the rhythm of the main theme at the movement's climax, this was the Annunciation of Death ("Todesverkündigung"), and interpreted the fading coda as the ticking of a clock by the deathbed. But even without these statements it would be apparent that some enormity is taking place at the climax, and some desolate ending is there in the coda. It is as though the grim drama that commences with the harmonically shifting opening theme is

explored in various directions, but at this climax and in this coda the unavoidable source of the dynamic is stripped bare and revealed as the ultimate destination.

A symphony whose beginning is concerned with the end of life poses, at the very least, a question or trauma which the rest of the symphony must in some way deal with. To this extent it's not unreasonable to suggest that this whole symphony is concerned with death. Indeed, the title sometimes attached to it, "Apocalyptic", would suggest it is about death writ large. It would be futile to produce a Schalk-type programme, but suffice it to comment that there are matters elemental and implacable at work in the *Scherzo*, and mournful and transcendent in the *Adagio*. And what is transfigured in the coda of the finale is the very theme that carried the original annunciation, and the grim finality of the three notes of the ticking clock is transformed into the glorious finality of the last three notes of the symphony. The logic of the return of the first movement's main theme in the eye of a storm before the final victory is this: there was unfinished business left over from the first movement, the symphony has cleared a path for it to be dealt with, the finale has made ready, and now is the moment. Over the length of this enormous work, the death that was announced in the opening movement has been presented with shattering power; its musical ramifications courageously explored; and its horror challenged and overcome.

Such a victory was not available to Bruckner during the struggle to complete his Ninth Symphony. The Death announced in the Eighth arrived and destroyed Bruckner, and with him--helped by the "strolling Viennese" (Benjamin-Gunnar Cohrs, CD booklet, Sonarte SP13) who pilfered sheets of music from the dead man's room--the finale of the Ninth. Bruckner knew it would be his last symphony; it was composed under the shadow of imminent death. He regarded the *Adagio* as containing his farewell to life, and commentators have interpreted the symphony's highly dissonant harmony and its cataclysmic gestures as signifying terror, uncertainty, loss of faith, despair. But the opposite is also true. There is in this symphony a fascinating dialectic whereby the Nothingness of death becomes a renewed musical Being. Stanislaw Skrowaczewski comments: "Unlike some composers, for whom the twilight years represent a decline, Bruckner at the end explodes with image, invention and craftsmanship. In the Ninth Symphony he is at his peak" (cit. Mary Ann Feldman, CD booklet, Reference Recordings RR-81). The imminence of death seems to have been a liberation for Bruckner, a new freedom where he no longer had to care what the world thought. Bruckner himself remarked of the *Scherzo*: "When they hear that, people will be furious, but I won't notice, I shall be in my grave" and: "I'll write my last symphony in D minor, just like Beethoven's Ninth. Beethoven won't object." There would be no objections because this symphony was dedicated "dem lieben Gott": a matter between Bruckner and his God. The rest of the world, Eduard Hanslick and the Vienna musical establishment were no longer of any concern to him. In the event it was too much for Ferdinand Löwe, who domesticated the first published score. It was too much for Mahler, who called the symphony "the height of nonsense" ("Unsinn") in a letter of 1906. It was also too much for legions of commentators who persist to this day in viewing the music of the finale fragments as a demonstration of weakening creative powers. But face to face with death, Bruckner was set free and reborn as a composer of immense daring, originality and modernity--nowhere more so than in the Ninth's finale with its obsessive other-worldly repetitions and painstaking preparation of the moment for the final Song of Praise.

It is undeniable that this amazing symphony was the death of Bruckner, and was the unavoidable goal of the trajectory outlined in this essay, as death is for us all. But it is not given to many of us to face our own destruction with such creative vigour, or to use the power of the ultimate negative to build so new, so overwhelming, so vital an outcome.

BRUCKNER: STRING QUINTET IN F

A paper presented at the *Bruckner Journal Conference* (Nottingham, April 26 2003)

Introduction: Genesis and Reception

Two letters - the first written to his Berlin friend, Wilhelm Tappert on 9 December 1878, and the second written to Ignaz Traumihler, choir director at St. Florian abbey, on 25 July 1879 - give precise details of the compositional time-scale of the String Quintet. Bruckner informed Tappert not only that he had completed revision work on his Fourth Symphony but also that he had begun work on a String Quintet 'which Hellmesberger who, as you know, is very enthusiastic about my works, has repeatedly urged me to compose'. In his letter to Traumihler, in which he enclosed the manuscript of his motet, *Os justi*, he mentioned that he had finished the work, much to the satisfaction of Hellmesberger -

