



The Bruckner Journal

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The Key to Bruckner

That Bruckner and his music present a puzzle, rich in mystery on many levels, is one of the qualities that ensures our continuing interest and fascination with the composer and his music. In confronting things that puzzle us, deepening our understanding of this 'grand, mysterious harmony', we follow up whatever clues that seem to us most likely to bear fruit.

In his essay, published in this issue of TBJ, on Bruckner's 6th Symphony, Ian Beresford Gleaves asserts, "it is tonality and tonal processes ... at which we will need to look ... if we are going to begin to understand and to assess what happens in this work," and in the tradition of English language writing on Bruckner that reached its apotheosis in Robert Simpson's *The Essence of Bruckner*, he proceeds to an analysis founded upon keys. There are many illuminations on the way.

Nicholas Atfield's paper on Erich Schwebsch by happy coincidence also focuses on the 6th Symphony, the Adagio of which Schwebsch described as leading us into 'the flourishing fullness of maternal inner life'. Although Schwebsch, a self-proclaimed 'music anthropologist', is not entirely oblivious to matters of tonality, his writing soon plunges into unrestrained psychological and spiritual metaphor. The challenge to the reader is not to understand how keys work, but to find if there is anything in their own experience of spiritual journeying that enables them to take additional enlightenment in Bruckner from Schwebsch's poetic effusion.

Both approaches, and the spectrum that falls between them, are not without reward but, as with much writing on music, no sooner is something 'explained' than the mystery at heart of musical experience reasserts itself at a higher, and sometimes deeper, level. There comes a moment when we must leave the words behind, put The Bruckner Journal down, and just listen again to the music - whereupon we may be surprised to find ourselves in possession of a key to unlock another door that had previously been closed to us.

KW

BROMLEY, UK

Ravensbourne Hall

19 January 2008

Bruckner - Symphony No.7

Bromley Symphony Orchestra / Adrian Brown

Conducted by Adrian Brown (a former pupil of Sir Adrian Boult, and a finalist in the Karajan Conductors' Competition) the orchestra gave a very good account of themselves in an interesting programme of Schubert, Richard Strauss, and in the second half, Bruckner. It was what might be called a homely occasion, with the conductor giving a spoken introduction to each piece, and an extended explanation before the Bruckner. I suppose it needed it: Bromley no longer has a decent record shop and a number of my friends who like classical music think I mean Bruch when I talk of Bruckner. In the event it was an enjoyable performance tackled with verve, and enthusiasm, well-paced by the conductor - no alarms or excursions. I understand that the orchestra last tackled a Bruckner symphony some 10 years ago.

1. *Allegro moderato* (19 mins)

The opening had an appropriate sense of mystery and the ensuing difficult bars for the horns were negotiated well. The pulse flowed easily and, whilst some passages did lack the ultimate sense of mystery, the final few pages (bar 390 on, *sehr feierlich*), which I liken to a magnificent dawning, were well judged and beautifully brought off, with all the orchestra playing their hearts out.

2. *Adagio* (24 mins)

In the smallish hall, the orchestra of some 80 players extended from the stage to take up nearly one third of the total space, and had difficulty in achieving a really hushed sound. The cellos and violas were sonorous and secure, but the violins were a bit thin in the upper register. However, the great climax was expertly prepared and executed (no cymbals) and the dying-away chords at the end brought a satisfying conclusion, with the brass excelling themselves in some lovely hushed playing, the final bars floating off into an ethereal infinity.

3. *Scherzo* (10 mins)

This movement was nicely paced and moved forward at a satisfying lick, although some of the entries in the woodwind lacked a sense of mystery and magic. The trio section (*etwas langsamer*) could have done with a little more Austrian lilt.

4. *Finale* (12 mins)

The Brucknerian pulse was well held by the conductor and propelled the music forward as the performance neared its conclusion. An unconscious quickening perhaps - nearing the end of a long and demanding performance? The gear changes appeared hurried, and were the timps a bit flat? No matter. The coda was executed with verve, beautifully judged with everyone playing out of their skins.

The packed audience were clearly delighted with this performance of a symphony rarely heard live in the Borough of Bromley. Sixty-five minutes end to end. I have been dissatisfied with more illustrious performers of Bruckner on the South Bank. Enough said.

The first half of the concert comprised a performance of Schubert's Rosamunde Overture and a Richard Strauss rarity, the Duet Concertino for clarinet and bassoon with string orchestra, with the two excellent soloists from the orchestra's ranks - Massimo Roman and Stephen Fuller - the interplay between them giving a sparkling reading. Whilst the performances this evening couldn't be described as on a par with a *premier cru* Bordeaux, they had the hallmarks of superbly done *cru bourgeois* - well-made, enjoyable, satisfying and good value.

George Banks

SHEFFIELD

St Mark's Church, Broomhill

19 April 2008

Sibelius - Symphony No.6

Bruckner - Symphony No.6

Sheffield Symphony Orchestra / John Longstaff

At the start of his chapter on Bruckner's Sixth Symphony, Robert Simpson writes (*The essence of Bruckner* (3rd ed., 1992, p. 150)), 'It has always been neglected, and I have never been able to understand why, for it has consistently struck me...as among his most beautiful and original works....Bruckner's Sixth makes an instant impression of rich and individual expressiveness. Its themes are of exceptional beauty and plasticity, its harmony is both bold and subtle, its instrumentation is the most imaginative he had yet achieved'. No wonder that, as Simpson concludes, Bruckner himself considered the Sixth to be his most daring work. For these, and other, related, reasons, it is also a distinctly tricky piece to pull off in performance, and perhaps this accounts at least partly for the tendency to place it on one side.

Three thoughts occur immediately. First, the Sixth presents, in acute form, characteristic Brucknerian challenges regarding tempo, structure, balance, and rhythm. In respect to the last, the 'Bruckner rhythm' is taken to

its furthest extent in this score, vertically as well as horizontally: the second, lyrical theme in the first movement combines sets of various kinds of triplet figures – and quintuplet semiquavers – set within the *alla breve* time signature. (The popular designation of the opening violin figuration as the ‘Morse’ theme fails to represent its true character: it does not consist of simple long/short elements and standardized breaks; rather, it is a very particular sequence of quaver, semiquaver rest, semiquaver, followed by a set of triplet quavers.*) Secondly, of the four movements (five, if the Trio is counted separately), only the *Adagio* presents anything like a technically easy start for the conductor. Thirdly, the confident sweep of Bruckner’s ideas involves not only, in terms of tonality, rapid key shifts (as usual with Bruckner, these are not always readily apparent from a superficial glance at the score, given the composer’s customary preference for the use of accidentals rather than formal new key signatures), but also, with regard to tempo changes, some very awkward ‘corners’ to negotiate.

Evidence of these difficulties – as well as the lack of any conclusive outcome to the continuing debate regarding the much vexed question of tempo – is readily available in the various recordings available. All the more credit, therefore, goes to John Longstaff and the Sheffield Symphony Orchestra for a performance which was, on a number of levels, thoroughly convincing. (It was notable that there was dead silence from the audience during the music and spontaneous cheering at the end.) Secure, positive, yet sensitive throughout, this was a rewarding reading with much to cherish. Longstaff is a shrewd, skilled, and experienced Brucknerian, who knows how to pace the music and bring out its essential character – appealing to *cognoscenti* and novices alike – while dealing with the practical decisions that have to be taken by those who actually perform this music. While never dragging, he appreciates the value of patience, and the often tortuous routes to Bruckner’s climaxes are carefully mapped out: the impact is then all the greater.

There were some especially memorable passages: in the first movement, the E flat reprise of the main theme, in a key alien to the tonic – indeed, the polar opposite to A major in the circle of fifths – and its masterly rapid move, over a mere fifteen bars, via G flat, A flat, and a dominant seventh, into the home key of A major for the recapitulation; in the *Adagio*, the glorious string figurations (which benefited greatly from the positioning of the first and second violins to the left and right respectively, with the violas and cellos directing their lyrical outpourings from the centre of the orchestra), then the agonizing C minor funeral march (all the more effective for being kept steady), and the radiant calm of the coda; in the fantastical *Scherzo*, the tangible gain from Longstaff’s insistence on the *Nicht schnell* marking; and finally, in the startling changes of mood that characterize the *Finale*, the staged transformation of the seemingly unpromising and meandering opening theme into the blazing conclusion which embraces the opening theme of the symphony played *fff* by the trombones.

The orchestra was on fine form, having warmed up with another sixth symphony, that of Sibelius, in the first half of the concert. There was a noticeable bloom in the string playing (the sonority assisted by five very positive double basses) and a cohesiveness and a fine attack in the *tutti* passages which this reviewer in his role as conductor of an amateur orchestra can only envy. Purists might have raised queries regarding balance: the doubling of woodwind parts makes a certain sense in an orchestra of this kind in such a work, but it does create tuning problems; also, giving the eager brass section its head made for excitement, but did occasionally result in a swamping of the strings (and caused a member of the audience next to the reviewer to stop her ears repeatedly!). All departments of the orchestra acquitted themselves well: the horns, incidentally, enjoyed an excellent evening, and the principal oboe was simply unlucky once or twice. All in all, it was a splendid account of ‘die Keckste’; and, to end on a mundane note, well worth the round trip of 300 miles to hear it: the key of A major proved to be a real tonic for the long drive home.

Paul Coones

* A much closer rhythmic figure can be found in – of all things – the soundtrack of *Pirates of the Caribbean* (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_UvKyVuQ2U); one might be forgiven for concluding that this particular theme in the film score was – shall we say – ‘suggested’ by the Bruckner symphony: after all, the music moves rapidly through Tchaikovsky (1’53”) straight into the opening of the Mozart *Requiem* (2’03”)!

DALLAS, USA

Meyerson Symphony Center

15-17 May 2008

Schumann – *Konzertstück* for Four Horns and Orchestra, Op. 86
Bruckner – Symphony No. 7

Dallas Symphony Orchestra / Günter Herbig

Since its premiere in Leipzig in December 1884 under the baton of Arthur Nikisch, Bruckner’s Seventh Symphony has stood in a unique position among his compositions. It was the most performed of Bruckner’s symphonies in his lifetime, and has been a favorite among classical music lovers. Its inclusion in Dallas Symphony’s seasonal program, therefore, was a wise choice, for it would, on the one hand, cater for those who craved Bruckner’s music (it has been a while since a Bruckner symphony was performed in Central Texas), and on the other hand, serve as an opportunity to introduce to others who otherwise might be unfamiliar with the music of this great Austrian composer.

I attended the last of three performances of the Seventh Symphony on the evening of May 17. The concert opened with Schumann's *Konzertstück* for Four Horns and Orchestra, which featured the horn section of the Dallas Symphony as soloists. The conductor, Günther Herbig, was an old friend of the orchestra, for his acquaintance with the Dallas Symphony dated back to 1979, when he stepped foot in the United States for the first time. Since his post as principal guest conductor of the Dallas Symphony, the East German conductor has held positions with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and the Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra. It is interesting to note that Herbig's performances of the Seventh Symphony with the Dallas Symphony were the first of a series of concerts devoted to this piece; the maestro would perform the symphony again with the Bilbao Symphony Orchestra and the Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y León later in the same month (see "International Concert Selection," *The Bruckner Journal* 12/1 [March 2008]: 51). Exactly a year ago, in May 2007, Herbig played the Seventh with the Columbus Symphony Orchestra ("Letters for the Editor: from Paul Gibson, Columbus, Ohio, USA," *ibid.*, 48). This work therefore holds a unique place among the conductor's repertoire, and the performance I attended was indeed a treat for Brucknerians.

Conducting the whole symphony from memory, Herbig began the first movement with a very comfortable tempo, one that I would consider a middleground between what I have experienced as extremes in other performances (I have in mind Celibidache's 24-minute with the Munich Philharmonic [EMI] and Haitink's 18-minute with the Royal Concertgebouw [Philips]; Herbig's was 21 minutes long). Another thing that struck me was Herbig's treatment of dynamics. The tremolos the violins played were barely noticeable; it was like they were coming from nowhere - so soft, so silky, as if the curtain rises slowly to gradually reveal that beautiful and serene unison theme on the horn and cellos. As the music continued to unfold, Herbig was very conscious about the dynamic shape, not letting the orchestra go beyond a certain intensity - not until the passage that precedes the unison third theme, supported by a pedal point in the low strings, did we hear an upsurge of dynamics that marked the first real climax. The sudden drop of dynamics that followed as the third theme came in was breathtaking even for those who know the music. The overall effect was one of suspense and drama. By combining this distinct treatment of dynamics with a careful execution of tempi and tempo changes, as well as a classical approach to phrasing, Herbig provided a rather reserved yet honest interpretation of the movement.

How could anyone who hears the second movement not be moved by the sound of the Wagner tubas? The warm and lyrical tone is especially palpable in a live performance. Bruckner's mastery of the instrument's musical capability is revealed in the different passages he wrote in the movement—the chordal introductory theme and its restatements, the chromatic transition before the initial appearance of the second theme, and the famous "Lament" for Wagner that highlights the concluding section. The players are to be commended for their execution of these passages, which showed their sensitivity to intonation, balance, and nuance. Here again, as in the first movement, Herbig was very conscious of the tempo and dynamic profile of the music. Even at the climactic point of the movement, where he chose not to include the controversial cymbal crash, the *fortississimo* is one of control and balance—one could easily hear the interplay of ideas among the winds, brass, and strings. It seems to me that Herbig's "hold back" of the dynamics in the first half of the symphony served a larger purpose. Some conductors, such as Celibidache and Jochum, have commented on the structural weight of the first two movements. As a result, a listener might sense a kind of imbalance caused by the "decline" in the rest of the piece. Herbig's dynamic approach somehow averted this perceptual likelihood by retaining the emotional energy gathered in the first two movements and keeping the audience's attention and expectation. The third movement, with its swift tempo and dance-like rhythms, provided moments of relief and served as a transition to the last movement, where the orchestra, playing with confidence and precision, was finally allowed to bring out its full dynamic potential. The music was executed with perfect balance and textural clarity. With the triumphal entry of the main theme of the first movement in the coda, Herbig brought the piece to an exuberant close. The standing ovations that the maestro and the orchestra received from the audience were rightly deserved for such an engaging performance.

Eric Lai

LONDON, Barbican Hall

7.30 pm Friday 23 May 2008

Schubert - Symphony No. 5

Bruckner - Symphony No. 7 (order of inner movements reversed)

7.30 pm Sunday 1 June 2008

Joe Duddell - Azalea Fragments (after Patrick Heron) / cond. Pavel Kotla

Schubert - Symphony No. 8

Bruckner - Symphony No. 6

London Symphony Orchestra / Sir Colin Davis

In the first half of the first concert the LSO under Sir Colin Davis performed Schubert's 5th symphony, playing all the movements in the right order. After the interval they performed Bruckner's 7th with the order of the Adagio and Scherzo reversed. An intervention unthinkable in Schubert is apparently permissible when you play

Bruckner. There was no explanation given in the programme note: readers unfamiliar with the symphony would think they were hearing what Bruckner wrote (indeed, sloppy cut-and-pasting of the programme note meant that Andrew Huth's commentary read as though the Adagio began after the first movement, was interrupted by the Scherzo, and then continued with its second subject). Ignorance was added to injury by Richard Morrison's review in *The Times* which speaks of the Adagio being 'third in Nowak's edition.'

This re-ordering has several strange and, to my mind, unwelcome consequences. The proportions of the symphony as Bruckner wrote it progress in the first movement through deepening levels of emotional, even spiritual, drama, with increasing inwardness, so that come the magnificent coda we are prepared for events of even greater profundity to follow. When the Scherzo is placed second, the curtains that have been carefully drawn to exclude the outside world are summarily ripped open. It is quite horrible to hear the Scherzo at this point, and thereafter you arrive at an Adagio for no good reason. The significance of the great Adagio is now undermined: it becomes just another 19th century slow movement. It's as though the proportions that Bruckner intended are too ungainly, too profound for Sir Colin's English sensibilities, and something has to be done to mitigate the idiosyncrasy of Bruckner's vision. The aspiration is for a comfortable symphony, a work of nice proportions, rather than something extraordinary that might change a person's life.

Certain things were good, indeed very good. The orchestral playing was consummate and intensely beautiful. The opening of the symphony was wonderful, a decent *Allegro moderato* tempo chosen, and the first theme beautifully moulded. The orchestral palette in the Scherzo was transparently displayed, with really energetic and precisely articulated playing from the double basses. The Adagio was again very beautiful, the second theme sang gloriously, and the capping of the dirge for Wagner tubas by the entry of the horns at the crescendo to *fff*, followed by spare writing for violins and woodwinds, provided an impressive and obviously well-rehearsed event.

But what failed in this interpretation was due to the absence of a sense of movement towards a goal, of a sense of purpose. The tempo in the first movement, originally well-chosen, then became homogenous - or at least with variation too subtle to give dynamic shape to the movement. The drama of the development was underplayed and the timpani drowned out the strings in the coda, but to no meaningful purpose. The Trio in the 3rd (here 2nd) movement lacked interest, and the Adagio lost its power not merely because it was in the wrong place, but also because the climax was subject to an accelerando that suggested the embarrassed conductor wanted the rising three-note theme repetitions over as quick as possible, rather than indulging their blazing splendour into eternity. The unforgivable effect was to reduce the climax to banality. And the short finale seemed interminable, so lacking was it in any sense of purposeful endeavour. The tempo was again consistent throughout but unrelated to the first movement's opening tempo, and no attempt was made to observe the *rit.* markings suggested in the score. Davis was after a quicksilver, fleet-footed finale - but ideally this finale has a function to serve whereby it effectively balances the first movement, which it can do if played with some weight. And if that is achieved, (as Günter Herbig managed according to Eric Lai's review above), then the concerns that presumably led Sir Colin Davis to muck around with the order of Bruckner's composition fall away, and the symphony makes perfect music as written. Ultimately, the decision to change the order of the movements is merely the most obvious symptom of what was apparent from the rest of the interpretation: the conductor is not prepared to trust the composer, that Bruckner knew where he was going and the best way to get there.

In the second concert of this pair Sir Colin Davis was persuaded to play the movements of both the Schubert 'Unfinished' and Bruckner's 6th in the right order. The Bruckner Journal readers I met at the concert had reactions to this Bruckner performance that ranged over the whole gamut from 'quite wonderful' (Dr Paul Dawson-Bowling) to 'ghastly' (Dr Keith Gifford). Jorge Fernandes, who heard the same programme in Lisbon on May 27th, commented on the Yahoo Anton Bruckner Club message-board that it was 'well played, yet not very exciting'. My own view was that again there were some very beautiful things in the performance, but as a whole it didn't hang together. The best for me was the Scherzo and Trio, played rather slowly but immaculately, with stunning horn calls in the Trio. The Adagio was played *molto espressivo* with a thick lush string sound that quite overwhelmed the plaintive oboe melody that should be heard in the opening bars. This was a pity because this melody, with its falling dotted semi-quaver phrase, is of great importance for the structure of not merely the Adagio, where the horns take it up at the approach to the climax as a baleful, suffering outcry above the thick string texture, but also in its cheeky major-key reincarnation when it becomes one of the agents that turn the Finale round, enabling the triumphant concluding reappearance of the first movement main theme. For this development across the movements to be at its most eloquent the theme must be audible on its first appearance, but here the conductor was too concerned with his glorious strings, treating the oboe theme more as texture than independent idea. He made a great meal out of the magnificent falling scale that ushers in the closing pages of the Adagio, and at this point I had suspicion that expressiveness was in danger of crossing the boundary into sentimentality.

The two outer movements seemed the weakest. There was something light and jaunty about the presentation of the main theme of the first movement, and I didn't feel that such an approach works with this symphony. The *Gesangsperiode* theme seemed underplayed to start with, but was given the full *espressivo* treatment on its forte restatement after the short chorale-like interruption, an effect repeated exactly in the recapitulation - as Jorge Fernandes remarks, 'repetitions seemed almost like playback.' This is not necessarily a bad thing, but in this performance it seemed just a bit mechanical: the change of context between exposition and recapitulation seemed without any sense of progress. Although the climax was quite strong, the famous first movement coda failed to

deliver, incapacitated by the lightweight treatment of the theme. Many conductors find the Finale a problem, so Sir Colin is in good company when he fails to forge anything very coherent from the manifold disparate motives of the Finale theme groups, and it seemed that after a promising start things made less and less sense, and the raucous brass outstayed its welcome. The Finale can work, and work well - Klemperer and Celibidache amongst others succeed.

Although we should of course be grateful to the LSO for putting on this pair of Bruckner symphonies, especially now when performances in the UK are getting rarer, it is hard to escape the conclusion that Sir Colin Davis is not really an ideal Bruckner conductor. He gets a beautiful sound, immaculate playing, but somehow he just doesn't get Bruckner. Ken Ward

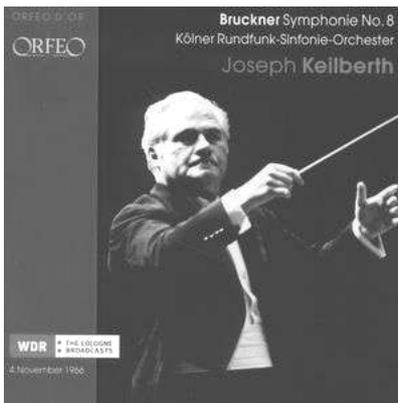


CD Reviews

Bruckner - Symphony No. 8

Cologne Radio Symphony Orchestra / Joseph Keilberth

Orfeo CD C 724 071 B Timings: 16:11, 14:11, 23:35, 25:27



Connoisseurs will need no introduction to the bold and dramatic Bruckner recordings of Joseph Keilberth. His clear and insistent 6th with the Berliner Philharmoniker still features regularly in “best ever” lists, despite being out of print for years. And while the highly theatrical *Walpurgisnacht* of a 9th that he recorded earlier with the Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Hamburg (also long OOP) may not be everybody's idea of perfection, it does demonstrate, if nothing else, that funereal solemnity is not the only - or necessarily the best - way to reveal the power of that extraordinary work.

His later NHK SO concert recordings (still obtainable) of those popular favourites, the 4th and 7th, do not have the same stature in their own crowded marketplaces. The 7th in particular is noticeably weak at a number of points (and not well recorded.) But all four of these meet the first requirement of a successful Bruckner performance: *they seize the attention* – and maintain their grip through a relentless forward momentum, derived internally, that

sounds easy enough but is beyond the skills of many an otherwise successful conductor.

Now Orfeo bring us that most anticipated of offerings: a CD reissue of Keilberth's broadcast recording of the 8th symphony with the Kölner Rundfunk-Sinfonie-Orchester. Dating from 1966, it falls chronologically between the landmark 6th and the Japanese 4th/7th, a few years after Klemperer's own excellent 8th with the same orchestra (soon to be re-released on Andromeda.)

Of all the recordings of the 8th in my collection, very few have no merit at all, and at least 20-30 are world-class performances with a claim to be considered definitive, at least of their type. For there are many different possible interpretations of this symphony. Those which deviate from what might be considered the mainstream can still be considered successful if they manage to establish a coherent case for their own particular viewpoint and aesthetic. A good performance is one which *works*.

Sadly, this one does not. The timings (above) give a clue as to why not: the whole thing is out of balance. If you doubt me, go to your own collections and see how many of your favourite recordings have a Finale that's almost 2 full minutes longer than the Adagio. (I can save you the trouble: there aren't any.) Is this because the Adagio is too fast, or the Finale too slow? It's both. And more.

