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January 1940

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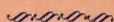
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"MY TIME WILL YET COME"



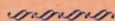
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CHORD AND DISCORD

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The Life of Anton Bruckner

BY GABRIEL ENGEL

LIKE Franz Schubert, Anton Bruckner springs from a line of Austrian schoolmasters. In the pleasantly situated village of Ansfelden, not far from the town of Linz, Bruckner's grandfather Joseph and his father Anton had both devoted their lives to the drab duties of rustic pedagogy, at that time still considered a hereditary occupation among provincials. Hence the arrival on earth of Anton himself on September 4, 1824, meant in the normal course of things merely a fresh candidate for the abundant miseries of schoolmastership.

As early as his fourth year the tiny "Tonerl," like Haydn a century before him, showed his undeniable musical bent, for even then he could bring forth intelligible music from a little fiddle and (to quote an old Ansfelder's naive characterization of these first signs of composer's fancy) "could often be heard humming or whistling unknown tunes."

With the dawn of schooling the child showed a hearty dislike for all classroom activities, except the "Singstunde," an hour which seemed for him filled with irresistible enchantment. Of course, he received many a whipping for his backwardness in all extra-musical studies.

As tradition demanded of the village school-teacher, Father Bruckner had also to play the organ in church, and it is doubtless owing to his efforts that Anton at ten knew enough about the organ to attract the attention of a good musician in a nearby village. Under this man Weiss, a cousin of the family, the boy then earnestly studied musical theory and organ-playing for two years. Remarkably enough, the organ preludes he composed during that period exhibit a freedom of expression which deserted him all through his subsequent decades of theoretical study not to return again unimpaired until his years of maturity as a symphonist.

The death of his father in 1837, leaving eleven children (Anton being the eldest) rendered it imperative for his mother to accept the refuge offered the gifted boy as *Saengerknabe* in the sacred music school of St. Florian. The four impressionable years he spent there learning how to play the organ, piano, and violin, and mastering the elements of musical theory doubtless stamped his entire character, musical and otherwise,

with a fervent piety which no later influence ever dimmed. Even when the conflict of suffering and passion rages highest in his monumental symphonic first and last movements, a sudden naive appeal direct to heaven through austere trombone chorales points back to the influence of those early years of unquestioning devotion and zeal at St. Florian.

Yet at this time the idea of music as a life-work seems hardly to have entered the boy's mind. His father had been a schoolmaster; he too must become one. To further this aim he added to his arduous music courses private studies in academic subjects, finally gaining admission to the teachers' preparatory school at Linz.

Though even a brief ten months spent in learning what a pious child must not be taught proved trying to so human a soul as young Bruckner, he passed his examination for a position at seventeen and set out for the first scene of his teaching career, the world-forsaken mountain-village of Windhaag. Here, as assistant village teacher and organist, he was to receive the munificent monthly wage of two gulden (less than eighty cents). Additional attractive features of his work were that he must help in the field during "spare" time and breakfast with the maid servant.

In spite of these crushing handicaps the youth seems not to have been altogether unhappy, for he found the village-folk friendly. An especial joy was the folk-life and dancing, with its opportunity for a new, fascinating kind of music making. In this pleasant life the youth gladly joined, playing the fiddle at dances and absorbing those rustic, rhythmic strains which the Midas-touch of his genius later turned into incomparably vital and humorous symphonic scherzos.

The ancient calm of the village church services was frequently interrupted by the new organist whose marked leaning towards dramatic harmonies was irrepressible. His experience with the startled villagers in this respect was much like that of the great Bach himself, who was once officially reprimanded for his fantastic modulatory interpolations during the ritual music.

Yet Bruckner's innate musicianship must have dawned even upon the ignorant villagers, for this word has come down about it direct from the lips of an old Ansfelder, "Yes, that fellow Bruckner was a devilish fine musician!" Then, as an afterthought, in the light of a teacher's unhappy lot, "I wouldn't let any son of mine become a teacher. No, sir! Much better be a cobbler!"

One day Bruckner, who was absent-minded, forgot to attend to some menial chore in the field and for punishment he was transferred to the still smaller village of Kronsdorf.

The teacher's demotion proved the musician's promotion, however, for the little "nest" lay only an hour distant from two historic towns, Enns and Steyr. The latter was noted for its fine organ and soon became the object of the youth's frequent pilgrimages. In Enns, moreover, lived the celebrated organist von Zanetti, a fine musician, who now became Bruckner's new master of theory. All his compositions during

this period bear the modest character of occasional church music. Completely humbled in the face of superior knowledge the zealous student was content to obey implicitly the so-called laws of music. Infinite thoroughness, the sole path to perfection, became an obsession with him. Trustingly he allowed the incredibly long veil of years of academic self-suppression to fall over his genius.

Meanwhile he had been preparing himself for the final examination for a regular schoolmaster's license. At length, in May 1845, he passed the test, and experienced the good fortune of an immediate appointment to St. Florian, the happy haven of his earlier youth.

The texts and dedications "to the beautiful days of young love" of several of his songs and piano pieces in those days tell us that Bruckner met his first "flame," young Antonie Werner, soon after his appointment as teacher at St. Florian. Yet sentiment was but shortlived in the heart of this youth whose insatiable yearning for musical knowledge swept aside all other considerations. At this time, too, there began to unfold that magnificent gift of his for free improvisation on the organ, the gift with which he in later years held audiences spellbound, even as Beethoven and Bach had done before him.

In 1851 the post of organist at St. Florian was declared vacant and Bruckner, who had for some time been occupying it as substitute, was officially appointed thereto. By then he had reached the comparatively affluent state of eighty gulden per year, plus free rent, and one of his dearest wishes had at last been realized: he was master of the finest organ in the world. Determined to become a virtuoso of the keyboard he made it a habit to practice ten hours a day on the piano and three hours on the organ.

At St. Florian in 1849, he composed his Requiem in D-minor, the only early work deserving classification with his mature accomplishments.

Desiring to obtain a license to teach in "main schools" he continued his academic studies, stressing Latin, and in 1855 successfully passed that examination as well.

In 1853 he had made his first trip to Vienna in the hope of laying the ghost of doubt that would ever loom up in his soul as to the lifework he had chosen. This doubt had even led him to consider giving up music altogether, for he once applied for a clerical position in Linz, claiming in his letter that he had been preparing himself for several years for such a vocation. Fortunately, wise counsel induced him to forget such thoughts and to apply himself anew to theoretical studies. From this decision date his amazing years of self-imposed confinement in the contrapuntal chains forged by the famous Viennese musical grammarian, Simon Sechter. There is this to say for the almost incomprehensible devotion of the superannuated schoolboy Anton to his text-book lessons, that only such hard prescribed work could dispel the torturing doubts which lurked grimly at the threshold of his consciousness.