Hellmesberger, the court music director, is quite beside himself with joy and intends to perform it. He is completely changed and makes a huge fuss of me.¹

Dates in the autograph in the Austrian National Library confirm that the work was completed on 12 July 1879 and its four movements were written in the order: first movement (end of 1878 / beginning of 1879) - Adagio (March / April 1879) - Finale (May / June) - Scherzo. Hellmesberger clearly found the Scherzo too difficult and was not as 'overjoyed' as Bruckner made out. As a result, the composer wrote an alternative third movement - an *Intermezzo* (the autograph of which is also in the Austrian National Library) which he completed on 21 December. No alternative Trio was written. This replacement movement seemed to please Hellmesberger even less, and the original Scherzo was reinstated in the first edition of the Quintet (Vienna: Gutmann, 1884); the *Intermezzo* was published posthumously (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1913). Another interesting point concerns the order of the movements. In the original autograph, the copy used for engraving and the parts used by the Hellmesberger Quartet, the slow movement is placed second. But a more satisfactory order of movements in which the slow movement is placed third was eventually adopted both in the engraver's copy and the parts, almost certainly with Bruckner's approval. Although Bruckner made some

¹ The original German versions of both these letters can be found in Andrea Harrandt and Otto Schneider, eds., *Anton Bruckner Briefe* (Vienna, 1998), pp. 181-3. Bruckner's relationship with his superior was fairly good on the whole but had its rough passages!

alterations and additions in the engraver's copy, for instance a tempo change in the slow movement (originally 'Andante quasi allegretto') and some changes in the second subject of the Finale, he did not copy these into the autograph. There are other differences between the autograph and the first edition. Two cuts indicated in the autograph (in the coda of the first movement, bars 245-64; in the Scherzo, bars 63-82) were not observed either in the engraver's copy or the first edition and can, justifiably, be disregarded. The closing bars of the Finale were amended to provide a more convincing conclusion in the printed version.²

Hellmesberger and his quartet did not perform the work until January 1885. In the meantime Bruckner carried out some revision work on his Symphony no. 4 (incl. the 1880 Finale), and composed his Sixth (completed September 1881) and Seventh Symphonies (completed September 1883), *Te Deum* (completed March 1884) and some sacred and secular choral works. In November 1881 Joseph Schalk, one of the composer's most dedicated pupils, arranged a private performance of the first three movements of the Quintet in the Bösendorfer hall which received one or two reviews in the local press, including favourable comments from Theodor Helm.³ The first performance of the complete Quintet was given by the Winkler Quartet, with Franz Schalk playing the first viola part, at another private musical evening arranged by the Wagner Society in the Bösendorfer hall on 7 May 1883. Joseph Schalk also made a piano-duet arrangement of the Quintet.⁴

Critical reaction to the first major public performance - by the Hellmesberger Quartet in the large *Musikverein* hall on 8 January 1885 - was mixed. We know, of course, that, as far as Bruckner's music was concerned, Viennese critics were usually divided into two diametrically opposed camps with one or two occupying a kind of middle ground. This is certainly true of the first performance reviews. Writing in *Die Presse*, Max Kalbeck described the Quintet as a 'mixed sequence of musical hallucinations, an apocalypse in four

2 Further details can be found in Leopold Nowak's foreword to his edition of the score (*Anton Bruckner Sämtliche Werke* XIII/2 (Vienna, 1963) and in articles in the *Bruckner Symposion* (Linz 1985) and *Bruckner Jahrbuch* (Linz 1997) series. The two different versions of the closing bars of the Finale are also provided in the Nowak edition. Margaret Notley discusses the slow movement of the Quintet in the context of other chamber-music slow movements of the period, particularly those of Brahms, in a recent article, 'Late-Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music and the Cult of the Classical Adagio', in *19th-Century Music* xxiii/1 (Summer 1999), pp. 33-61. A particularly fruitful comparison can be made with Brahms's String Quintet in F op. 88 (1882) which has the same instrumentation, viz. two violins, two violas and cello.