The performance starts well enough, with a strong, steady, fluid opening movement that paints a clear picture and carries conviction. There are one or two unusual shifts of emphasis, but overall the impression is of a thoughtful and spirited interpretation, laying the foundation for something monumental.

This is followed by a vigorous Scherzo which is executed superbly, but has so much energy spilling over, that in places it starts to run away with itself. By the time it returns from the more tempered Trio, it is beginning to sound just a touch frantic, and a bit scrappy.

There is uncertainty right from the start of the Adagio, which never seems to settle down. And by the halfway mark, it's clear that something is amiss. The problem is not primarily the tempo – in fact mostly the tempos of the individual sections fall broadly in the normal ranges – but the way the sections run together, leaving no pause for breath. Time and again, the music seems to run on ahead of itself, past the point where it's normal to pause, if

only for a moment – indeed in some places the music seems to jump into a new phrase before the previous one has properly finished. The overall impression is of haste and hurry, as if Keilberth were trying to get through the entire movement in a single breath. There are occasions when the music does seem to draw back for a moment, but they tend not to be where you might expect – as if this just happened to be the point where he ran out breath – took a gasp – then launched back in. The result is an Adagio that’s not just a little unusual, as the first movement was, but profoundly misshapen, and very much the weaker for it.

He does something similar in the Adagio of his 7th: the melodies which you like to hear drawn out, he despatches with a sometimes throwaway haste (then lingers over the bits in between, curiously.) But in the 7th a weak Adagio is not necessarily fatal, in fact a greater risk there is that an over-strong Adagio may over-balance the symphony as a whole.

Not so in the 8th. The measure of this Adagio sets the scale of the symphony as a whole. Even speed merchants like Païta and Rögner know better than to rush it. Ultimately it is not about straight-line velocity. The brilliant Kubelik despatches his Adagio in even less time than Keilberth – but, crucially, manages to maintain the balance between all the various components, to deliver a performance which is exquisitely shaped and perfectly proportioned. It also happens to be a bit quicker than most – but in the context, it works fine: the extra pace adds fire, and sets the symphony up for a rousing Finale. By contrast, Keilberth’s Adagio sounds rushed, impatient and weak, and leaves the symphony floundering.

He follows it with a Finale so ill-judged, it all but destroys what’s left of the performance. As if trying to compensate for the haste of the preceding movements, this one is mostly plodding and dull: dragging and thrashing about, with no obvious purpose, for what seems a very long time; punctuated occasionally by inconsequential outbursts of bluster. Whatever was lost during the Adagio, remains lost throughout the Finale, no matter how long is spent searching. By the time it – finally – hauls itself to a conclusion, the response is mainly one of relief.

I can think of two possible explanations of this performance. One is that Keilberth genuinely believed that Bruckner’s 8th symphony was essentially three fast movements followed by a slow one, and to hell with the markings – in which case, I can only say: *he was wrong* – and just how wrong, this record amply demonstrates. The alternative is that he had at the outset a coherent and sensible view of this symphony, which unfortunately veered off course during this one performance, and which he tried to correct while it was happening - but alas, it slipped from his grasp, and the whole thing ended up staggering from one direction to another, getting increasingly bogged down. These things do happen. I have seen concert performances literally fall apart in front of me. This could be another of them.

Keilberth’s 9th is one of my favourite recordings – not just of Bruckner’s 9th Symphony, but of *anything*. It’s a remarkable, possibly unique, production. I really wanted to like this 8th. I’ve listened to it many times now - and I’ve also searched for a suitable context for it in comparison with a range of different recordings – but in the end, there’s just no escaping the fact: *it’s not very good*. It doesn’t join my personal shortlist of favourites; it’s not in the group of world-class recordings; and if I’m still trying to find a place for it amongst the vast majority which “have merit”, that’s largely because sentimentality makes it hard for me to do otherwise. The playing is (mostly) very good, and the sound quality is excellent for the year. But as a performance: best forget it.

Comparison recordings: Keilberth

Bruckner 9 – Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Hamburg (1956, Teldec)

Bruckner 6 – Berliner Philharmoniker (1963, Teldec)

Bruckner 4 – NHK Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo (1968, King)

Bruckner 7 – NHK Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo (1968, King)

Comparison recordings: Bruckner 8th

Horenstein / LSO (1970, BBC)

Kegel / RSO Leipzig (1975, Ode)

Klemperer / RSO Köln (1957, Europa)

Kubelik / Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks (1963, Orfeo)

von Maticic / NHK SO (1984, Denon)

Mravinsky / Leningrad Philharmonic (1959, Melodiya)

Païta / Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra (1982, Lodia)

Rögner / RSO Berlin (1985, Berlin)

[The above review by *The Pink Cat* was first published at www.brucknerfreunde.at. A performance of the 9th by Keilberth with the Bamberger Symphoniker has now been issued by Andromeda, ANDRCD9028, misdated on the cover as 1956. This is a 1962 performance. *This info from John Berky at www.abruckner.com*]

A donation to The Bruckner Journal was received from Elizabeth Thompson, Derby - with many thanks.

- Bruckner - Symphony No. 7 (Nowak - *incorrectly attributed to Haas*)
LPO/Tennstedt
LPO – 0030 63 minutes
- Bruckner - Symphony No.8 (1890, Nowak)
LPO/Tennstedt
LPO – 0032 74 minutes
- Bruckner - Symphony No. 3 (1873)
Stuttgart Radio SO/Norrington
Hänssler Classic 93.217 61 minutes

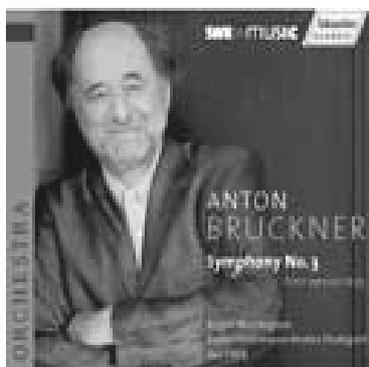
Klaus Tennstedt was a devoted Brucknerian who, as far as I know, didn't conduct all of the canon and tended to converge the most on the fourth, seventh and eighth symphonies. He made commercial recordings of numbers 4 and 8 (in, respectively, Berlin and London), and there is also a live (Bavarian Radio) performance of the third symphony in circulation. The London Philharmonic has now issued, on its own label, concert performances of the seventh and eighth symphonies (there is also a 7th from Tennstedt in a Chicago Symphony box).

This LPO No. 7 is from the Royal Festival Hall, London and was recorded on 10 May 1984 (no doubt a live broadcast on BBC Radio 3). Whatever the merits of the performance, the sound is poor and has been re-mastered unacceptably. Not only is the reproduction more ambient and the orchestra more distantly placed than was (and is) the case in this venue – which may be due to 'interference' at the time by Radio 3 – but the tape (seemingly from a private source) has been over-processed; the result is a contamination of timbre and 'swishy' tape hiss that makes proper listening difficult.

As to the performance, it is alive and vivid, full of identification, played with focus and commitment, and one can appreciate that anyone at the concert may well have had a spellbinding experience. While one can understand that the tape used here may have needed some 'restoration' help, there can be no excuse (not least the perpetrator) for not hearing the problems caused to orchestral frequencies when processing is used as steeply as this.

Bruckner 8 (Nowak, RFH, 29 October 1981) no doubt coincided with the EMI recording that Tennstedt and the LPO made (an early digital affair that was first issued on LP in 1983). The concert performance issued here is quite tremendous. Thankfully, although the RFH is once again overly spacious, the orchestra is now that bit more tangible and the sound has been better but not brilliantly transferred (by the same engineer, even if the reproduction remains too 'closed in') because the processes are less interventionist, no doubt because the source is better, but that does not excuse the avoidable results that blight the Seventh.

As for Tennstedt's conducting and the LPO's playing – it is electric and crackles from the first bar, a performance of intensity and forward-moving pace. Tennstedt seems to have had particular affinity with Bruckner 8 (and more so than any other Bruckner symphony that he conducted); this performance compels in its beauty of shape, rough-hewn grandeur and impulsive (if emotionally unshakeable) direction that never seems rushed or gabbled (although it is very different to the spiritual dimension that Giulini and Karajan, say, found in the music) and makes for thrilling music-making that is enhanced by the live setting.



Following his version with the London Classical Players, Roger Norrington has returned to Bruckner's Third Symphony and stayed loyal to the 1873 version. He breezes through it in 61 minutes (rather different to Georg Tintner's epic account on Naxos) but there is no sense of rush and plenty of time for reflection and mystery. Although Norrington is here conducting the 'modern' Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra, there are many 'period' touches, not least the minimal use of vibrato. It all works though and there is much to relish, not least detail, a translucent soundworld and to be reminded that Bruckner could be 'young' and eager. The recording is excellent and captures the orchestra (and some of the audience's coughs) with clarity and air. Norrington points the dance-rhythms with spring and delight and the performance, as a whole, is joyful, eloquent and faithful.

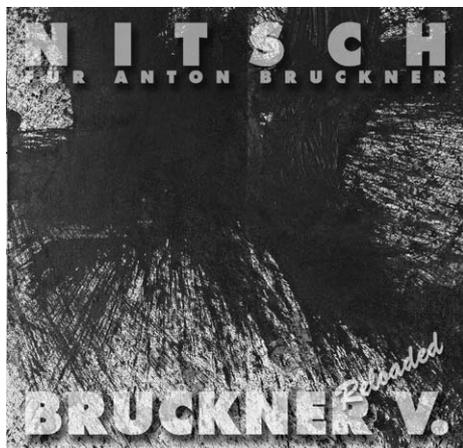


Hermann Nitsch - für Anton Bruckner
Bruckner - Symphony No. 5 (reloaded)

European Philharmonic Orchestra / Peter Jan Marthé

Preiser Records PR 90746

Timings: 22:59, 21:40, 15:24, 27:27



In the interests of objectivity, I try not to read the booklet notes before auditioning a new CD. Never was that more necessary than with this 2-CD recording of a concert performance of Bruckner's 5th given by the European Philharmonic Orchestra in the basilica of St Florian in 2007, under the direction of their co-founder and principal conductor, Peter Jan Marthé. The accompanying booklet, bearing the title "Bruckner V Reloaded", reproduces an interview which a combative Marthé packs with provocative statements in support of what he describes as "a fundamentally new kind of music-making." The details of exactly how this differs in practice from conventional standards of excellence are less clear, but if I understand it correctly, the conceptual difference seems to be that the work in performance is viewed primarily in emotional rather than musical terms, and this (amongst other benefits) confers upon the interpreter the right, if not the duty, to alter the musical scoring to suit the perceived emotional programme. Listeners too have to

approach the performance in the same spirit, and suspend critical judgement, if they are not to find themselves excluded from participation in the emotional adventure. Experience and opinion based on previous or comparative listening are worthless.

Had I read all this first, I might never have played the CDs at all – but fortunately I hadn't, so was free to enjoy, without prejudice, what is a top-flight performance by any standard. There have been times recently when, after yet another bloodless and anodyne rendition of the 5th, I have started to wonder if I was losing my savour for this work. If nothing else, Marthé has emphatically put that doubt to rest. What a glorious achievement this symphony is, in the right hands. I have no idea what the "correct" emotional view of it might be – if such an idea means anything – nor do I think it matters: this is a performance which, despite what Marthé may assert to the contrary, needs no particular philosophical or emotional programme or viewpoint as justification. Whatever Marthé may believe he is doing, I think he is using his formidable musical talent to bring this difficult symphony to life and making it sing, in a way which few contemporaries have the skills to approach. I don't imagine that, as a self-professed radical, he'd appreciate being told that his conducting builds upon old-fashioned virtues – but that's how it sounds to me. Less a departure from established practice than a return to its fundamentals, valuing music as experience rather than product: time and again I found myself reminded of Maticic and even Knappertsbusch – though there is none of the latter's tendency to cartoon obviousness. For – much as Marthé might also dislike having these epithets applied to him – this is also a very measured, balanced, and subtle interpretation.

The timings are misleading: this is not a particularly slow performance. True, Marthé's adagios are certainly adagio, but then his allegros are definitely allegro. What he does is allow the music the space in which to expand to its proper size - which sometimes means allowing it to stretch and breathe – but there is no point at which the performance drags, no sense of stringing it out beyond its natural span in order to serve some ulterior motive. Each section gets the time it needs to unfold properly, at its own pace, whatever that is. From the first moment to the last, Marthé builds a coherent and convincing narrative, which over time develops an epic quality, enthralling to listen to through all its twists and turns and returns, whilst retaining its human scale and immediacy: something to be lived and experienced, as well as listened to – like the *Ramayana* transmitted through sound.

So what about the edits? Marthé quotes approvingly Mahler's dictum about the published score being only the starting-point, from which you might expect his own emendations to be aimed at producing the same sort of stripped-down hot-rod – all gleaming chrome and barking exhausts – that Mahler made of Bruckner's 4th. Not at all. In the main, Marthé's edits seem to me entirely unobjectionable, and have the effect of filling out what is already there. Like the recent *Opus Kura* remaster of Furtwängler's 1942 performance, which from somewhere has managed to dig out astonishing levels of extra detail, particularly in the lower octaves: it's what we are used to, only more so. There might be a couple of places where personally I would have rolled off the extra tympani a bar or two earlier, but really the issue is insignificant. Overall the effect is benign and constructive.

There are just two places where I believe Marthé's ear fails him – and in the grand scheme of things, neither is that serious, though they are certainly noticeable. The first and most incongruous occurs in the Adagio, which Marthé has apparently decided should follow an emotional narrative consisting of a buildup/release/recovery sequence. In order to implement this scheme, he has to manufacture an artificial climax about 1/3rd of the way through, and has chosen to splice the questionable "cymbal-crash" climax from the Adagio of the 7th onto one of the minor peaks of the development. I don't believe that this works on any level. Even when you know that it's coming, it still seems to arrive out of nowhere and vanish into nothing. Marthé appears to believe that he is filling a

gap in the movement as Bruckner intended it to be. I think he is wrong about this. The 5th symphony inhabits an entirely different landscape from the 7th: the slow movement is an exercise in sustained intensity – great rolling waves heaving and swelling, but *never breaking*. There is no climax missing from the movement as Bruckner wrote it – and the one which Marthé transplants from the 7th comes from a completely different narrative – and it stands out here like the anomaly that it is.

At least there is a genuine climax in the Coda of the Finale, on two of whose peaks Marthé plants a flag consisting of the cymbal crash and jingling triangle which the Schalk Edition uses so extensively to ginger up the remains of its butchered Finale. And there is a precedent in Maticic's practice of adding exactly the same flourishes to every single high point within the Coda as Bruckner wrote it. Restricting himself to just the two makes Marthé's additions less of a distraction, but they're still superfluous to what is going on at the time. When done right – and Marthé, emphatically, does it right – the energy which has accumulated throughout the symphony has by this point magnified the ebb and flow of the opening movement into a towering tidal wave which finally comes ashore in this Coda. And like a real-life *tsunami*, it doesn't need a bell ringing to announce its arrival. All the necessary force is already present in the great crashing chords, particularly in brass and strings.

But leaving those minor points aside, this is a remarkable performance that stands comparison with the best. In preparation for this review, I listened again to many other recordings across the whole range, from Thielemann to Botstein – including three by Marthé's teacher Celibidache and two by that other obvious role-model, Herbert von Karajan. In my opinion Marthé's performance is the equal of any of these, and superior to most. I have no hesitation in recommending it.

The symphony is preceded on the disk, as it was in concert, by 22 minutes of extemporisation at the keyboard of the Bruckner organ by the "controversial" Austrian artist Hermann Nitsch. This takes the form of a single, extended, slow modulation between single tones, chords and tone clusters, enriched by the intermodulation created as the sound is reflected in the resonant acoustic. In concept this is not a bad idea – introducing the symphony through a kind of dialectical synthesis. But for this to work, all parts of the music have to be up to the job. I have heard the 9th symphony prefaced by Ligeti's *Lontano* – and another given a choral completion with Schnittke's 2nd. The Nitsch improvisation, by contrast, seems to amount to little more than an aimless meander across the organ manuals and stop-panels, lacking any sense of structure or progression, and what musical invention there is begins to wear thin long before the end. It is not a worthy accompaniment to the symphony that follows. Try substituting it with a work in a similar genre which does have substantial musical content and a strong sense of purpose, such as Ligeti's *Volumina*, and the result is very different. Ending as it does on a long, fading, single tone, *Volumina* leads into the start of the 5th in such an unforced manner that it is tempting almost to imagine the effect might have been intended. I repeated this experiment with a number of other modern organ works, ranging from Schoenberg and Krenek to Terry Riley and the *Soft Machine*, and in their very different ways they all complemented Marthé's 5th to an extent which Nitsch does not even begin to approach. Even the notorious *Poème Symphonique* for 100 metronomes – an exercise in total randomness – comes across as having more musical content, and more connection to the 5th symphony, than the rather limp effort which opens this CD.

So programme your CD player to start at Track 2 – or as I did, transfer the whole symphony to an MP3 player and add an introduction of your own choosing. And while you're at it, best throw away the booklet before you're tempted to read it. But be in no doubt: this is one of the most significant and important new Bruckner releases of recent times, which no serious Brucknerian should be without.

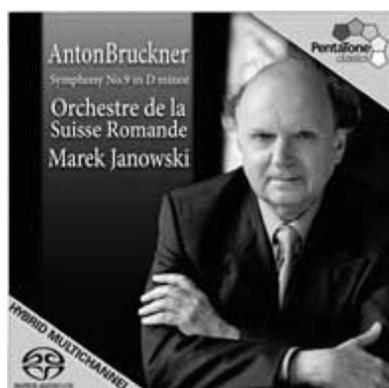
The Pink Cat

Bruckner - Symphony No 9

Orchestre de la Suisse Romande / Marek Janowski

PentaTone Classics PTC5168 030

Timings 24:57 10:53 25:51



This recording made in the Victoria Hall, Geneva in May 2007 is the first in a projected cycle of the symphonies from this historic orchestra, with Marek Janowski, who has been music director since 2005. The orchestra, not usually associated with Bruckner, was founded in 1918 by Ernest Ansermet who remained principal conductor until 1967, a span of almost 50 years. Successors included Paul Kletzki and Wolfgang Sawallisch. In addition other posts for Janowski have included Music Director of the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte Carlo and the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra.

This new series has at the very least two exciting advantages. One is the fine recording acoustic which is evident in the sound quality here - it is to be hoped that the others will be made in this venue - and the other is the SACD format. (PentaTone is issuing all its recordings in SACD.) With the

numerous Bruckner recordings available there are so far few with SACD.

Bruckner's symphonies should benefit from the additional clarity and depth which SACD brings - whether or not one is listening with surround sound - as is evident here. This adds to this reading of the Ninth which is, one might suggest, different - and certainly fresh. It's because of this that it is possible to be cautiously excited about the series. Those who might not agree will seek for high drama and some stark - and dark - revelation of Bruckner's mental trials, of the terrors piled up with such a spiritual journey in the new sound-world created in this work. But any raw edge in this performance ironically stems more from some lack of richness or depth in the strings, (more so in the first movement), rather than apparent interpretative intention. But the view of each movement is a long one, as though from a greater, unifying distance and so presents an experienced and confident perspective. There is often a gentle and assured flow, beautifully portrayed in the structure of the wide paragraphs. But the novelty - in the best sense of the word - of this reading is the clarity of the upper parts, indeed their special highlighting, a feature however which some listeners may feel compromises structural integrity. But this special delineating might well be the most interesting aspect of the reading. It serves to offer a way to embrace the main thematic moments with elements, although meant to be heard, that in many recordings one may not even be aware of. There are numerous examples but significant ones include, in the first movement, the brittle trumpet answering the horn calls from bar 11 (0' 41"); the full clarification of the second violin theme at bar 120 (5' 20"); in the *Adagio* the characterful viola answers from bar 29 (3' 09"); the firm and clear *pizzicatos* at bars 69-74 (7' 29"); the second violin demisemiquavers at bar 181 (19' 00"), emphasized in a way Celibidache might have done (and did do in the coda of the 4th Symphony - Munich), which lead up to the stark climactic discord; the seraphic string passage at bar 155 (16' 15") given a serene and more gentle beauty than in some other recordings. In the Scherzo the Trio's second half finds the fluttering flutes from bar 120 (5' 10") almost producing a French kind of sound here! These flutes throughout are shimmering in light, not darkness - and are purposefully made distinct here.

Often there is a feeling of deliberate restraint with the brass, though always clearly articulated: some may find this somewhat uncharacteristic for this work, but the louder sections are thereby prevented from being over-emphatic. The repose of the final bars of the *Adagio* is of great charm and very beautifully handled.

This lucid, well-balanced and often affectionate performance is full of clarity. On one or two occasions tempo markings are not observed, but these are often problematic in this score and are not in this case serious considerations. Whilst I would not set this recording alongside some of the great or historic performances of this symphony, it does work well with repeated hearings, and the obvious Brucknerian understanding which Janowski displays make it a very welcome addition to the catalogue.

Raymond Cox

In this careful and fastidious recording, Janowski appears to take very much a "bottom-up" approach to the symphony: shaping and polishing each phrase, and spotlighting individual details, amongst which there are many features to admire and enjoy. What seems lacking though is a consistency of vision or shape to the symphony as a whole - and without it, what you get is a series of distinct sections threaded together like so many beads on a string: a musical charm-bracelet, albeit with many points of interest - but nothing that one has not heard elsewhere, in the context of more substantial and coherent interpretations. There is nothing at all *wrong* with this performance, and it is played very well, but nonetheless it leaves the impression of someone skating punctiliously across the surface, where others manage to connect with the deeper forces at work in this symphony whilst being no less meticulous at a superficial level - Blomstedt and Abbado being just two examples that come to mind (and easier to recommend.)

The Pink Cat

Erwin Horn – transcriptions of music by Hans Rott, Otto Kitzler, Gustav Mahler and Anton Bruckner, played on Bruckner-Orgel St. Florian

Motette CD13551



Erwin Horn, the distinguished German scholar and organist, is well known to Brucknerians as editor of the 'Works for Organ' volume in the Anton Bruckner Gesamtausgabe, writer of several articles on Bruckner as organist and composer for the organ and, not least, as a superb organ virtuoso himself. In this recent disc, he gives commanding performances of his own transcriptions of music by Hans Rott, Otto Kitzler, Gustav Mahler and Anton Bruckner.

Hans Rott (1858-1884) was one of Bruckner's organ students at the Vienna Conservatory in the late 1870s. He was a gifted performer and composer who died at a tragically early age. Horn, who has provided some illuminating notes on his transcriptions in the CD booklet, surmises that some of the themes of Rott's Symphony in E were the result of his improvising on the organ at the Piarist Church of 'Maria Treu' in Vienna

where he was organist from February 1876 until October 1878. Those who have heard the orchestral version of the symphony will be aware that, beyond the obvious influence of Bruckner in places, there is ample proof of Rott's inventiveness and originality – and Horn captures these qualities very faithfully in his transcription of the first (*Alla breve*) and second (*Adagio*) movements of the work.

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) was a close friend of Rott's but his intention to perform the Symphony in E never came to fruition. As a young friend and supporter of Bruckner, however, he had more success, performing some of his symphonies and sacred choral works in Germany during the composer's lifetime and in Vienna after his death. In his transcription of the sixth and final movement of Mahler's Third Symphony, originally given the title 'Was mir die Liebe erzählt' ('What love tells me') Horn deliberately evokes an atmosphere of solemn majesty by omitting bars 53-91 and 124-251 of this extended 328-bar slow movement.

