



# The Bruckner Journal

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Supplement: CD Releases  
from March 1998.

Silhouettes by Otto Böhler.

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## MEETING POINTS

WE feared the worst when there was flooding in several parts of England the week before our readers' meeting in April. Whatever the reason, the numbers at Dr Johnson House were indeed lower than projected. All the same, enthusiasts came from as far away as North Yorkshire and the South Coast, and feedback suggests that their time was not wasted. Liquid refreshments were supplemented with a donation of cakes from Drucker's Vienna Patisserie – to whom our thanks for their generosity.

This was a unique gathering of Bruckner lovers: nothing like it has been convened in Britain before, and we are not yet a constituted society. Each person accepted the invitation to introduce himself or herself to the circle and to say how they first got to know Bruckner's music. Crawford opened the meeting with some reminiscences of his own; Raymond and Peter touched on some aspects of this journal. Although the number of subscribers has long been in three figures, at least another 50 are really needed to ensure stability. Consequently the general feeling seemed to be that the formation of an official Bruckner Society, with the extra cost which that would entail, should await a further increase in readers. On the other hand there was strong support for a proposed Bruckner Weekend next April (see back page).

We appeal to you to help bring subscribers up to the requisite numbers, whether by word of mouth, by sponsoring an advert or by distributing leaflets. Thanks to **your** support, The Bruckner Journal has made great strides in only a short time; one more concerted heave, and it should gain a very sure foothold in the world of music.

## Bruckner: Symphony No. 4, Hallé Orchestra/Herbig, Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, 2 April 1998; Symphony No. 8, BBC Philharmonic/Sinaisky, 23 May 1998.

by Derek Scott

A glance at the programme notes would have encouraged the belief that the 1874-8 original version of the Fourth was to be performed, but it was, as usual, the later version with completely new scherzo and much-altered Finale that we heard. **Günther Herbig** has won the admiration of Manchester audiences for his Bruckner interpretations. He certainly has the right pedigree, having studied conducting with Hermann Scherchen and Herbert von Karajan.

It was evident from the opening that there was to be no romantic lingering over the horn theme, despite the work's subtitle. In fact, Herbig knocked a good two minutes off this movement as given by Stanislaw Skrowaczewski and the Hallé on their CD recording (IMP Classics, 1993). His reading was informed by a sense of structure, and the performance was carefully shaped throughout. Herbig's virtues were soon apparent, especially his control of dynamics, clear delineation of inner voices, and clean attacks. Examples of his attention to detail were the gentle rubato before the second theme; the timps *hervortretend* at the recapitulation, as Bruckner marks; and the sensitive display of shifting tonal colours in the coda (made to sound more than ever prophetic of the coda of the corresponding movement of the Sixth). The orchestral playing was magnificent, and the brass sounded splendid in the chorale theme.

The long second theme of the next movement was played by the violas with long bows and beautifully phrased, dispelling any *longueurs* that might sometimes assail the listener at this point. There was then a Schubertian rather than Mahlerian return to the 'funeral march' theme. Herbig's long-breathed control showed in his build-up to the grand *langsamer* climax, which sounded glorious in the improved acoustic of the Bridgewater Hall.

With seven horns instead of four, the 'hunting' scherzo had more than usual bite. They were carefully deployed, however, and the passages of horn and woodwind dialogue received delicate treatment. The trio section had an earthy rustic character and was not taken too quickly.

The atmosphere of mystery at the start of the Finale was gradually intensified before exploding into an awesome unison. Under Herbig's direction Bruckner's climaxes may swing from the extremes of terror to grandeur, but never cross into the domain of bombast. His architectural approach was again evident in his effort to make the structure of this movement convincing. There were well-judged changes between *alla breve* and common time as well as further attention to detail: for example, a lightening of mood here, a touch of rubato there, and dramatic contrasts when necessary elsewhere. As in the first movement, there was a concern for the balance of those interweaving melodic strands that are so

important to Bruckner's musical style. Moreover, this movement abounds in the three-against-two rhythmical intricacies that are also so typical of Bruckner, none of which managed to trip up the Hallé players.

Throughout, Herbig proved responsive to the needs of Bruckner's music, whether by encouraging an appropriate lilt to a polka rhythm, drawing a singing cantilena from the violins, or ensuring a heart-stopping stillness to the beginning of a coda. A Bruckner performance under his baton is not to be missed.

On 23 May, **Vassily Sinaisky** conducted the BBC Philharmonic in a performance of Bruckner's epic Eighth Symphony in the same hall. This time the programme announced in bold type that it was the revised version of 1889-90, although no mention was made of which edition (it was, in fact, the Nowak). Sinaisky worked with Kondrashin, and was Principal Conductor of the Moscow Philharmonic until 1996. It is not surprising, therefore, that his interpretation should bring to mind the superb Russian recording of this work under Mravinsky in 1959. Sinaisky did not quite achieve the latter's speed in the Scherzo, but he came close. How different this approach to the movement is from the readings given by the likes of Giulini, Karajan and Wand. What it lost in relentlessness, it made up for in excitement, however, and it was marred only by the heavy plunking *pizzicato* at the start of the Trio section.

The opening movement was a little disappointing; the first fluffed horn chord was an ill omen. The woodwind instruments were sometimes masked; the ensemble occasionally lacked accuracy; and the dynamics were not always sufficiently contrasted. Sinaisky was obviously of the distinctly modern opinion that Bruckner's music should not be pulled about, but I feel sure that a sense of shape needs to be better communicated to the audience in these long movements. The coda produced something more akin to a slippery menace rather than a ticking menace; perhaps that was deliberate – I've read all sorts of accounts of what is meant by the term *Totenuhr* that Bruckner used to describe this ending.

I am relieved to say that the Adagio and Finale were wonderful. Again, there was a tendency to exercise restraint even in those places where Bruckner actually calls for an *accelerando* or *ritardando*, but the rhythmic precision was a joy, the string intonation excellent in both lyrical and angular passages, and the climaxes were tremendous. There was a nice touch just before the recapitulation in the Finale when the clarinets were given prominence, and this movement's coda was thrillingly played, prompting enthusiastic and lengthy applause from the (surprisingly) large audience.

## COMPACT DISCS

### Bruckner: Symphony No. 8, in C minor

Berliner Philharmoniker/Wilhelm Furtwängler

(recorded at the Gemeindehaus, Berlin Dahlem, 14 March 1949)

Testament SBT 1143 (78 minutes 49 seconds)

by Mark Audus

This is the first of two recordings made by the Berlin Philharmonic and Furtwängler on consecutive days in Berlin during March 1949. The second, made at a live concert in the Titania Palast on 15 March, was taped by RIAS and is available as part of EMI's second box of historic Bruckner recordings already reviewed here by PP (volume 1 number 3), and separately on the Music & Arts label. Though that performance undoubtedly has the *frisson* of a live event, it is marred by the contributions of an excessively bronchial audience. In this respect the present recording – which derives from tapes of a Sender Freies studio broadcast – certainly scores over its companion. As Alan Sanders points out in his detailed and informative note, there are telling interpretative differences between the two performances. As might be expected, the live performance is the more urgent and excitable (particularly in the Scherzo and Adagio), whilst the present issue is generally a shade more controlled and measured without any loss of intensity.

More important, however, are differences in the recorded sound. The Testament remastering preserves a fair amount of tape noise, and the dynamic range is not as wide as on the EMI transfer of the later performance. But

although the latter (like the much-prized 1944 Vienna Philharmonic performance on DG and Music & Arts) has greater clarity and bite, the Sender Freies recording places the listener closer to the orchestra and the acoustic is drier. Despite the sometimes musty sound, many details of the wind writing are much clearer, and the timpani are free from boom. Crucially, the bass is much riper, the strings richer and the brass have greater presence and weight. From the work's opening murmurings, through the searing intensity of the Adagio to the triumphant final pages, the sound grows gloriously from the bass upwards, combining passion with purpose. The result is much more faithful to the sonorities we know Furtwängler purposely cultivated in his orchestras. As such this is an important addition to the conductor's discography, the occasional lapses in intonation and ensemble being easily forgiven.

More than any other conductor, Furtwängler achieved an ideal balance between structural integrity and expressive intensity in this extraordinary work. All Bruckner lovers should possess at least one of these recordings; admirers of his unique gifts in this music will want all three.