3 Helm's review was printed in the *Wiener Signale* (19 November 1881).

4 Also published by Gutmann in 1884.

chapters the unravelling of which would require a new subsidiary work' but at least conceded that the Adagio came 'directly from paradise... the reflection of an ecstatic vision reaching to the seventh heaven'.⁵ Gustav Dömpke, the reviewer for the *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, adopted the same stance, making a distinction between the muddled structures and harmonic waywardness of the outer movements and the sustained excellence of the 'deeply-felt ensemble writing' in the Adagio.⁶ Eduard Hanslick referred to Bruckner as an anarchist, transferring the Wagnerian style to five string instruments - 'endless melody, freedom from all natural laws of modulation, Wotan's pathos, Mime's will'-o-the-wisp-like humour, and Isolde's intense and self-consuming ecstatic utterances'.⁷ Ludwig Speidel's review was, as one would expect from a critic normally favourably disposed towards Bruckner, much more appreciative. He described the working-out of material in the first movement as 'masterly' although he regretted that the structure was not 'more open and pliable'. The Scherzo, however, was a 'most interesting and charming' movement and the Adagio 'an outpouring of pure song'.⁸ Theodor Helm who had already praised the Adagio in his 1881 review and described the Adagio as one of the 'noblest, most inspired, most gentle and euphonious pieces that has been written in modern times' when reviewing another performance of the Quintet by the Winkler Quartet in an *Akademischer Gesangverein* concert in April 1884, conceded that Bruckner's 'masterly creative powers' and 'unusual contrapuntal skill' occasionally demanded too much of his listeners, but was convinced nonetheless that the work was 'indisputably one of the most important works to have appeared in the realm of modern chamber music'.⁹ In an article on the Quintet in the *Bruckner-Jahrbuch*, Gerold Gruber says that it was his first hearing of the work in 1881 which 'converted' a hitherto

5 From Kalbeck's review in *Die Presse* (12 January 1885).

6 From Dömpke's review in the *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung* (17 January 1885)

7 From Hanslick's review in the *Neue Freie Presse* (26 February 1885).

8 From Speidel's review in the *Wiener Fremdenblatt* (17 January 1885).

9 Helm's first review (concert held in the Bösendorfer hall on 5 April 1884) appeared in the *Deutsche Zeitung* on 8 April 1884; his review of the Hellmesberger Quartet concert appeared in the same paper on 14 January 1885. On 24 January Bruckner wrote Helm a letter of profuse thanks, describing his words as 'precious jewels'; see Harrandt and Schneider, *op. cit.*, p. 238 for the text of this letter.

sceptical Helm from a 'Saul' to a 'Paul' in his appreciation of Bruckner's music.¹⁰

The work itself: a brief analysis

It is interesting that one of the negative points Dömpke makes in his review is that the Quintet, 'which is without precedent in chamber music', can only be directly compared with Bruckner's symphonies 'of which only a small number, not without reason, have become known'. Dömpke's chief complaint, which is clearly expressed earlier in the review, is that the Quintet on the whole is structurally abstruse; and he finds support for this notion by making a direct comparison with the symphonies. And when I agree that the Quintet shares several compositional features with the symphonies, I am stressing the positive rather than the negative and drawing attention to the 'massive' octave-unison gestures and rich textures one associates with the orchestral works. On the other hand, the time-signature for the first movement - 3/4 - is one which is not found at the same point in any of the symphonic works. In addition, there are many passages in which Bruckner displays a remarkable awareness of the chamber medium and shows that he is not thinking orchestrally but is concerned more with the give and take of thematic material among the five instruments. Each instrument has its own, individual voice but Bruckner is able to blend the different strands into a homogenous whole. One or two commentators have made the pertinent point that, by making a conscious decision to use two violas rather than two cellos, he strengthened the middle range of the texture and avoided the more 'symphonic' sound of a stronger bass. Bruckner's handling of sonata-form structure is also different from that encountered in the symphonies (see discussion of first movement below), and clearly shows that it wasn't his intention to write a mini-symphony or symphony for chamber-music forces! Comparing the outer movements of the Quintet with the parallel movements in his symphonies, Wilhelm Seidel writes:

In the outer movements of his *Quintet* Bruckner moves away from the monumentality of the symphony. There is finesse, malleability and suppleness in his style and he leans towards a looser formal structure which is almost fantasia-like at times; nevertheless, this is achieved

¹⁰ Gerold Gruber, 'Anton Bruckner, Streichquintett in F-Dur', in *Bruckner-Jahrbuch 1994/95/96* (Linz, 1997), p. 100.

without any constriction in the dynamic range of his musical language or decrease in the organisational level of his form. Bruckner reduces both the internal and external format of his movements. The first movement of the Fifth Symphony, the symphony which he composed before the Quintet, has 573 bars and the final movement 541 bars; the first movement of the Quintet is 273-bars long, and the Finale 197-bars long.¹¹

Although this reduction in format is true of the outer movements, it is certainly not applicable to the *Adagio* third movement, by far the longest movement in the work and one which undoubtedly possesses the depth and breadth of a symphonic slow movement.¹² There is no doubt that it provides the emotional highpoint of the Quintet and, as we have seen, even those who criticised the work as a whole, were moved to recognise its wonderful melodic inventiveness.