In January, 1856, having been persuaded to take part in an open competition for the vacant post of organist at the Cathedral in Linz, he easily carried off the honors, astonishing all by his incredible powers of improvisation on given themes.

During the first few of the twelve years he served as organist in Linz, Bruckner made practically no efforts at original composition, burying himself heart and soul in the contrapuntal problems heaped upon him by the pedantic Sechter. During the periods of Advent and Lent, the Cathedral organ being silent, Bishop Rudigier, who greatly admired Bruckner's genius, permitted him to go to Vienna to pursue (in person) the studies which throughout the year had to be left to the uncertain benefits of a correspondence course.

One may get some inkling of the stupendous physical and mental labor involved in "studying," as Bruckner interpreted the term, if one believes the evidence advanced by eye-witnesses, who assert that the piles of written musical exercises in the "student's" room reached from the floor to the keyboard of his piano. For those who think this incredible there is the written word of the unimpeachable Sechter himself to the following effect. Upon receiving from Bruckner in a single instalment seventeen bookfuls of written exercises, he warned him against "too great an intellectual strain," and lest his admonition be taken in ill part by the student, the teacher added the comforting, indubitable assurance: "I believe I never had a more serious pupil than you."

Eloquent of Bruckner's Herculean labors in the realm of musical grammar and rhetoric during those years is the list of examinations to which he insisted upon subjecting himself (after typical Bruckneresque preparation). After two years of work, on July 10, 1858, he passed Sechter's test in Harmony and Thorough-bass. Of the text-book he studied (now a treasured museum possession) not a single leaf remained attached to the binding. Then on August 12, 1859, he passed Elementary Counterpoint; April 3, 1860, Advanced Counterpoint; March 26, 1861, Canon and Fugue. Thereupon he remarked, "I feel like a dog which has just broken out of his chains."

Now came the crowning trial of all, one without which he could not be sure of himself. He begged for permission to submit his fund of accomplishments to the judgment of the highest musical tribunal in Europe, a commission consisting of Vienna's five recognized Solons of musical law (today all turned to names or less than names). The request was granted and Bruckner accorded the grace of choosing the scene of "combat."

Such final tests of "maturity," not uncommon in Vienna, were usually of a somewhat stereotyped nature, but in the case of this extraordinary candidate the occasion assumed an epic cast.

Bruckner had chosen for the scene of his grand trial the interior of the Piaristen-Kirche. Had Wagner been present, he might have been reminded of the examination of Walter by the Meistersinger, which he

was even then planning. The customary short theme was written down by one judge and submitted to the others for approval; but one of these maliciously doubled it in length, at once changing a mere test of scholarship to a challenge of mastery.

The slip of paper was then passed down to the expectant candidate seated at the organ. For some moments he regarded it earnestly, while the judges, misinterpreting the cause of delay, smiled knowingly.

Suddenly, however, Bruckner began, first playing a mere introduction composed of fragments of the given theme, gradually leading to the required fugue itself. Then was heard a fugue — not such a fugue as might be expected from an academic graduate, but a living contrapuntal Philippic, which pealed forth ever more majestic to strike the astonished ears of the foxy judicial quintet with the authoritative splendor of a lion's voice bursting forth from the jungle.

"He should examine us!" exclaimed one judge enthusiastically. "If I knew a tenth of what he knows, I'd be happy!"

Then, being asked to improvise freely on the organ, Bruckner exhibited so fine a fantasy that the same judge cried: "And we're asked to test him? Why, he knows more than all of us together!"

This man's name was Herbeck, and he was from that moment Bruckner's greatest musical friend. Unfortunately he died too soon to be of much help to the struggling composer.

Of great advantage to Bruckner during his Linzian years was the opportunity afforded him for the first time to try his hand at "worldly" music, for church-music had monopolized his attention ever since his earliest boyhood.

The choral society "Frohsinn" chose him as director in 1860. Through this association, on May 12, 1861, Bruckner made his first concert appearance as composer with an "Ave Maria" for seven voices.

He struck up a friendship with the young conductor at the theatre and was appalled at the realization that all his earnest years of academic study were mere child's play beside the practical musical craftsmanship of this brilliant young exponent of the "modern" school. Eagerly he gave himself into the care of this new teacher, Otto Kitzler. From the revealing analysis of Beethoven's sonatas, Kitzler led his enthusiastic disciple to the study of instrumentation, introducing him to the beauties of the *Tannhaeuser* score. Here Bruckner was given his first glimpse of a new world of music, the very existence of which he had scarcely suspected. In 1863, finally convinced that he was ready to face the musical world alone, he took leave of Kitzler and the last of his long years of preparation.

Those years are perhaps unique in the annals of mortal genius, at least in those of Western civilization. The naive modesty of a great artist already within sight of middle age burying himself more desperately than any schoolboy in the mass of antiquated musical dogma prescribed by a "Dr. Syntax" would be at once labelled in these psycho-

analytic days as a sample of the workings of an inferiority complex. But Bruckner's had been a church-life, his language a church idiom, and in the light of this, is it illogical to claim that his particular preparation had to differ from that of other symphonists as the architecture of a cathedral differs from that of a palace or villa?

In short, without those drab years of study mistakenly termed "be-lated," the tremendous symphonic formal concepts of Bruckner might never have been realized.

Of significance in the contemplation of his spiritual affinity to Wagner is the fact that an Overture in G-minor (composed by Bruckner in 1863) closes with the still unknown "Feuerzauber," not that either master plagiarized the other, but that the caprice of nature which set two such gigantic figures side by side in the same generation must not be ignored. It is truly a cause for human gratitude that sublime accident granted the one the faculty it denied the other. Epic as is the expression of both these Titans, Wagner's helplessness in the field of the symphony is as notorious as Bruckner's in that of the music drama. The future will simply have to regard the two composers as kindred in spirit, but supplementary in achievement.

The music of *Tannhaeuser* sang into Bruckner's ears a veritable proclamation of independence. Thus, Wagner, whom he had as yet never seen, set him free at a mere spiritual touch, spurring him to unrestrained self-expression. With the very first effort of this new-born Bruckner, the glorious Mass in D, the world was endowed with an initial major work surpassed in depth and brilliancy perhaps by no other in the entire range of music. Inspired by *Tannhaeuser*, if you will, yet sounding not the slightest echo of its strains, the Mass abounds in fine passages, unjustly dubbed Wagnerian, for they could not as yet have had any prototype. The opening *Adagio*, built up on the theme of the *Liebestod* (a year before the first performance of *Tristan*), the music accompanying the settling down of the dove at the end of *Parsifal* (nineteen years before the first performance), the "Fall of the Gods" and the "Spear-motive" from the *Ring* (twelve years before Bayreuth), these anticipatory touches should, in justice, be viewed, not as Wagnerisms, but rather as forerunners of the new epic spirit that was just rising in music.