*Testament CDs are distributed in the UK by The Complete Record Co.*



## Bruckner Studies

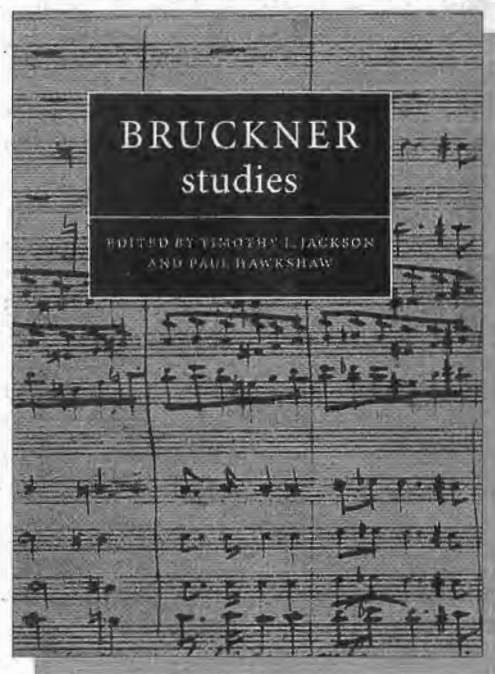
Edited by Timothy L. Jackson  
and Paul Hawkshaw

*Bruckner Studies* presents the latest musicological and theoretical research on the life and music of Anton Bruckner. It is the most important English-language book on the composer since Robert Simpson's *The Essence of Bruckner*. The essays provide new biographical insights into his enigmatic personality, working procedures, and circle of students and friends; consider the fascinating history of the dissemination of his music during his lifetime and in this century, including its reception in Nazi Germany; and provide new analytical perspectives on his musical style and its origins. The volume challenges the reader to reassess the man and his music in a new light, unencumbered by decades of special interest and propaganda which have coloured perceptions of Bruckner for more than a century.

'... its influences could well be salutary'. *BBC Music Magazine*

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## **Bruckner: Symphony No. 2, in C minor**

*(1872 version, ed. William Carragan)*

*National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland/Georg Tintner*

*Naxos 8.554006 (recorded September 1996)*

by Dermot Gault

This is an important issue, as it is the first recording of the original 1872 version of the Second to be generally available in the UK. It is not the first recording ever: that was made by the Linz Bruckner Orchestra under Kurt Eichhorn, once available as an import as part of a 2-CD set with the rather different 1873 version (Camerata 30CM-195~6). That issue had the advantage of a long and revealing essay by William Carragan describing the edition and its relation to the later versions of 1873 and 1877. This issue doesn't, and indeed the writer of the German notes was evidently not informed that this version was in any way different from the usual editions of Haas and Nowak.

The appearance of yet another edition of a Bruckner symphony may well engender scepticism in some readers, and it would take an essay as long as Carragan's to describe this version properly. But to put it very briefly, it is clear that this issue gives us the Second as Bruckner originally wrote it, and – minus a few later accretions – as it exists in the MS (Mus.Hs. 19.474 in the Austrian National Library, from whom microfilms of this MS can be obtained).

The most striking difference is that the scherzo comes second. It is supposed that Bruckner changed the middle movements round to avoid comparisons with Beethoven's Ninth, and it seems that the change was made while the parts were being copied for the private run-through Dessoff grudgingly conducted late in 1872. The first-movement exposition is in fact the same in all versions, but with the development section changes from the scores we know creep in (no bassoons at bar 194!) and there is some unfamiliar material. The climax of the slow movement (beginning at letter K) is also quite different. The finale is more or less familiar until letter J, where there is an extended passage which was later replaced (twice) by shorter passages. The versions join up again at letter K, but the passage before letter L was originally considerably longer. The tutti following letter T is different again, and much longer, with ordinary quavers instead of triplets.

Bruckner rewrote some passages for the 1873 official première, cut the repeats in the scherzo and trio, and, doubtless for practical reasons only, changed the lovely ending of the slow movement, allocating the horn part to clarinet and violas. The eventual 1877 version (the version Nowak gives us) includes cuts insisted on by Herbeck but also includes

quite a few alterations by Bruckner himself. It also incorporates the periodic revision to which Bruckner is now known to have subjected his first five numbered symphonies at this time.

The question naturally arises as to where all this leaves the good old Haas edition on which most of us were raised. Haas's score is an edition of the 1877 version which restores parts of the 1872 score, including the repeats in the scherzo and some of the cuts in the second and fourth movements, but keeps the main rewrites and changes in orchestration of the 1877 version. It's probably best seen as an ideal version of the 1877 score as it might have been without the influence of Herbeck, to whom Haas attributed some of the changes Bruckner made in 1873.

In the finale, for instance, Haas opts for the 1877 version of the passage at letter T, but follows it with the quiet passage cut in 1876. Unfortunately the quaver rhythm of this passage doesn't match the distinctive triplet rhythm of the 1877 version, and so Haas was driven to recomposing the violin parts at letter U. Possibly what Bruckner himself might have done had he retained the passage, but not a procedure a modern editor would endorse.

The 1872 version now revealed is longer than any of the others, and indeed the finale, at 806 bars, is Bruckner's longest movement in terms of bars. But it's not a bar too long, and although some of the revisions were undeniably effective and even beneficial, the symphony is more timelessly cogent in its full form. As a result this issue is musically valuable, besides helping to set the record straight.

The veteran Georg Tintner, a pupil of Weingartner, has a feeling for Bruckner's idiom, and his gentle unforced approach, at tempi generally broader than Eichhorn's, is persuasive. At times I wanted him to exert a slightly firmer grip and draw a fuller tone from the strings (the dull acoustics of the National Concert Hall in Dublin are probably not helpful), and an extra session might also have helped the tricky syncopations to be found in this version of the finale. But this is still a very worthwhile issue, and Naxos have to be thanked for making it available. Perhaps other record companies will follow their example instead of perpetuating a version fabricated over forty years after Bruckner was dead.

*Dermot Gault was born in Belfast and obtained a Doctorate from Queen's University, Belfast in 1994 with a thesis on the different versions of Bruckner's Third, Fourth and Eighth Symphonies. He is a reviewer for the Irish Times.*

## Bruckner: Symphony No. 4 (1878-80 version ed. Nowak)

Los Angeles Philharmonic/Zubin Mehta

Belart 461 3562 10

This is one of Bruckner's most familiar scores, given a highly polished performance by a leading orchestra and conductor, and richly recorded by Decca in 1970. It's still very enjoyable as sound, with Mehta revelling in the full singing tone of the Los Angeles strings. Interpretatively, Mehta steers a middle course between the forthright Klemperer and the indulgent Tennstedt, and tempi, balance and phrasing for the first three movements all seem entirely natural. He is at his most individual – and most debatable – in the Finale. Although it's nowhere acknowledged, various differences in orchestration make it clear that the Nowak edition is being used, and the changes between C and 4/4 which appear in this edition of the finale lead Mehta to take the third group at a brisk, rather military clip, while the quieter episodes sprawl.

Overall this is a fine performance, but in the last analysis Mehta remains rather bland and external in feeling, and he fails to build the work symphonically. To give only three examples, Klemperer on EMI, Jochum on DG and Haitink's first recording (with the Concertgebouw) all in their different ways bring us closer to Bruckner.