In his final concert as director of the Brno Music Society in November 1905, Otto Kitzler (1834-1915) conducted one of his own compositions, an orchestral tribute to Bruckner entitled 'Trauermusik – Dem Andenken Anton Bruckners' ('Funeral Music – In Memory of Anton Bruckner'). Kitzler was Bruckner's teacher in form and orchestration in Linz at the beginning of the 1860s and, after he left Linz in 1863 to take up a new appointment in Brno, maintained contact with his erstwhile pupil, performing his Second and Fourth Symphonies in the 1890s and following his career with great interest. Horn's imaginative choices of registration in his transcription underline Kitzler's love of Wagner's music and his affinity with the latter's harmonic style (there are some unmistakable echoes of 'Tristan' and 'Parsifal' in this work).

The 'Andante' movement of Bruckner's Second Symphony is a particularly apt choice for organ transcription as the composer's own decision to quote from the 'Benedictus' of his F minor Mass twice in this movement is given further resonance when heard on the organ, particularly the magnificent St Florian 'Bruckner organ' with its four manuals and 103 stops. Horn, with his magisterial command of this instrument, provides an impressive range of timbral colour.

The final track on the disc is entitled 'Kaiserliche Festmusik' ('Imperial Festival Music'), Horn's own description of his arrangement of a number of Bruckner's sketches that are housed in the Music Collection of the Austrian National Library in Vienna. In 1890 Bruckner was asked by the Emperor's daughter, the Archduchess Marie Valerie, to provide music for the introit and outgoing procession at her wedding. He had to submit his choice of music beforehand, together with explanatory verbal directions, for imperial approval; but his original idea of using themes from the Finale of his First Symphony, which he was revising at the time, and combining them with the Emperor's hymn (composed by Haydn) and Handel's 'Hallelujah' chorus was not sanctioned and was finally narrowed down to the two latter pieces. Horn has skilfully adopted Bruckner's original plan, including a final fugato with stretto entries of the symphony's main Finale theme to provide a glorious peroration.

My grateful thanks to John Wright for making me aware of this recent addition to the Bruckner discography. Crawford Howie

The Bruckner Journal also received a review of this disc from Franz Zamazal:

The great organ in the abbey church of St Florian is indissolubly linked with the life and work of Bruckner. Hence hardly another organ is as well suited to re-creating the musical world of the master from Ansfelden and the composers around him, in all its splendour and richness. And this is particularly the case when the music in question has been mastered by an expert Bruckner disciple like Erwin Horn of Würzburg, fully realising the technical possibilities, and also making his own organ arrangements of substantial symphonic works. Although uncommon nowadays, these are "original digital" recordings, and they unfold in a smooth, uninterrupted flow.

The choice of a programmatic title: "St Florian – Bruckner Organ", with the addition of *Was mir die Liebe erzählt* [What love tells me], hints at a genuinely personal motive and a special commitment on the organist's part. Overall, impressive interpretations are the result.

The Andante from Bruckner's Second Symphony is like a humble prayer and derives its vitality from the sensitive registration. – Otto Kitzler (1834-1915), Bruckner's Linz teacher and friend, dedicated to him a funeral piece for full orchestra entitled *Dem Andenken Anton Bruckners* [In Memoriam Anton Bruckner] (1905). Its basically sacred character exerts a poignant effect.

Bruckner's short-lived organ student Hans Rott (1858-84) left posterity a Symphony in E major (first performed in 1989!) which is now in wide circulation; it is being played at the launch of this year's Linz Bruckner Festival. In his transcription of the first two movements (*Alla breve*, *Adagio*), Erwin Horn was attempting to illustrate their organ-friendly character, and he was conspicuously successful in this.

Well-chosen extracts from the Third Symphony of Bruckner's young friend Gustav Mahler result in a solemn organ piece of flowing lyricism and great climaxes. – And Horn has used Bruckner's sketches and verbal directions for a performance at the wedding in Bad Ischl (1890) of the Archduchess Marie Valerie to create a ceremonial organ work justly called *Kaiserliche Festmusik* [Imperial Celebratory Music].

The musical texts of Erwin Horn's organ transcriptions of works by Rott, Bruckner, Kitzler and Mahler have been published by Dr J. Butz Musikverlag, Postfach 3008, D-53739 Sankt Augustin.

(transl. Peter Palmer)



Bruckner - Symphony No. 9

Europa Philharmonia Members Virtual Orchestra /
Maximianno Cobra

Hodie CD (Tempus Collection) *Timings: 47:21, 18:35, 39:08*

Here's an odd one: a half-speed Bruckner 9th assembled in the studio by multi-tracking a mixture of live instruments and pre-recorded samples. Apparently it illustrates something called "The Tempus Theory". I'm happy to say that I have no idea what that is – and since the 2-CD set is presented in a clamshell case with no booklet, that's how it will stay. I'm told that there's a theoretical explanation on a website somewhere,

but, fearing that my blood pressure wouldn't stand yet another misuse of the word *Zen* to mean *does everything as if in a trance*, I have not sought it out.¹ As a general rule I tend to be sceptical of these attempts to re-interpret Bruckner's music. If it works the way he wrote it – and it does - then why mess with it? The various organ transcriptions of Bruckner symphonies seem to me to succeed only in reducing some of the finest orchestral writing to the level of circus music.

This one, however, is different, and might just have something to it.

First, the technology. It enables Cobra to assemble a quasi-symphonic recording without the need to maintain an entire orchestra at vast expense for the purpose of his own private experimentation. In years to come, the products of this sort of technology will be indistinguishable from the real thing. At present, sampled instruments – strings, particularly – are always readily identifiable as such, not least because the attack/decay envelope of the electronic instrument on which they're played back tends not to match that of the original instruments – but in itself this is by no means offensive, and for those of us who remember 1970s synth-rock, at times it gives the whole thing a comfortably "retro" feel (think: *King Crimson play Anton Bruckner*.)

And unlike the organ transcriptions, which have to reduce and simplify in order to make the music playable by two human hands (and feet) at the controls of an instrument of limited expressive range, the technology employed by Cobra enables him to preserve every detail of the original score and, in his fashion, present it faithfully. It also enables him to sustain tones steadily across intervals more extended than any real-life orchestra could manage without wobble or pause, and is thus the only way that these very slow speeds could be maintained without a sense of the whole thing dragging. It seems to me to compare well with, for example, Celibidache's Munich recording on EMI, despite being even slower by a substantial margin. Partly this is because electronic instruments don't give rise to the same sense of stretch, and partly because when it's *this* glacial, the music seems actually to mutate into something else. If you've ever heard one of Pogorelich's ultra-dead-slow Chopin sonatas, you'll already be familiar with the way that melody can dissolve into a kind of meditation, with the energy seeming to be concentrated in the spaces *between* the notes. It's like that.

The first movement seems to me the most successful, with the sheer variety of the invention displayed in interesting shades of light and dark and managing still to be exciting even at super-slow speeds. The *Scherzo* also is fine. The *Adagio* however does develop a certain relentless quality, not helped by the sharpness of attack at loud moments, which over time can become quite wearing and oppressive – and, if listening through headphones, somewhat claustrophobic.

Nonetheless I found myself enjoying this recording a lot more than I expected. There wouldn't be many occasions when I'd book for a concert performance of the 9th or slap a CD in the player, and want this to be what I heard. But there is a time and place for everything – which for this one I initially thought might be limited to an afternoon spent in a flotation tank – but in fact I have been drawn to listen to it a number of times in different situations – most memorably when, lost in the mists above the Attersee, the sense of having strayed across the frontiers of normal space and time was eerily palpable, to which Cobra provided an appropriate though not altogether comfortable aural backdrop. It definitely has *something*. Whether it reveals any more of Bruckner's 9th than you'd get from a good conventional recording, I rather doubt – and that isn't really the right comparison to be making. This recording is out on its own – a kind of *trip-hop*² version of Bruckner's 9th (think: *Anton Bruckner meets Portishead*) – and in those terms, it does actually seem to work. Only you can know if that's likely to appeal to you – and if it doesn't, then you probably won't miss anything by not hearing it – but if your tastes do extend that far then you could do worse than give it a try.

The Pink Cat

1. The web-site can be found via <http://hodie-world.com> Ed.

2. Trip hop, according to Wikipedia, is a music genre also known as the Bristol sound or Bristol acid rap. The trip hop description was applied to the musical trend in the mid-1990s of down-tempo electronic music that grew out of England's hip hop and house scenes. Ed.



CD ISSUES MARCH - JUNE 2008

compiled by Howard Jones and John Wright

In the Wand/Munich PO 8 CD set only the #6 and 9 are new issues. As they have individual numbers it must be assumed they were prepared for separate release and then Profil decided to include them in this boxed set instead. The Asahina DVD's are of concerts previously released on CD. The Yamagata SO #4 is conducted by Norichika Iimori, a different conductor to the one listed in the March 2005 Journal who was Tajjori Iimori. Of particular interest here is the Bruckner Organ at St Florian disc which is available from Europadisc, UK. Telarc, under their mid-price Classic label, have reissued the Lopez-Cobos/Cincinnati #6 from 1991. It carries the previous CD number of 80264.

SYMPHONIES

* = new issue

- No. 3 1873v** *Norrington/RSO Stuttgart (Stuttgart 5-07) HÄNSSLER HAN093217 (61:02)
- No. 4** *Iimori/Yamagata SO (Yamagata 1-07) EXTON OVCX-00037 (66:52) SACD
- Nos 4,5,6,8,9** Wand/Munich PO (Munich 9-01,11/12-95,6-99,9-00,4-98) PROFIL PH06013 8 CD set includes Schubert #8 & 9, Brahms #1 and Beethoven #1 (72:47,75:41,57:37,89:41,64:11)
- Nos 4-9** Furtwängler/VPO/BPO (Stuttgart,Berlin,Cairo,Vienna 10-51,10-42,11-43,4-51,10-44,10-44) MUSIC & ARTS CD-1209 (65:55,68:50,36:28,62:57,79:11,58:49)
- No. 5** *van Zweden/Netherlands RPO (Hilversum 6-07) EXTON OVCL00305 (78:54) SACD
*Marthé/European PO (St Florian 8-07) PREISER PR90746 (87:30), plus 'Homage to Anton Bruckner' - Hermann Nitsch on the St Florian Organ (22:41)
- Nos 5 & 7** Welser-Möst/LPO (Vienna/London 5/6-93,8-91) EMI 5209432 (70:25,60:49)
- No. 7** *Tremblay/Orch de la Francophonie Canadienne(Laval 8-06) ANALEKTA 29893 (64:10)
- No. 8** *Tennstedt /LPO (London 10-81) LPO 0032 (73:51)
Klemperer/Cologne RSO (Cologne 6-57) MEDICI MASTERS MM021-2 (72:05)
- No. 9** Keilberth/Bamberg SO (Bamberg 1962 - wrongly dated 1956 in CD insert)
ANDROMEDA ANDRCD9028 (56:24) 3 CD set "Rare Recordings 1943-1957"

ORGAN

Bruckner/Rott/Kitzler/Mahler

*Erwin Horn on the Bruckner Organ at St Florian (10-07) MOTETTE CD13551 (72:38)

DVD

- No. 2** *Solti/Stuttgart RSO (Stuttgart 1991) DIGITAL CLASSICS DVD134 WG-0004 (52:15)
- No. 4** *Asahina/NHK SO (Tokyo 11-00) NHK NSDS-11008 (65:15)
- No. 8** *Asahina/NHK SO (Tokyo 3-97) NHK NSDS 11006 (84:44)
- Nos. 8 & 9** Karajan/VPO/BPO (Vienna 11-88,Berlin 11-85) SONY 88697202399 (83:46,58:16)
Karajan/VPO (St Florian 6-79,Vienna 5-78) DG 004400734395 (83:43,58:10)
plus Te Deum with Vienna Singverein (26:06)
- No. 9** *Asahina/NHK SO (Tokyo 5-00) NHK NSDS-11007 (64:40)

Stanislaw Skrowaczewski in Scotland - January 2008

Interview by Alan Munro



photo: Toshiyuki Urano

During his recent visit to Scotland to conduct the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra Maestro Skrowaczewski kindly agreed to give an interview to The Bruckner Journal. We met at the City Halls in Glasgow following a three hour afternoon rehearsal. Skrowaczewski is a remarkably fit man, courteous and attentive. He insisted we take the stairs rather than the lift to his dressing room! We spoke for close on an hour and although I had many more questions to ask I felt that after two days rehearsal and a performance the next day I should not detain him too long.

AM. *In an earlier interview you mentioned two conductors who, you felt, brought something special to Bruckner. George Szell and Sergiu Celibidache. Tell us about Szell.*

SS. Szell was more influential for me because I knew him very well personally. I heard fewer of Celibidache's concerts and rehearsals. Szell brought me to America when he was musical adviser to the NYPO. He often came to my concerts and rehearsals and offered some interesting remarks on my conducting and interpretations. I saw his rehearsals also. He gave me a great deal of help and advice. We met in Salzburg on my debut there and afterwards gave me advice and spoke to members of the VPO to find out what they thought. He was a senior conductor who cared about improving the orchestra and making perfect balances, ensemble and intonations. This was very important to me and something I have tried to remember throughout my life. When you talk about recordings by fine Bruckner conductors like Karajan and Jochum, Kempe and Furtwängler on record you cannot tell how much the conductor cares about balance but on CD you now have perfect recording equipment. Take the Eighth and Ninth symphonies. You have this incredible polyphony between sections, horns and strings for example. In Karajan, for instance, you do not get the score aurally. With Szell and Celi you get a perfect image of the score aurally. You saw the score and you heard the score. It is very simple you know! For example there are big tuttis. Take the Ninth symphony. In the 1st movement for 12 bars there is three fortissimo in timpani, now if you read three fortissimo in 12 bars you cannot hear anything but timpani and some noise, some brass. Now in this kind of example Bruckner wrote a lot of interesting polyphony. You do not hear it because of timpani. Maybe Karajan and the others did not hear it or did not care. Szell did. He made X-rays of the orchestra. Some say he was pedantic, too scholarly. How he was, he was - whether you like his interpretation or not. This is also very important to me. In Warsaw and Cologne and throughout the States they call me Mr Pianissimo and Mr Balance. This care about nuance came from Szell.

AM. *This is the first time you have worked with the BBCSSO. Can you tell us how you prepare for a concert with an unfamiliar orchestra?*

SS. A programme such as this is well known to a professional orchestra. Apparently it is some time since they played Bruckner 4 and so they chose it. They know the essence of the music of course so I let them play, feel how the orchestra react to my gesture and how well they know the score. Through how they play and my gestures we quickly established good contact with each other. All British orchestras are clever and have sense! They think very quickly and are accustomed to working quickly because there is so little rehearsal time. I had this in mind so did not linger. The symphony is 68 minutes long and time passes quickly so I did not linger and I was very pleased with the results. The orchestra has some very good soloists. You know the 1st movement is all horn and brass and the first horn here is excellent so when he played the solo it was ideal. I didn't have to say a word, I just congratulated him. Obviously he was sensitive to my approach, my gestures. When we played the 1st movement exposition this was a crucial moment and some ensemble needed better balance. There was no problem with the 2nd movement, some intonation had to be improved but that is normal. So yesterday was first rehearsal and we did the entire symphony; the first day three hours, and one more hour today. Today we worked on the

finale. The scherzo and finale are the most difficult technically for the brass. I was very pleased with the rehearsals. The total rehearsal time was ten hours. Five yesterday and five today but today I shortened it!

AM. Is the City Hall a good venue acoustically?

SS. For a conductor, for hearing, for clarity a dry hall is best. I think this is a very good hall. With an audience it will become drier. My favourite halls include Vienna and Amsterdam obviously. Boston is very good. Minneapolis is wonderful. The acoustician is boss! The architect must follow the acoustician.

AM. What challenges does conducting Bruckner bring?

SS. Well, it is about balance, it is about the hall. Bruckner knew perfectly well what he was doing. When I am conducting the strings are beside me and they sound adequate; when I go into the hall the strings are lost. So you have to be very careful about this. In order to enjoy the full glory of Bruckner with clarity of texture the conductor has to balance, to measure the score. All glory means loss of clarity. The line is also crucial especially during slower passages so the music does not sound choppy, and there must be continuity. To prevent any lack of continuity you have to know the music up and down, inside and out. You also must like the music! This brings it alive. If the performance does not have line, does not flow it is not the fault of the composer, it is the fault of the conductor. The conductor has to make sense of the change of tempos. He must make them logical. That is the most difficult challenge for the conductor and that is why so many conductors do not do very much Bruckner.

AM. Do you conduct any of the realisations of the final movement of the Ninth?

SS. No. I was asked to do it when we recorded the cycle but I decided not to. Many fine musicians have done good work but it is not Bruckner. Also the sketches he left were not the greatest musical ideas Bruckner had, but the three earlier movements do contain some of Bruckner's greatest ideas, especially the Adagio. So after the great Adagio you begin to conduct something that is not at this great musical height? Why? It is not by him! The Mahler 10th is different because he left much more and somehow it was easier. But not with the Bruckner Ninth.

Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, born October 1923

Born in Lwow, Poland, Skrowaczewski began piano and violin studies at the age of four, composed his first symphonic work at seven, gave his first public piano recital at 11 and two years later played and conducted Beethoven's 3rd Piano Concerto. A hand injury during the war terminated his keyboard career, after which he concentrated on composing and conducting. In 1946 he became conductor of the Wroclaw (Breslau) Philharmonic, and he later served as Music Director of the Katowice Philharmonic (1949-54), Krakow Philharmonic (1954-56) and Warsaw National Orchestra (1956-59).

Skrowaczewski spent the immediate post-war years in Paris, studying with Nadia Boulanger and co-founding the avant-garde group "*Zodiaque*". After winning the 1956 International Competition for Conductors in Rome he was invited by George Szell to make his American debut conducting the Cleveland Orchestra in 1958. This led to engagements with the New York Philharmonic, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati Symphonies and, in 1960, to his appointment as Music Director of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra (now the Minnesota Orchestra). Skrowaczewski has regularly conducted the major orchestras of the world as well as the Vienna State Opera and the Metropolitan Opera. He has made international tours with the Concertgebouw, French National, Warsaw and Hamburg orchestras, and twice toured the Philadelphia Orchestra to South America and the Cleveland Orchestra to Australia.

From 1984-91, following 19 years as Music Director of the Minneapolis Symphony, he was appointed Principal Conductor of the Hallé Orchestra. With the Hallé he gave concerts throughout England, led tours to the United States, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Scandinavia, Spain and Poland and recorded for RCA, Chandos and Pickwick/Carlton.

Beginning with his *Overture 1947*, which won the Szymanowski Competition in Poland, many of Skrowaczewski's works have received major international awards. Among his most recent compositions are his *Symphony*, premiered in 2003 by the Minnesota Orchestra, the *Concerto for Orchestra*, short listed for a Pulitzer Prize in 1999 and his *Violin Concerto*, commissioned and premiered by the Philadelphia Orchestra. Earlier works performed by major European and American orchestras are the *Concerto for Clarinet*, *Concerto for English Horn* and "*Ricerari Notturmi*", recipient of a Kennedy Center Friedheim Award in 1976.

Skrowaczewski's interpretations of the Bruckner symphonies have earned him the Gold Medal of the Mahler-Bruckner Society, whilst his programming of contemporary music at the Minnesota Orchestra has been acknowledged by five ASCAP awards. An extensive discography includes recordings for RCA, Philips, CBS, Denon, EMI/Angel, Mercury, Vox, Erato, Muza, Arte Nova and Oehms Classics. Many celebrated earlier recordings have been re-released on CD and his digital recordings of Shostakovich, Brahms and particularly Bruckner have received highest praise. Skrowaczewski's recent recordings of Bruckner's eleven symphonies and Beethoven's nine symphonies with the Saarländischer Rundfunk Orchestra for Arte Nova have received enormous critical acclaim, with the Bruckner receiving the Cannes 2002 Award for Best Orchestral Recording of 18th/19th Century Orchestral Work and last year the Halle Orchestra released Skrowaczewski's recordings of Shostakovich's First and Sixth Symphonies on their own label.

Guest engagements now take Skrowaczewski across North and South America, to Europe, Scandinavia and Japan. Skrowaczewski is currently the Conductor Laureate of the Minnesota Orchestra, Principal Guest Conductor of the Saarländischer Rundfunk Orchestra and Principal Conductor of the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra in Tokyo.

Biography and photo from Intermusica web-site, www.intermusica.co.uk

Bruckner Symphony No. 9...fourth movement.

Another musician's opinion, another point of view

If, by some seemingly impossible twist of fortune, you were to come across an incomplete painting by Turner ... Degas ... Klimt... or any other artist you may choose to name, would you "complete it" if you had the expertise? Perhaps - but what then would that painting be? A 'Turner' (or whatever), completed for viewing by A. N. Other? More importantly, what aesthetic value would it have? A true lover of art wants to see a fully authentic painting. Why? Because every artist ... painter, sculptor, engraver, caricaturist... has that 'Something' which stems from the soul within, creates and sets apart the individual; it cannot be replicated.

Whether we care to admit it or not, the work of any artist, in the widest interpretation of that word, is a personal statement of their life, experiences, feelings - indeed of the very soul of the artist. That is why a particular medium of expression is chosen.

So it is with musical composition, and therefore it follows, so it is with regard to Bruckner and his 'ninth'. That one must have the academic expertise in counterpoint, harmony, form, composition, full knowledge of Bruckner's life and background and have access to his original manuscript workings, in order to 'complete' the symphony Bruckner so desperately wished to finish himself, cannot be disputed. That someone has the expertise to put all these things together and create a movement as close as possible to his wishes is to be respected - but only Anton Bruckner lived HIS life, and only HIS soul experienced the anguish, the hopes, successes and failures, the joys and the disappointments, and NO-ONE else can possibly experience them as he did. It must automatically follow that no-one can produce a TRULY Bruckner finale to this already magnificent work, so full of spiritual torture, despair, hope, gentle reminiscences of the good things in his life, and awe at the thought of coming face to face with his God.

Unfortunately, in the technological 21st century, it seems that emotion in music is to be avoided in favour of scholarship. I do not try and read non-existent 'programmes' into symphonies - not even the one in question - but there can be no denying the first three movements are the very personal statement of a man looking back on life and now nearing his end.

The much acclaimed 4th movement has been academically achieved, but how does this fit in with our criticisms of the Schalks, and others who have imposed their opinions, persuading Bruckner to 'cut', 'alter', 'rewrite', or persuading audiences that their 'version' is better, and with the disputes and outcries over the famous/infamous cymbal clash in the 7th Symphony? No matter how much of the fourth movement Bruckner left behind we can never know exactly how he would have USED his material, or what the final outcome would have been. We can never know what went on, or would have gone on in his mind had he lived. Bruckner's desperate wish to complete the work was perhaps even an inverted admission of failure, knowing that he COULD NOT, because he felt he needed to meet his God in order to write a finale of a magnificence beyond the ability of a mere mortal. Having listened carefully to this latest Performing Version, [SPCM - SC2007] I have to say that what Bruckner left us are the tired efforts of a man at his end. The three movement form of the 'ninth', far from being incomplete and 'not proper Bruckner', as has been maintained, is much more fitting on its own. It is not just a question of notes on paper, or 'coda or no coda', the quality of what he left for the Finale is simply not there; a four-movement 'ninth' is no fitting memorial to this great composer.