The composition of this masterpiece took only three months. After the first performance, in the Cathedral at Linz, November 20, 1864, the Bishop Rudigier was heard to remark: "During that mass I could not pray." Indeed, so profound was the impression the work made, that it was given a "concert" performance by general request shortly after, achieving a veritable triumph. Bruckner's success was proudly reported in the Viennese papers, for it was good publicity for the "home" conservatory of which he had been "one of the best pupils."

Elated by his success Bruckner at once began working on his first symphony. That year (1865) May 15 had been set aside in Munich for the greatest musical event of the century, the initial performance of

Tristan. Naturally, Bruckner made the trip to the Bavarian capital and when, owing to the illness of Isolde (Frau Schnorr), the event was postponed till the tenth of June, he decided to await the great day in the city. There he had the fortune to be presented to Wagner himself, who at once took a liking to the serious, honest Austrian, inviting him to spend many an evening in the famous Wagnerian "circle." Von Buelow became Bruckner's first confidant when the latter shyly showed the great pianist the first three movements of his growing symphony. Von Buelow was so astonished at the splendor and freshness of the ideas in this new score that he could not refrain from communicating his enthusiasm to the great Richard, much to Bruckner's embarrassment, for when Wagner asked in person to see the symphony, so great was the awe in which the younger composer stood of the "Master of all Masters" that he could not summon up the courage to show it to him. He shrank from such a step as though it had been a sacrilege. So naive was his hero-worship of the master that he could not even be induced to sit down in Wagner's presence. No wonder, then, that after the *Tristan* performance Wagner became for Bruckner a veritable religion. Yet for this faith the younger man was condemned to suffer such abuse as has fallen to the lot of no other in the annals of art. He was to write nine mighty symphonies, *ad majorem Dei gloriam*, for from man he was destined to receive not reward, but neglect, scorn, and spiritual abuse beyond measure.

On April 14, 1866, Bruckner's first symphony was complete, ready to announce to a skeptical world that the supreme instrumental form had not culminated in Beethoven. True enough, it was from the immortal *Fifth* of Beethoven, that Parnassus of musical classicism, that this new master drew the spiritual motto for all his symphonic efforts. Each of his symphonies might be described as an ascent *per aspera ad astra*. Through the logical order of the four movements he unfolded the panorama of the trials of the human soul as hero. Beginning with (first movement) the drama of inner conflict, then (*adagio*) returning from the prayerful communion with God to the (*scherzo*) joys of life in nature, at length (*finale*) with unconquerable energy and determination entering upon the battle with the world, culminating in the final triumph over all opposition, he laid down the permanent spiritual foundation for all his symphonic labors.

That the first performance of this symphony, 1868, technically the most difficult that had as yet come into existence, was not a total failure, is scarcely short of a miracle, for the best string and brass sections the town of Linz could provide faced the allegedly "impossible" score almost hopelessly. Yet Bruckner conducted the numerous rehearsals with such desperate zeal that the result was at least musical enough to call forth respectful comment from the critics, though they could have gleaned but the scantiest notion of the true significance of the work from such a performance.

Even the noted critic Hanslick, on the strength of this favorable report, congratulated the Viennese conservatory, hinting approvingly at a rumor that its faculty was soon to be augmented by so valuable an acquisition as Bruckner.

The rumor came true, though only after long, long hesitation on Bruckner's part. He feared to give up his modest but secure post in Linz for a miserably underpaid and insecure chair in theory at the noted music school of the capital, but his friends, understanding his timidity and realizing the tremendous artistic advantages of the proffered position, urged him to accept it. At length, after Bishop Rudigier assured Bruckner that the organ at the Cathedral in Linz would always be waiting for him, he decided to risk the chance. The date upon which he officially assumed his title of professor was July 6, 1868.

Just about this time, in his forty-third year, he was made the unhappy victim of a great spiritual shock. The parents of the seventeen-year-old Josephine Lang with whom the composer had fallen in love refused him the girl's hand because of his age. In Bruckner's many cases of platonic affection for young girls (this continued till his seventieth year) there is enticing food for the modern psychologist's or psychoanalyst's formulations.

Now began for Bruckner a slow and cruel martyrdom. His very first Viennese attempt, the newly composed Mass in F-minor, was refused a hearing on the ground that it was "unsingable." After this two new symphonic attempts were suppressed by the nerve-racked composer himself with the bitter comment: "They are no good; I dare not write down a really decent theme."

Discouraged, he decided to stop composing for a while and set out on a concert tour through France. The newspaper reports of this series of recitals were so jubilant that Europe soon rang with the name of Bruckner, "the greatest organist of his time."

Returning to Austria, in better spirits, he experienced "the most glorious day of his life" when his Mass in E-minor (composed in 1866) was given its initial hearing (Linz, 1869) midst unqualified enthusiasm.

The astonishing reports from France about Bruckner's organ-improvisations had so aroused the curiosity of many Englishmen that the virtuoso was offered fifty pounds for twelve recitals in London to be given within a week! Out of this "munificent" fee he was expected to pay his own travelling expenses!

Nevertheless August 2, 1871, found Bruckner seated at a London organ dutifully improvising on the appropriate theme "God save the King." Phlegmatic John Bull, quite impressed by the grandeur of these improvisations, nevertheless remarked judiciously that the performer showed his weakness in a Mendelssohn sonata, as had been expected. After one of these recitals a London lady advised Bruckner through an interpreter to learn English before his next visit to Britain. He never visited England again.

Back in Vienna he doffed the hated mask of virtuoso and determined at his own cost to give the shelved F-minor Mass the hearing he felt sure it deserved. The performance took place in June, 1872. He had hired the world-famous Philharmonic orchestra for the occasion at a cost of three hundred gulden (eight months' wages to the Professor of Counterpoint) but the favorable report of the famous Hanslick about the work (though he declared it reminded him in spots of Wagner and Beethoven) was alone worth the price. Could Hanslick, Wagner's most powerful and bitter opponent, only have dreamed that the simple Bruckner was destined to receive at the hands of the great music-dramatist the heavy legacy of critical abuse he had gathered through two score years of stormy travel from Dresden to Bayreuth! Bruckner, only two years before this (1869), humbly as any music student, had sat with rapt attention at the feet of Hanslick, then lecturer on "Musical History" at the Viennese conservatory.