First Movement

In the first movement (*Gemässigt*, F major), Bruckner stretches the sonata-form structure by introducing new material towards the end of the exposition (bars 74 - 98).¹³ Before that we have a first subject group whose secondary material (bars 21-28), in particular a rhythmical figure first heard on the cello, is an essential part of both the second subject group (bars 29-56) and the powerful third subject group (bars 57-73). The new material in bars 74ff, which is more typical of a Brucknerian second subject, moves from F sharp major to C major, the key of the dominant one would expect at the end of a sonata-form exposition. The repeated falling fifths for second violin (89ff) prepare for the return of the opening limb of

11 Wilhelm Seidel, 'Das Streichquintett in F-Dur im Oeuvre von Anton Bruckner und Johannes Brahms', in *Bruckner-Symposion Linz 1983* (Linz, 1985), p. 184. In an article 'Bruckner and Brahms Quintets in F' in *Music and Letters* xxxvi (1955), p. 253, Hans Ferdinand Redlich also warns against describing the Quintet as a 'symphony in disguise'.

12 At 173 bars, it is only 38 bars shorter than the slow movement of the Fifth Symphony.

13 Leopold Nowak labels these bars '4. Gruppe (Schlußgruppe)' in his article 'Form und Rhythmus im ersten Satz des Streichquintetts von Anton Bruckner' in Horst Heussner, ed., *Festschrift für Hans Engel zum siebzigsten Geburtstag* (Cassel, 1964), pp. 260-73; repr. in Nowak, *Über Anton Bruckner* (Vienna: Musikwissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1985), pp. 60-70. However, several writers, including Ernst Kurth in his discussion of the Quintet in Vol. II of his *Bruckner* (Berlin, 1925), pp. 1156-80 and Wilhelm Seidel in his comparison of Bruckner's and Brahms's F major Quintets in op.cit., p.184, suggest that they essentially constitute a postponed *Gesangsperiode*.

the first subject material at the beginning of the development section (99ff). After alternating with quasi-improvisatory *ad libitum* phrases for first violin and viola, this material is worked contrapuntally in stretto and inversion. The descending trills from the first subject return in bars 123ff and are combined with the earlier dotted rhythms which are also presented in stretto fashion (bars 127-9). In bars 131-8, Bruckner introduces a more lyrical and Ländler-like new theme for first violin above the trills and pizzicato cello. After more fugato treatment of the opening limb (139ff), another soaring *ad libitum* phrase for first violin leads into the recapitulation which follows the same course as the exposition, although it is not an exact repeat. Bars 11-16, for instance, are not re-stated and the second subject material is shortened. On the other hand, the 'closing group' (bars 230ff; cf bars 74ff in the exposition), which begins in B major but soon moves to F major, is considerably expanded. In the coda, which is admittedly almost orchestral, the important rhythmical figure from earlier is particularly prominent in the second violin (bars 241-7) and second viola (bars 265-70).

Second Movement

The contrast between four-bar and two-bar phrases helps to give the *Scherzo* (Schnell, D minor) great rhythmical vitality which is maintained in a more restrained fashion in the middle section (bars 35 - 82). Bruckner gave some indication of the kind of contrast he wished in this central section when he wrote to Benno Walter in March 1885 - 'Please do not observe the tempo marking exactly, but play the second section up to the repeat of the opening section almost *Andante*'.¹⁴ Although Bruckner indicated *Langsamer* only for bars 63-82, Nowak, in his edition of the Quintet in the *Gesamtausgabe*, adds *Quasi Andante* in brackets at bar 35 in accordance with Bruckner's instructions to Walter. The main thematic material is provided by the first and second violin parts, and Bruckner directs the latter to be 'immer hervortretend' ('always prominent') in the outer sections. The second violin also has a primary role in the *Trio* (Langsamer, E flat major). Its Neapolitan key-relationship with the *Scherzo* enables Bruckner to effect a seamless return to the latter.

14 See Andrea Harrandt and Otto Schneider, eds., *Bruckner Briefe I (1852-1886)*, *Anton Bruckner Sämtliche Werke* XXIV/1 (Vienna, 1998), p. 247 for this letter, dated Vienna, 27 March 1885. Benno Walter was the leader of the Munich Court Orchestra and of the renowned Benno Walter Quartet who performed the Quintet in Munich on 31 March 1885.