I have no argument with the idea that we should have some sort of opportunity to hear what Bruckner DID WRITE, but I do not consider there is a 'duty' to present it as a 'performing version' to be tacked on to the other movements. (The very title sends out the wrong signals.) Finally, I have to say I sincerely hope a 4-movement 'ninth' will not become a PERMANENT 'norm' with conductors, particularly after hearing a three-movement performance such as that given recently by the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, a sincere, sometimes almost brutal presentation which threw into stark black and white relief the tortures and torments of life, put into gentler 'colours' life's pleasanter moments, and in the third movement, gave us a devout view of the anguish, humility and final resignation of a soul released from it all. Any version of a 4th movement on this occasion would have been very much an anticlimax which would have brought the listener down to earth with a bump. Such a performance leaves nothing to be said musically. In the words of Robert Simpson (*The Essence of Bruckner* - 1992, p.223) - "we may be grateful that this last Adagio, though it is not his (Bruckner's) most perfect, is his most profound."

Florence Bishop

Editor's note: This paper was read at the Bruckner Journal Readers Conference "Mystery in the Music of Anton Bruckner" in Birmingham in April 2007.

'Music and Mysticism in the Weimar Republic: The Case of Anton Bruckner and Erich Schwebsch'

Dr Nicholas Attfield
St. Catherine's College, Oxford

I'll begin with my title. Anton Bruckner clearly needs no introduction to the readers of the *Bruckner Journal*; likewise, the Weimar Republic – that is, the German state in the years 1918-1933 – is surely familiar to most people. I can see that I'm going to have to work a little harder, though, with my title's two outstanding terms, namely mysticism and Erich Schwebsch. Let's get underway by travelling from the latter towards the former.

I have to confess straight away that, presumably like most readers, I don't know very much about Erich Schwebsch. He's not a character who crops up in *New Grove* or *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (MGG); while his name *is* occasionally seen in other large Germanic reference works, it's almost always in the middle of a long list of long forgotten names. Even in the esteemed pages of the *Bruckner Journal*, he seems to have had only one mention, in a paragraph from Raymond Cox's 2002 article 'Bruckner's Cosmic Musical Background in Relation to the Zodiac' – this title alone should give you a flavour of what is to come in this article.

What I can say for certain about Schwebsch is that he lived from 1889 to 1953, that he studied modern languages and Germanistik in Berlin, and that he was a life-long devotee of Bach, Wagner, and of course, Bruckner. He wrote a number of books on these subjects: *Goethe and Wagner*, for example, published in Bayreuth in 1919; and *Johann Sebastian Bach and the Art of Fugue*, published in Stuttgart in 1931. His principal Bruckner text, which first appeared in 1921, was entitled 'Anton Bruckner: Ein Beitrag zur Erkenntnis von Entwicklungen in der Musik' or 'Anton Bruckner: A Contribution to Awareness of Developments in Music'; he later added a considerable essay in the *Neue Musik-Zeitung* journal in honour of the centenary of Bruckner's birth, and a monograph on the Sixth Symphony.



Image from www.torben-maiwald.de

I'll return to the content of these texts shortly. But first I want to outline Schwebsch's general approach to Bruckner – and it's here that we step back into, or at least around the peripheries of, the realm of mysticism. For Schwebsch was one of the world's first, and perhaps still one of the world's only, self-proclaimed 'music anthroposophists'. Anthroposophy, otherwise known as 'spiritual science', was largely the brainchild of the prolific Austrian thinker Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). Prolific is really the word here: I doubt that, at least in the modern age, there have been many thinkers with influence in so many different directions at once. Steiner's formal training was in maths and philosophy (undertaken in Vienna), and so he began his career as something of a philosopher and literary scholar, working on editions of the texts of Goethe, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche. He later became, nonetheless, an educational reformer (he was the founder of Steiner schools, as we tend to call them – or Waldorf-Schule, as they're known in German); he was a social activist, he wrote plays, he painted pictures, he invented biodynamic agriculture, and the art form Eurythmy – which involves expressive movement in response to music and speech. His life's writings and lectures, unsurprisingly then, take up over 350 volumes.

Amidst all this activity, anthroposophy remained Steiner's most highly prized doctrine, the jewel in the crown of all his esoteric thought (and indeed, still is: the Anthroposophical Society that Steiner and others established in Germany in 1913 is still today very much a thriving concern). Its name's Greek roots literally referring to 'human wisdom', anthroposophy was described by Steiner as 'a path of knowledge, to guide the Spiritual in the

human being to the Spiritual in the universe'. 'It arises', he says, 'in man as a need of the heart, of the life of feeling; and it can be justified insofar as it can satisfy this inner need'. It is by no means, however, the same as conventional mysticism; Steiner found this latter too clouded in its approach to spiritual questions; rather, with anthroposophy, he aimed to apply the clarity of thought found in the natural sciences to inner life – hence the alternative name 'spiritual science'. Overall, he advocates spiritual enquiry driven by thought freed from the empirical senses; the kind of 'internal' thought, I suppose, that we might conventionally apply to a question of logic or geometry.

When, in the 1924 lecture 'Eurhythm as visible song', he asks the question 'was ist das Musikalische?', then, it's not entirely surprising to find that his answer is similarly non-empirical – 'Das Musikalische', he states, is that 'which *isn't* heard'; that which you 'don't hear' between the tones of a melody is the 'music in reality' or 'the spirit in the thing', whereas the tones themselves are simply the spirit's sensory expression.

Before we come to the application of Steiner's anthroposophical thinking in Schwebsch's writings, though, I just want to clarify part of my agenda here. I'm anxious not to see these modes of thought in their own esoteric vacuum, as revealing as that may (or may not) prove. Rather, I'm interested in reconnecting these kinds of esotericism with the political and cultural contexts from which they grew. And I should state right away, then, that, in Steiner's quest for a spiritual essence hiding behind the tones of a piece of music, I see a parallel with other searches for essence taking place in Germanic countries at this time. I also see a cataclysmic provocation for these searches in common: the First World War, an event more disastrous and humiliating for German-speaking countries than anything before it, brought in its wake an urgent need to identify and cling on to the so-called 'eternal values' of its culture, in the hope that they might soon be rejuvenated.

Now, of course, there are varying degrees in which such quests could be outspoken in their connection with contemporary politics; perhaps Steiner's writings on music reflect the mostly implicit end of the scale, by which I mean that their approach claims to transcend all earthly concerns. At the other end of the scale, however, I think we might place the writings from this period that asked 'was ist deutsche Musik?', that is, those writings that, within the pages of Germany's most conservative music periodicals, sought a specifically national and racial essence lying somewhere in or between the tones of great works of music. These, as is well known, directed an unprecedented amount of vitriol towards the self-consciously 'new' music of the period, finding there a foreign, and highly damaging, influence on Germany's musical life. 'New at any price' was the slogan of modern composers, the reactionaries claimed.

Yet what's particularly fascinating is that, whether we consider the period from the perspective of Steiner, his apostle Schwebsch, or the ultra-conservatives, one name appears again and again as a saving grace in the midst of all this cultural confusion: and that, of course, is Bruckner. Bruckner's symphonies, since their earliest reception in the late nineteenth century, had always been associated with 'absolute' or essential revelation; they had always offered, for many, a mystical glimpse of the Schopenhauerian world-in-itself and the promise of its transcendence. But in the era after the First World War, these claims took on a new eloquence and urgency: Steiner, for instance, speaks in a late lecture that he gave (in Torquay, of all places) of Bruckner's Ninth Symphony as necessitating a bold step into the purely musical ('in rein Musikalischen') that, in turn, conjures the essence of the world, 'das Wesenhafte', in tones.

And we also know of the rapid flourishing of a concerted *Bruckner-Bewegung* ('Bruckner Movement') throughout German society at this time, that, in keeping with the nostalgic goal of rejuvenating past values, sought to promote the 'true' Bruckner, a figure allegedly obscured by the vituperative excesses of his ignorant critics – a considerable part of this project, of course, was to produce and perform unadulterated editions of his symphonies. These activities reached their height at Bruckner's centenary in 1924 with a variety of events in celebration of his life and works: festivals in major cities and small towns alike, *Festschriften* and special periodical issues, and the dedication of societies in the composer's name. Moreover, with the official foundation of the *Internationale Bruckner-Gesellschaft* (IBG) in Vienna in February 1929, an organisation came into being that could coordinate these widespread activities. These years, as Carl Dahlhaus once put it, were indeed the highest height of Bruckner's fame.

Schwebsch's writings

I've used this introduction to establish a constellation of connected ideas: Rudolf Steiner and anthroposophy, quests for Germanic cultural essence in the interwar period, and stinging critiques of that

period's 'modern' culture and music. This constellation is now going to help us, I hope, to chart an intelligible course through the twists and turns of Schwebesch's labyrinthine writings on Bruckner.

Straight away, in the second line of the foreword to his 1921 book 'Anton Bruckner: A Contribution to Awareness of Developments in Music', we find one of our ideas. 'From thoughts arising from years of following recent music', says Schwebesch, 'the author was led to the anthroposophically oriented spiritual science of Rudolf Steiner, that brought with it a new, boundless revelation of all historical Becoming'.

Schwebesch seems to mean that Steiner's work has given him new belief in the progress of human history – a promising development, since, for Schwebesch at least, the first decades of the twentieth century had been utterly bleak in cultural, musical, and spiritual terms. He finds the modern artist to be descended from the decadent figures of Nietzsche, Strindberg, and Dostoyevsky, in whom 'the pathological became a quality of genius'; he says that the modern artist is driven by materialism, agnosticism, and arbitrariness. Like civilisation itself, his art is homeless, rootless, and above all, spiritless. In what sounds like a direct denunciation of expressionism, Schwebesch rails against modern music as that in which 'the sick human screams and grows ever darker'; as that in which the 'all-too-human is repeatedly called up for the listener'. He resorts to a striking Christian metaphor to claim that within modern music, the 'essence of mankind' is nothing less than 'crucified'.

As we might suspect from what we've already seen, the saving grace in this situation for Schwebesch is Bruckner. Though it's highly unlikely that he ever met the composer, Schwebesch clearly feels a profound and personal connection to him; let's not forget, after all, that Bruckner had been dead for less than thirty years at this point, and so was very much in fond communal living memory. Indeed, at the opening of his centenary salutation for the composer, Schwebesch even brings the apparent fact of Bruckner's death itself into question: 'Measured in spiritual terms', he says, 'a conception of life cannot come to an end ... the creative essence continues its spiritual existence, and human love is the bridge through which it participates in life even after earthly death'.

For Schwebesch, then, Bruckner and his music are very much a contemporary concern, and moreover something of a *Schwelle*, or threshold: on the one hand, they are the prize for which the human soul had been striving for the past two centuries; on the other, and even more significantly, they present a new attitude of that soul, a *neue Seelenhaltung*. This is music, according to Schwebesch that is 'not of *this* world', music that 'awakens the highest humanity in everyone ... Here reign powers of resurrection in a human essence that, at its very core, is built upon the essence of Christ'. Ultimately, this is music that uncovers the true meaning of the word religion: 'here is found re-ligio', Schwebesch writes, 're-connection, re-discovery, here the divine world of humankind is created anew. Here re-sounds for the first time, and in the highest aesthetic and ethical sense: pure music!'

Schwebesch makes this identification partly on the basis of his knowledge of Bruckner's own devout faith. 'Since childhood', claims Schwebesch, 'Bruckner's humble consciousness purified itself of all personal content so that an inspirational spiritual world could stream in'. Thus, unlike Beethoven, who 'forged his music from the sheer act of concentration,' Bruckner's themes came into existence and developed, through religious meditation.

Equally demonstrative of Bruckner's importance in human history is, for Schwebesch, his mature musical investment in the symphony. 'Born from spiritual sound', he says, 'symphonic music treads forth as witness of a spiritual world, as a master of feelings that it presents in their greatest purity and strength'. This is music that truly offers an 'image of the world' that stands contrary to the one we receive from our eyes: it unites the sensory with the extrasensory, the revealed with the hidden. It is nothing less, says Schwebesch, than the *tönende Weltidee*, that is, the idea of the world in tones; a catchphrase that at once blends Hanslick's famous 'tönend bewegte Formen' with Plato's and Schopenhauer's doctrine of the fundamental ideas underlying all empirical existence. At the same time, it fulfills the tenets of anthroposophy as defined by Steiner – the guiding of the Spiritual in the human being to the Spiritual in the universe.

Through Bruckner, then, the young generation of the 1920s would overcome the rubble of the War and would experience the 'resurrection of modern music', an event driven by the birth of a 'self in full inner contact with the spiritual world' and 'a life directed by a clear knowledge of God, and never again torn to pieces in the world of its nerves'. Employing rhetoric that became ever more common in the following decade, Schwebesch adds that Bruckner will thus become seen as the first *Klassiker* of a new spiritual human elite, of a new race of the soul borne of *deutsche Gemüt und Geblüt*: the German mind and bloodline.

A Musical Case Study: The Adagio of Bruckner's Sixth Symphony

Having reviewed Schwebsch's words about Bruckner, I'd now like to bring us down to earth a little – but only a little – by offering something more practical: namely, an account of his approach to a specific movement from Bruckner's oeuvre. What I want to know here is how the rich complex of ideas, doctrines, and motivations that define Schwebsch's writing inflect his view of Bruckner's Adagio; in other words, how do his anthroposophical beliefs and conservative cultural outlook guide his hand in interpreting this music? In turn, I'm interested to know if and how Schwebsch's interpretation might give us new ways to think about and engage with Bruckner's symphonies. And the movement that I've chosen for this purpose is the Adagio of the Sixth Symphony, as described in Schwebsch's book on the work.

If the first movement of the Sixth is, for Schwebsch, the symphony's *Kopfsatz* (literally, 'head-movement'), then the Adagio is its *Herzsatz*: the work's very heart. As such, he says, it sets us on a trajectory inwards; if the first movement showed us 'shimmering cosmic distances', then this one leads us into the 'flourishing fullness of maternal inner life'. Its home key of F major also makes it, according to Schwebsch's sparsely outlined theory of tonality, evocative of nature: F, he says, spreads a sense of the 'elementary life of slumbering nature', and hence Beethoven, Wagner, and Weber's use of it as a 'pastoral key'. (He independently verifies, incidentally, that on a trip to the American side of the Niagara Falls in Winter 1939, he himself heard nature sound in the key of F major).

Perhaps most meaningfully of all, though, this movement is the spiritual night in contrast to the opening movement's spiritual day: as Schwebsch himself points out, Novalis's 'Hymnen an die Nacht', a favourite document of romantic aesthetics, found night to be the best metaphor for the 'real, world lying outside the senses' and took sleep as representing the journey of the human soul into that world. Schwebsch can thus claim that, likewise, Bruckner's Adagio allows those 'nocturnal powers of the world' to sound that guide the human being into the 'deeper reality' of sleep and allow him (or her) to become spiritually regenerated.

The first theme, then, is the beginning of this nocturnal spiritual journey: Schwebsch treats its regular ascending and descending motion, best evoked by the lower strings, as the 'solemn breathing of a peaceful slumberer'. With the plaintive accents of the oboe melody that enters at bar 5, we are then borne down into a world of dreams, the equivalent, so it would seem, of the hidden life of the soul. And this sinking motion is fundamental, in Schwebsch's view, to the movement as a whole: in contrast to the ascending trajectory of many of Bruckner's other movements, we are here drawn downwards, he says, using another of his favourite metaphors, into the 'maternal womb' [*mütterlichen Schoss*].

The second theme, based in the dominant of the first movement's A major tonality, provides a brief stopping-place on this downwards journey: it allows the higher soundworld of this earlier music to mix, if only for a short time, with the dark sounds of the Adagio. With the third theme, finally, we seem to have arrived somewhere: the 'sinking current of movement' becomes, in Schwebsch's words, a 'serious and quiet funeral procession [*Trauerzug*]', marked by shadow-like pizzicato basses and toneless, dull timpani rhythms.

Nonetheless, as we recall from Schwebsch's preamble, this journey into the night was not so much about death as about regeneration and transfiguration, and so, in the second part of his reading, this is exactly what we find: the recapitulation of themes he hears not as dictated by formal convention but rather as necessary to the chronicling of the development of the soul. In particular, the reprise of the first theme is a passage of revelation: its new figures in accompaniment and richer inner polyphony bring a 'wonderful excitement' for Schwebsch – 'the plaintive tone', he says 'is forgotten, and from it comes a newly delivered and flourishing life'; this is the high point of the entire movement. Likewise, he hears the second theme's return as the sound of 'deepest, most spiritualized worship', a change in part brought about by its key of F major – the tonality of nature, of course, that unites this theme, in Schwebsch's words 'with the maternal fundament' [*mütterlichen Urgrund*].

Finally, the end of Schwebsch's description of this Adagio gives rise to a striking description that, for me, in its appeal to anthroposophical connection as to spiritual re-birth, neatly sums up his approach to the movement, to Bruckner's music, and even to his hopes for the future of German culture. 'All the movement's descending scales', he remarks, 'come together at the end like a sonorous ladder from heaven, from which we experience the descent of the divine, through the spiritual realm and into the earthly sphere ... there are few sounds like those of this spirit-blessed sleep-Adagio – it is the most tender artistic transfiguration of a spiritual conception, that now grows towards birth in the womb of the soul'.

Conclusions

So, to a few concluding remarks. I mentioned the possibility of finding something new here, and I'd like to begin by pursuing that end. Certainly, I don't think that Schwebsch's means of analysing Bruckner's Sixth Symphony offers us anything out of the ordinary: in spite of his commitment to the revelation of Brucknerian secrets through meditation, as he puts it, his approach boils down to a relatively commonplace (and even unacceptably broad-brush) labelling of thematic material and harmonic areas inside a sonata structure – as we might find in far more incisive shape in many writings of the period and since.

Perhaps it is in Schwebsch's rhetorical and hermeneutic approach to this symphony, then, that something more valuable is to be discovered – that is, the manner in which he interprets meaning in the Sixth is arguably the most compelling quality of his writing. Yet even here, it strikes me that we struggle to come across anything excitingly new for Bruckner criticism: as strange as an anthroposophical approach might appear at first glance, Schwebsch's conviction in Bruckner's music as disclosing the mysteries of inner life, the infinite cosmos, or a spiritual re-birth are not so different, in my opinion, to beliefs found in virtually any vintage of writings about Bruckner.

Nonetheless, I don't want to dismiss Schwebsch as old hat, or as a pale imitation of other better known Brucknerians. On the contrary: I want to suggest that, precisely because we are so comfortable and familiar with the conclusions at which he arrives, the rhetoric and hermeneutics adopted by Schwebsch and his mystical contemporaries must have become woven into the fabric of Bruckner discourse. I recall, as an example of this fabric's influence, reading about the Nazi *Dunkelkonzerte*, or 'darkness-concerts'. As you may know, these were events that took place in the Vienna *Konzerthaus* between 1939 and 1944, in which the Wiener Symphoniker would take to the stage and, under the direction of Hans Weisbach, would perform a programme of works in near-complete darkness. The crowning piece would always be a symphony, and in the vast majority of cases, a Bruckner symphony. Their underlying aesthetic, I would suggest, points back to the ideas that we've heard about today: as one organiser explained in a *Dunkelkonzert* programme note, 'the tones resonate on this occasion through the room, dark as night', so that 'the essence of music is recognised', or, as is elsewhere remarked, 'our newly introduced concerts in the darkened hall correspond to National Socialist strivings after the internalization and absorption of the art experience'. In the writings of Schwebsch and others, then, it seems to me that Nazi ideologues found a rich fund of ideas for the taking; a fund that still makes its presence known in the ways in which we, today, write about and play Bruckner's music.

Ultimately, then, outlandish though they may seem on first inspection, the mysteries of anthroposophy and similar modes of thought were inextricably bound up with the conservative forces of German culture and music in the interwar period. As such, they became a defining feature of the discourse and remain part and parcel of the mysteries of Anton Bruckner today – and so, I would suggest, an intrepid descent into their world is never likely to be dull, or indeed, uninformative.



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On Bruckner's Sixth Symphony

by
Ian Beresford Gleaves

The Sixth Symphony has always occupied a somewhat anomalous position in the Bruckner canon, being sandwiched between the stupendous Fifth, with its superbly satisfying finale, and the radiant heights of the Seventh, than which no other Bruckner symphony is more immediate in its appeal, or more representative and characteristic. In fact it has been said (by Robert Simpson) that the Sixth is more interesting as a transitional work between the Fifth and the Seventh than as a work in its own right. And Alban Berg extolled Mahler's Sixth as "the only true Sixth, despite the *Pastoral*". I do not know precisely what Berg meant by this, especially his "despite"; and is not the Tchaikovsky *Pathétique* a "true Sixth", "despite" the Mahler? For I suspect that Berg must have been succumbing to the once-familiar fallacy of considering works of greater spiritual import as being somehow necessarily superior as works of art, assuming thereby that Beethoven's 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th symphonies are more important than their even-numbered companions. From a purely aesthetic point of view, this would be hard to justify, and would be as mistaken as the rating of *Die Meistersinger* as a lesser work than *Tristan* purely because the former is a comedy and the latter a tragedy. Works of art should be evaluated on their own merits; classifications of this nature may be useful when dealing with things that are quantifiable, like sacks of flour; but they are hugely misleading when applied to works of art, where aesthetic criteria apply (or should do so) before all else. So therefore Bruckner's Sixth Symphony, if certainly a problematic work, should be evaluated strictly on its own terms, and on the basis of the information in that specific score and no other. Fortunately, this work exists in one version only, meaning that Bruckner did not revise it, although there are editions of the score which are best avoided.¹ One of these is that edited by Joseph Wöss and published by the old Universal Edition (Philharmonia: Wiener Philharmonische Verlag, 1928), in which there are some unwarranted interferences with the dynamic indications (e.g. at letter **Z**, bar 353 in the first movement, 17 bars from the end where the full orchestra enters, marked *pp* followed by *crescendo*, which is clearly ridiculous); having said which, however, one must admire and endorse the sentiments of Wöss in his preface, in which, among several pertinent and penetrating observations, he refutes the mistaken notion that the Sixth is one of Bruckner's weaker works, pointing out not only that this is emphatically not the case, but that, on the contrary, it is one of his most original: "ein Meisterwerk ersten Ranges" (a masterpiece of the first rank), as Bruckner himself thought.

Another commentator on the work, Donald Tovey ("the greatest writer on music in English" - Robert Simpson) contributed (unusually, for the 1930s) an essay on the Sixth (as well as on the Fourth) to the second volume of his *Essays in Musical Analysis* in which he says

If we clear our minds, not only of prejudice but of wrong points of view, and treat Bruckner's Sixth Symphony as a kind of music we have never heard before, I have no doubt that its high quality will strike us at every moment.

Note that categorical "wrong points of view", suggesting, as Schopenhauer puts it, that "wrong thinking queers the pitch for right thinking", which is something that might not be welcome in an age which seems to think that 'right' thinking is "elitist", and that anything, however manifestly absurd, should be allowed to express itself and be foisted, willy-nilly, on the public. That same public, it needs to be remembered, is not the gullible non-entity it might be thought to be by some ivory-towered academics who would wish, ideally, to keep great works of art to themselves, as if they alone were possessed of arcane knowledge and insight denied to lesser mortals (what price elitism there?). On the other hand, Tovey's "kind of music we have never heard before" is unfortunately ambiguous: for there is plenty of music "of a kind we have never heard before" which it is not necessarily desirable to hear, just as there are certain wines which are said to possess "a flavour all their own", which doesn't mean we would necessarily want to drink them.