Meanwhile, during his London experience, he had launched upon a new symphony, determined to make it from the viewpoint of technical playability totally acceptable to the easy-going world of musicians and critics among whom fate had cast his lot. Conviction would not let him abandon the titanic skeletal structure of his *First*, the symphonic "wagon" to which he had "hitched his star." After long pondering he hit upon the unusual idea of punctuating the longer movements of the work with general pauses in the whole orchestra. This striking device at once caught the knowing ears of the musicians during the rehearsals for the first performance and resulted in the fabrication of the sarcastic nickname, "Rest Symphony," by which the work was thereafter known in Vienna. The description "Upper-Austrian," later applied by the noted Bruckner biographer Goellerich, is far more appropriate, for the opening and closing movements, and particularly the *scherzo*, are thoroughly saturated with the atmosphere and song of Bruckner's rustic "home country" surroundings. Upon being once more refused an official hearing for his new work on the ground of "unplayability," Bruckner again dipped deep into his yawning pockets and invited Vienna to hear his *Second Symphony* to the tune of four hundred and five gulden literally borrowed on a "pound of flesh." Speidel, a prominent critic, had the honesty to say in his report of the occasion: "It is no common mortal who speaks to us in this music. Here is a composer whose very shoe-laces his numerous enemies are not fit to tie." Hanslick, still no outspoken Bruckner opponent, expressed discomfort at the titanic dimensions of the work, and lauded the "masterly manner" in which the orchestra played the "unplayable" score. (October 26, 1873.)

Although Brahms, whose *First Symphony* was still uncompleted, had nevertheless been firmly seated on the world's symphonic throne (for had he not been crowned by all critics as Beethoven's heir?) court-conductor Herbeck could not refrain from making the following remark to Bruckner after hearing this work: "I assure you if Brahms were capable

of writing such a symphony the concert-hall would rock with applause."

Bruckner did not enter upon these huge personal expenses because of a thirst for public applause. That the joys of symphonic creation were sufficient spiritual exaltation for him, is clear from the zeal with which he began work upon his *Third* at the very moment his *Second* was unconditionally rejected by the Vienna Philharmonic. In the production of this new score he gave up all thought of mollifying friend and foe, who alike had complained about the length and difficulty of his previous orchestral efforts. The heroic defiance that stalks proudly through every movement of this work, making it sound much like a huge declaration of independence, has caused many to label it "another *Eroica*," implying a definite community between Beethoven and Bruckner.

That it was Bruckner's original intention to make this *Third* a "Wagner" symphony is clear from the actual note-for-note quotations from the already widely discussed *Ring*. He had apparently, by now, summoned up the courage to go to Wagner and ask him for his artistic approval. Fortunately his arrival at Bayreuth, armed with his last two symphonies, caught the Master of Wahnfried in most friendly humor. Bruckner's own description of his emotions as Wagner examined the scores is eloquent: "I was just like a schoolboy watching his teacher correct his note-book. Every word of comment seemed like a red mark on the page. At last I managed to stammer forth the hope that he would accept the dedication of one of the symphonies, for that was the only and also the highest recognition I wanted from the world." Wagner's answer, one of the few happy moments in Bruckner's tragic life, is surely recorded by the angels. "Dear friend, the dedication would be truly appropriate; this work of yours gives me the greatest pleasure."

After that, Bruckner went on, "We discussed musical conditions in Vienna, drank beer, and then he led me into the garden and showed me his gravel!" They apparently spent a most delightful afternoon together. On the authority of the famous sculptor Kietz, who was present part of the time, we have it that a most amusing sequel developed on the two following days. Bruckner had had not only some, but in fact so much beer, the hospitable Wagner continually filling his mug and urging him to empty it (for a whole barrel had been ordered for the occasion), that the next morning found the Austrian quite muddled and at a loss which of the two symphonies the master had preferred. Ashamed to return to Wagner, he sought out the sculptor and appealed to him for help in this dilemma, but the latter, highly amused, pretended not to have paid attention to the discussion, saying he had heard some talk about D-minor and a trumpet. Now in the sculptor's own words, "Bruckner suddenly threw his arms about me, kissed me, and cried, 'Thank you, dear Mr. Councillor (I don't know to this day how I came by the title) thank you! I know it's the one in D-minor the Master has accepted! Oh, how happy I am that I know which it is!'" Next day, however, he was once more doubtful, for he sent the following message to Wagner on a slip of blue

paper (now a treasured museum possession): "Symphony in D-minor in which the trumpet introduces the theme. A. Bruckner." The same leaf came back to him promptly with the following addition: "Yes, yes! Hearty greetings! Wagner." Thus came Bruckner's *Third* to bear the name *Wagner Symphony*. Whenever Wagner heard Bruckner's name mentioned thereafter, he would exclaim, "Ah! Yes, the trumpet."

The report of this incident with its clear implication of Wagner's regard for Bruckner's genius proved the death-knell for whatever chance the symphonist may still have had for Viennese recognition during the Hanslick regime. Up to that moment his work had been neglected mainly because the musicians of the city had little ear for such "modern" harmony and dramatic orchestration, but the leaps and bounds Wagner's music-dramas and Liszt's Symphonic Poems were making in the world of art had brought about a complete revolution in musical taste. The new era was one of bitter personal hatreds between musicians and critics of two opposing factions. No political enemies have ever used more poisonous epithets than the Wagnerites against the Anti-Wagnerites and vice-versa. A lion for punishment, both taking and giving, Wagner could easily weather the storm of unspeakable abuse, but away from his scores and classes Bruckner was a mere child so simple and shy that the merciless critical boycott of his works, which now followed, all but crushed his spirit. It was inconceivable to him that human beings could be as cruel as Hanslick and his snarling myrmidons were to him, merely because he had gained Wagner's friendship and recognition. His only solace was that he had become reconciled to composing work after work without the encouraging incentive of public hearings.

The *Fourth*, already in the making at this time and bearing the title *Romantic*, was finished November 22, 1874. Although the description *Romantic* is no less fitting than that of *Pastorale* in the case of Beethoven's *Sixth*, there seems little doubt that the detailed "program" or symphonic plot communicated to his circle of friends by Bruckner was a postanalysis influenced by no other than Wagner, who had even published a rather fantastic pictorial description of Beethoven's *Ninth*. It is at any rate silly to dilly-dally over the fitness of its details, for the *Romantic* has so clear and effective a tale to tell that it has become the favorite vehicle for the introduction of Bruckner to a new audience. That the composer did not regard the "program" seriously is evident from his remark concerning the Finale: "And in the last movement," said he, "I've forgotten completely what picture I had in mind." Yet the work possesses an unmistakable unity hitherto without precedent in absolute music, for all four parts spring from the main theme in the first movement. So logical and masterly is the development of this theme in the course of the work that the climax is not reached until the closing portion of the Finale, making the *Romantic* symphony from the point of view of perfection of form perhaps the last word that has yet been spoken by man.