Dermot Gault

*In our last issue we were unable to include some comments on Thomas Schmögner's organ transcription of Bruckner's Fourth Symphony (Edition Lade CD 009) for reasons of space. Howard Jones listened to the recording from the viewpoint of both an orchestral horn player and an occasional organist. His conclusions are:*

- \* Mostly very effective and technically very well played
- \* Sparser passages work best; some tuttis are impressive, too, but others are too congested
- \* Registration not always well chosen – decorative strands in the treble often swamp main melody in tenor or baritone register and sometimes important supporting figures in this register cannot be heard. Some (quiet) horn calls do not register well
- \* Movements II and III work best but I and IV also make a tremendous impression
- \* Dynamics (pp) are not always observed
- \* Changes in registration are well done mainly but some abrupt changes jar uncomfortably
- \* Simulation of long drum-roll pedal notes with a sustained pedal stop does not work convincingly, although effective pulsation at the outset of I works well (the horn counter-melody is presumably played on the pedal organ with 8' or 4' stops)
- \* The end of I is just noise – the horn call is very unhorn-like and the tutti at A in IV is a jumble

*Lionel Rogg's version for organ of Bruckner's Eighth Symphony recorded on BIS CD 946 will be reviewed in November.*

## OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

A new Philips CD (454 446-2) not to be missed by Lieder lovers features the twenty songs of Ernst Krenek's cycle, *Reisebuch aus den österreichischen Alpen* ("Travel Book from the Austrian Alps"). Krenek wrote the words and music in 1929, several years before adopting the twelve-note technique in his opera *Karl V*. Mixing lyricism with satire (modern tourism is one of the targets), the cycle travels backwards in time with an overt tribute to Schubert. Baritone Wolfgang Holzmair and pianist Gérard Wyss are the admirable performers. Their CD also includes seven *Fiedellieder* which Krenek composed the same year, and texts and translations are provided. The packaging is uncommonly attractive, the disc nestling within a card imitation of a small photo album, illustrated with Austrian rural scenes.

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# Bruckner Remembered

by Stephen Johnson

Faber & Faber, 1998. ISBN 0-571-17095-1.

186pp (paperback). £12.99



This book appears as part of a series which includes volumes devoted to Bartok, Mahler and Satie among others. A book on Bruckner is however especially welcome, as English-speaking readers have always been rather deprived as far as source material on this composer is concerned, and most of us have had to depend on selectively quoted second- and third-hand sources for our knowledge of Bruckner's life and personality. Neither the standard if unwieldy Göllicherich-Auer biography nor the composer's letters have ever been translated into English, and neither has there been anything resembling Manfred Wagner's indispensable documentary study.

The present work goes a long way to remedying this last deficiency. Here we have naive anecdotes of Bruckner's childhood from his brother Ignaz, affectionate memories of his youth from Karl Seiberl, and moving accounts of Bruckner's final days from Hugo Wolf, Josef Schalk and, most importantly, his doctor, Richard Heller. There are also fascinating documents such as the report on Bruckner's audition for the post of Organist at the Cathedral in Linz, and a selection of reviews of the disastrous première of the Third Symphony. However the bulk of the book derives, inevitably, from the affectionate memoirs by his friends and former pupils, many of which appeared to mark the centenary of Bruckner's birth.

The mention of these works raises a note of warning, as a certain amount of that material is anecdotal of a sort which has tended to contribute to Bruckner's image problem. In the originals, Bruckner is made to appear almost excessively rustic by the use of a heavy dialect, which Johnson has wisely refrained from trying to render into English. One is inclined to ask if such material is really helpful to the cause of Bruckner, but the answer is an emphatic 'yes' when used judiciously, as here.

For example, Fritz Kreisler's story about how he and his fellow pupils conducted Pavlovian experiments on Bruckner's dog is highly dubious (there is no other reference to Bruckner's ever owning a pet of any sort), and it may be that Johnson includes this 'priceless' anecdote as an example of Bruckner apocrypha. His attitude to his sources is the reverse of

uncritical; for example, it seems very probable that Bruckner did encounter Brahms at 'The Red Hedgehog Inn' at least once, but the problem is that there are so many different versions of the story, and they are all second or third-hand.

Fortunately there are abundant first-hand memories of Bruckner by people who respected him and had something pertinent to say about him, and the bulk of the book derives from the entertaining and well-written reminiscences of Bruckner pupils such as Eckstein, Hruby, Oberleithner and Klose.

The picture that emerges is richer, and more contradictory, than the Bruckner we have selectively glimpsed hitherto. There are references to Bruckner's 'simple, child-like nature' and his social awkwardness, but also to his dark complexes and obsessions. The surgeon Alexander Fränkel remembers his morbid interest in medical cases, August Stradal his ghoulish pre-occupations with murder trials and executions. Both Bruckner and his pupils are amazingly frank about his sex-life, or lack of it, and on the immature clumsiness he manifested in his relations with women. There are differing views on Bruckner's intellectual capacities; Friedrich Klose states that 'Bruckner had hardly any intellectual needs' and Friedrich Eckstein recalls that 'Bruckner showed not the slightest interest' in intellectual discussion. On the other hand Carl Hruby was astonished to find that Bruckner had read the *Leben Jesu* of David Strauss and 'my amazement increased when I heard how calmly and objectively Bruckner spoke about this work' by an avowed agnostic. There are examples of the apologetic, cringing Bruckner, but also evidence of a surprisingly temperamental, even autocratic, side. On the whole the picture is an attractive one. Bruckner appears as a kindly and intelligent, if unsophisticated, man, tolerant (see the section on 'The Honourable Israelites'), affable, and with more self-knowledge than he is generally given credit for. He recognized the stranglehold his obsessions had on him, and acknowledged that he may have devoted his youth to musical study at the cost of his social development. Above all we see Bruckner as the good companion, the trencherman with an appetite for crab soup, and get a few tantalising glimpses of the improviser of genius. Johnson's arrangement of his material by chronology and subject-matter rather than by source cuts through the rambling and repetitive nature of the source-material and allows him to play off conflicting or

complementary pictures of Bruckner's character and career (the differing views on his teaching, for instance).

Inevitably, those who have dipped into this source material will miss some items which might have merited inclusion because they refer to some of the themes raised; for instance, August Stradal's *Erinnerungen an Bruckners letzte Zeit* (from the 1932 *Zeitschrift für Musik*) is useful not only for his impressions of Bruckner playing at Liszt's funeral at Bayreuth (he was not on form), but also for Bruckner's subsequent exposition of the programmatic content of the Eighth Symphony. Another possible inclusion from the same source might have been the memories of Amalie Klose, the sister of Bruckner's pupil Friedrich Klose, who also recalled Bruckner expounding the programme of the Eighth, and heard him play the scherzo. His broad and rhythmically emphatic style led her to criticize conductors who take it too quickly, which ties in with Anton Meissner's quoted remarks about the scherzo of the Third Symphony, 'which he felt conductors always performed too quickly'. This in turn raises the fascinating question of Bruckner performance tradition, but such speculations are beyond Johnson's remit.

One also wonders if the memoirs of Bruckner's teacher Otto Kitzler and of the son of his champion

Johann Herbeck would have merited quotation, and the book fails to shed much light on Bruckner's relationship with Franz Schalk. It's clear from the memoirs of Carl Hruby that Bruckner's relations with Josef Schalk had their ups and downs, but one must be wary of lumping the brothers together, and other sources seem to indicate that Franz enjoyed a much greater influence than Josef.

But it's all too easy to complain of omissions. Bruckner was, let's face it, something of an eccentric. His lack of social veneer meant that virtually everything he said and did became an expression of his core personality, and this openness fascinated his contemporaries. However, as Johnson himself acknowledges, the book could easily have been twice the length without telling us anything especially new about Bruckner.

Translation takes time, a book of this nature must be selective, and Johnson has done an excellent job in tracking down so many diverse sources and rendering them into English. At one stroke he has materially added to our knowledge of this fascinating man.

One might add that an error appears to have slipped through the net (page 122): according to other sources it was the Fourth Symphony, not the Third, which Franz Schalk persuaded Mottl to conduct at Karlsruhe in 1881.

Dermot Gault

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**Hansjürgen Schaefer. *Anton Bruckner: Ein Führer durch Leben und Werk.***  
*Henschel Verlag, Berlin 1996. ISBN 3-89487-249-7. 205pp. DM 58 (hardback)*

by Peter Palmer

East Germany's top orchestras, notably those of Dresden and Leipzig, served Bruckner well during the Communist era. It is fairly safe to assume that his music provided East Germans with a welcome source of spiritual nourishment, then as now. And a Bruckner monograph by Matthias Hansen, published in 1987, shows that ideological constraints need not prevent a writer from saying worthwhile things about the composer. Hansjürgen Schaefer, who was educated in Leipzig and East Berlin, does his "guide" to Bruckner's life and music no great harm by drawing on Hansen's work.

Far more damaging are the errors that emerge from even a cursory reading. The first jolt to the reader's confidence comes towards the end of the dustjacket blurb, which claims that not only Bruckner's symphonies and masses but also his string quartets (in the plural) are part of the regular concert repertoire. A trawl through the book itself yields a variety of misprints, from the absurd performance time given for Psalm 150 to the omission of Bruckner, in the bibliography, from the title of Dika Newlin's *Bruckner, Mahler, Schoenberg*.