Let us clear our minds of unnecessary prejudice, therefore, and concentrate on the facts in the score without reference, as far as possible, to anything outside it. This is not to say that the Sixth

1. The published 'authentic' scores of Symphony no. 6 in A major are as follows:

1. Musikwissenschaftlicher Verlag, ed. Haas, 1935; re-issued Brucknerverlag, 1949. (GA VI); 2. Breitkopf (3620), ed. Haas, 1937;

3. Musikwissenschaftlicher Verlag, ed. Nowak, 1952. (ABSW VI); 4. Eulenburg (464), ed. Nowak (1992).

The inauthentic 1st published version (incl. posthumous editorial changes) or scores based on it are as follows:

1. Doblinger, pl. nr. D.2300 [1899, first edition, ed. Hynais]; 2. Eulenburg (64), pl. nr. U.E.3596, ed. Steinitzer, 1912;

3. Eulenburg (464), ed. Altmann, c.1930; 4. Peters Edition (3840f), pl. nr. 10396; 5. Universal (3596), pl. nr. U.E.3596; 6. Universal (2886), pl. nr. U.E.2886, revised Wöss, 1927; 7. Philharmonia (199), pl. nr. U.E.3598; W.Ph.V.199, newly revised Wöss, 1928.

Symphony does not represent an important stage in Bruckner's ongoing spiritual journey, or that the work does not possess a spiritual content. Of course it does; all the greatest art does, and Bruckner's spirituality is of the rarest and most precious quality. However, it is all contained within, or expressed through, the notes in the score and not outside them, and it is in the shaping of the musical material, and the design of the whole, that the 'meaning' consists, and which is the experience we have while listening. That this 'meaning' may be complex and/or apparently ambiguous does not imply that it is not there, or that, in its own terms, it is not ultra-precise: indeed, the degree of clarity with which it is communicated constitutes the measure of success of each individual work of art. That the 'content', insofar as it is extra-musical, is not definable in words of equal precision is one reason why Bruckner uses notes.

As usual, it is to tonality and tonal processes, which means keys and their modal inflections, and modulations between keys, and indeed all aspects of key-relationships, at which we will need to look, before all else, if we are going to begin to understand and to assess what happens in this work. Unfortunately this is a subject which is notoriously difficult to explain in words without using technical terms, or without musical examples, preferably live; nevertheless it is something of which all intelligent listeners to Bruckner are aware, even if intuitively, or at a subconscious level, otherwise the music would be meaningless; and so therefore an awareness of tonality and of everything that relates to it is fundamental to understanding the work's construction, which is also the basis of what 'extra-musical' meaning or 'spiritual content' the work can be said to possess. These are not technicalities: they are of the very substance of the music itself, and all that is required is perceptive listening.

The first thing which anybody notices, consciously or subconsciously, on encountering Bruckner's Sixth Symphony is its main key of A major, which is a key of radiance and divine joy, as in Beethoven's Seventh Symphony (first and last movements) and in *Lohengrin*. In this key those works begin and end, as does Bruckner's Sixth Symphony, and as does its first movement; and all other keys employed in that first movement, including all those heard in the glorious Coda that concludes it (meaning all twelve major keys) exist in a hierarchical state of reciprocal attraction to that same A major, which is primal, central, and its influence all-pervasive. This is something so obvious, you might say, that it does not need stating; which is precisely why I am stating it. The Great Masters do not fear the obvious, nor even the commonplace, if and when it is required: and only a fool would cut off the lower rungs of the ladder up which he or she is climbing and carry the ladder (i.e. what should have done the carrying) along with him.² For tonality is a primary source of musical knowledge and awareness, is rooted in the natural world, and is not something devised by the mind of man; it is the Ground upon which the ladder stands, and the various rungs of which are the related keys to that primary key, or 'tonic', which in the present case is A major.³ It is largely due to the extension of tonality in the mid-nineteenth century, in the works of Wagner and Liszt before all others, that the vast scale of the Bruckner symphonies becomes possible; to express it in a different way, it is because Wagner and Bruckner make use of the whole tonal spectrum, and thereby the total possibilities of modulation thus afforded that their works need the large space which they occupy. There is a metaphysical analogy here which is intrinsic in the case of Bruckner, as all his works reflect, each in its own unique way, Cosmic Awareness (or "God"), the relevance and influence of which all-informing principle is both present from the outset and/or latent or immanent at other points in each work. This, like tonality, is in reality so obvious as to hardly need stating, but, as with many other things that are obvious and fundamental, it tends to become ignored, or 'taken for granted'. Remove such an obstacle or prejudice against the obvious or fear of the commonplace, and all becomes superabundantly clear.

So therefore the primacy of A major in this work (or indeed the primacy of the tonic key in whatever work) is the most important single aesthetic item, and the extent to which other keys attempt to threaten or undermine this primacy, is the second most important. Now already in bar 4 we hear a G natural and a B flat, notes alien to A major, as part of that first main theme, which begins with a falling fifth, A to E, defining the key:

2. I have taken this image from Schopenhauer: see *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. E. F. Payne, Vol 2, p.72

3. For a lucid and straightforward explanation of these matters, and indeed of all 'technical' aspects of music, I recommend *Introducing Music*, by Ottó Károlyi (Penguin Books, 1991)

Ex. 1

The stability of that opening fifth is further threatened by the alien F natural in the third bar of the above musical example; and all this musical information is accompanied by the important and ubiquitous rhythmic figure

Ex. 2

in the violins in octaves, which is above it, of which more anon. The “alarming technical difficulty”, meaning the integration of Ex.1 and Ex. 2, mentioned by Tovey, is much exaggerated: the conductor has merely to beat a clear two beats in the bar, and the orchestra will do the rest (on the other hand, try playing it on the piano!); and this is certainly not the reason “why this is the most neglected of Bruckner’s symphonies”, at least at the present time.

Thus far, therefore, we have seen how the stability of A major has been compromised, if not altogether undermined (Ex.2 has seen to that) at the outset; so that it is made clear that the radiance, or ‘divine joy’ of which I spoke in connection with A major, is not the all-informing indestructible reality that it is in the *Lohengrin* prelude, for example; and that negative, or at least questionable elements are going to be a permanent feature affecting the stability of the tonic key. This is something that will be seen to apply to the symphony as a whole, not merely the first movement, and those F naturals and G naturals recently mentioned foreshadow the A minor tonality of the third and fourth movements. The slow movement, too, while on the whole redolent of contemplative quintessential Brucknerian spirituality, is equivalently coloured, tonally, at its outset by an E flat and a D flat in the bass which immediately darken the F major (itself ‘dark’ in relationship to the A major first movement) that is its main key:

Ex. 3 *Adagio - Sehr feierlich*
G Saite

indeed, the E flat and D flat in the bass in the above example, are equivalent, tonally, to the F natural and G natural in the main theme of the first movement (see Ex. 1), and to those same notes which are defining features of the key of A minor in the scherzo and finale.

Thus far I have been discussing matters of tonality which, as aforesaid, is the single most important element of symphonic construction to which everything else is subordinate, in one way or another. Included in that ‘everything else’ are (a) rhythm, and rhythmic organization, and (b) the large-scale use of sonata form procedures in Bruckner symphonies. If I may discuss the latter aspect first, there seems to exist a notion, originating in Tovey and adopted by Simpson, that Bruckner’s use of sonata form is an atavistic irrelevance, an applied general formula deriving from the Viennese classical masters and employed, if idiosyncratically, as some kind of necessary convention. Indeed, it’s possible that Bruckner had never had formal training in such things as expositions, first and second subjects, developments, recapitulations or codas before Otto Kitzler introduced them to him in Linz (1861-3) during the period of Bruckner’s belated apprenticeship in matters to do with form, construction, modern orchestration, etc., when (significantly) he was also introduced to the music of Wagner, which has nothing to do with sonata form, and very few formal conventions, for that matter. Nevertheless, Bruckner’s symphonies undoubtedly make use of sonata form procedures, and there is no point in trying to imagine them (or anything else) constructed otherwise than they are. It is also important to know that sonata form and

symphonic construction are organized according to tonality and tonal processes, as when, at the climax of the Development in the first movement of the Sixth Symphony the main theme (Ex. 1) bursts in, impressively, *forte* on the full orchestra in the key of E flat major (bar 195), the furthest point, tonally, from A major, and at the exact point at which the rhythm which is Ex.2 is resumed, to be immediately followed by the real Recapitulation (bar 209) in the tonic key of A major. The close juxtaposition at that point of these two keys, which are polar opposites within the tonal spectrum, both defines that spectrum itself and also the time-scale of Bruckner's first movement as a whole, at the same time accounting for the space in time it occupies, which is the same thing as its total length. We can see from this how integrally inter-related are sonata form and tonality, and how they operate together to produce a perfectly balanced and proportioned movement.

Turning now to rhythm: we have already noticed the *ostinato*, i.e. the persistent accompanying figure, Ex.2, on the violins, which is the first thing which anyone hears in this symphony. This is a rhythmic foil, or counter-balance, to the staid and sober tones of Ex.1 on 'celli and basses, which include the alien G natural, B flat, and F natural, as well as the triplet crotchets in the second bar of the same music example. The omnipresence of the rhythm of Ex.2 is an all-informing source of buoyancy and alertness which permeates the whole of the First Subject area (bars 1-36), as well as the climax of the Development and beginning of the Recapitulation (bars 195-242) and the final phase of the Coda (bars 353-359). This makes 108 bars out of a total of 369, in which this rhythmic figure, Ex.2, is used, which statistic indicates essential proportions within the movement from the rhythmic point of view. It also indicates Bruckner's sure instinct in such matters, in that bars 1-46 are, save for one extra bar, the equivalent length as bars 195-242 (Development/Recapitulation).⁴ A further point of symmetry is that bars 353-368 of the Coda are analogous to bars 195-209, except that Bruckner has no need to extend the A major of bar 361 beyond the nine bars supplied, over the final tonic pedal-point. These facts are probably uninspiring when tabulated in words and figures, but when considered as a collective aesthetic item, relative to the movement as a whole, they fall beautifully into place, exactly as the individual details of an object in space (such as a Michelangelo sculpture) relate to the whole. Let me now summarize the above before progressing further:

<u>Incidence of Ex.2 rhythm:</u>	(a) bars 1 - 46	= 46 bars;
	(b) bars 195 - 242	= 47 bars;
	(c) bars 353 - 369	= 16 bars.
	<u>Total</u>	= 109 bars.

If the figure of 16 bars for the incidence (c) above seems disproportionate to the almost exactly symmetrical (a) and (b) that is because Bruckner, once again with the unerring instinct of genius, has substituted the quietly undulating figure



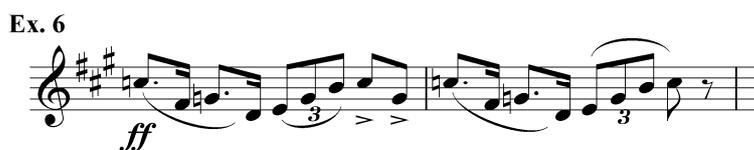
on the violins for the more incisively rhythmic Ex. 2, which would have become wearisome if maintained for 60 bars, i.e. from the beginning of the Coda to the end of the movement, as well as being extremely tiring to play over such a long stretch. It would also have nullified the impact which Ex. 2 ultimately has when it bursts in *fortissimo* (not *pp* as in the first published editions) at bar 354, underlined so effectively by the timpani's first entry on D.

Continuing, for the time being, with rhythmic elements within the first movement, the first deviation from Ex. 1 + Ex. 2 occurs at bar 15, in the 'celli:



4. A good example of a supreme artist's instinct in such matters is the Prelude to J. S. Bach's English Suite No. 2, in A minor for keyboard, which being in ABA form, exemplifies identical proportions of 55 bars, 55 bars, and 55 bars respectively; and nobody is going to tell me that Bach began with these mathematically defined areas of musical space which he then proceeded to fill up, artificially.

This two-bar sprightly figure, overlapping with free inversions of itself on woodwind, bearing in mind the continuing presence of the rhythmic Ex.2, is the progenitor of the important ‘Unison’ theme (as usual, the third subject-group within a Bruckner Exposition):



and when I say ‘progenitor’ it should be remembered that I am still discussing rhythmical elements: in other words, the dotted rhythms  relate to Ex. 5, and the triplet to Ex. 2. The provocative nature of these dotted rhythms, and the remarkable incidence of polyrhythm generally throughout this first movement are probably what prompted Bruckner’s remark “Die Sechste ist die keckste” (the Sixth is the sauciest).

Already we can see what a variety of rhythmic ideas are present in this first movement: however, I have not yet done justice to all of it in my discussion. For I next will need to mention the short chorale-like idea that forms part of the Second Subject Group (or ‘Gesangsperiode’); this, while only two bars long, has its own melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic individuality:



Melodically this is chorale-like; the ‘block-chord’ harmony is also chorale-like; and like most ‘chorale’ ideas in major keys it radiates assurance, confidence, and security; and the whole new musical idea has its own peculiar rhythm, splitting the main minim beat into triplet crotchets. The key at this point is D major, and the whole of Ex. 7 is immediately repeated in F major. However the tonality here is secondary to the overall tonality of the *Gesangsperiode*, which, as usual in a Bruckner Exposition, tends to be discursive and ruminative. I have not yet mentioned the *Gesangsperiode* itself, the main idea of which (bars 49-52, unquoted) has always seemed to me to be austere, resigned, and unpromising-sounding, particularly when coming after the confidence and assurance of the opening paragraphs, including the *Tutti* restatement at bar 25, incorporating Exx. 1, 2 and 5. For one thing it is in the minor key (E minor), for another the triplets in the bass are trying to hold back the progress of the music, and the general effect seems curiously retrograde and negative; but what a lovely surprise is in store for us in the subsequent two bars (53-4), which unexpectedly smile at us, radiant and benign (and do not forget the expressively Wagnerian quintuplet decorating the second bar):



That is immediately inflected by a minor mode version, and the prevailing mood of the *Gesangsperiode*, hitherto, is re-established; and it is only with the benign influence of the Chorale theme, Ex. 7, that the whole Second Subject Group, the *Gesangsperiode*, is allowed to proceed in the more optimistic (and orthodox) key of E major, the home dominant, in which the Exposition will end, despite the noisy interruption which is the Unison theme as per Ex. 6, already mentioned.

Throughout this discussion, or commentary, so far, it will have been noticed that, in the first movement of Bruckner’s Sixth Symphony, there exists, as usually in his symphonies to date (and in

Symphony No.7) a substratum of stability and certainty that I will call the Divine Ground⁵ lying behind all manifestation, but also that this basis of calm and confidence is frequently undermined by negative and unstable elements. Conflict, in a word, is present, and conflict is of the essence of drama, and symphonic construction is inveterately dramatic. This conflict, like much else in Bruckner, is expressed through tonality and tonal tensions. It is also something which, in spiritual terms, might be translated into a conflict between Faith and Doubt, and as such it will be intensified in the last two symphonies (Nos. 8 and 9), to become an urgent problem in the uncompleted finale of the Ninth. However, in the Sixth, it is a conflict which is convincingly and satisfactorily resolved only in the first movement, making for a sense of complete unity and wholeness: for the other movements, while each is superb in its own peculiar way, do not have a sufficiently convincing psychological relationship to the first movement to be able to maintain, or to be irradiated by, the glories of its Coda, to a discussion of which I now progress.

* * * * *

If, as I have maintained both here and elsewhere, Bruckner's work operates on the basis of (or has its parameters within/between) a Divine Ground, from which the work begins, moving towards a conclusion in which that Divine Ground becomes revealed in the light of its full glory, the first movement of the Sixth exemplifies this, in its own individual way, to perfection. Tovey's words (also aptly quoted by Simpson) concerning the ongoing stately progression of the harmonies, and suggesting to him "a tumultuous surface sparkling like the Homeric seas" spring to mind here as capturing something of the music's majesty and spaciousness; and his observations "the whole coda is one of the greatest passages Bruckner ever wrote" and "Wagner might have been content to sign it" seem to me wholly apt; indeed, for Bruckner, there could have been no greater praise than that last remark. Let us now look more closely at its structural organisation.

A detailed inventory of all the key-changes, lengths of phrases, etc. would be as boring to read as the London telephone directory (residential section); nevertheless it is fascinating to learn exactly how Bruckner has ordered his Coda and to account for the superb effect it makes in performance. To begin with (bars 309-16), there are two quietly articulated four-bar phrases based on Ex.1(a) and (b), on a solo horn, characteristically combined with its own inversion, Ex.1(a) and (b) on a solo oboe, and Bruckner underpins this thematic activity with the ubiquitous undulating accompaniment patterns (as per Ex.4) carried over from the preceding four bars of 'dominant preparation', i.e. for A major, giving that calm feeling of certainty and inevitable ultimate triumph that is the usual culmination of his Codas. The majestic swing from tonic to dominant, as if looking from right to left, during bars 317-30, traversing no less than six of the major keys of the tonal spectrum, has all the poised dignity of an impressive looking Viking ship sailing up a fjord through magnificent scenery; as indeed do bars 331-353, by which point all the other six major keys have been sounded, and the harmonic rhythm compressed into one-bar phrases (bars 349-51), as the full power of the orchestra adds to the total effect. Finally comes the *pièce de résistance* par excellence, the return of the rhythmic figure Ex.2, and the sudden assertion of the subdominant, resolving via two bars of diminished seventh harmony (bars 359-60) onto the "hohe Punkt" (which should be the loudest part of the entire movement), being the culminating last assertion of A major. Even here, this ultimate triumph has to be qualified by the alien F natural of bars 362 and 364;⁶ but then they are made to contribute to the final glory by being forced up to F sharp in the penultimate bars.

Slow movement. The sound of F major at the beginning of the slow movement (see Ex.3) is particularly impressive and significant because F major was never established as a main key in the first movement: indeed, it has hitherto been scarcely heard at all. It is also significant that F major in relation to A major (i.e. the flattened submediant) is decidedly darker in colour, and, furthermore, that no sooner has the first beat been sounded, the music moves towards the 'black' region of B flat minor (bar 2), by means of the solemnly descending bass line, only to emerge back into the relatively clearer light of F major in bar 4. This is an unusual proceeding for the start of a Bruckner slow movement, where normally the main key is established at the outset. (The only other cases are in symphonies 1 and 9). It is clear, then, that the negative, or 'questionable' elements of which I spoke when discussing the first movement, are going to

5. 'Divine Ground' - in the sense as used by Aldous Huxley in his novel *Time Must Have a Stop* (Chap. 30)

6. There is an equivalent effect at the end of the finale of Symphony No.4 (Romantic) where C flat in the *tremolandi* string figurations similarly inflect the E flat pedal-point - regrettably inaudible on the Karajan recording, by the way.

underline the prevailing character of the movement, which is subtly sinister, bizarre, even grotesque; there is something vaguely uncanny or supernatural in the air which, paradoxically, is the more acutely felt for being merely suggested and understated. Tonally, there is a clear bias in favour of flat keys, particularly in the middle of the movement, where B flat minor occurs at one point (bars 59-62), and the constant four-bar phrasing, predictable in a piece of dance origin, perhaps, produces an almost mesmeric effect on the listener. Perhaps this is a world which derives from German folk-lore; the *Wolfsschlucht* (Wolf's Glen) of *Der Freischütz* is not too far away, nor is *Walpurgisnacht* on the Brocken in Goethe's *Faust* (Part One), or even some elements from the paintings of Hieronymous Bosch (d. 1516)¹⁰. This is a new sound in Bruckner's music, and will be heard again, with varying nuances, in the last three symphonies, but particularly in the Scherzo of the Ninth (which is certainly no joke): indeed the demons that inhabit that piece would seem to be present in the same work's *finale*, as far as can be seen from the fragmented torso that has come down to us.

Finale. If the last movement of No.6 seems at first arbitrary, or to be an unsatisfactory conclusion to the whole work (as might be thought to be the case with Mozart's G minor Quintet, for example) this is not a failure of imagination or of technique. It is, perhaps, one of those pieces which demand repeated hearings (as does the whole symphony) for its full appreciation, as its difficulties are intrinsic, not extrinsic, which is to say they arise out of the nature of the material. That material is bounded and conditioned by tonal processes, before all else, as aforesaid; and Bruckner's finale will, after thorough exposure to it, be seen, ultimately, as the only right conclusion to the work, and we should rid our minds of wrong thinking, by which I mean trying to imagine the piece as different from what it is: in other words, there is no point in speculating on the possibility of a different kind of finale from the one that he did write, whether that has its problems or not.

Looking at the movement as a whole, it will be seen at once that there is conflict and therefore tension between positive and negative forces. Nothing new in that, you may say, but it is important to be aware of the individual case, in which heroic and valiant elements (using, predictably, 'bright' keys) attempt to prevail over subjective, negative, or repressive elements (using, predictably, flat keys, B flat minor in particular trying to assert itself wherever possible). All this operates from the relatively neutral area of A minor. The final victory, in which *pace* Simpson, "the A major sun is high in the sky" is a distinctly Pyrrhic one, and almost comes too late; nevertheless the movement as a whole is the logical consequence of the various tonal tensions that have manifested themselves earlier in the symphony. In particular, the G natural and F natural in the opening theme of the first movement (see Ex.1), now determine the Phrygian mode of the opening idea, in which there reigns an unmistakable spiritual weariness:

Ex. 10

Bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell

Tonally and modally (if we think of the modes as individually inflected major and minor keys, which they are), this relates to the Scherzo, also in A minor with flattened seventh (G natural); and also to the slow movement, whose initial tonic F was immediately qualified by its own flattened seventh, E flat, in the bass (see Ex.3); and indeed the openings of all three latter movements are related to the opening of the first movement, with its own alien flat seventh, G natural, in the bass, as well as its B flat and F, all of which notes were attempting to destabilize the bright and optimistic sound of A major, as discussed earlier. That same bright optimistic sound now bursts in, on the full orchestra, as early as bar 29, and the vigorous 2-bar *ostinato* pattern on the strings entering at that point -

10. If that description seems somewhat in excess of the facts, that is probably because later composers, e.g. Bartók, Janáček, having a more developed and sophisticated musical language than Bruckner, have painted even more lurid visions in music. We should, however, as far as possible see everything in context as what it is in itself.