Third Movement

In the first movement the close relationship between the first and second subject groups is created by a pervasive rhythmical figure. In the slow movement (Adagio, G flat major), the relationship is a melodic one, the falling *Hauptmotiv* of the first theme being inverted to produce a rising melody (initially in the viola, bars 37ff.), which is characterised harmonically by its swing between B flat major and B flat minor over an F dominant pedal. Bruckner exploits this relationship in the central section of the movement. After a shortened re-statement of the first subject (bars 67 - 76), the *Hauptmotiv* is treated imitatively (bars 77-82). When it appears in inversion (2nd viola, bars 83-4; 1st violin, bars 85-6), it is but a step to the return of the second subject material (at bar 91). This is not expanded, but a variant of the *Hauptmotiv*, in both direct and inverted forms, is used as a means of exploring a wide range of keys and effecting a central climax of great power (bars 103ff.) The alternative ('ossia') first and second violin parts in the score in bars 107-110 are in accordance with Bruckner's addition to the engraver's copy at this point; demisemiquavers would certainly not be practical at an 'Andante quasi allegretto' tempo! Further exploration of the diversified second subject material leads to a broad preparation (Langsamer. Gemessen, bars 135-8) for the return of the first subject which flows into a valedictory coda over a G flat pedal (bars 157 - end).

Finale

The immediately striking feature of the Finale (Lebhaft bewegt, F minor - F major) is the lack of a clearly defined 'first subject'. Instead we have 32 bars of preparatory material, 16 over a D flat pedal (as dominant of G flat major) and 16 over a C pedal (as potential dominant of F major) which is brought to an abrupt end with a pause mark over the bar-line. What follows is a freely modulating second subject (Langsamer) commencing in E major and ending inconclusively over a B pedal in bar 70. In its combination of two contrasting melodic ideas (falling and rising sixths initially in first viola; expansive melody for first violin) it is reminiscent of the second subject in the Finale of Symphony no. 3. There is also a contrast of two different ideas - rising and falling crotchets and triplet quavers - in the quasi-fugal texture of the energetic third subject material (bars 71- 86). After a quieter interlude in which the angular crotchet leaps make prominent appearances in direct and inverted forms in the second viola and cello (bars 87-96), the triplet quavers ('breit gestrichen immer') appear in

all five instruments to produce a *fff* climax on an octave-unison high A flat (bars 97-108). After a bar's rest, the first viola begins the rising and falling second subject idea on the enharmonic G sharp. This brief *ppp* interlude is followed by a more restrained re-appearance of the third subject material over a prolonged C harmonic pedal (bars 115-30). At this point we recognise some degree of kinship with the preparatory material at the beginning of the movement. After another pause mark over the bar-line the second subject material is re-stated, proceeding from D flat major to B flat major via a variety of keys. A semitone rise in the bass, B flat - B natural (bars 157-8), is followed by the opening material over a C pedal which is now resolved clearly in F major (bars 181 - end), the tonic key which Bruckner doggedly avoided at the beginning of the movement.¹⁵ The clearest 'symphonic' parallel to this is, of course, the Finale of the Eighth Symphony where C minor is not definitively reached and confirmed until the coda of the movement.

Intermezzo

This movement has the same key (D minor) and the same tripartite structure as the *Scherzo* which it replaced initially, but is texturally much less complex and has a much slower tempo (Moderato). In the middle section G flat is an important secondary key, and Bruckner exploits the rising harmonic sequence of keys a minor third apart (G flat [F sharp] - A - C; bars 51-76). In the repeat of the first section he makes further use of the key of G flat (F sharp major] before moving down a major third to D major to effect a powerful cadence. There are one or two small but unmistakable motivic connections between the *Intermezzo* and the first and third movements of the Quintet and the strong emphasis on the key of G flat is an obvious link with the *Adagio*. On the other hand, it does not provide the same effective contrast in character either with the other movements or with the *Trio* which Bruckner left unchanged. This is probably the main reason why the original *Scherzo* was ultimately preferred to the replacement *Intermezzo*. The tempo of the latter is almost the same as that of the *Trio*, and some of its rhythmical gestures are virtually identical.

¹⁵ William Carragan, in another paper - 'Bruckner's Golden Arches' - presented at the 2003 *Bruckner Journal* Conference in Nottingham, convincingly analysed this Finale as the first and 'the most classic' of Bruckner's arch forms.

Conclusion

We tend to measure Bruckner's development as a composer from the early 1860s to the late 1870s / early 1880s by comparing the fascinating but, as yet, fairly raw attempts at large-scale structure in the early Symphony in F minor (1863) with the more assured architecture of Symphonies 5-7. No less fascinating and instructive is a consideration of the immense distance travelled between another student work, the String Quartet in C minor (1862), and the String Quintet in F. The Quintet is tautly constructed throughout, has a final movement which, in its convincing postponement of tonic resolution and closure until the coda, comes as close as any other 19th century sonata-form movement to solving the so-called Finale problem, and is graced with a noble *Adagio* which even Bruckner's most vociferous detractors recognised as being among the finest of its kind.