Now these faults are attributable to inadequate proof-reading; and the publisher must take the blame for the lack of an index of any description. Writing in the *Austrian Music Journal*, however, Elisabeth Maier has

listed a number of authorial misapprehensions, especially about Bruckner's early years. Dr. Maier is also unhappy about the "atavistic, heathen, at any rate 'Protestant' elements" that Schaefer finds within Bruckner's mature works. To my mind this statement is highly interesting, but it needs to be expanded. Does it refer to the symphonic scherzo movements, or to other pieces as well (such as the choral music in which Crawford Howie, in our last issue, perceived an almost "primitive" strength of expression)? Is there, perhaps, a parallel with late Janacek?

The book's title and layout give it the appearance of a textbook, and as such it was bound to incur a critical drubbing. I hope Hansjürgen Schaefer will not feel too discouraged, for he obviously has something to contribute to discussions of Bruckner.

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# REFLECTIONS ON THE SYMPHONIES

by Raymond Cox

## ***SYMPHONY No. 3 in D minor***

*Composed 1872/3, first published edition by Nowak, 1977.*

*Revision of Adagio 1876, ed. Nowak 1980. Revision of whole symphony 1877, first published 1878; ed. Oeser 1950; ed. Nowak 1981. Another complete revision 1889/90, published 1890 ed. Franz Schalk; ed. Nowak 1959.*

In my early concert-going days in Birmingham in the nineteen-sixties, a man once took his seat in front of me and was soon greeted by an acquaintance who asked: "And what brings you here this evening?" (There was a popular concerto or some other well-known work in the first half of the programme). There immediately came the proud reply: "The Bruckner! The Bruckner D minor!" It was the Third Symphony, not the Ninth, which was then very rarely performed, if at all. In fact the Third was enjoying something of a vogue at the time. Sometimes it was programmed in successive seasons.

The version played was always the last and shortest. This is still often the case, although such writers as Robert Simpson and Derek Watson have stood firmly behind the original 1873 score since its publication in 1977. Most recordings are based on the last revision, but there's a very good performance of the 1877 compromise version by the Vienna Philharmonic under Bernard Haitink. The Finale is conspicuous both for its structural weaknesses and for its being shorter in the 1889 revision than in either of the other two versions. No early symphony of Bruckner is a perfect structure, in my opinion – which seems to make the great Fifth Symphony even more remarkable.

Wonderful in its sound-world (which, whatever Wagnerian connotations have been placed upon it, is yet only Bruckner), the Third Symphony had an unhappy early history. Fortunately Bruckner kept working at it in spite of the disappointment of the rejection of his Second Symphony by Otto Dessoff at the Vienna Philharmonic. It took much of his time from the autumn of 1872 to December 1873. Herbeck, who planned to conduct the first performance, died after Bruckner's 1878 revision of the score. The composer himself conducted the premiere. It seems that he was not fully up to the task, and the audience gradually left the hall. The symphony did, of course, fare better later, after Bruckner had been encouraged to revise and shorten it. Mahler, however, did not advocate any revision, and he made a piano duet arrangement of the symphony which apparently pleased Bruckner.

Like its predecessors, the Third Symphony sees its

composer advancing into new territory, right from the broad opening bars with their trumpet theme. Throughout, there are cadences of sacred repose. While the music includes subtle reminiscences of the "sleep motive" from Wagner's *Die Walküre* and the opening of *Tristan und Isolde*, there are also brief quotations from Bruckner's D minor and F minor Masses. I perceive this symphony very much as an expressively ambivalent work, an intrinsic fitting together of the sacred and secular. So we can understand how that polka could have been inserted in the Finale in the same passage as a chorale. Bruckner's own explanation is worth repeating: "Listen! In that house there is dancing, and over there the master [Schmidt, the cathedral architect] lies in his coffin . . . The polka represents the fun and joy in the world, and the chorale the sadness and pain."

*Recordings of the 1873 version: Frankfurt Radio SO/Eliahu Inbal (Teldec) and London Classical Players/Roger Norrington (EMI). Recording of Mahler's piano duet arrangement: Evelinde Trenkner & Sontraud Speidel (MDG).*

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## ***SYMPHONY No. 4 in E flat major*** ***("Romantic")***

*Composed 1874, first published edition by Nowak, 1975.*

*Second version of Finale 1878, ed. Nowak 1981. Revision of whole symphony (with new "Hunt" Scherzo and Finale of 1880), 1878-80, first published (with Finale of 1878 in an appendix) ed. Haas, 1936, and, with minor revisions, 1944; ed. Nowak 1953 (incorporating further revisions of 1886).*

What a contrast the "Romantic" Symphony forms to the Third! This is an earthly yet visionary romanticism, and it is probably Bruckner's most played work. Is there anything more spine-tingling than the shimmering opening with its hushed tremolo and muted horn – the beginning of a long span of 74 bars which develops into the "Bruckner rhythm"? The horn is to play an important role in this symphony.

We could quite easily be in the forest in early morning, with perhaps a view of distant mountains through the trees. In the second movement, Andante, we might be joining a funeral march, strangely veiled but of a rustic character. Then comes the "Hunt" scherzo, full of the countryside. This wonderful movement replaced in its entirety the one in the original 1874 version (of which there is a fine recording by the Frankfurt Radio SO under Eliahu Inbal). For once the decision to revise and rewrite was undoubtedly correct. The whole work benefited from the revision; climaxes are handled better and the scoring is much clearer



generally. The first movement contains, in places, the finest music Bruckner had written up to that point.

As with the Third Symphony, the Finale caused Bruckner the most problems. It appears to run aground at times. Yet in the hands of an understanding and sympathetic conductor, it can be performed with considerable success. The Finale is capped with the finest coda yet created by Bruckner – rivalling, I think, the codas of the later symphonies. This coda features a superb, dignified crescendo and a final blaze of trumpets and tuba reiterating the opening theme and rhythm in E flat. I find Bruckner's codas particularly fascinating. They have a transcendent logic which belies all the difficulties of structure and process the composer had encountered along the way. This is already evident in the "Student Symphony" (see my article in *TBJ*, July 1997).

Helped by its key-signature, the sound-world of the "Romantic" Symphony is heroic. It was the only symphony to be formally given a title by Bruckner, and one cannot fail to recognise a poetic and descriptive intention. But we should not be misled into thinking that it is some kind of symphonic poem, even less an actual description of certain scenes. Bruckner is not Liszt. We are never without the spiritual element, even though in the Fourth Symphony we are not yet drawn to heaven.

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## ***SYMPHONY No. 5 in B flat***

*Composed 1875/6, slightly revised 1878/9 and later. First published edition by Franz Schalk, 1896; ed. Haas 1935; ed. Nowak 1951.*

"The Fifth Symphony is for me one of the central mysteries of the world. Bruckner is one of the rare composers who matches Bach and the early polyphonic masters in his combination of architectural and spiritual strength – and nowhere more than in the fugue that ends the Fifth Symphony."

(Philippe Herreweghe in *Gramophone*)

These rapt words sum up for me this work, the most assured, masterly and objective of the symphonies. Here Bruckner finally achieves a structure sure of itself. The Fifth Symphony also goes beyond the previous ones in its visionary aspirations (it does not have the more psychological or subconscious aspects of the later symphonies). If there is one Bruckner symphony which ought to be played in cathedrals and churches, it is this one. The opening is unique in symphonic literature with its great turrets of sound and reverberating silences, giving time for reflection. Then, eventually, comes the Allegro, and we know instinctively that a wonderful journey has begun. The miracles in the first movement, the subtle and – to quote Robert Simpson – myriad ways the themes are combined, have been overshadowed by the Finale with its fusion of

double fugue and chorale.

Some might think the Fifth Symphony austere. But there are many things which belie this, such as the second theme of the Adagio: one of the world's great tunes for the strings. Or the Scherzo's transformations of its Ländler elements and the bucolic wit in the Trio.