- is to feature prominently in at least 120 of the movement's 415 bars, and is, in fact, the last thing in the symphony that we hear, in combination with the final triumphant assertion of Ex.1, the main theme of the first movement, but without the alien, destabilizing inflections as recently discussed. However, Ex.11 has no sooner been sounded (and note those precise three-note rising figures, in chords, on the brass - a speeded-up version of the similar, nobly aspiring figure near the beginning of the slow movement of the Seventh Symphony) than the disruptive, negative key of B flat minor cuts in and makes the first of several attempts to dominate tonally. Indeed, B flat minor is still trying to assert itself as late as bars 371-384 and at 395-400; but note that the former of these two incidences is 14 bars and the latter a mere 5, so that by that stage A major, and Ex.11 are clearly in the ascendant. Therefore the opposition of these two keys is of obvious psychic import in this last movement. Also important in this conflict is a brass fanfare-like idea



which at once suggests the Herald's proclamations in *Lohengrin* to all who know that work.¹¹

So far, then, the keys of A minor and/or A major have been mainly in evidence, save for the opposition of B flat minor. The *Gesangsperiode*, which now follows, begins in C major, a close relative of A minor, and has all the usual characteristics of these secondary sections (or 'Second Subjects') as found in Bruckner: lyrical, discursive, with much enriching counterpoint and many secondary ideas (including one that sounds remarkably like the 'Liebestod' motive in *Tristan*) and subsidiary keys. In fact, it is usually true to say that modulations within any given *Gesangsperiode* are relative to the particular *Gesangsperiode* itself, and not to the movement as a whole. However, unusually in this case, cutting into the *Gesangsperiode*, and distinctly discountenancing it, especially after the 12 nobly aspiring sequences on the dominant of F major at bars 113-125, is a theme which first entered at bar 37, at the point of the first attempt of B flat minor to gain ascendancy, presented now in its inverted form:



The original form of this theme, as per its first entry (bars 37-38) is as follows:



from which it can be seen that Ex.13 is not merely an inversion of Ex.14, but is an augmentation of it. Both of these powerful assertions are accompanied by the ever-persistent Ex.11, but it is clear that Ex.13 (or 14) intends to make its presence felt, wherever possible; in other terms, the pure, sacred ground which is normally the *Gesangsperiode* is, in this case not invulnerable. But, in the recapitulation of this same material it is noticeable that its influence is less, and that the valiant Ex.11 is in the ascendant as the symphony marches (literally so, at times) to its victorious conclusion. This is not, as I have already hinted, a conclusion without any *arrière pensée*, and it is not a conclusion which completely resolves all the tensions present in the movement, or in the symphony as a whole. It sounds, perhaps, like a provisional resolution, but nevertheless a necessary one, representing a stage in Bruckner's development

11. The figure as used in *Lohengrin* is concerned with the deadly rivalry between Lohengrin, emissary of the Holy Grail (= A major) and Friedrich von Telramund (= E flat major, as per his first entry in Act 1 sc. 1) the two characters standing for Divine Law (Lohengrin) and Sorcery (Telramund - although he does not know it). I hardly need to point out that A major and E flat major are tonal opposites.

as a symphonic composer which had to be experienced before the radiant brave new world of the Seventh Symphony could be explored.

I should like to conclude by briefly considering the circumstances of Bruckner's life at the time he wrote the Sixth, although in general I do not favour the linking of works of art to the life of the artist; for whatever connections there could be said to exist between the two, the artist's development will have an almost autonomous life of its own and will follow a path which is integral to it and possessed of its own inner life. Nevertheless, as I have already suggested, each Bruckner symphony stands as a testament to a stage in the spiritual progress of its creator, which is to say that it is, at least in part, a reflection of Bruckner's own experience, both of art and life, and his reaction to that experience. However, at the time that Bruckner composed the Sixth (1879-81) his life and career were not progressing particularly propitiously; the gigantic Fifth Symphony lay unperformed, so did the Fourth, and the Third had had a disastrous reception on the occasion of its first performance on December 16th, 1877. Reactions to his work in Vienna were almost universally negative, even hostile; he felt his financial situation to be precarious, and this was not improved by his dismissal (in 1874) from his teaching post at the Seminary of St. Anna, where he, of all people, was wrongfully arraigned for a misdemeanour with a female pupil. That these vicissitudes and unfavourable circumstances did not, in any way, act as a brake on his creative continuity is demonstrated not only by the composition of the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies and String Quintet, but by the radiant Seventh Symphony, work on which was commenced immediately after completing the Sixth. In fact it becomes superabundantly clear that all these works were created in a spirit of sublime idealism, written "for the glory of God" (as Bruckner might have expressed it), without too many expectations of fame or reward for his labours in this world, but with an overwhelmingly vital conviction of the truth and worth of his own spiritual experience. It was that same inner vision and certitude, combined with his artistic genius (which are ultimately one and the same) that enabled him to reveal and to communicate that vision in the only way he knew.

Good Friday, March 21st, 2008.

This essay grew out of the study weekend on Bruckner's Fourth, Fifth and Sixth symphonies held during November 30th-December 2nd 2007 at Madingley Hall, Cambridge and organised by Cambridge University's Board of Continuing Education.

Readers of this analysis of the 6th Symphony will be interested in Benjamin Korstvedt's paper "Harmonic daring' and symphonic design in the Sixth Symphony: an essay in historical musical analysis" in *Perspectives on Anton Bruckner*, ed. Crawford Howie, Paul Hawkshaw, Timothy Jackson, (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2001) pp 185-205.

COURSES BY IAN BERESFORD GLEAVES

Ian Beresford Gleaves's weekend courses on Wagner's Ring Cycle conclude at the Farncombe Estate Centre, Broadway, Worcestershire with *Götterdämmerung*, Acts 2 & 3, 19-21 September. Further planned courses include *Die Meistersinger* (3 nights) 10 April 2009, *Lohengrin* 29 May 2009, *Tristan und Isolde* 18 Sep 2009.

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He is also presenting a weekend course on Beethoven's String Quartets at Madingley Hall, Cambridge, ☎ 01954 280399, commencing on the evening of Friday 20 March 2009

Giuseppe Sinopoli (1946-2001)

A survey of his Bruckner performances (1983-99)

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Giuseppe Sinopoli was born in Venice on 2 November 1946 of a Venetian mother and Sicilian father. He began his musical studies when he was 12 and continued them at the Venice Conservatory while also studying medicine at the University of Padua. Later on he studied conducting with Hans Swarowsky in Vienna and composition with Bruno Maderna and Franco Donatoni in Darmstadt, Germany. He also composed several works, the most important being his 1981 opera, *Lou Salome*. During the last years of his life he also studied archaeology at La Sapienza University of Rome. He died while conducting *Aida* in Berlin on 20 April 2001.

In addition to his life as an itinerant conductor of opera and symphonic music, Sinopoli held several other posts, the most durable of which was the directorship of the venerable Dresden Staatskapelle Orchestra, where he was resident conductor from 1992. From 1983 to 1987 he was the chief conductor of the St. Cecilia Academy Orchestra in Rome. He was appointed principal conductor of the Philharmonia Orchestra of London in 1984, and was music director there from 1987 to 1995. According to Keith Bragg, former Chairman of the Philharmonia Orchestra, Sinopoli 'was a hugely charismatic figure, larger than life in every sense of the word, and this, combined with his young age of 54, made his untimely death all the more bewildering. ... He was a warm and generous character and a deeply committed musician who was passionate about his art.' (Bragg 2001)

Sinopoli's executive producer Ewald Markl exclaimed that 'with the passing away of Giuseppe Sinopoli we have lost a conductor who was young in years but whose manner was reminiscent of conductors of days now long-forgotten. Giuseppe Sinopoli was a conductor who quoted Byron to explain Robert Schumann's *Manfred Overture*; a conductor who thanked his Japanese hosts with spontaneous *Haikus*; a conductor who telephoned his family in Rome after a performance to dictate a Greek exercise to his eldest son; and a conductor who, just a few weeks ago, gave a concert in Caracas performed exclusively by children who live on the streets'. (Markl 2001)

As far as Bruckner performances are concerned, Sinopoli recorded six Bruckner symphonies (Nos. 3-5 and 7-9) with Staatskapelle Dresden for Deutsche Grammophon between 1987 and 1999. He also conducted a live performance of the Sixth symphony with the Philharmonia Orchestra for a BBC broadcast on 20 March 1987 - the concert recording, however, was never released commercially. Moreover, it is known that there were several other performances of Bruckner symphonies conducted by Sinopoli with various orchestras such as Rome's Orchestra of the Accademia di Santa Cecilia, the Philharmonia Orchestra in London, the Staatskapelle Dresden, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra as well as the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. So far, of these 'live performances' it appears there is also a recording of his Bruckner 4 performance with the Philharmonia Orchestra at Suntory Hall, Tokyo on 16 September 1988. This survey is mainly intended to provide a checklist of all known Sinopoli Bruckner performances, some general aspects of his Bruckner interpretation, a brief evaluation of his Bruckner recordings, as well as a selection of interesting and thought-provoking extracts from published reviews. The last section includes references, further reading and multimedia resources with a view to stimulate more interest in this great conductor and his cultural achievements.

General comments on Sinopoli's Bruckner

L'intelligenza che analizzava la pagina non faceva altro che fornire legna al fuoco dell'emozione. Perciò il suo Mahler, il suo Wagner, il suo Bruckner, il suo Schönberg, il suo Skrjabin e, pochi lo hanno notato e detto, il suo inimitabile Ravel (la sua interpretazione del 'Bolero' è semplicemente allucinata), ma anche il suo Puccini e perfino il suo bellissimo Verdi ci apparivano così incandescenti e insieme così intrisi del senso della morte, della fine: il suo Ciaikovskij sembrava quasi putrefatto.

The intelligence that analysed the page did nothing other than provide fuel for the fire of emotion. For this reason his Mahler, his Wagner, his Bruckner, his Schönberg, his Skriabin and, what few have noticed and commented upon, his inimitable Ravel (his interpretation of Bolero is simply amazing), but also his Puccini and even his lovely Verdi used to appear to us so incandescent and altogether soaked in a sense of death, of the end: his Tchaikovsky used to appear almost putrefied. (Villatico 2001)

The Second Viennese School was a speciality to which he brought a sense of style and formal appreciation, while in its precursors, Bruckner and Mahler, his objective approach sometimes paid unlikely dividends. (Clements 2001)

Sinopoli's reinterpretation of familiar scores owes much to his bilateral training, first as a doctor, and then as a composer. On the one hand he literally dissected the music so it achieved uniform transparency (his Mahler *Das Lied von der Erde* being a perfect example). On the other hand, he brought a composer's insight to a conductor's role, deconstructing here and reconstructing there. There was, however, always an intellectual rigour to a Sinopoli performance and if his Mahler did not always reveal this, his Bruckner, which he turned to later in his career, definitely did. Recordings of the Fifth, Eighth and Ninth symphonies have towering strength and are amongst the finest of the last decade. Hear a Sinopoli Bruckner symphony and you hear textures and notes which are missed in other performances. Compare Sinopoli's Dresden Bruckner with Jochum's Dresden Bruckner and you hear the correct balance versus the obtuse balance. Sinopoli's brass were gloriously restrained, whereas Jochum's sabotaged the detail. (Bridle)

It is easy to see where the critical hostility came from: Sinopoli's preference for slow speeds and mannered, sometimes lifeless phrasing, brought back a juggernaut approach to Brahms and Schumann at a time when authentic liveliness was the order of the day, and could result in some leaden evenings in the concert hall. Yet there was always the phenomenal ear for layering of textures, however eccentric - the brass perspectives in his Bruckner interpretations were impressive, and recognisably Sinopolian, whatever the doubts about the pacing of the performance - and the capacity to surprise. (Nice 2001)

Evaluating Giuseppe Sinopoli's Bruckner recordings

In 2004 there was an interesting one-page article in TBJ regarding the BBC concert broadcast of Sinopoli's Bruckner 6, which provided me with a lot of food for thought about this conductor, as at that time I already knew about The 2002 Penguin Guide Rosette rating of his Bruckner 5 CD. Eventually, the first of Sinopoli's Bruckner performances I heard was Symphony No. 3, then No. 6. After listening attentively to these two performances I felt strongly that these Bruckner recordings are in many ways similar and complimentary to Celibidache's Munich set on EMI, which I normally consider as my standard yardstick for comparative purposes.

In general, Sinopoli's Bruckner performances tend to be somewhat faster (total timings are indicated in the list below) than Celibidache's later recordings - but similarly, having magnificent brass and string textures. Sinopoli's tempi are indeed close to Celibidache's 1970s and early 1980s live recordings included in the Deutsche Grammophon Editions as well as the mid-1980s concert broadcast recordings (such as his 1985 Eighth, just over 90 minutes, and 1986 Ninth, spanning 67 minutes, both with Münchner Philharmoniker). Tempi are also very similar to most Asahina's performances included in the JVC (1980s) and Pony Canyon (1990s) Bruckner sets.

Symphonies Nos. 5 and 9 are edited from live recordings at Dresden Semper Oper, with the Fifth, that is the last one recorded, generally considered as the crowning glory of the set. Nos. 3, 7, 8 and 9 are also very strong performances with exceptional clear sound but some lack of ambient atmosphere, especially in Nos. 3 and 8. Symphony No. 4, the first one recorded, seems to be somewhat shaky in some instances, although quite enjoyable overall with the same clear sound as the other recordings. It is evident that the working relationship between Sinopoli and the Staatskapelle Dresden was developing in an exceptional manner as can be witnessed, for example, from his highly moving Dvorak Stabat Mater (his last live recording on 12 March 2001) as well as his superb Verdi Requiem recorded live on 13 and 14 February 2001 just over two months before his death as a fund-raising project for the rebuilding of the Dresden Frauenkirche.

The typical sound of the Dresden orchestra was also to large extent highly idiosyncratic - this indeed may have induced me to listen to it with more interest. In this respect, a very interesting comment I received lately from Professor Neil Schore, after his listening to Sinopoli's Bruckner 8 for the first time, is worth quoting here: 'Recently I heard Sinopoli Bruckner 8 with the Dresden, an orchestra that had a unique sound - hard to describe, but rustic, even rough and sometimes harsh, completely the opposite of the finely tuned machines out of Berlin or Vienna. As is the case with all I have heard from Sinopoli, it is very dramatic'.

My appreciation of the Sinopoli Bruckner performances eventually triggered me to search for any press interviews with Sinopoli as well as reviews of the individual performances. Reading Sinopoli's views and comments (mostly in Italian) on music and his favourite composers has become for me a highly inspiring experience. I then started to search specifically for his comments on Bruckner; however they turned out to be rather sparse compared to his other favourite composers, especially Wagner and Mahler.

As can be clearly perceived from the selected extracts below, most of the press reviews highlight various strong points in respect of Sinopoli's Bruckner recordings and it appears that all CDs have been very well received and appreciated. It is also generally true that one tends to hear several notes and textures which you don't hear in other Bruckner recordings. This may be due both to his training and practice in composition as well as his professional grounding in psychiatry and psychoanalysis. One therefore wonders why Deutsche Grammophon has not yet issued an edition of the Sinopoli Bruckner set, of which, except for symphonies Nos 4 and 5, all recordings have now been unavailable for quite some time.

Selected extracts of press reviews of Giuseppe Sinopoli's Bruckner performances and recordings

Third symphony

It is good to have a newcomer to this symphony on record, Giuseppe Sinopoli, opting for the preferable but too little recorded First Definitive Version of Bruckner's flawed but magnificent Wagner-Symphonie. It is also gratifying to find a Bruckner conductor from the younger generation of interpreters who is both aware and level-headed, with a fine grasp both of Bruckner's orchestral methods and his long-breathed arguments. Though Sinopoli occasionally gently pressures tempos at nodal points, the pressure is never otiose. Having opted for the 1877 text (complete with the added third movement coda which Nowak includes in his edition), Sinopoli treats it sympathetically and with respect. (Osborne 1991)

Fourth symphony

I probably have more versions of Bruckner 4 on the shelves than any other (twelve) and to make comparisons with them all would be very time-consuming. But I don't need to re-listen to others to express some confidence that this is one of the best-sounding, if not the best. The acoustic is perfect for the composer, orchestra just far enough back in the sound perspective and the recording very detailed. Textures are beautifully layered, aided by violins divided left and right. Most of the credit for the judicious balances should probably go to Sinopoli - you can just about hear every note that Bruckner wrote. The orchestral playing is first-class and one senses that the players have this music in their soul. It now seems hard to believe but this recording was made behind the "iron curtain" – how life has moved on in less than twenty years.

This may not be a first-choice for the fourth symphony but it is a rather classical and dispassionate interpretation in very fine sound. Let us hope that DG will re-issue the other Sinopoli Bruckner recordings, preferably collected together in an economical way. (Waller 2006)

Fifth symphony

Sinopoli's disc appeared in the very month of his untimely death, a wonderful memorial, characterful and strong in a positive, even wilful way distinctively his. The Dresden Staatskapelle responds with playing of incandescent intensity, totally allied with the conductor in silencing any stylistic reservations. This is a reading of high dramatic contrasts, with the towering climaxes of the outer movements both rugged and refined, purposeful and warm, with the variegated structure of the finale tautly held together. This is a live recording, and the inspiration of the moment comes over at full force. The energy of the Scherzo and the passion of the slow movement complete the picture of an exceptionally high-powered reading, recorded in glowing sound. (March et al. 2001)

Bruckner's Fifth seems to me his most devout and cathedral-like symphony, its exterior grand and imposing, its interior hushed and intimate. Recorded in March 1999, the late Giuseppe Sinopoli's latest Bruckner performance on disc with the Staatskapelle Dresden is very impressive. This is weighty, trenchant Bruckner, thrillingly cumulative. The tuttis are massive, instrumental strands cleanly defined, climaxes finely honed. Sinopoli eschews sentimentality, mysticism or pseudo-religiosity. There's no lack of expressiveness or radiance, the music often rising to eloquence, but it's Sinopoli's

grasp of architecture, his granitic resolve and his 'modernist' examination of harmony and scoring that linger in the memory. The recording is close and vivid, a tad airless in the final pages--a pity about the low-frequency buzz running through movements 2 to 4. A Fifth for those who can square up to the music. (Anderson 2001)

This new version of Bruckner's Fifth Symphony was recorded in Dresden two years ago. Sinopoli is punctilious in observing all the gradations of dynamics, and in pointing up the web of thematic links that binds this huge structure in such a unity, though his ultra-slow adagio tends towards ponderousness at times; in the finale he synthesises all its constituents - fugue and chorale as well as references to the earlier movements - with granitic inevitability. It is a massive and ultimately impressive reading, wonderfully delivered by the Staatskapelle, and, though there are presumably more Sinopoli recordings awaiting release, a timely tribute to his distinctive ability. (Clements 2001)

This is Sinopoli's last commercial Bruckner recording (edited from a series of live performances at the Semper Oper in Dresden) before his untimely death in April 2001. Sinopoli was a controversial but highly gifted musical personality, full of ideas and always ready to convey the passion he felt for his favourite composers. This Fifth unfolds at a steady pace in a somewhat reserved manner, but seldom have the intricacies of its Finale been resolved with such force and conviction, and as well supported by such a magnificent orchestra. It is as though everything was saved for that culminating moment in the coda, where this performance shows its glory. The recording is a fine memorial to a conductor who will be missed. (Khalona and Griegel 2002)

With this live recording of the Fifth Symphony, Giuseppe Sinopoli adds a new chapter to his well-received Bruckner series with the Staatskapelle Dresden, a team which has a very special ring about it. There is no doubt that his approach will reveal new facets of this work, considering Sinopoli's reputation for a powerful, expressive and intellectually rigorous account of a score and a clear realisation of its inner and outer details. The Fifth Symphony was the most powerful symphony Bruckner had yet written, and the most puzzling – undoubtedly one of the grandest and most original of the entire cycle. Nowadays the most widely accepted version of this symphony (as of others) is Bruckner's original, as recorded here, which was largely completed in 1876 and underwent some slight revisions in 1877-78. (iclassics)

Sinopoli's Bruckner No. 5 has all the rhetorical grandeur necessary for an outstanding performance of this composer's music, but it also has a degree of detail rarely encountered. It's as if the score has been exactly translated into sound, with inner figures reaching the ear without exaggeration. The Dresden orchestra's playing is all one could ask for: weighty and airy at the same time, breathtaking accuracy and warmth from the strings, brass that cuts through the climaxes with weight and power, and wind playing of consummate sensitivity, helped in no small measure by the unique tonal quality of the oboe and flutes, rounder and warmer than we're used to from American orchestras. The engineering has an analytical, somewhat dry sound, whose dynamic extremes make it hard to find the right volume setting. All in all, one of the most interesting Bruckner Fives on the market.

(Dan Davis, www.amazon.com)

Some of his (Sinopoli's) performances were clearly wayward, but he gave a very fine series of Bruckner 5 in the later 1980s (a work he never conducted in London), in which the string sound mushroomed quite sumptuously and the brass textures blazed in a way not even matched by his recent fine recording of the work in Dresden. (Hall 2001)

Sixth symphony

Giuseppe Sinopoli last night offered a very different route through the Sixth Symphony, making its progress quite odd and obscure, and giving the impression rather that we were going forward with difficulty through dense fog. (Griffiths 1987)

Seventh symphony

Anche in Bruckner [7ª sinfonia] Sinopoli evita la tentazione della malinconia e del ripiegamento intimista. Prende così corpo un'interpretazione di assoluto rigore strutturale, quanto mai emozionante per anticonvenzionalità e fascino. Si tratta di una lettura in chiave modernista, che lascia intravedere sotto le ampie e tortuose volute del sinfonismo bruckneriano la lucida chiaroveggenza nel dominare, quasi in senso drammatico, il materiale e le derivazioni tematiche. Ma si coglie anche il significato sperimentale della ritmica e, naturalmente, l'originalità livida e visionaria di alcuni impatti timbrici (specie nell'Adagio e nello Scherzo); qua e là, si giunge persino ad apprezzare un insospettabile tocco di eleganza. Grazie a questo radicale ripensamento interpretativo, l'esito è così intenso da mozzare il fiato.

Also in Bruckner (Seventh Symphony) Sinopoli avoids the temptation of melancholy and inmost retreat. In this way takes shape an interpretation of absolute structural rigour, so exciting due to its anti-conventionality and its charm. His is a reading of a modernist tone, that leaves one to catch a glimpse,

under the broad and tortuous spirals of Brucknerian symphonism, of the far-sighted lucidity that dominates, almost in a dramatic sense, the material and its thematic derivations. But one also grasps the experimental significance of the rhythmic and, naturally, the livid and visionary originality of some tonal impacts (especially in the Adagio and Scherzo); here and there, one even arrives at appreciating an unsuspected touch of elegance. Thanks to this radical interpretative rethinking, the outcome is so intense as to take your breath away. (Fertonani 1993)

It is not uncommon to hear Sinopoli spoken of as a 'stop-go' conductor, and it is true that he sometimes tends to cosset this or that detail and is reluctant to allow the musical argument to speak for itself. His account of the Seventh Symphony with the Staatskapelle Dresden is, however, unaffected, very well held together and beautifully played. Indeed it must be numbered among the best of Sinopoli's recordings, both artistically and technically, although Blomstedt's set with the same orchestra has greater nobility. (March et al. 1996)

Some of my most moving concert experiences have been hearing the Philharmonia under Giuseppe Sinopoli in the Festival Hall. There were unforgettable performances of Mahler 9 and 5, a searching Bruckner 7 (I remember the 7th there well. It seemed a somewhat 'sectional' or 'analytic' performance - but very good) and some glorious Strauss - just to mention a few highlights of a glorious era. In fact there are few [Philharmonia] concerts that stand out so strongly in my memory since Klemperer's Bruckner 7, 8 and 9 in the early '60s. (Ward 2001)

Eighth symphony

The final point to note about the performance is perhaps the most important. It is Sinopoli's amazingly exact calibration of dynamics and dynamic levels and the extraordinarily precise realization of this by the Dresden players. Nor is there anything remotely self-conscious about this. It is simply a question of delivering the music as Bruckner intended it to be delivered. (Osborne 1996)

Ninth symphony

La sua introduzione della Nona sinfonia di Anton Bruckner, con la ritmica, cupa predominanza dei timpani sugli altri strumenti, ricorda un po' l'interpretazione di Hans Knappertsbusch. Vi si è ispirato?

Già a Bayreuth, eseguendo il 'Parsifal' di Wagner, gli orchestrali mi fecero notare certe somiglianze con la visione che di quel brano aveva il Kapellmeister di Erbfeld. Non volute. Devo però ammettere che all'ascolto, pur essendo grandi le differenze, ne ho intravisto l'affinità spirituale.