At this time, thanks to the zeal of his enemies his material condition had become almost hopeless. To quote from one of his letters, January 12, 1875: "I have only my place at the Conservatory, on the income of which it is impossible to exist. I have been compelled to borrow money over and over again or accept the alternative of starvation. No one offers to help me. The Minister of Education makes promises, but does nothing. If it weren't for the few foreigners who are studying with me, I should have to turn beggar. Had I even dreamed that such terrible things would happen to me no earthly power could have induced me to come to Vienna. Oh, how happy I'd be to return to my old position in Linz!"

The Viennese musical "powers that be" had conspired to make life unbearable for the avowed Wagnerite. One of the highest officials at the conservatory, in answer to an appeal by Bruckner, gave him the following generous advice: "It's high time you threw your symphonies into the trash-basket. It would be much wiser for you to earn money by making piano arrangements of the compositions of others." The same man, with equally kind intent, went so far as to say, "Bruckner can't play the organ at all."

The warlike Wagner's arrival in Vienna in the spring of 1875 drew more hostile attention to the timid symphonist. Of course, it did him more harm than good. The music-dramatist's reiterated praise of Bruckner's work was like a signal for the Viennese authorities to redouble the cruelty of their method of torture. Dessoff, conductor of the Philharmonic, promised to perform the *Wagner Symphony*, invited Bruckner to several rehearsals, and suddenly (after two months of preparation) declared he could not find room for it on a program. Later the orchestra took hold of it again, but rejected it finally (only a single musician opposing the move) as "absolutely unplayable."

Just as the persecuted Wagner set to work on his *Meistersinger*, pouring his sufferings out through the lips of Hans Sachs, Bruckner plunged into the tragic depths of his *Fifth*. Only in the construction of his colossal symphonies was he able to play the hero against fate. Over two years in the process of composition the *Tragic* symphony was compelled to wait eighteen years for its first hearing. That was not to be in Vienna, nor was Bruckner ever to hear the work at all.

In 1876 Wagner invited him to the inaugural *Ring* performances at Bayreuth and the two giant musicians once more discussed the *Wagner Symphony*. Perhaps as a direct result of this conference Bruckner now set about simplifying the condemned score and again appealed to the Philharmonic for a hearing. The prompt refusal then given his request must have convinced even him that a relentless hostility due to Wagner's praise made his cause impossible so far as that organization was concerned. Into this spiritual state of almost total eclipse there suddenly broke a ray of light. Herbeck, old friend of sunnier days, conductor of the fine, though less-famed, orchestra of the *Society of the Friends of*

Music, became so disgusted with the unjust persecution that he determined to brave the wrath of critics and musicians by espousing the Bruckner cause. Hardly had he announced the first step of his campaign, a production of the tabu *Wagner Symphony*, when he died. Had not, at this juncture, an influential government representative named Goellerich (father of the noted Bruckner biographer) stepped into the breach, the *Third Symphony* would have been taken off the Herbeck program and the unhappy composer, poisoned with a cup of misery worthy of a Job, would probably have gone mad.

The performance itself which took place December 16, 1877, was one of the saddest in the history of music. Since no conductor dared to wield the baton upon the occasion, Bruckner himself was compelled to direct the orchestra. Early in the course of the symphony, Director Hellmesberger, spokesman of the conservatory, burst out laughing. Promptly another "director" followed suit. Upon this the apish students joined in. Then, of course, the public began to giggle. Soon some people rose and left the hall, indignant that the cause of music had been offered so great an insult as the performance of a Bruckner work in Vienna, the sacred musical metropolis. When the symphony came to an end there were hardly ten people left in the parquet. The few faithful occupants of the "standing room," a handful of Bruckner-pupils, among them Gustav Mahler, rushed down to the heartbroken master, from whom even the musicians of the orchestra had fled, and attempted in vain to cheer him with consoling words. At this moment an angel approached, in the guise of the music publisher Rättig, described the symphony as wonderful, and declared himself ready to risk the expense of publishing it. Under such a black sky was the *Wagner Symphony* given to the world.

To return to the Viennese critics for whose Wagner-gobbling appetite it had been a gala evening, the director Hanslick (intending it, of course, only as a joke) for once told the absolute truth, namely, that he "could not understand the gigantic symphony." He said there had come to him, while listening, "a vision in which Beethoven's *Ninth* had ventured to accost the Valkyr maidens, only to be crushed under their horses' feet." As a sarcastic climax he added that he "did not wish by his words to hurt the feelings of the composer, whom he really held in great esteem."

A little before this time, through the good graces of the previously mentioned Goellerich, the University of Vienna had announced the creation of a "chair" of music and the inclusion of harmony and counterpoint in the regular curriculum. Despite the firm opposition of Hanslick, Bruckner, who had ten years before appealed to the faculty that some such step be taken in his behalf, was now appointed lecturer. From the opening address, April 30, 1876, which was attended by so great a number of students that the occasion might well be compared to the first of Schiller's lectures at Jena, the younger generation embraced the Bruckner cause enthusiastically. To the academic subjects taught by

Bruckner, with Goethe's words as motto: "Gray is every theory, Green alone life's golden tree," were added those glorious improvisations for which he was so noted and the inspiring message of which endeared him to the hearts of his "Gaudeamuses," as he lovingly called his students. The open enmity of Hanslick towards their beloved professor gradually assumed for them the proportions of a political issue and a life problem. In the years to come the Bruckner cause in Vienna was to attain such strength through the loyalty of these University students that the combined enmity of critics and musicians would have to bow before it in the dust. This was actually realized ten years later, when the Philharmonic was finally compelled, owing to the force of public opinion, to program the already world-famous *Seventh Symphony* (1886).

As the result of the frigid reception accorded the *Wagner Symphony* Bruckner spent the next two years (1878-80) in a radical revision of the instrumentation of the *Second*, *Fourth*, and *Fifth* symphonies, including the composition of a totally new movement, the now famous *Hunting Scherzo*, for the *Fourth* or *Romantic*. However, the changes he made in the scores are not of the nature of compromises between the artist and the world, for the themes of the symphonies remained unaltered, only unnecessary rhythmic and technical complications being abandoned.

To this interval also belongs the composition of the *Quintet* for strings, Bruckner's sole contribution to chamber-music, but a work so deep and mighty that those who have heard it proclaim that in the whole range of chamber music only the last Beethoven string-quartets attain such spiritual heights. The *Quintet* was composed by the *symphonist* Bruckner and has the sweep and grandeur of his best symphonic creations.