So to that Finale, whose technique is unlike any other in Bruckner. The cumulative breadth of the coda is without peer (even taking into account the coda of the Eighth). It is made even more effective by the feeling that the work's first movement had been of an introductory character in the overall scheme. The opening of the Finale has reminiscences of previous movements akin to those in Beethoven's Ninth, but they are treated in a different way. In spite of the first fugue, the movement is not really launched until the chorale arrives. A complex weaving of sound is followed by a second fugue, culminating in a passage with hammering down-bows played by the strings. The real climax is judiciously delayed more than once. Then, in the festive outcry, the chorale shines forth. The whole thing is riveting and yet, for all its complexity, amazingly clear.

If I took just one symphony by Bruckner to a desert island, it would be his Fifth. For me it is the one which would remain the most durable after repeated listenings. This is a symphony of purity and detachment. Bruckner was too ill to travel to the first performance in Graz. Yet, as Richard Osborne has written, who is to say he has not had an echo of it since? It is music which has sonority and sublimity enough to reach to the gates of heaven.

**Recording note:** Eugen Jochum recorded the Fifth Symphony several times – in 1938 with the Hamburg Philharmonic for Telefunken (now to be reissued); 1958 with the Bavarian Radio SO for DG; 1964 with the Amsterdam Concertgebouw in Ottobereun (reissued on Belart); and in 1980 with the Dresden Staatskapelle for EMI. And with the release on Tahra TAH 247 of a live recording of Jochum's last Amsterdam appearance, in December 1986, we have perhaps the finest rendering of this symphony currently available on CD. This is an expansive performance, more so than the 84-year-old conductor's previous ones, and it has clarity and is phrased with loving care. Not for one moment is one led to feel that the conductor has come between the music and the listener. Thanks to its architectural strength and feeling of a unified whole, this is a performance one can live with. The recording retains a few seconds of applause, but why not? The analogue sound (AAD) is very good. The booklet includes an eight-page article by Jochum on the symphony.

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# BRUCKNER AND SCHUBERT

by Benjamin Gunnar Cohrs

edited and translated by Peter Palmer



Silhouette produced in 1897 to commemorate the centenary of Schubert's birth. Bruckner, having only recently arrived in Heaven, is bringing up the rear. How many of the other composers paying homage to Schubert can you identify?

AFTER an initial attempt had run into scheduling problems, the distinguished musicologist Harry Halbreich eventually succeeded in organising an international Bruckner-Schubert symposium in Belgium on 28 and 29 November 1997. This came about through a harmonious collaboration between the Austrian Embassy in Brussels (and notably Dr Rudolf Altmüller, the Cultural and Press Attaché) and the Royal Conservatoire of Brussels as host institution. The project was funded from the public purse and was designed to further an understanding of the music of Bruckner and Schubert in Belgium – a point made by Professor **Arie van Lysebeth**, Director of the Conservatoire, in his opening address. He did, however, express some dismay at the relative paucity of conservatoire students in the first-day audience. This will have been partly due to the fact that five papers were presented, three in German and two in French, and that the advertised subjects were hardly connected with practical music-making.

On the second day there was a far better response. The renowned flautist and teacher **Barthold Kuijken**, one of the champions of historically informed performances, offered insights accruing from his long experience of Schubert's only flute piece, the *Trockene Blumen* Variations. His presentation ended with an intimate rendering of the piece on the transverse flute. He was sensitively accompanied by Luc Devos on a Hammerflügel. The audience included students of singing as well as the flute, because the second speaker was **Louis Devos**, an international celebrity and one of the really great singers of our day. Besides drawing on the rich fruits of his involvement with Schubert's songs, he referred in particular to the little-known compositions of Ferdinand Schubert, Franz Schubert's brother. The musical illustrations, comprising songs and little sacred works written by Ferdinand, showed a distinct affinity with similar works by Bruckner.

The five papers given the previous day threw much light on the subject of Bruckner and Schubert. The first speaker was **Ernst Hilmar**, the former head of the music collection of the Vienna City and Regional Library. After a short biographical sketch he focused on the circles in which the two composers moved and introduced a number of persons who were direct links between them. One was the conductor Johann Herbeck, who not only championed Bruckner but also directed the 1865 première of Schubert's symphonic fragment in B minor, the "Unfinished" Symphony.

**Sigrid Wiesmann**, a scholar with a close knowledge of the Schoenberg circle, discussed Bruckner's and Schubert's links with the second Viennese School. Following some detailed aesthetic remarks, she proceeded to draw compositional parallels between the Schubert song *Gretchen am Spinnrad* and thematic processes in Bruckner's Sixth. She then related these to works by Schoenberg, especially the note-row and 'mutation' techniques in his chamber and piano music. Since not all her listeners could follow the specialized sentence construction, it will be all the more helpful to publish her paper in the forthcoming symposium report.

For my own part, I can claim to be familiar with the problems of unfinished compositions, having long been involved with the unfinished finale of Bruckner's Ninth and having worked on a performing version of the fragment [reviewed in our next issue]. I compared the unfinished symphonies of Schubert and Bruckner, bringing out thematic connections and qualities and also noting the difficulties that reception-history faces in this area. In particular I castigated the dogmatism of some scholars and interpreters, a dogmatism often deriving more from lazy listening and ideological thinking than from a close acquaintance with the actual sources. I pleaded strongly for more tolerance and a willingness to rethink one's personal standpoint.

**Remy Stricker**, Professor of Aesthetics in Paris, discussed death and love in Schubert's music. The "Death and the Maiden" string quartet is a prime example of this. With its many illustrations from the songs and chamber music, and with its digressions on such subjects as the

problems of the Wagnerian *Liebeshod*, Stricker's paper amounted to a brilliant firework display of aesthetic observations.

Patrick Szersnovicz unexpectedly withdrew on the eve of the conference. This was a great pity, because his paper 'On the concept of musical time in Bruckner and Schubert' would surely have been very rewarding. In his stead, **Harry Halbreich** took the opportunity to discuss problems relating to the different versions of Bruckner's Second, Third and Fourth Symphonies. Tracing the changes in Bruckner's thinking with the help of 60 minutes of musical illustrations, he made his presentation seem as exciting as a thriller. Halbreich underlined the value of the earlier versions, which sound more immediate and are orchestrated more thickly: proper storm-and-stress works whose neglect in the concert hall is quite undeserved.

In a final round-table discussion the thread leading from Schubert's masses and symphonies to Bruckner's music became clearly visible. What did not emerge quite so clearly was that the two main representatives of the Viennese tradition were far in advance of their times, and that their output has had a decisive influence on 20th-century music. The public took an active part in the discussion. The speakers also had ample opportunity for a private exchange of views during the two days of the symposium, which can be summed up as thoroughly successful for the organisers.

*Benjamin Gunnar Cohrs is a conductor, musicologist and contributor to the Bruckner Complete Edition.*



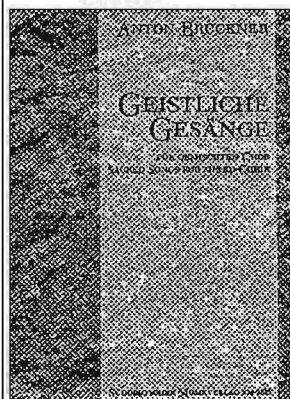
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# LUX IN TENEBRIS (II)

by Derek Scott

## Bruckner's use of signifiers for darkness and light, and the meaning of darkness and light in his religion.

Bruckner's early familiarity with conventions for signifying light can be seen in the *Domine Jesu Christe* section of his Requiem of 1849. Immediately following an agitated setting of *ne absorbeat eas tartarus, ne cadant in obscurum*, the C minor of *tartarus* is exchanged for C major for the words *sed signifer sanctus Michael repraesentet eas in lucem sanctam*.

Example 1

Requiem, Domine Jesu Christe, bars 48-52

A similar change from minor to major occurs at the word *Lux* in the *Agnus Dei* of the same work. In another early work, the *Missa Solemnis*, Bruckner moves from minor to major at *Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine*. His semiotic code, as established in his early works, proved as enduring as his own character, which was not changed by his move to Vienna in 1868, or by any growing liberalism in Austrian politics.<sup>25</sup>

The use of low and high pitch as signifiers is evident in the B flat, D minor, E minor, and F minor Masses, in each of which the words *Judicare vivos et mortuos* are given a high pitch for 'living' and low for 'dead', as Beethoven treated them in his *Missa Solemnis*, Haydn in his *Nelson Mass*, and Schubert in his A flat Mass of 1822. This helps us to locate the historical specificity of Bruckner's semiotic code; one would expect to find this feature in most eighteenth and nineteenth-century Masses, but not in earlier Masses. Indeed, William Byrd's Mass for four voices rises in pitch at the word *mortuos*.