Q: Your introduction to the Ninth Symphony of Anton Bruckner, with rhythmic, dark predominance of the timpani over the other instruments, is to some degree reminiscent of the interpretation of Hans Knappertsbusch. Have you been inspired by it?

A: Already at Bayreuth whilst performing Wagner's Parsifal, the orchestral musicians have drawn my attention to certain similarities to the vision that the Kapellmeister of Erbfeld had with regard to that particular piece. Not really intentional. However, I have to admit that when I heard the piece, although there were great differences, I have caught a glimpse of the spiritual affinity. (Lenzi 2001)

Opinions divide regarding Sinopoli's Bruckner. He was to record all 9 symphonies for DG, but record company cuts mean the cycle will not be completed. This account of the 9th symphony, recorded during live performances, is powerful and highly intelligent. As so often with Sinopoli, you hear things obscured in other recordings, such is the clarity and balancing of forces. It's an interpretation based solely on what's in the score - by turns thrilling and challenging - with a broad muscular line that gives the music a secular modern feel. The 9th is Bruckner's most anguished score. He looks into the abyss (like Mahler in his 9th symphony), but without resolving the uncertainties and doubts he sees there. That the work remained unfinished at Bruckner's death (the finale was never completed) is partly to blame for the work's ambivalence.

Given this, Sinopoli plays the work with remarkable clarity of vision, bringing a keen far-sighted objectivity to music that can sound unbearably fraught and painful. Not that the performance lacks passion or fire; on the contrary, the Staatskapelle play with gripping intensity throughout. Rather, Sinopoli's eyes are set to a distant horizon as he makes us aware time and again of how remarkable the music is, and how modern too. DG's recording sounds sonorous, full, and highly detailed, with some bonecrunching climaxes, and forward balances. (JMH)

The latest explorers to boldly go are the late Sergiu Celibidache, whose Zen Bud-dhist-like Munich Philharmonic recordings of Bruckner have finally been issued in America, by EMI, and Giuseppe Sinopoli, Mr. Symphonic Deconstruction, who weighs in with the Staatskapelle Dresden on a new

Deutsche Grammophon release.

Longer is, alas, not always better. Certainly Bruckner's complex sound picture needs room to unfold, but it operates in a sophisticated spacetime (Anton didn't need Albert to tell him about relativity), and when you take away the time -- and the mortality -- his symphonies just get lost in space. I expected Giuseppe Sinopoli's reading to stress Bruckner's manic-depressive nature (this conductor has a degree in psychiatry, after all), but it emotes rather than explores. The initial slow tempo causes the composer's kinetic rhythms to flatten out, and when the second subject arrives, it can hardly get slower, as Bruckner's "langsamer" indicates it should. Histrionics mar the close of both second and third subjects; transitions are flat-footedly literal (try the one between second and third subjects starting at bar 153; 7:14); and Sinopoli sprints into the (otherwise well-judged) coda as if he were meeting a date, not his Maker.

The Trio of the Scherzo is a little square, and the Adagio is heavy and literal, with a cataclysm that's powerful but not ugly. Sinopoli isn't helped by Deutsche Grammophon's bright, shallow sound, which robs the horns of air at the end of the first movement's exposition (bar 219; 10:22) and may be responsible for the lack of contrast in the call-and-response for first violins (bars 51-54; 2:09). The symphony is beautifully played, just not beautifully thought out by a conductor who hasn't spent as much time as the composer did listening to Satan in the desert. (Gantz 1999)

Giuseppe Sinopoli on music

The importance of music in our life

La vita è un viaggio che si compie in solitudine. Il viaggio di un altro può non prevedere la musica, ma la pittura o la letteratura. Però la musica può aiutarci a vivere più di un quadro o un libro perché è dinamica, prende uno spazio fisico e un tempo.

Life is a journey that one fulfils in solitude. The journey of someone else may not make provision for music, but rather for painting or literature. However music can help us in life more than a painting or a book, because it is dynamic, it takes physical space and time. (Palermi)

Per me l'archeologia e' la conoscenza e la musica l'espressione. Non potrei pensare la mia vita senza studio ed entrambe ne fanno parte.

For me archaeology is knowledge and music is expression. I can't imagine my life without study and both form part of it. (www.viagginrete-it.it)

The score is only an elementary sign

Ma questo segno è fenomeno o è la musica fenomeno? La musica "vive" nel momento stesso in cui si fa fenomeno, però la coincidenza tra fenomeno e segno è molto complessa. E' un po' ingenuo dire io eseguo ciò che è scritto in partitura. Ingenuità stupenda ma inefficace: è come pensare che il Bene possa venire in ogni momento e dominare il Male, come credere nella pluripotenzialità della mamma o del papà...

But is this sign [the score] the phenomenon or is music itself the phenomenon? Music "lives" in the same moment in which the phenomenon is made, but the coincidence between the phenomenon and the sign is much more complex. It is a little bit ingenuous to say I perform everything that is written in the score. A marvellous ingenuousness, but rather ineffective: it is like thinking that the Good could overcome the Bad in every moment, like believing in the plural power of the mother or the father... (Foletto 1991)

Music addressing spiritual problems

I think we speak of psychology because it's better for people today than speaking about spirituality. If you speak about spirituality, nobody understands, or maybe they misunderstand. But when I speak about the psychological, I don't mean it in the modern sense of scientific, clinical psychology, but in the very, very old meaning of the word that is, to speak about the soul, the spirit. I don't conduct music that is not a manifestation of the existential and spiritual problems of life. (Kozinn 2001)

Music makes us beautiful

Ecco il messaggio inedito di Giuseppe Sinopoli, inviato il 13 ottobre 2000 a Pietro Bria, primario di consultazione psichiatrica all'Ospedale Gemelli, perché lo leggesse ai pazienti a introduzione dell'iniziativa "Giovani artisti in ospedale".

Sono veramente felice che l'iniziativa di portare la Musica negli ospedali continui il suo percorso. Sarei stato così volentieri con voi per continuare ad imparare i profondi legami che passano fra il dolore e la sublimazione di esso attraverso un'attività dello spirito. So bene che questa parola e' oggi malintesa o sfruttata in ambiti ingenui che rasentano l'animismo. Tuttavia lo Spirito e' cio' che ci permette di elaborare il dolore, di superare la difficile realtà, per procedere verso mete illuminate dall'utopia della speranza. La musica e' forse il momento in cui l'uomo raggiunge, con i suoi sensi e con il suo intelletto, i confini estremi della materia: cio' che e' impossibile misurare, quantificare, toccare.

La musica e' quantità, misura, nel periodo in cui viene scritta o nell'attimo in cui lo strumento, stimolato dal musicista, la produce. Qui si compie un salto misterioso; quello che noi ascoltiamo e' immateriale e nell'attimo in cui lo percepiamo sparisce per diventare memoria. La musica e' il segno piu' sublime della nostra transitorietà. La Musica, come la Bellezza, risplende e passa per

diventare la memoria, la nostra piu' profonda natura. Noi siamo la nostra memoria. Il superamento del dolore e' necessario perche' la nostra vita riacquisti il senso della Bellezza. Forse la musica con la sua impalpabile bellezza, ci puo aiutare. Giuseppe Sinopoli

Here is the unpublished message by Giuseppe Sinopoli, sent on 13 October 2000 to Pietro Bria, head psychiatric consultancy at Gemelli Hospital, so that he can read it to the patients as introduction to the "Young artists in hospital" initiative:

"I am very happy that the initiative of bringing music into hospitals is continuing its journey. I would have been so glad to be with you to continue learning about the profound links between pain and its purification through an activity of the spirit. I know very well that this word is nowadays misunderstood or abused in naive domains which border on the animism. Nevertheless, it is the Spirit which permits us to elaborate pain, to overcome the difficult reality, in order to proceed towards aims and goals illuminated by the utopia of hope. Music is perhaps the moment in which man reaches, through his senses and intellect, the extreme boundaries of matter: that which is impossible to measure, quantify and touch.

Music is quantity, measurement, in the period when it is written or at the moment in which the instrument produces it as stimulated by the musician. Here a mysterious step takes place; what we hear is non-material and, at the moment we perceive it, it vanishes to become memory. Music is the most sublime sign of our temporary reality. Music, like Beauty, shines and goes by to become memory, our most profound nature. We are our own memory. Overcoming pain is necessary so that our life regains the sense of Beauty. Maybe music can help us with its impalpable beauty. Giuseppe Sinopoli" (Lenzi 2001b)

The Conductor's role

Dirigo soltanto musiche che entrano nei miei interessi mentali e culturali. Rossini, per quanto lo ami, non rientra nei miei interessi per cui non saprei come farlo, non so proprio. Mozart, lo amo moltissimo: come amo il mare. Ma non so nuotare.

I conduct only music that enters within my mental and cultural interests. Rossini, although you love him so much, does not form part of my interests and therefore I wouldn't know how to conduct him, I simply don't know. I love Mozart immensely: as much as I love the sea. But I don't know how to swim.

(Foletto 1991)

Ogni musicista ha libero accesso alla mia posta, sa tutto sull'attività. Con l'orchestra discuto i programmi. Abbiamo così deciso di incrementare accanto a Strauss, Bruckner, Wagner, pilastri del repertorio, la presenza di Mahler, non troppo amato dal socialismo reale, e la scuola viennese, Berg, Schönberg, Webern. (Cannavo 1993)

Every orchestral musician has liberal access to my post and therefore knows everything about the activities. I discuss the programmes with the orchestra. So we have decided to promote in addition to Strauss, Bruckner and Wagner, pillars of the repertoire, the presence of Mahler, not so much loved by real socialism, as well as the Viennese School, Berg, Schonberg and Webern.

Two or three times I used rehearsals to analyse with the players Bruckner Five and Beethoven Nine. I would say 'you can never play this piece if you don't hear how it is composed'. (Morrison 1991)

Giuseppe Sinopoli's Bruckner performances in chronological order ¹

12, 13, 14 June 1983 - Symphony No 9 / Orchestra dell'Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome Accademia concerts)
(Sinopoli 2006, ed. Cappelletto)⁸

1, 2, 3 April 1984 - Symphony No 4 / Orchestra dell'Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome Accademia concerts)
(Sinopoli 2006, ed. Cappelletto)⁸

10, 11, 12 November 1984 - Symphony No 7 / Orchestra dell'Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome Accademia concerts) (Sinopoli 2006, ed. Cappelletto)⁸

30, 31 May 1985 - Symphony No 7 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Concerts at Royal Hall, Nottingham and Royal Festival Hall, London - Martyn Jones)⁸

2, 3, 4, 5 June 1985 - Symphony No 7 - Philharmonia Orchestra (Concerts at Teatro Maliban, Vienna; Duomo, Parma; Teatro Comunale, Bologna and RAI Auditorium, Turin - Martyn Jones)⁸

14, 15, 16, 17 December 1985 - Symphony No 6 / Orchestra dell'Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome Accademia concerts) (Sinopoli 2006, ed. Cappelletto)⁸

2 June 1986 - Symphony No 4 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Royal Festival Hall, London - Martyn Jones)⁸

29 August 1986 - Symphony No 7 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Lucerne - Martyn Jones)⁸

3, 8, 11 September 1986 - Symphony No 7 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Concerts in USA: Ravinia; University of Nevada, Las Vegas; and Ann Arbor - Martyn Jones)⁸

2 October 1986 - Symphony No 7 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Brucknerhaus, Linz - Martyn Jones)⁸

- 20 March 1987 - Symphony No 6 (1881 Original version Ed. Leopold Nowak [1952]) / Philharmonia Orchestra [60:30] Disc # COR-100 (This concert was promoted by Philharmonia Ltd and sponsored by Mitsubishi Electric (UK) Ltd - *Griffiths 1987, Ward 2004 and Stephen Miller*)²
- 19, 21 August 1987 - Symphony No 7 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Concerts at Stadthalle, Lubeck and Deutsches Haus, Flensburg - *Martyn Jones*)⁸
- 18, 21, 24, 27, 29, 30 September 1987 - Symphony No 7 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Concerts at Tonhalle, Zurich; Meistersingerhalle, Nurnberg; Philharmonie, Berlin; Philharmonie im Gasteig, Munich; Tonhalle, Dusseldorf; and Schauspielhaus, East Berlin - *Martyn Jones*)⁸
- September 1987 - Symphony No 4 (1882 (aka 1878/80) Leopold Nowak [1953]) / Staatskapelle Dresden [66:58] DG 423 677-2³
- 7 December 1987 - Symphony No 5 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Royal Festival Hall, London - *Martyn Jones*)⁸
- 1987 - Symphony No 5 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Altes Schloss Kiel concert performance - *Michael Schaffer*)⁸
- 21 February 1988 - Symphony No 8 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Royal Festival Hall, London - *Martyn Jones*)⁸
- 9, 10, 12, 17 March 1988 - Symphony No 8 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Concerts at Sala Grande del Teatro la Fenice, Venice; Teatro Municipale, Reggio Emilia; Istituzione dei Concerti, Cagliari; and Carnegie Hall, New York - *Martyn Jones*)⁸
- 5, 26, 27 June 1988 - Symphony No 8 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Concerts at Royal Festival Hall, London; Stadthalle, Lubeck; and Schloss, Kiel - *Martyn Jones*)⁸
- 5 July 1988 - Symphony No 7 / Philharmonia Orchestra (London Royal Festival Hall - *Ken Ward (Ward 2001)*)⁸
- 14, 16, 18 September and 1 October 1988 - Symphony No 4 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Concerts in Japan at Bunka Kaikan, Tokyo; Suntory Hall, Tokyo; Nova Hall, Tsukuba; and Bunka Kaikan, Chiba-Ken - *Martyn Jones and John F Berky*)⁷
- 1 January 1989 - Symphony No 5 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Brucknerhaus, Linz - *Martyn Jones*)⁸
- 23, 24, 25, 26 July 1989 - Symphony No 3 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Concerts at Royal Festival Hall, London; Stadthalle, Lubeck; Deutsches Haus, Flensburg; and Neumunster - *Martyn Jones*)⁸
- 28 August 1989 - Symphony No 7 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Teatro Greco, Taormina - *Martyn Jones*)⁸
- 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 21 November 1989 - Symphony No 3 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Concerts at Palau de la Musica, Barcelona; Palau de la Musica, Valencia; Auditorio Manuel de Falla, Madrid; Coliseo de Recreous, Lisbon; Talchunderhalle, Frankfurt/Hoescht; Meistersingerhalle, Nurnberg; and Festhalle, Landau - *Martyn Jones*)⁸
- Early 1980s - Symphony No 4 / Berliner Philharmoniker (Berlin concert - *Michael Schaffer*)⁸
- April 1990 - Symphony No 3 (1877 Version Ed. Leopold Nowak (with Scherzo coda)) / Staatskapelle Dresden [59:11] DG 431 684-2^{3,6}
- 10, 11, 16, 19 January 1991 - Symphony No 4 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Concerts at Philharmonie, Cologne; Musikhalle, Hamburg; Brucknerhalle, Linz; and Royal Festival Hall, London - *Martyn Jones*)⁸
- 14 May 1991 - Symphony No 4 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Teatro Verdi, Florence - *Martyn Jones*)⁸
- 16 September 1991 - Symphony No 8 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Brucknerhalle, Linz - *Martyn Jones and Massimiliano Wax*)⁸
- September 1991 - Symphony No 7 (1885 Eds. Gutmann [1885], Leopold Nowak [1954] (with percussion)) / Staatskapelle Dresden [64:57] DG 435 786-2 (1996 Penguin Guide ***)^{3,6}
- 6, 12, 13 March 1992 - Symphony No 7 / Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (Concerts in Japan - *John F Berky*)⁸
- 1992 - Symphony No 4 / Staatskapelle Dresden [68:30] (*John F Berky*)⁸
- 19 September 1993 - Symphony No 4 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Royal Festival Hall, London - *Martyn Jones*)⁸
- 17 September 1994 - Symphony No 3 / Philharmonia Orchestra (Brucknerhaus, Linz - *Martyn Jones*)⁸
- December 1994 - Symphony No 8 (1890 Version by Bruckner and Josef Schalk Ed. Leopold Nowak [1955]) / Staatskapelle Dresden [85:51] DG 447 744-2^{3,5,6}
- 1994 - Symphony No 4 / Staatskapelle Dresden [70:10] (*John F Berky*)⁸
- 29 May 1996 - Symphony No 5 / Staatskapelle Dresden (Vienna Musikverein concert - *Michael Schaffer*)⁸
- 30 May 1996 - Symphony No 4 / Staatskapelle Dresden (Vienna Musikverein concert - *Michael Schaffer*)⁸
- March 1997 - Symphony No 9 (1894 Original version (3 movts) Ed. Leopold Nowak [1951]) / Staatskapelle Dresden [61:51] DG 457 587-2^{4,6}
- 9 March 1999 - Symphony No 5 (1878 Ed. Leopold Nowak [1951]) / Staatskapelle Dresden [76:37] DG 460 527-2 (2001 Penguin Guide Rosette)⁴

The source of concert information is in italics at the end of each entry. Any corrections or additional information would be most welcome. The author's email address is ms51159@gmail.com.

(1) Symphony version data extracted from John F Berky's website (www.abruckner.com)

(2) Aircheck (Noise Reduction) recording of BBC March 20, 1987 live broadcast from the Royal Festival Hall, London

(3) Studio recording at Lukaskirche Dresden

(4) Edited recording from live performances at Semperoper Dresden

(5) Double CD coupled with Richard Strauss Metamorphosen

(6) Currently out of print

(7) Recording/s known to exist

(8) Not known whether recording/s exist/s

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- ZDF (1986), Giuseppe Sinopoli conducting Mahler Fifth Symphony with the Philharmonia Orchestra London at Alten Oper Frankfurt, including interview and extracts of rehearsal sessions (video in German)

Translations from Italian by Martin Spiteri

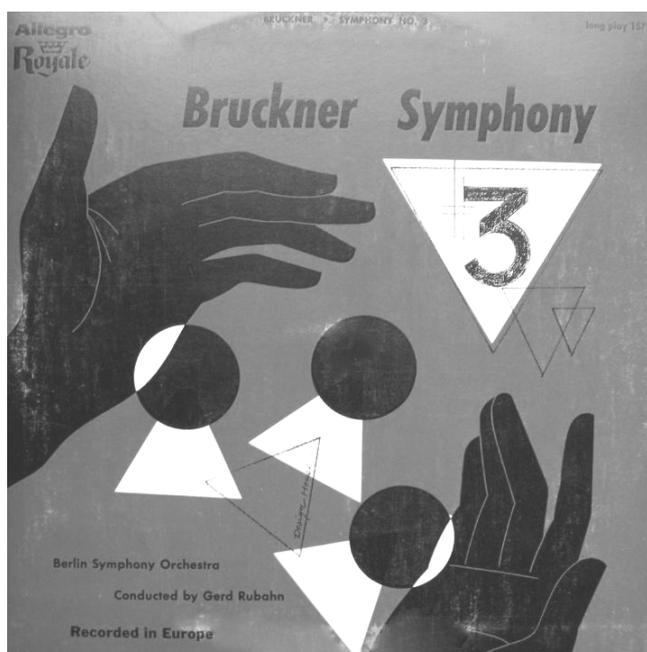
Note: The author would like to thank Mr John F Berky, Mr Martyn Jones (Archivist of the Philharmonia Orchestra in London), Mr Michael Schaffer, Prof Neil Schore, Dr Alexander Hal, Mr Ken Ward (The Bruckner Journal Editor), and Mr Massimiliano Wax for their kind assistance in assembling this survey.

Any comments or additional information would be welcomed by Martin Spiteri at ms51159@gmail.com

The Mystery of the "Gerd Rubahn" Symphony No. 3

The history of the commercially recorded Bruckner Symphonies is peppered with instances where the true identity of the performers has been in question. The discography is filled with names such as a Henri Adolf, Cesare Cantieri, Jan Tubbs, etc. who are conductors that no one has even seen. There are also recordings by such ensembles as the South German Philharmonic and the Hastings Symphony that have never given a public concert.

For this article, I am going to focus in on one recording of which it had been thought the true performers had been positively identified, but recent evidence seems to prove otherwise. The recording in question is the *Allegro Royale* LP No. 1597. The recording was released in 1954 and featured a performance of the Bruckner Symphony No. 3 as performed by Gerd Rubahn and the Berlin Symphony Orchestra. The *Allegro Royale* label was one of the first budget LP labels to reach the market after the advent of the LP. It was the creation of Eli Oberstein of the Record Corporation of America ("RCA") but not to be confused with the Radio Corporation of America, the real RCA. To keep the production price down, producers of this genre of LP resorted to low royalty recordings or used pseudonyms to cover up the real performers. Mr. Oberstein claimed to have a "Berlin source" for many of his productions. When this first LP of the Bruckner 3rd was released, there was a good deal of speculation regarding the real performers on this disc and there was one important clue - the performance on this LP used the newly published 1878 version of the 3rd Symphony as edited by Fritz Oeser.



This very 'Fifties' style cover of the *Allegro Royale* LP of the 'Gerd Rubahn' Bruckner 3 is attributed to 'Design House', which probably means that it was designed by Curt John Witt

In an article in the ARSC Journal, Ernst A. Lumpe continues the story:

"Allegro Royale #1597 - One of the few records of "RCA" which has been more widely commented on and was thought to capture a live performance with Jascha Horenstein (as suggested by the late Jack Diether), a conductor who championed the 1878 version. The orchestra in this performance is clearly one of the "big" ones. There was a performance of this version in Germany some time after its publication which was carried out by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, marked expressly in the program as "premiere of second version from 1878". The event took place in Berlin's Titania-Palast on March 2 and 3, 1952, Leopold Ludwig conducting. Apparently Ludwig and the BPO were the first to study and perform the recently published version. Given the "Berlin contact" of Oberstein it is more than likely that this *Allegro/Royale* disc has captured one of these performances. An original tape of the live performance no longer exists, probably because RIAS Berlin had made a studio recording of the work a few days later with the same forces and the same conductor. This tape is extant and could not be inspected for a stylistic comparison with this live version."¹

Based on this article, the general conclusion was that the *Allegro Royale* was indeed a copy of the 1952 Leopold Ludwig performance with the Berlin Philharmonic.

In recent weeks, I attempted to provide more concrete evidence for this theory. Lumpe certainly had made a strong case for his identification, but the only way to be sure was to listen to the RIAS studio recording. Through the cooperation of Deutschlandradio (DLR) who maintains the RIAS archive, an audition copy of the March 6, 1952 studio recording in the Christuskirche, Berlin was made available in order to make the long-awaited comparison.

The results of this comparison indicated two important facts.