The interval of rest from major composition saw him frequently attending the many colorful formal dances of Vienna. It seems psychologically consistent that one whose mind was always engaged in tragic inner conflicts should seek recreation in the halls of festivity and laughter. Bruckner had always been fond of dancing.

A severe attack of "nerves," doubtless due to overwork, drove him to seek relief in Switzerland during the summer of 1880. In August of that vacation period he visited the Passion Play at Oberammergau and fell head over heels in love with one of the "daughters of Jerusalem," the seventeen-year-old Marie Bartl. He waited for her at the stage-door, obtained an introduction, and escorted her home. After spending that evening and most of the next day in the Bartl family circle he arrived at a temporary understanding which left the love affair on a correspondential basis. There followed a lively exchange of letters between him and Marie, lasting a year, but the time came when the girl no longer answered him. Thus the now fifty-six-year-old lover found himself again refused entrance into the halls of matrimony. One is here involuntarily reminded of the love of the thirty-seven-year-old Beethoven for the

fourteen-year-old Therese Malfatti, though nowadays we have ceased to gasp at such things. The solitary silent remnant of this romance of Bruckner's is a photograph of his bearing the inscription: "To my dearest friend, Marie Bartl."

In these gloomy days when, following the deplorable fiasco of the *Wagner Symphony*, no one in Vienna dared or cared to lift a hand in favor of the *Romantic* and *Tragic* symphonies, now long finished and still unperformed, a malady affecting his feet compelled Bruckner to take to his bed. There, in spite of depressing circumstances, he summoned up the spiritual strength to work on his *Sixth Symphony*. As if his misfortunes had merely been trials sent from Above to prove his faith, while Bruckner was still busy with the last movement of the new work, Hans Richter, the Wagner disciple, visited him and was so struck with the beauties of the dormant *Romantic Symphony* that he at once programmed it and invited the composer to a rehearsal. Richter's own words describing the occasion reveal Bruckner's naive character: "When the symphony was over," he related, "Bruckner came to me, his face beaming with enthusiasm and joy. I felt him press a coin into my hand. 'Take this,' he said, 'and drink a glass of beer to my health.'" Richter, of course, accepted the coin, a Maria Theresa thaler, and wore it on his watch-chain ever after. The premiere of the *Fourth* took place on February 20, 1881 and proved a real triumph for Bruckner, who was compelled to take many bows after each movement. On the same program, however, the symphonic poem, the "Singer's curse" by Buelow, met with utter failure. Buelow, now a deserter from the Wagner camp, and turned to a staunch Brahmsian could not contain his jealousy and asked sarcastically, referring to the successful symphony: "Is that German music?" From Buelow, at any rate, the most devoted of Wagnerians could expect no praise. In time the insults Bruckner had to endure from that source grew vile beyond description. Even seven years later, with musical Germany at the composer's feet, Buelow still stood by the sinking ship, saying: "Bruckner's symphonies are the anti-musical ravings of a half-wit." At last in 1891, the patient composer experienced the gratification of hearing that Buelow had finally relented and was promoting Bruckner's *Te Deum* as a splendid work well worthy of public performance.

In July, 1882, he made a flying trip to Bayreuth to hear the opening performance of *Parsifal*. To him these few days were a beautiful idyll. He would stroll along the road with a black frock-coat on his arm, ready to don it hastily should Wagner come along by chance. It made no difference to him that people said this was an unnecessary act of homage. Sometimes he would stop at "Wahnfried" and gaze at its windows long and reverently. Mornings he would visit Wagner. The Master would come out to greet him, offering him the hand of the little Eva, while he said laughingly: "Mr. Bruckner, your bride!" Then Wagner would deplore the disappointing state of contemporary music, exclaim-

ing: "I know of only one who may be compared to Beethoven — and he is Bruckner!" One evening, grasping the Austrian's hand, the aged Master cried: "Rest assured, I myself shall produce *the* symphony [meaning the *Wagner*] and all your works." "Oh, Master!" was all Bruckner could answer. Then the question: "Have you already heard *Parsifal*? How did you like it?" Bruckner sank upon his knees, pressing Wagner's hand to his lips, and murmuring: "Oh, Master, I worship you!" Wagner was deeply moved. When they bade each other good night that evening, it was the last greeting they ever exchanged on earth, for the call of Valhalla for the "Master of all Masters," as Bruckner called him, was soon to sound. This is the premonition that took hold of the younger composer, then already deep in the creation of his *Seventh Symphony*. No more majestic tribute to the greatness of one mortal has ever been paid by another than in that glorious, soaring *Adagio of Premonition*. It is an appeal direct to the soul of the mighty music-dramatist, spoken in its own dialect, consummately mastered by a kindred soul.

The death of Wagner was a stupendous blow to the whole musical world and especially so to Bruckner. The latter, now approaching his sixtieth birthday, was still humble Prof. Anton Bruckner to the world about him. The field of musical fame, suddenly deprived of its solitary gigantic tenant, seemed to yawn for a new Titan. The psychological moment was at hand.

On the twenty-ninth of December, 1884, Hugo Wolf wrote: "Bruckner? Bruckner? Who is he? Where does he live? What does he do? Such questions are asked by people who regularly attend the concerts in Vienna." The Viennese were destined to the shame of soon being taught by Germany the greatness they had been ignoring in their midst for a score of years.

When on December 30, 1884, young Arthur Nikisch, Bruckner pupil, gave the *Seventh Symphony* its first hearing in no less modest a hall than the celebrated Gewandhaus at Leipzig, it was as if a divine Voice had burst forth from total darkness crying, "Let there be light!" As the last note ceased there was enacted a scene of unparalleled enthusiasm, the applause lasting fully fifteen minutes. Bruckner appeared on the stage dressed in his simple manner and bowed repeatedly in answer to the unexpected ovation. One of the critics present spoke of him as follows: "One could see from the trembling of his lips and the sparkling moisture in his eyes how difficult it was for the old gentleman to suppress his deep emotion. His homely but honest countenance beamed with a warm inner happiness such as can appear only on the face of one who is too goodhearted to succumb to bitterness even under the pressure of most disheartening circumstances. Having heard his work and now seeing him in person we asked ourselves in amazement, 'How is it possible that you could remain so long unknown to us?'"

On New Year's Day, 1885, the whole world knew that a great sym-

phonic composer whom snobbish Vienna had for years held bound and gagged was at last free to deliver his message to all mankind.