© Crawford Howie

From a review by Hugo Wolf, Wiener Salonblatt, January 10, 1886:

Anton Bruckner's Quintet is one of those rare artistic phenomena blessed with the capacity to utter a profound secret in a simple, sensible way, in contrast to the usual procedure, much favored by our modern "masters", of clothing simple, everyday thoughts in the enigmatic utterances of oracles.

Bruckner's music flows full-bodied and rich from the clear fountain of a childlike spirit. One can say [with Wagner's Hans Sachs]: "It sounded so old, and was yet so new." This is thanks to a strong, popular strain that emerges everywhere in his symphonic compositions, sometimes overtly, sometimes hidden. How charming, for example, is the Ländler-like trio of the Quintet! How well the composer, for all his earthiness, knows how to play the gentleman of distinction, sometimes by a harmonic deviation or a bit of ingenious counterpoint, by a more richly colored instrumentation or a surprising inversion of themes, etc.

Never is Bruckner commonplace or banal, a virtue he shares with Schubert. But neither do Bruckner's compositions ever seem to be contrived. His harmonies are bold and new, and they lend the melody an utterly characteristic finery, a definite physiognomy that impresses itself with adamant incisivness upon the listener's sensibility. His thematic invention is the product of an extraordinarily fertile fantasy and a glowing perceptiveness, hence the lucid imagery of his musical language.

(Translated by Henry Pleasants, "The Music Criticism of Hugo Wolf", Holmes & Meier Publishers, New York & London, 1979)

L E T T E R S

From Peter Bishop (Lindal in Furness, Cumbria):

Arthur Butterworth's article [TBJ, November 2003] is interesting, particularly when he writes about "slick, polished ...playing", "jet-setting conductors", "conductors who often lack imagination" and "ubiquitous orchestral supermarket". My wife and I couldn't agree more because so many conductors take their common-denominator sound and interpretation around with them and impose these on an orchestra. Why is it so difficult for others to break into the celebrity conductors' circuit - particularly in this country? Whose fault is it: ours, i.e. the concertgoing public's, the concert impresarios', the recording companies', or the critics', such as those in the Gramophone? We do seem fixated on certain conductors. Why not go for a less slick performance and one more idiomatic and spontaneous?

Bruckner's music should be alive, at times rustic as well as contemplative. So often these days we hear famous conductors, even Wand at the end, conducting a performance which is so slow and dreary that it doesn't flow or hang together. They seem to be trying to outdo Celibidache, and he was the only one who could make what he did convincing. It is good to hear different conductors, lesser known conductors, giving different performances - there is always something to listen to.

Postscript: We picked up on our continental satellite a performance of Bruckner 4 on Bavarian TV from Waldsassen, a Stiftsbasilika very close to the Czech border. This was conducted by Enoch zu Guttenberg and performed by the Klangverwaltung orchestra [7 September 2003]. It was given in the right place and played superbly, in that the music progressed and made you want to listen to what was coming next. The scherzo had a superlative lift contrasting very well with the first two movements. They all obviously knew their Bruckner.

From Tim Girard (Ottawa, Ontario):

In his review of Sir Colin Davis's new recording of the Ninth Symphony in the July 2003 issue, Benjamin-Gunnar Cohrs expresses his disappointment that Sir Colin chose to use "the problematic Nowak edition... instead of the new critical edition [by the present writer, Vienna 2000]".

I am curious whether Mr Cohrs believes that all performances of the Ninth Symphony between Siegmund von Hausegger's legendary 1932 performance in Munich and the publication of Mr Cohrs's own "critical edition" are inadequate. I am also curious whether there are many Brucknerians who agree that his own edition is clearly superior to Nowak's. In any case, I look forward to a recording of Mr Cohrs's edition so that those who are unfamiliar with it can judge for themselves,

Peter Palmer replies:

I feel that I should write in Mr Cohrs's defence. As he notes in the booklet to Nikolaus Harnoncourt's recording of Bruckner's Ninth, the Nowak edition of 1951 is hardly more than a reprint of Alfred Orel's edition of 1934. It came out at the beginning of Nowak's Bruckner editorship, and an appreciable amount of material and information not available to Nowak has since come to light. For that reason, Cohrs was commissioned by the publishers of the Critical Edition to provide a new edition which would meet scholarly requirements today. If he is in the invidious position of having to promote his own work, that is because of the inability of conductors to acknowledge such research in the climate evoked by Peter Bishop above.