- 1) The LP record was indeed a concert performance. While the audience was well behaved, there are clear indications that an audience is present. The RIAS recording had no audience noise. There is no doubt that these were not recordings of the same performance. That finding coincided with Ernst Lumpe's theory.
- 2) Further examination, however, indicated that the Allegro Royale recording was probably NOT by Ludwig and the BPO. While many elements of the two performances are similar, there are some distinct differences that would typically not show up in a recording made within the week of a concert. Timings alone show the wide variation:

Allegro Royale:	21:06	15:50	6:38	14:53
Ludwig/BPO Studio:	19:53	16:42	6:13	13:46
Difference:	+ 1:09	- 0:52	+ 0:25	+ 1:07

With Ludwig / BPO now out of the running as the performers on the Allegro Royale LP, I began to look to other Oeser editions that were performed during this time. Comparisons were made with recordings by Jascha Horenstein (remembering Jack Diether's earlier suggestion) Rafael Kubelik and Carl Buente, the conductor of the (West) Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra. Below, is a table of timings:

Oeser Edition Performances of the Bruckner Symphony No. 3 - Timings

	Rubahn Berlin SO?	Ludwig 1952 Berlin Phil	Horenstein 1963 BBC North SO	Horenstein 1957 BBC SO	Kubelik 1954 Concertgebouw	Buente 1957 Berlin S.O.
I	21:06	19:57	19:10	19:20	18:43	
II	15:50	16:42	14:34	12:58* truncated	14:55	
III	6:38	6:13	7:38	7:05	7:24	
IV	14:53	13:46	16:22	15:26	16:15	14:15

Based on these timings, there seemed to be little correlation between any of these performances and the Rubahn recording. The stylistic differences between Ludwig and Rubahn, apart from the timings, were too great. While the Buente timing was fairly close, only one movement was available for comparison and the 1957 performance was the conductor's first performance of the symphony and was thus too late to be the source of the Allegro Royale recording.

So, as of this writing, the mystery continues and Gerd Rubahn remains the only conductor associated with the Allegro Royale LP recording. The search now enters a new phase as we look for another Oeser Bruckner 3rd performed between 1952 and 1954. Due to the difficulty in locating other performance data, any information from readers would be welcome.

John F. Berky

¹ Ernst A. Lumpe's research was published in Vol. 21:2 [Fall, 1990] and Vol. 27:1 [Spring, 1996] of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections Journal. He has since posted his research on his website: www.geocities.com/elumpe/index.html. The above quote is used with the author's permission.

* * * * *

WOSA - 1943: Serious Music Straight...

Browsing in a second-hand bookshop in Port Chalmers I discovered *The Story of 100 Great Composers* by Helen Kaufmann, published in 1943 by Grosset C Dunlop, New York in 'The Little Music Library' series. This is what she had to say about Bruckner.

His symphonies, characterized as "the monumentalization of his organ improvisation," require from an hour to an hour and three quarters to perform, and there is not a smile in a carload. Pious, mystical, deeply and fearfully earnest, they are most admired by those who prefer their serious music straight.

KW

Letters to the Editor

From Tony Newbould:

Having received your latest Journal today (brilliant edition) and seen your comments on BSOs and London buses, I'm reminded that I went to the Bushey 4th on 19th January 2008 and meant to send you a report. Why I didn't is a tale of musicians' misfortunes that will shock and amuse!

The orchestra had been augmented by professionals for the purpose, I was told by a player colleague - all the brass (but not horns) and half the first violins. Bushey Hall is a lofty wood-vaulted place with a completely flat floorspace - the orchestra and audience were all on the flat floor except for the brass and wind on benches around. This was fine in the crisp opening Sleeping Beauty waltz, but in the Dvorak Cello Concerto the top strings didn't seem to be coming through the acoustic at the climaxes, nor indeed very clearly the soloist, certainly from the back of the hall where I was.

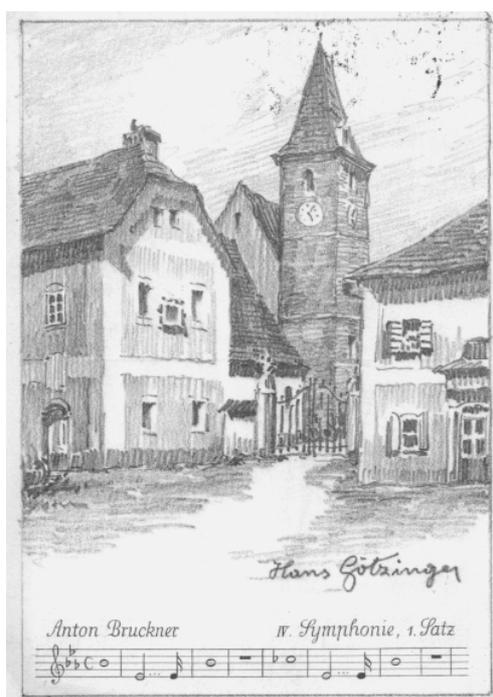
Come the Bruckner, the principal horn started very tentatively, seeming not to be confident enough to slur up the last two notes of each repeated phrase; indeed, the short first note of each pair seemed to be lost - perhaps affected by the acoustic problems as well. And then the climaxes with the top strings simply lost to our ears just didn't sound like Bruckner should. This was a great pity because George Vass (whom I had not come across before) impressed with a wonderful feel for tempi and the way he managed all the difficult moments with aplomb.

I found out from my colleague afterwards that things had gone wrong at the end of the final rehearsal. When the principal horn picked up his instrument case to go it flew open and his horn crashed to the floor and was completely smashed. So he had to borrow someone else's at the last minute, and I know as a horn-player that that would be absolutely terrifying and leave you with no confidence at all. (By the start of the last movement he had recovered the confidence to play it beautifully.) And when the cello soloist went out to play the concerto, his board (into which the spike slots) had gone missing - that too would have been terrifying for him. Personally I still got more than plenty out of the evening to justify the ticket price, but you'll understand my sympathy for the poor souls involved in deciding not to attempt a report!

PS It now transpires that the missing cello equipment was a wooden rostrum that the orchestra, knowing the acoustic problems, had had specially constructed to give the player height and provide firm lodging for the spike. Storage was difficult, but it was still a shock when it went missing at the worst possible moment. It has since been sighted with wheels fitted at the four corners and small boys having great fun on their newly-acquired monster go-cart!

The opening horn theme of Bruckner's 4th Symphony transcribed beneath a drawing of an Austrian village, by the prolific Viennese artist, Hans Göttinger, 12 Feb.1867 - 25 Sept.1941.

From the collection of John Berky.



UK Concert Listings

late June to end of October 2008

For the first time in nearly 50 years there will be no Bruckner performed at the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts.

Sat 21 June - 7.30 pm - Clifton Cathedral, Bristol
Wagner - Ride of the Valkyries; Messiaen - L'Ascension
Bruckner - Symphony No. 7
Brunel Sinfonia / Tom Gauterin ☎ 0117 927 6536

Sat 5 July - 7.30 pm - Blackthorpe Barn, Bury St Edmunds
Beethoven - String Quintet Op 29; Bruckner - String Quintet
Razumovsky Ensemble ☎ 01284 769505

26 Aug - 8 pm - Usher Hall, Edinburgh
Stravinsky - Symphonies of Wind Instruments
Pousseur - Mnemosyne
Stravinsky - Anthem *The Dove Descending Breaks the Air*
Stravinsky - Mass
Bruckner - Mass No. 2 in E minor
Collegium Vocale Gent / Philippe Herreweghe
Edinburgh Festival ☎ 0131 473 2000

Wed 8 Oct - 7.30 - Barbican Hall, London
Boulez - Livres pour Cordes
Messiaen - Poèmes pour Mi [Sally Matthews]
Bruckner - Symphony No. 4 (1874 version)
London Symphony Orchestra / Daniel Harding
☎ 0207638 8891

Wed 29 Oct - 7.30 pm - Symphony Hall Birmingham
Bruckner - Symphony No 6
City of Birmingham SO / James Gaffigan ☎ 0121 780 3333

Thurs 30 Oct - 7.30 pm - Royal Festival Hall, London
Mozart - Sinfonia Concertante K364; Bruckner - Symphony No. 4
Philharmonia Orchestra / Christoph von Dohnányi
☎ 0871 6632500

International Concert Selection

late June to end of October 2008

alphabetically by conductor

Daniel Barenboim

Bruckner - Symphony No.8
Staatskapelle Berlin
2 July - 8 pm - Teatro alla Scala, Milan ☎ 0039 0272003744

Bruckner - Symphonies 7, 8 & 9
(No 9 preceded by Elliott Carter - *Obra a determinar*)
Staatskapelle Berlin - on consecutive nights, 4,5,6 July - 10.30 pm,
Palacio de Carlos V - Festival Internacional
de Musica y Danza de Granada ☎ 0034 958 221 844

Herbert Blomstedt

Bruckner - Symphony No. 5
Bamberger Symphoniker
22 June - 5 pm - Kaiserdom, Bamberg ☎ 0049 951980 8220

Bruckner - Symphony No. 8
Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival Orchestra
23 Aug - 8 pm - Koncertsalen Alstion, Sonderburg
24 Aug - 7 pm - Musik und Kongresshalle, Lübeck
Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival ☎ 0049 431570 470

Bartel - Violin Concerto; Bruckner - Symphony No.6
Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra
25, 26 Sept - 8 pm - Gewandhaus, Leipzig ☎ 0049341 1270280

Sylvain Cambreling

Wagner - Parsifal - Prelude Act 2, Karfreitagszauber
Messiaen - La ville d'en-haut; Bruckner - Symphony No. 7
SWR Sinfonieorchester Baden-Baden und Freiburg
2 July - 8 pm - Konzerthaus, Freiburg im Breisgau
☎ 0049 761 38 81552

Sylvain Cambreling, cont.
Mozart - Symphony No. 33
Widman - Harmonia
Bruckner - Symphony No. 4
New Japan Philharmonic
28 July - 7.15 pm - Suntory Hall, Tokyo ☎ 00813 3584 9999

Messiaen - L'Ascension, and Oiseaux Exotiques
Bruckner - Symphony No. 7
SWR Sinfonieorchester Baden-Baden und Freiburg
9 Sept - 8 pm - Philharmonie, Berlin ☎ 0049 30 2029 8715

also at Linz Brucknerfest - see back page.

Ricardo Chailly

Bruckner - Symphony No.5
16 Oct - 8 pm; 17 Oct - 1.30 pm
18 Oct - 8 pm; 21 Oct - 7.30 pm
Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Symphony Center, Chicago ☎ 001 312 294 3000

Thomas Dausgaard

Morawetz - Carnival Overture
Ruders - Concerto in Pieces
Bruckner - Symphony No.2
Czech Philharmonic Orchestra
9, 10 Oct - 7.30 pm - Rudolfinum, Prague ☎ 0042 0227 059 227

Sir Colin Davis

Schubert - Symphony No. 8
Bruckner - Symphony No. 6
London Symphony Orchestra
23 June - 8 pm - Tonhalle, Düsseldorf ☎ 0049 211 8996123
24 June - 8 pm - Philharmonie, Köln ☎ 0049 221 280 280

Christoph Eschenbach

Bach - Magnificat in D
Bruckner - Ave Maria
Mozart - Ave Verum Corpus
Bruckner - Mass No. 2 in E minor
Dresdner Philharmonie
19 July - 8 pm Frauenkirche, Dresden ☎ 0049 3514 866866

Daniel Harding

Boulez - Livre pour cordes
Messiaen - Poème pour Mi [5, 7, 8 Sept]
Beethoven - Piano Concerto No. 4 [6 Sept]
Bruckner - Symphony No. 4
London Symphony Orchestra
5 Sep - 8 pm - Konzerthaus, Dortmund ☎ 0049 231 22696 200
6 Sep - 6 pm - Redefin, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival
7 Sep - 8 pm - Philharmonie, Berlin ☎ 0049 302029 8715
8 Oct - 7.30 pm - Barbican Hall, London ☎ (0)207638 8891

Philippe Herreweghe

Bruckner - Aequalis No.1, No. 2
Bruckner - Motets: Ave Maria, Os justi, Locus iste
Bruckner - Mass No. 2 in E minor
Collegium Vocale Gent, Festival de Saintes
12 July - 8 pm - Abbaye aud Dames ☎ 0033 5 4697 4848
Other programmes including Bruckner - Mass No. 2 in E minor
26 Aug. - 8 pm - The Edinburgh Festival, ☎ (0)131 473 2000
28 Aug - 7.30 pm The Helsinki Festival, ☎ 00358 600 900900
30 Aug - 7.30, 9, 10.30 pm - 3 performances in Bremen Music
Festival's 21 concert 'Eine grosse Nachtmusik' ☎ 0049 42133 6699

Bruckner - Symphony No. 8
Orchestre des Champs-Élysées,
20 July - 8 pm - Cathédrale Saint Pierre
Festival de Saintes ☎ 0033 5 4697 4848
11 Sep - 8 pm - Brussels, Henry Le Boeufzaal 0032 2507 8200
18 Sep - 8 pm - Philharmonie, Berlin ☎ 0049 30 2029 8715

Manfred Honeck

Schubert - Sacred choral works;
 Bruckner - Te Deum
 Württembergisches Staatsorchester Stuttgart
 29 June - 5 pm - Pfarrkirche S. Katharina, Wolfegg
 Internationale Wolfegge Konzerte ☎ 0049 7527 960151

Eliahu Inbal

Mahler - Kindertotenlieder; Bruckner - Symphony No. 2
 WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln
 3 July - 8 pm - St Maria im Kapitol, Köln ☎ 0049221 2801
 4 July - 8 pm - Rheingau Musik Festival ☎ 0049 1805 743464
 6 July - 8.15 pm - Concertgebouw, Amsterdam
 ☎ 0031 20 6718345

Mariss Jansons

Messiaen - Hymne au Saint Sacrement [28/8, 5/9]
 Poulenc - Organ Concerto [28/8, 5/9]; Debussy - La Mer [2/9]
 Schubert - Lieder [6/9]
 Bruckner - Symphony No. 3
 Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra
 28 Aug - 8.15 pm - Concertgebouw, Amsterdam ☎ 0031206718345
 2 Sep - 8 pm Freiburg im Breisgau ☎ 0049 761 38 81552
 5 Sep - 8 pm - Philharmonie, Berlin ☎ 0049 30 2029 8715
 6 Sep - 7.30 pm - Lucerne Music Festival ☎ 0041 41 226 4480

Lutoslawski - Piano Concerto; Bruckner - Symphony No. 4
 Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra
 17, 18, 19 Sep - 8.15 pm; 21 Sep - 2.15 pm
 Concertgebouw, Amsterdam ☎ 0031 206718345

Marek Janowski

Mozart - Violin Concerto No. 4; Bruckner - Symphony No. 9
 Radio Symphony Orchestra, Berlin
 28 Sep - 6 pm - Philharmonie, Essen - ☎ 0049 2018122 8801
 and at Bruckner Festival Linz - see back page.

Neemi Järvi

Bruckner - Symphony No. 5
 The Hague Residentie Orchestra
 3 Oct - 8.15 pm - Dr Anton Philipszaal ☎ 0031 70 8800333
 5 Oct - 8 pm - Freiburg im Breisgau ☎ 0049 761 38 81552

Ricardo Luna

Bruckner - Te Deum
 Bruckner - Mass No.3 in F minor (first performance of the version of
 1883, ed. Paul Hawkshaw) Wiener Madrigalchor, Schola Cantorum,
 Wiener Volksooper SO
 22 Jun - 3.30 pm - Musikverein ☎ 0043 1505 8190

Lorin Maazel

Bruckner - Symphony No. 8
 New York Philharmonic
 4 Sep - 7.30 pm - Lucerne Music Festival ☎ 0041 41 226 4480
 5 Sep - 8 pm - Philharmonie, Essen ☎ 0049 2018122 8801

Ricardo Muti

Bartok - Viola Concerto; Bruckner - Symphony No. 2
 Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra
 8 Sep - 7.30 pm - Lucerne Music Festival ☎ 0041 41 226 4480

Eiji Oue

Beethoven - Piano Concerto No. 3; Bruckner - Symphony No. 7
 NDR Radiophilharmonie
 26, 27 July - 8 pm - Großer Sendesaal NDR, Hannover
 ☎ 0049 511988 2999

Bruckner - Symphony No. 9
 Osaka Philharmonic

9 July - 7 pm - Symphony Hall, Osaka ☎ 0081 664536000

Sir Simon Rattle

Schreker - Chamber Symphony
 Bruckner - Symphony No. 9
 Berlin Philharmoniker
 14, 15 Sep - 8 pm - Philharmonie, Berlin ☎ 0049 30 2029 8715

Stephan Rommelspacher

Bruckner - Mass No. 3 in F minor
 Bruckner - Te Deum
 Staatsorchester Rheinische Philharmonie Koblenz
 3 Oct - 5 pm - Hohe Domkirche Trier
 Moselfestwochen ☎ 0049 65 3150 0095

Stanislaw Skrowaczewski

Brahms - Piano Concerto No. 1
 Bruckner - Symphony No. 0
 Yoimuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra
 21 Sep - 2 pm - Tokyo Met. Art Space ☎ 0081 3 59851707
 22 Sep - 7 pm - Suntory Hall, Tokyo ☎ 0081 3 3584 9999

Bruckner - Symphony No. 8

St Louis Symphony Orchestra
 17, 18 Oct - 8 pm - Powell Symphony Hall,
 Saint Louis ☎ 001 314 5341700

Jac van Steen

Messiaen - Les offrandes oubliées
 Schubert - Symphony No. 8
 Bruckner - Symphony No. 6
 Dortmunder Philharmoniker
 20, 21, 22 Oct - 8 pm - Konzerthaus, Dortmund
 ☎ 0049 231 22696 200

Constantin Trinks

Shostakovich - Cello Concerto No. 1
 Bruckner - Symphony No. 3 (1889)
 Saarländisches Staatsorchester
 23, 24 June - 8 pm - Congresshalle, Saarbrücken
 ☎ 0049 681 3092486

Bartok - Piano Concerto No.3; Bruckner - Symphony No.7
 Saarländisches Staatsorchester
 Sep - 8 pm - Congresshalle, Saarbrücken
 ☎ 0049 681 3092486

Jan Willem de Vriend

Schumann - Manfred Overture, and Piano Concerto
 Bruckner - Symphony No. 1 (Linzer Fassung)
 Orkest van het Oosten (Orchestra of the East.)
 20 Sep - 7.30 pm, De Doelen, Rotterdam ☎ 00 31 10 2171717

Franz Welser-Möst

Ades - Powder Her Face: Overture, Wälzler, Finale
 Bruckner - Symphony No. 9
 Cleveland Orchestra
 1 Sep - Lucerne Music Festival ☎ 0041 41 226 4480

Chamber Music**Zehetmair Quartet**

Bruckner - String Quartet
 Holliger - String Quartet: Beethoven - String Quartet Op. 135
 24 Aug - 3 pm - Sellokali, Helsinki
 The Helsinki Festival, ☎ 00358 600 900900

Renaud Capuçon & friends

Bruckner - Symphony No. 7 (version for chamber ensemble)
 Schubert - Octet
 16 Sep - 8 pm - Stadttheater, Wilhelmshaven
 Bremen Music Festival ☎ 0049 42133 6699

Philharmonie Quartett Berlin

Pärt - Fratres; Piazzolla - Suite del Angel
 Bruckner - String Quintet
 + 12 cellists from the Berlin Phil.
 21 Sep - 11 am - Philharmonie, Berlin ☎ 0049 302029 8715

With gratitude to Mr. Tatsuro Ouchi whose web-site
[http://www.bekkoame.ne.jp/~hippo/
 musik/konzertvorschau/bruckner.html](http://www.bekkoame.ne.jp/~hippo/musik/konzertvorschau/bruckner.html)
 is the source for much of this information.

BrucknerTage 2008 - St. Florian

Brahms and Bruckner

Opening Concert - Marmorsaal - Sunday 17th August 2008

Handel - Arias

Mozart - Piano Concerto in E flat, K 449

Works by **Johann Strauss** etc.

String players of the Vienna Philharmonic

Klaus Laczika, Piano; Thomas Staudinger, Baritone

Chamber music concert - Monday 18th August

Bruckner - String Quintet in F major

Brahms - String Sextet in B major, op.18

Soloists from the Vienna Philharmonic

Organ concert on the Bruckner Organ - Tues. 19th August

“To Compose, To Arrange, To Play”

Organ music of Brahms, Bruckner and from the 21st

century - with Daniel Glaus from Bern

sponsored by www.brucknerfreunde.at

Piano Evening - Wednesday 20th August

Brahms - Piano Sonata in F minor Op. 5

Bruckner - Piano pieces

Debussy - Works for piano

Christoph Eggner, piano.

Jazz Evening - Thursday 21st August

Bruckner: **Mass in F minor** (Newly arranged)

Ohad Talmors Mass Orchestra

Featuring the Spring String Quartet

Various musicians from Austria and USA

StiftsBasilika St Florian - Friday 22nd. August

Bruckner - 3 Motets:

Christus factus est, Os justi, Ave Maria

Mass No. 3 F minor for soloists, choir, orchestra.

StiftsChoir St. Florian + Domchoir Linz

Ellen van Lier/Soprano; Valentina Kutzarova/Alto;

Markus Miesenberger/Tenor; Reinhard Mayr/Bass,

Altomonte-Orchestra; Conductor: Matthias Giesen

Musica Sacra - Marmorsaal - Saturday 23rd August

Brahms - A German Requiem,

version for soloists, choir and piano 4-hands

Ingrid Sonnleithner, Soprano; Johann Leutgeb, Baritone

Kyoko Yoshizawa, piano; Johannes Pell, piano

Conductor: Heinz Ferlesch

International Symposium on “Brahms and Bruckner in the Mirror of Music Theory” takes place within the scope of the BrucknerTage, from 17-20 August.

Tourismusverband St. Florian

Marktplatz 2, 4490 St. Florian

☎0043 (0) 7224 5690

Fax: 0043 (0) 7224 5788

st.florian@oberoesterreich.at

www.brucknertage.at

The Brucknerfest 2008 - Linz

Works by Bruckner to be performed
on the following dates:

Friday 19 Sept 2008

19:30 - Brucknerhaus Linz, Grand Hall

Thomas Mandel & The Temporary Art Orchestra

bruckner V. improvised Version for Jazz-ensemble

Tuesday 23 Sept 2008

19:30 - Brucknerhaus Linz, Grand Hall

Messiaen - L'Ascension

Bruckner - Symphony No. 7

SWR Sinfonieorchester Baden-Baden und Freiburg

cond. Sylvain Cambreling

Friday 26 Sept 2008

19:30 - Stiftsbasilika, St Florian

Bruckner - Symphony No. 9

Radio Symphony Orchestra Berlin / Janowski

Saturday 27 Sept 2008

19:30 - Alter Dom, Linz

Bruckner - works for Male Voice Choir

inc. Inveni David, Um Mitternacht,

Fest-Cantata for the laying of the foundation stone of

“Neuen Dom” - “Preiset den Herren”

with piano/organ and brass - Thomas Kerbl conducts.

Wednesday 1 Oct 2008

19:30 - Alter Dom, Linz

Bruckner - Mass No.1 in D minor

and motets and pieces for organ.

Ars Antiqua Austria

(with original instruments of Bruckner's time)

Rupert Gottfried Frieberger

Thursday 2 Oct 2008

ABC - Anton Bruckner Centre, Ansfelden

19.00 Visit to Bruckner's birth house

20.00 **Bruckner - String Quintet, Scherzo & Adagio,**

arranged for accordions by Wolfgang Mayer;

and works by **Isang Yun, Helmut Rogl**

21.00 Private View: Lucas Drobný - dialogue with Anton

Bruckner, in sculpture, trinkets and pictures.

Alfred Melichar, Bruno Würleitner - accordions;

Martin Rummel - cello.

Saturday 4 Oct. 2008

19:30 - Brucknerhaus Linz, Grand Hall

Debussy - Danse sacree, Danse profane

from Danses pour Harpe.

Bruckner - Symphony No. 3

Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra / Gergiev

Brucknerhaus, Linz

☎ 0043 732775230

Box office e-mail: kassa@liva.co.at

www.brucknerhaus.at