The performance of the *Seventh Symphony* in Munich under Hermann Levi proved an even greater triumph. The conductor called it the "wonder work," avowing its interpretation was the crowning point of his artistic career. Perhaps Levi, famous Wagnerian chieftan as he was, intended to annihilate Brahms with a word when he also added, "It is the most significant symphonic work since 1827."

Into the performance at Karlsruhe (the work was now making its meteoric way through all Germany), Felix Mottl, gifted Bruckner pupil, threw so much spiritual fire that even the white-haired Liszt, sitting among the distinguished audience, became from that moment a staunch Brucknerite. This conversion was all the more remarkable since the great pianist had long remained cold to Bruckner's music, although he had been for two score years one of the chief marshals of the Wagner camp. Liszt as a Wagnerian had secretly nursed the notion that the Liszt Symphonic Poems could never be properly understood by the people until they had learned to appreciate his son-in-law's music dramas.

Despite the recognition of the whole of Germany, Vienna and the Philharmonic continued to maintain a dogged aloofness. Still fearful, Bruckner anticipated any possible desire on the part of the famous orchestra to play his work by entering a formal protest against such a move, on the ground that "the hostility of the Viennese critics could only prove dangerous to my still young triumphs in Germany."

For diplomatic reasons, no doubt, the *Quintet* was now given, for the first time in its entirety, by the Hellmesberger aggregation. One of the most prominent reviewers wrote about it as follows: "We cannot compare it with any other *Quintet* in this generation. It stands absolutely alone in its field." Even Kalbeck, Brahms' biographer and one of Bruckner's bitterest enemies, said: "Its *Adagio* radiates light in a thousand delicate shades — the reflection of a vision of the seventh heaven."

Apparently the dawn of recognition was at hand, even in Vienna. Yet the conspirators were determined to die hard. Another critic, on the same occasion, after paving the way by admitting that the *Quintet* was perhaps the deepest and richest thing of its kind, warned the public on ethical grounds against Bruckner as "the greatest living musical peril, a sort of tonal Anti-christ." His argument follows: "The violent nature of the man is not written on his face — for his expression indicates at most the small soul of the every-day *Kapellmeister*. Yet he composes nothing but high treason, revolution, and murder. His work is absolutely devoid of art or reason. Perhaps, some day, a devil and an angel will fight for his soul. His music has the fragrance of heavenly roses, but it is poisonous with the sulphurs of hell."

Meanwhile, for the benefit of his Viennese friends, whom he did not wish to disappoint, the composer personally prepared the initial per-

formance of his recently finished *Te Deum*. This, a semi-private affair, took place in a small concert-hall. Two pianos were used in the absence of an impartial orchestra.

Suddenly Germany and Holland began clamoring for other Bruckner compositions, but only the *Wagner Symphony* had appeared in print. That work had even penetrated to America where the noted Wagner disciple, Anton Seidl, had given it a hearing at the Metropolitan Opera House, December 6, 1885. When Bruckner heard about the favorable report in the New York *Tribune*, he was as happy as a child, and exclaimed: "Now even America says I'm not bad. Isn't that just rich?"

These successes, however, did not turn his head. He was far from ready to rest on his laurels. During the summer of 1884 he began work upon a new symphony. His sister, in whose house in the little town of Voecklabruck he was vacationing, says he would show her a stack of music-paper covered with pencil marks, saying that these scribbblings would become another symphony. In order to be able to set down undisturbed the ideas that came to him during frequent walks in the surrounding woods, he rented a room with a piano in a house nearby, "just for composing."

When he heard that the owner of this house had a young and pretty daughter, he said, "I'm glad. Now I'm sure I'll be able to compose here." Every day he would bring this girl, a Miss Hartmann, a bouquet of flowers. The presence of the younger fair sex seems to have been always a source of happiness to the composer. He was then over sixty years old.

At this time, like Balboa when he first stood upon the hill overlooking the mystic expanse of the Pacific, Bruckner stood at last in the halo of his belated and hard-earned fame looking back with calm melancholy upon the bitter trials of his artistic career. Beneath this retrospective spell his *Eighth Symphony* unfolded itself. As a colossal structure of spiritual autobiography in tone it is a sequel to his *Fifth* or *Tragic Symphony*, which it excels in depth of expression. It has been called the "crown of nineteenth century music." It is useless to attempt to give any idea of it in words, but its message in brief is: (*First movement*) how the artist, a mere human, like Prometheus, steals the sacred fire from heaven and, daring to bring the divine essence to earth, is condemned to suffer for his temerity. (*Scherzo*) how his deed is greeted with scorn and ridicule by his fellow-men, and he finds solace only in the beauty of nature. (*Adagio*) reveals the secret of his creative power, communion with the Supreme Source. (*Finale*) the battle all truth must fight on earth before it attains recognition and the final victory and crowning of the artist.

In Bruckner's physical appearance at this time there was no hint of senility. He was a little above the average in height, but an inclination to corpulency made him appear shorter. His physiognomy, huge-nosed and smooth-shaven as he was, was that of a Roman emperor, but from

his blue eyes beamed only kindness and childish faith. He wore unusually wide white collars, in order to leave his neck perfectly free. His black, loose-hanging clothes were obviously intended to be, above all, comfortable. He had even left instructions for a roomy coffin. The only thing about his attire suggestive of the artist was the loosely arranged bow-tie he always wore. About the fit and shape of his shoes he was, according to his shoe-maker, more particular than the most exactly elegant member of the fair sex. As he would hurry along the street swinging a soft black hat, which he hardly ever put on, a colored handkerchief could always be seen protruding from his coat-pocket.

In the summer of 1886 he arrived in Bayreuth just in time to attend the funeral of Liszt. As Bruckner sat at the organ improvising a "Funeral Oration" in his own language out of themes of *Parsifal*, it was as if he were saluting the passing of that golden age of nineteenth-century music, which had endowed the world with the titanic contribution known as the art of Wagner. Now he was leader of the glorious cause, its highest living creative exponent, but he stood alone, he and his symphonies, while the enemy still held the field in great numbers.

The *Seventh Symphony* continued making new conquests. Cologne, Graz, Chicago, New York, and Amsterdam paid tribute to its greatness. When it reached Hamburg the aged teacher of Brahms said it was the greatest symphony of modern times. Brahms, however, continued to shrug his shoulders, and remarked: "In the case of Bruckner one needn't use the word 'Symphony'; it's enough to talk of a kind of 'fake' which will be forgotten in a few years."