Both light and darkness have sacred connotations. Light is a religious signifier; it may be *lux sancta* or a trope for the divinity/godhead – God of God, Light of Light; *Lux mundi*.<sup>26</sup> As such, it is associated with goodness, morality and, importantly, salvation: a psalm of David begins, "The Lord is my light and my salvation."<sup>27</sup> For Bruckner, it is not associated with reason as in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment; instead, it is *lux sancta*, the holy light of salvation for the believer. In contrast, darkness has connotations of immorality (especially lust), evil, and Hell. The association of darkness with lust is confirmed by linking Jude's statement (in his New Testament *Epistle*) that the fallen angels are "in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgement of the great day"<sup>28</sup> to the explanation in the Apocalyptic *Book of Enoch* that the main cause of their fall was lust. St John makes a direct association between darkness and evil by claiming, "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."<sup>29</sup>

Life is associated with light – 'the light of life'<sup>30</sup> – as death is with darkness (the 'shadow of death' being a common image).<sup>31</sup> Bruckner's own dark obsession was his desire to see dead bodies.<sup>32</sup> We find associations of C

minor with death in the 'funeral marches' in the slow movements of the Fourth and the Sixth (its third theme); Simpson remarks that before the latter commences, "the light of C major fades slowly."<sup>33</sup> We really know what the climax of the *Adagio* of the Seventh represented for Bruckner: the *Non confundar* theme of the *Te Deum* is quoted, and he described the beginning of the coda as "funeral music for the Master."<sup>34</sup> Here, the C major climax has connotations of light, God (*In te, Domine, speravi*), and glory.<sup>35</sup>

According to the Bible, darkness existed *before* God created light,<sup>36</sup> and after creating light, God "divided the light from the darkness."<sup>37</sup> It was the latter image that Michelangelo placed on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel immediately above the altar. This is the birth of form. Bruckner's tremolando beginnings have often been interpreted as birth tropes: Max Auer, for example, wrote of "thematic structure" raising itself "out of nothingness,"<sup>38</sup> and August Halm remarked, "we think we are inhaling something like the breath of creation, when we are enveloped in the first tones of his Seventh, Ninth, or Fourth Symphonies."<sup>39</sup> Watson writes of "the evocation of creation itself" in these beginnings.<sup>40</sup>

Auer's description of the openings of most Bruckner symphonies as "an awakening from unconsciousness and darkness to light and clarity"<sup>41</sup> could also be applied to most codas. These are especially helpful for showing the appropriateness of the darkness/light trope, because they are tonally static (note the use of pedals and *ostinati*). Simpson commented that most of Bruckner's ultimate passages open "in darkness."<sup>42</sup> So they move from darkness to light, but it is not achieved as in the Hegelian dialectic, and the end is only a contingent victory. There is no reconciliation of contradictions: in a word, light cannot be reconciled with darkness.

## The Dialectic of Darkness and Light: Structure and Meaning in Bruckner

Bruckner's dialectic is of a peculiarly non-muscular character. It is in some ways epitomized by the lack of struggle between the polka theme and the chorale theme in the *Finale* of his Third Symphony. Here a Hegelian dialectic cannot work because there can be no reconciliation between life and death.<sup>43</sup> More of a conflict *could* have been suggested; we have only to think of the third movement of Mahler's First Symphony. Bruckner's polka-chorale signifying life juxtaposed with death, or, rather, "In the midst of life we are in death,"<sup>44</sup> is anti-dialectic.

Example 2

Symphony No. 3, Finale, bars 65-72 (1877 version)

In attempting to understand Bruckner's *lux in tenebris*,<sup>45</sup>

we should note that the initial term of the opposition light/darkness both implies and is privileged over the other: darkness is absence of light; light is not absence of darkness.<sup>46</sup> Although light/darkness is not itself a metaphysical opposition (since darkness does differ *naturally* from light), its connotations, with the exception of life/death, are metaphysical: for example, night can suggest the feminine, lust, and evil. Therefore, it offers itself up to Derrida's deconstruction, which is concerned with demonstrating the privileging of one term over another in metaphysical opposition.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, light/darkness is metaphysical in Bruckner, because it exists only as *representation*. Meaning is created by differing and deferring (Derrida's *Différance*): minor is governed by major and therefore the minor opening of the Third Symphony is not mistaken for the dominant term; we know major will triumph. Minor is *always* the antithesis – but not a true antithesis, because Bruckner privileges major over minor. In Bruckner's music, major is the commanding term for ideological and not structural reasons: major connotes light and minor connotes darkness; or, we might say, minor is major with a lack, as darkness is light with a lack. There is no structural reason why minor should not command major: for example, in Mahler's Sixth all light is extinguished (adumbrated early on by the major triad's turn to minor). The fact that light does not shine forth in the revised first movement of Bruckner's Eighth is what makes it so exceptionally doom-laden.

For Simpson, the *Finale* of the Eighth is the 'cathedral' Bruckner has been trying to envisage during the course of the Symphony: "One by one the impediments have been removed, until the image is clearly revealed."<sup>48</sup> Bruckner's treatment of structure as a process of revelation offers a musical form of apocalyptic vision. Apocalyptic literature emphasized the dualism of good and evil as balanced forces (or as parallel worlds of God and Satan); it gave structure to the notion of Heaven and Hell, and created the idea of the 'final judgement'. An analogy may be made with the balanced tonal forces in Bruckner. The meaning of the term 'Apocalypse' is 'unveiling' or 'disclosure'.<sup>49</sup> Liddell & Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon*<sup>50</sup> gives "an uncovering, (revelation N.T.)" as its definition of *apokalupsis*. Again, an analogy may be found with Bruckner's formal method: Simpson described Bruckner's music as having a tendency "to remove, one by one, disrupting or distracting elements, to seem to uncover at length a last stratum of calm contemplative thought."<sup>51</sup> Ernst Bloch maintained that, in Bruckner's finales, "the listener is released from the pressure of the temporal world in a contemplative review of the passions, territories and the established primary colour of the whole performance, in the expectation of visionary prospects and with the consciousness of standing at the birthplace of that which is lyrically essential in the symphony."<sup>52</sup>

Instead of Beethoven's version of the Hegelian dialectic in his middle-period sonata form movements, where there is dramatic conflict of key and material in the exposition, struggle in the development section, and reconciliation in the recapitulation, Bruckner's dialectic of darkness and light involves slow discovery rather than muscular striving, and resolution without reconciliation. For, while we do have opposing forces, there is no sense of Hegel's 'inadequate thesis' vs. 'inadequate antithesis' reaching

finally a sublation (*Aufhebung*) that preserves what is rational in them and removes the irrational. As an illustration of Hegelian sublation applied to sonata form, here is Rose Rosengard Subotnik explaining Adorno's interpretation<sup>53</sup> of dialectical opposites in middle-period Beethoven: "through the recapitulation the subject seems not only to bring together within itself, but actually to derive from within itself, the principles of dynamic development (historical change) and fixed, external order (unchangeable identity) and to synthesize the two into a higher level of reality."<sup>54</sup> In the dialectic of darkness and light we cannot move towards a synthesis since one cancels out the other. The same goes for the religious connotations: death cannot be reconciled with life, nor evil with good. As stated above, darkness is understood as absence of light *and not vice versa*; thus, the very existence of a dialectical conflict is questioned. The first theme of Bruckner's Third does not undergo a tonal struggle to become 'light'; light (in the form of major tonality) is merely absent from it until the end of the Symphony. Changing the order in which major and minor appear makes no difference: in Bruckner's Seventh, where the opening theme is major, we do not interpret the dark inverted minor form of the theme midway through the movement as dominant, because we do not perceive a lack of desire for darkness, in its original major form.