Literary Sources: In Response to Jacques Roelands

M. Roelands (*Bruckner Journal*, July 2003, p. 25) expresses distrust over the use of "literary sources." Granted, explicit score or sketch material is always preferable. But lacking it, "literary" evidence can provide a high level of valid information. One must evaluate both the quality of the witness and the nature of the information. An event that bolsters the status of the teller is always suspect. A "startling event" is more likely to be recalled accurately than the "mundane details" surrounding it. Historians weigh these factors constantly in evaluating evidence.

Using the information marshaled by John A. Phillips in his doctoral thesis (*Bruckner's Ninth Revisited: Towards the re-evaluation of a four-movement symphony*, Adelaide University, 2002), I'd like to examine two points: the evidence for the thematic overlay, and the evidence for the conclusion of the movement. Page references are to the thesis noted above.

1) The literary evidence for a thematic overlay is actually rather murky. The first reference to it appears in a review of the 1903 premiere by Max Graf (p. 167). Graf himself possessed a remnant of the Finale manuscript (p. 138) and appears to have had connections with Ferdinand Löwe. Löwe certainly owned a quantity of Finale materials, which his widow sold off to various dealers and institutions (pp. 119-20). Some of these have yet to be recovered. Graf *might* have seen a sketch in Löwe's possession. However, he does not seem to definitely claim to have done so. (p. 167) Instead, he appears to be imagining what such a thematic overlay would have been like.

As a witness, Max Auer can be impeached. Auer was heavily involved in the musical politics of his day, and not above stretching the truth to serve his ends. For instance—as Phillips points out—the story that Bruckner gave the score of the completed movements of the Ninth to Karl Muck who returned it years later is most likely just such a fabrication: the Hofbibliothek received the autograph score from Bruckner's executor six weeks after the composer's death (pp. 71-73; 115-7). And when Auer reprinted Heller's reminiscences (see below), he retouched them extensively for pathetic effect (pp. 84-5).

Auer's description of a thematic overlay varied in the telling; his published descriptions from 1923 and 1934 do not match. As is the case with Graf, it is not clear that he claimed to be an eyewitness of such a sketch. Moreover, he could have been expanding upon Graf's remarks, pp. 167-8, (pp. 130, 207-8, 504-5, 598).

On the other hand, like Graf, Auer *could* have been an eyewitness: in 1911 he examined the sketches that were in the possession of Franz Schalk—even annotating them in the process (pp. 130). This fact enhances his credibility on this particular subject. For a time, he himself owned four other sketch pages, now ÖNB 6007 (p. 119)—which he published in mangled order and with one page upside-down in Göllicher=Auer, vol. IV/4—further establishing his interest in the subject.

It is altogether possible that Auer saw such a sketch, either among the material in Schalk's custody or (more likely) elsewhere ("startling event"). The custodian of the manuscript may not have permitted Auer to make a copy of the sketch at the time, though this is suppositious. If the custodian were less careful than Schalk, the

likelihood that it has passed from view increases. As Phillips points out, (p. 144), given the tortured provenance of the Finale manuscripts, many such losses may reside unrecognized in some Fond or another or in private possession.

In this scenario, one might expect that after the passage of so much time, the "mundane details" of such a sketch might be garbled in Auer's memory when he came to write his description(s) decades later. However, the inconsistency between the descriptions he offered, coupled with Auer's tendency to bolster his standing in the cultural politics of his day, the possibility of his references being derived from Graf's suppositions, makes the testimony concerning a planned thematic overlay in the Finale of the Ninth far less probable.

Phillips appropriately characterizes the thematic overlay in the performing version in which he was involved as "more... a logically or analytically derived than a philologically validated element" (p. 168). That element exists in performing versions for *purely musical*-not literary-reasons. But exploring those is best left to another hand and occasion.

2) The principal witness for the conclusion of the Ninth Symphony's Finale is the account by Richard Heller, Bruckner's personal physician, who ended his career as director of sanitation for Salzburg (p. 56, n. 130). His powers of observation can be tested, since his medical case file on Bruckner has survived (p. 83). His concern for probity can likewise be established-he filed and won a plagiarism suit against the son of his partner. He was at most marginally involved in the cultural politics of his day-he had nothing to gain from fabricating his story in 1924. As Phillips notes, Heller's account appears to follow chronological order, suggesting that a diary was before him as he wrote (p. 85). Although one might be happier with the contemporary diary entry, Heller is a credible witness.

That Bruckner might have seen the Finale of the Ninth as a whole sometime in 1895, had an ending in mind for it, even played a version of it that contained recognizable elements amount to "startling events." That Bruckner refused to write it down at the time is a confirming detail; Bruckner invariably notated his scores methodically, one section at a time in sequential order, as Phillips points out (p. 86). That Heller might not be able to recall the "mundane details" of what Bruckner played is not surprising. The ability to write down the details of an extended musical passage after a single hearing is uncommon even among professional musicians. The explanatory footnote by Max Auer identifying the source of the "Allelujah" as the Trio of the Eighth Symphony could have been based on Heller's response to a direct inquiry from Max Auer, although we cannot be certain of this (p. 85). In short, Heller's testimony can be trusted.

Phillips draws historically responsible and appropriate conclusions from Heller's account: that a thematic overlay was *not* to be the culminating point of the movement, that the ending was *not* based on material intrinsic to the movement such as its Chorale, but rather pointed towards a class of related themes used at culminating moments in Bruckner's latest works (pp. 85, 603-4, and Mus.Ex. 25). To utilize this knowledge in a performing version, it seems to me, is a matter of common-sense.

James Cyphers

Boston, MA (USA)

D I A R Y - Britain

2004

March 21 Symphony No. 9. Concertgebouw Orchestra/Bernard Haitink. Barbican Hall, London, 3.30pm.

March 27 Symphony No. 8, Two Equals, Motets. Orchestra & Chorus of Opera North/Dietfried Bernet. Town Hall, Leeds

Symphony No. 4. Salisbury Symphony Orch/David Halls. City Hall, Salisbury, Wilts £6-£10.50, tel 01722 327 676

April 8 Symphony No. 8. Orchestra of Opera North/Bernet. Town Hall, Huddersfield

April 17 Three Motets (& works by Bernstein, Rutter). Choir of Clare Coll, Cambridge/Timothy Brown. St John's, Smith Square, London. £8-£20

May 1 Symphony No. 7 - second perf by David Briggs of his organ transcription. St Mark's Ch, Kingsholm, Gloucester

May 26 Symphony No. 9. City of Birmingham Symphony Orch/Jaap van Zweden. Symphony Hall, Birmingham, 2.15pm.

May 27 Symphony No. 9 as above. Symphony Hall, Birmingham (7.30pm). Tel 0121 780 3333

June 12 Symphony No. 9. BBC Nat Orch of Wales/Walter Weller. St David's Hall, Cardiff. £9.50-£19.50, tel 0800 052 1812

In addition to visiting Vienna and London, Bernard Haitink and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra will give Bruckner's Ninth in Amsterdam on March 15 and 18. Symphony No. 4 will be played by Bavarian Radio Symphony Orch under Mariss Jansons at the Lucerne Easter Festival on April 2. At the Musikverein on May 15, Georges Prêtre is to conduct the Vienna Symphony Orch in Bruckner's Ninth and Te Deum. Christoph Eschenbach and the Philadelphia Orch will visit the Vienna Musikverein with Symphony No. 7 on May 19

* * * *

A performance of Helgoland, thought to be the first in Denmark, was given last September by Kolding Men's Choir and Sonderjysk Amateur Symphony Orchestra

Beethoven's "Choral" Symphony was performed in the Vatican on 17 October 2003 to mark the silver jubilee of the Pontificate of Pope John Paul II. As an encore the Choir of Central German Radio, Leipzig, sang Bruckner's motet Locus iste

The second and final volume of Bruckner's Letters, edited by Andrea Harrandt and Otto Schneider, has been published in Vienna by the Musikwissenschaftlicher Verlag

The Anton Bruckner Institut Linz celebrated its 25th anniversary last November. Prof Constantin Floros has been made an honorary member

IAN BERESFORD GLEAVES is to lead three weekend courses on Bruckner's symphonies at Missenden Abbey. The early symphonies will be studied on October 29-31. Further dates are February 18-20 and May 20-22, 2005. Contact Missenden Abbey Centre for Adult Education, Great Missenden, Bucks, HP16 0BD, tel 01494 862 904 or 01494 890 298

BJ SUBSCRIBER Jonathan Hodgetts, who plays tuba in Salisbury Symphony Orchestra, would be pleased to meet readers at the City Hall on March 27 (see Diary)

CHANGES have been made to this Journal's website address without prior notice by the provider. Consequently we are in the process of acquiring a more autonomous website

DONATIONS are gratefully acknowledged from George Banks, Malcolm Bennison, Geoffrey Gill, Roger Humphries, Tom Paton, Michael Piper and David Wilson