Bloch expresses concern about the "profound problem . . . of the musical finale as *happy ending*" in Bruckner and Beethoven.<sup>55</sup> While agreeing that "Climax and resolution are necessary," he insists that "Through darkness to light!" or the joyous ending, "does not stem from the music-making itself in an inexorable way."<sup>56</sup> As I have argued, there is no innately musical logic for Bruckner's Third to end in D major rather than D minor. Bloch is seeking an inner human essence making itself felt in the musical processes themselves, so that joy is achieved by the work itself and not just by the will of the composer: he speaks of "a birth of faith out of music, coming from the quietest, innermost, farthest depths of the musician's soul" which could "finally strike up the *Sed signifer sanctus Michael*."<sup>57</sup> But there is no inexorable logic about darkness moving to light; and in Christian religious discourse movement from darkness to light is interpreted precisely as a matter of free will. Bloch's search for deeper unity and organic growth in music is motivated by his need to find logical explanations for what is happening on the surface. Today, we must recognize that postmodernist theory, poststructuralism and deconstruction have strongly challenged notions of organic unity and the composer's expressive presence within his or her music.<sup>58</sup> Because of the presence of multiple versions of his music, concern with "deep structure" in Bruckner gives rise to something similar to demands for the 'Director's cut' in film – the Haas editions are just such an attempt to provide the ordinary, univocal creations of the 'master artist'. It is instructive to read Subotnik on Adorno's opinion that exaggeration enters Beethoven's preparations for recapitulation as he begins to realize that "the principle of reprise . . . arises from no logical necessity within the subject."<sup>59</sup> She explains: "By contrast with logical implication, as embodied in the syllogism, musical implication, as Adorno understands it to occur in the classical style, is a temporal rather than a formal process . . . musical implication makes itself fully known only in

terms of an actual and hence subsequent resolution.”<sup>60</sup> However, Adorno regarded 19th-century music as lacking implicative power.<sup>61</sup> As an example of our not understanding an implication until revealed, note that the third bar of the fugue subject to *et vitam venturus* in the F minor Mass moves stepwise up a fourth, but its meaning is deferred, and it only becomes clear that this is an inversion of the *Kyrie* motive during the last dozen bars of the Mass.<sup>62</sup>

In Bruckner, imbalance is created between tonal forces without the physical struggle associated with Beethoven. Simpson remarks of the first movement of Bruckner’s Seventh: “Throughout the whole first part of the movement B major takes over, as it were, by stealth, in a manner remote from the muscular action of sonata.”<sup>63</sup> I would argue that this is why the metaphors of darkness and light so often work in Bruckner – because darkness does not *struggle* to become light. Instead, night is *gradually transformed* into day (Bruckner’s gradual ‘unveiling’), or a light *suddenly shines* in the darkness. There may be a crisis at the inversion of the main theme in the C minor middle section of this movement (bars 233–6), but it is not treated as part of a process of tonal tension and release. As a result, the home key does not feel stable at the recapitulation. While the C minor passage may readily be interpreted as the dark antithesis of the movement’s

opening (this key carrying, as it does, connotations of death), it should be emphasized that inversion itself does not work as an opposite in musical semiotics. Consider what happens when the *Miserere* motive from the *Gloria* of the D minor Mass appears in inverted form in the *Adagio* of the Ninth (the A flat theme at bar 45); it does not become *Jubilate*. Moreover, when the fugue subject of *Psalm 150* is inverted it is still sung to the same words. The inverted theme in the Seventh Symphony does work as an opposite, because musical *descent* has been established by convention as an opposite to ascent in music of this style and period, and the inversion of this theme produces an unwavering descent.

Example 3a: D minor Mass, *Gloria*, bars 100–103. Soprano part, piano (*p*) and *dim.* dynamics. Lyrics: mi - se - re - re, mi - se - re - re.

Example 3b: Symphony No. 9, *Adagio*, bars 45–48. Violins *sul G*, *mf* *breit* dynamics.

Example 3c: Symphony No. 7, 1st movement, bars 3–6. Cellos, *mf* dynamic.

Example 3d: Symphony No. 7, 1st movement, bars 233–6. Woodwind + violins, *ff* dynamic.

25 Patricia Howard, ‘Music and the Enlightenment and Haydn’s *Creation*’, *A206 The Enlightenment, Studies*, I, eds. M. Bartholomew, D. Hall and A. Lentin (Open University), Milton Keynes 1992, 359.

26 Vulgate, St John 8:12.

27 Psalm 27:1.

28 Jude 6.

29 St John 3:19.

30 St John 8:12.

31 Job 10:21, Isaiah 9:2; St Luke 1:79.

32 See Deryck Cooke, ‘Bruckner’, *The New Grove Late Romantic Masters*, London 1985, 27.

33 Robert Simpson, *The Essence of Bruckner* (rev. edn), London 1992, 158.

34 Quoted in Hans-Hubert Schönzeler, *Bruckner* (rev. edn), London 1978, 80. The whole *Adagio* was written in anticipation of Wagner’s death.

35 Timothy Jackson refers to C major as “traditionally a symbol for divine glory” in ‘Reply to Parkany 1988’, *Nineteenth Century Music*, 13 (1989), 74. Bruckner’s *Te Deum* and Psalm 150 offer further evidence of this convention.

36 Genesis 1:2.

37 Genesis 1:4.

38 Quoted in Dika Newlin, *Bruckner – Mahler – Schoenberg* (rev. edn), London 1979, 83.

39 See n. 38.

40 Derek Watson, *Bruckner* (rev. edn), Oxford 1996, 67.

41 See n. 38.

42 Simpson, *The Essence of Bruckner*, 210, discussing the coda to Symphony No. 8.

43 That the pairing of themes originated in Bruckner’s reaction to a body lying in state amid the sounds of a grand ball from an adjacent mansion is well known. The anecdote comes from August Göllerich’s biography.

44 *Media vita morte sumus* is from an antiphon c. 911 A.D. attributed to St Notker Balbulus of St Gall Monastery, Switzerland.

45 Vulgate, St John 1:5.

46 In the same way as writing is understood as an absence of the voice, but the voice is not an absence of writing; see Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. G. C. Spivak, Baltimore 1976, 144; 295.

47 Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. A. Bass, Chicago 1978.

48 Simpson, *The Essence of Bruckner*, 204.

49 See H. T. Andrews, ‘Apocalyptic Literature’, *A Commentary on the Bible*, ed. A. S. Peake, London 1919, 431–5.

50 Oxford (originally published in 1843).

51 Simpson, *The Essence of Bruckner*, 232.

52 Ernst Bloch, *Essays on the Philosophy of Music*, trans. P. Palmer, Cambridge 1985, 41.

53 In Theodor W. Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, trans. E. B. Ashton, New York 1976.

54 Rose Rosengard Subotnik, *Developing Variations: Style and Ideology in Western Music*, Minneapolis 1991, 21.

55 Bloch, *Essays on the Philosophy of Music*, 41.

56 *Ibidem*, 41–2; however, Bloch thinks it does stem from the “ultimate experience” of a composer like Beethoven.

57 *Ibidem*, 42; this, Bloch claims, is a goal rarely achieved, and “more wont to occur in the *adagio* than in the *finale* with its fancifully epic structure.”

58 See Steve Sweeney-Turner, *The Sonorous Body: Music, Enlightenment & Deconstruction* (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh 1995).

59 Subotnik, *Developing Variations*, 23.

60 *Ibidem*, 217. Here the reference is to Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, trans. A. G. Mitchell and W. V. Blomster, New York 1973.

61 See Subotnik, *Developing Variations*, 218–19.

62 See Watson, *Bruckner*, 93–5.

63 Simpson, *The Essence of Bruckner*, 172.

## Letter

Brian Duke (Fleet, Hampshire)

Constantin Floros' second 'Bruckner Propositions' article (*TBJ* July 1997, pages 8-9) has got me thinking about formal principles "largely static" and "largely dynamic" in the context of the symphonies of KALEVI AHO (*TBJ* November 1997, back page). One or two of us who've had the chance to "get into" AHO hear a *structural* method in common with Bruckner, Sibelius, Simpson, Holmboe and others – a way of keeping things moving by melodic mutation. The slow movement of the TENTH symphony of AHO (recorded on BIS CD-856) doesn't simply *begin* with a quote from the Bruckner Ninth. The movement lasts twenty minutes, which is a large slice of the whole playing time of 46 minutes (there are four movements in all). The development and dynamic of this slow movement are very clearly Brucknerian throughout, in pace, in pauses and in the brass writing, to mention three of the most obvious features. *But* the two previous movements have prepared the way by less obviously doing the same, whereas the finale breaks the spell with something almost jokey – the ending is quite abrupt, and the only parallel *there* I can think of is the end of the Robert Simpson Eleventh (and last) Symphony, which tosses everything off in a flash.

## "THE INNER NATURE OF MUSIC"

Jonathan Brett Harrison conducted Bruckner's Fourth Symphony in April at the re-opening of the Main Hall of the Goetheanum, the anthroposophical centre in Dornach, near Basle.

In "Bruckner Propositions III" [*TBJ*, November 1997] Constantin Floros writes: 'In the 1920s especially, Bruckner was celebrated as a mystic *par excellence* . . . as a composer whose work could be grasped . . . from the standpoint of the mystical experience behind it . . . he was claimed by anthroposophists and theosophists as one of their own.'

**Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925)** enrolled for Bruckner's lectures on the theory of harmony at the University of Vienna in the winter semester of 1879 and the summer semester of 1880. He became a philosopher, teacher, seer and investigator of the spiritual world, which was as real to him as the material world. Steiner was the founder of anthroposophy, or spiritual science. It involves such subjects as the nature of the human being, reincarnation and karma, esoteric Christianity, education, curative education, medicine, biodynamic farming and much more. Steiner would refer to many scientists, philosophers, writers, and occasionally composers when speaking of art and music. Beethoven, Schubert, Wagner and Bruckner were mentioned as representing a bridge to the world of spirit.

An understanding of what Steiner had to say can only really be gleaned from his lectures and books, particularly *The Inner Nature of Music and the Experience of Tone*. According to his biographer Guenther Wachsmuth, he called attention to the idea that, at early stages in the evolution of humanity, 'the musical experience blended with a religious experience.' Then, there was still a consciousness that the action of the Godhead was expressed in the intervals of the seventh, the fifth, the third. Man still shared in the experience of the 'cosmic sound of jubilation of the gods' and the 'cosmic mourning of the gods'. But in the last few centuries, the human being has more and more lost this experience and is for that reason in danger of becoming unproductive in music.

In the lecture cycle *True and False Paths in Spiritual Investigation*, Steiner speaks of Bruckner's music: 'The Christ Impulse can be found in music. And the dissolution of the symphonic into near-dissonance, as in Beethoven, can be redeemed by a return to the dominion of the cosmic in music. Bruckner attempted this within the narrow limits of a traditional framework. But his posthumous symphony [i.e. the Ninth] shows that he could not escape these limitations . . .' It is emphasized that he is not criticising Bruckner's music *per se*; he considered that Bruckner came near to realising the spiritual in music.

Raymond Cox

## ON THE AIR

Items from *The Bruckner Journal* may soon be broadcast in Spanish. A manager of a non-commercial radio station in Colombia is a Bruckner lover who regularly devotes air time to his music. We have gladly permitted the use of our material.



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# JOTTINGS

Please note the dates of the **Bruckner Weekend** that we are organising at the University of Nottingham Arts Centre between 9-11 April, 1999 (the weekend after Easter). The University offers an attractive campus, a superb new lecture and recital hall, and first-class catering and accommodation. Couples will be booked into a hotel in the vicinity.

The Weekend is to focus on two main subjects: Bruckner's life and times, and comparative versions and recordings of his symphonies. Recitals will be given by the Richard Roddis Singers and organist Tom Corfield. More details and a booking form will appear in the autumn, but we are delighted that the speakers are likely to include the American scholar William Carragan.

The *Bruckner-Jahrbuch* 1994/95/96 is now available from the Musikwissenschaftlicher Verlag in Vienna. In addition to coverage of the 1993 Bruckner Festival in Würzburg and shorter notices, the book features sixteen articles in German by Elisabeth Maier, Andrea Harrandt, Gunnar Cohrs, Erwin Horn, Erich Wolfgang Partsch, Thomas Röder and others.

The long awaited first volume of letters in the Bruckner Complete Edition (24/1) published by the Musikwissenschaftlicher Verlag has appeared. This is the first substantial edition of Bruckner's letters since the 1920s and covers the period between March 1852 and December 1886. A review is planned for our November issue.

A CD of Viennese waltzes by Joseph Hellmesberger junior (1855-1907) was released in June on the Marco Polo label, performed by the Göttingen SO under Christian Simonis. From 1875 the composer played second violin in the string quartet founded by his father, who in 1885 led the first complete performance of Bruckner's String Quintet.

A "Mahlerthon" conceived by journalist Norman Lebrecht was held in Stockholm Concert Hall earlier this year. Leading Swedish pianists played four-hand arrangements of all Mahler's symphonies. Bengt Forsberg enjoyed himself so much that he has since turned to piano transcriptions of Bruckner.

Conducted by Kai Bumann, the Swiss Youth Symphony Orchestra

visited Lugano, Zurich and other Swiss towns in April and May with a programme coupling Vaughan Williams' Tuba Concerto and Bruckner's Seventh Symphony. At the first Swiss Youth Orchestra competition this spring, the Strasbourg Conservatoire Orchestra (dir. Anne Muller) chose as one of their free pieces the Adagio from Bruckner's Sixth.

Howard Jones, our recordings consultant, believes that the live recording of Bruckner's Eighth performed by the Hallé Orchestra under Barbirolli (see *TBJ*, March 1998, page 4) on BBC Radio Classics is identical to that issued in 1990 on Hunt CD 717. The latter CD gives the location as Manchester and the date as 20 July 1970, nine days before Barbirolli died – but HJ points out that 'the brass fluffs are in the same places'.

Two corrections to the information on Helmuth Rilling's first recording of Bruckner's E minor Mass given in our last issue. Although the Lovallo discography proposes a date of ca. 1972, it is quoted as March 1966 on the original Bärenreiter LP. At that time Rilling conducted a performance in the Stuttgart Stiftskirche, but the recording was made just outside Stuttgart in the Stadtkirche, Leonberg.

Our distinguished Norwegian reader Olav Myklebust has kindly sent us his book on Bruckner published in Oslo in 1995. We hope to say more about it in a future issue! At the time of writing there are also overseas subscribers to *The Bruckner Journal* in Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Eire, Germany, Italy, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA.

**For new subscribers, the first three issues of this journal (March, July, November 1997) can still be purchased at £7 the set, including postage. Write to 4 Lulworth Close, Halesowen B63 2UJ enclosing payment.**

A major German study of Bruckner's instrumentation and its development in his symphonies has been written by Dieter Michael Backes. Priced at 98 Deutschmarks, the book comprises 615 pages and a supplement with 52 tables and 524 music examples. For further details contact the publisher, Dr Gisela

Schewe, Zehnthofstrasse 2, D-53489 Sinzig.

We will replace any copy of *TBJ* that reaches you in less than perfect condition. A reader employed by the British Geological Survey has requested that the journal be sent to him there to avoid damage. The address always reminds our managing editor of Robert Simpson's description of Bruckner's Eighth Symphony as 'granite-like' in consistency.

Günter Wand returns to the Usher Hall, Edinburgh, on 22 August to conduct the NDR Symphony Orchestra of Hamburg in Bruckner's Fifth Symphony. The box office telephone number is 0131 473 2000, and early booking is advised. This year's Edinburgh International Festival will run from 16 August to 5 September. Hugo Wolf songs will be performed in a dozen recitals.

The Berlin Philharmonic will play Bruckner's Fifth at the Royal Albert Hall in London under Claudio Abbado on 27 August. The other Bruckner symphony planned for this summer's BBC Promenade Concerts is the Third, now to be performed on 24 July by the *BBC Scottish SO* under Osmo Vanska.

Yakov Kreizberg and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra are giving Bruckner's Seventh Symphony in September. There will be performances in Poole Arts Centre (17), Portsmouth Guildhall (18) and The Anvil, Basingstoke (19), with pre-concert talks by Terry Barfoot in Poole and Portsmouth. See our "Special Offers" on page 5.

A memorial concert for Robert Simpson, composer and noted Brucknerian, will be held at St John's, Smith Square, London on 19 September. Taking part are the Delmé String Quartet, Raymond Clarke, Pauline Lowbury and Christopher Green-Armitage, playing works by Beethoven, Carl Nielsen, Robert Simpson and Matthew Taylor. Tickets (telephone 0171 222 1061) go on sale on 3 August.

And finally . . . many thanks for the information sent by readers on concerts planned for next season – please keep it flowing in!