Then young Karl Muck, Bruckner pupil, came to Graz with the same symphony, and following upon this really Austrian triumph, Vienna was compelled at last to capitulate, much to the annoyance of the Hanslick coalition. Hans Richter conducted the hostile "King of Orchestras" on March 21, 1886. The *Seventh Symphony*, after hunting for the "blue bird" all over the world, had come home at last to bring happiness to the "prophet in his own country." Hanslick's review the following day was a sort of brief *apologia pro vita sua*. "It is certainly without precedent," complained he, "that a composer be called to the stage four or five times after each movement of a symphony. To tell the truth the music of Bruckner so rubs me the wrong way that I'm hardly in a position to give an impartial view of it. I consider it unnatural, blown up, unwholesome, and ruinous." Kalbeck, his *aide-de-camp*, picked on Richter for having shown personal homage to Bruckner and alleged that it was done purely for popular effect. Concerning the music itself he said: "It comes from the Nibelungen and goes to the devil!" Dompke, another member of Hanslick's staff snarled: "Bruckner writes like a drunkard." Richter, at the banquet of the *Wagner-Verein* held to celebrate the occasion, declared that many members of the Philharmonic orchestra had changed their minds about Bruckner and that there would be no difficulty about producing his works in Vienna from that

time on. As a matter of fact, the next symphony, the *Eighth*, was introduced to the world by the Philharmonic. Heroic Richter now carried the banner into the British Isles, in spite of Brahms' reproofing warning, "You surely are not going to perform Bruckner in England!"

The triumphant journey of the *Seventh* continued, Budapest, Dresden, and London next being conquered. To be sure, Berlin, in the hands of the Brahms marshals, Buelow and Joachim, only gave it a timid welcome. A prominent writer said of the occasion: "It was like offering a roast to a table of mules." Another said: "I considered Brahms a great symphonist until to-day, but how the little 'Doctor' seemed to shrink when he was programmed beside this giant, as was the case in this concert!"

It was still impossible for Bruckner to find publishers for his colossal work. Time after time his manuscripts were called for by different firms, but always returned to him with regretful apologies. Then suddenly, New York through Anton Seidl threatened to publish the *Romantic*, whereupon Hermann Levi for the second time made a collection of the required sum in Munich and thus saved Europe from the imminent disgrace.

In the autumn of 1889 personal friends of Bruckner and Brahms, hoping to end the quarrel between the two masters, agreed to bring them together in a Viennese restaurant. Bruckner, quite amicable, had arrived early and had already had two or three portions of Nudel-soup before Brahms put in an appearance. "Stiff and cold they faced each other across the table," related one of those present. It was an uncomfortable situation and the well-meaning conspirators were highly disappointed. Finally Brahms broke the silence and called for the bill-of-fare. With a forced display of good-nature he cried out: "Now let's see what there is to eat!" He glanced along the list of courses, suddenly looked up, and ordered: "Waiter, bring me smoked ham and dumplings!" Instantly Bruckner joined in, crying, "That's it, Doctor! Smoked ham and dumplings. At least that's something on which we can agree!" The effect of this remark was instantaneous. Everybody shook with laughter. The ice was broken and the remainder of the evening proved to be friendly and jolly.

A real understanding between the two was, of course, impossible. It was a case of temperaments diametrically opposed, conceptions of art basically at variance, in short, an apt illustration of Kipling's phrase "And the twain shall never meet."

Bruckner explained the situation thus: "He is Brahms (hats off!); I am Bruckner; I like my works better. He who wants to be soothed by music will become attached to Brahms; but whoever wants to be carried away by music will find but little satisfaction in his work." Brahms himself had declared before joining the Hanslick camp: "Bruckner is the greatest symphonist of the age."

Once after listening to a Bruckner symphony Brahms approached the

composer, saying: "I hope you won't feel hurt about it, but I really can't make out what you are trying to get at with your compositions." "Never mind, Doctor," answered Bruckner, "that's perfectly all right. I feel just the same way about your things."

In 1890, warned by repeated attacks of laryngitis and general nervousness, he begged leave to spend a year free from conservatory duty. His request was granted, but with no pay. He now drew the long-dormant *First Symphony* from its dusty shelf and set to work polishing it. Several years before, Hans Richter, happening to be present when two of Bruckner's pupils played a four-hand arrangement of the work, in his enthusiasm snatched up the orchestral score and wanted to run off with it, when Bruckner called out anxiously, "But the ragamuffin has to be cleaned first!" From that time the *First Symphony* was known in Bruckner circles as the "Ragamuffin"—an apt nomenclature, indeed, when one remembers the impudence of the opening bars.

Hermann Levi, already familiar with it, was particularly worried that the aging master might make radical changes in the process of revision and wrote to him: "The *First* is wonderful! It must be printed and performed—but please don't change it too much—it is all good just as it stands, even the instrumentation. Please, please, not too much retouching." An eloquent tribute to the genius of the early Bruckner is this verdict from the lips of the greatest of Wagnerian conductors and certainly one of the finest musicians of his time.

During these vacation days the master would review with longing the happy days before his Viennese trials began. Wondering what had become of the pretty Josephine Lang with whom he had fallen in love twenty-five years before, he decided to look her up. She had married long before and he was delighted to find in her beautiful fourteen-year-old daughter the living replica of her mother whom he had loved so long ago. Kissing the girl, he called her: "My darling substitute." In her company all reckoning of time past or present was lost for him and his heart beat once more as swiftly as the vacation moments flew by.

On December 21, 1890, the first and second printed versions of the *Wagner Symphony* were performed consecutively in Vienna. Hanslick admitted that here and there four or eight bars of exceptional and original beauty might be heard, but that the bulk of the work was "chaos." One wonders whether the man was really so old-fashioned that he could only read confusion out of the super-order which the world now knows as Bruckner's symphonic form, as vast and as centripetal as a great empire.

About Hanslick there seems ever to be popping up a ghost of doubt, "Was the man, after all, sincere?" If so, he certainly deserved the immortality Wagner gave him in the figure of Beckmesser. It is good for us to keep in mind that Beckmesser or Hanslick, the stubborn reactionary, is an eternal type to be found in every generation and in every field of activity.

On the above occasion the critic Helm, long faithful Hanslick assistant, left the opposition and stepped over to Bruckner's side beating his breasts for his past sins. The valiant Kalbeck still stood firm and incorrigible. He offered this recipe in lieu of criticism: "Stand the *Allegro* of Beethoven's *Ninth* on its head and see the *Finale* of this Bruckner Symphony tumble out."

Vienna was by then thoroughly convinced of Bruckner's quality. A group of wealthy Austrians met to take financial measures necessary to free the composer from his arduous academic duties. Though pride at first led him to misunderstand the motive for this, the master soon realized that nothing but regard for his genius had prompted it and gratefully accepted the offer, deeply moved. Thus he was set free to do with the last five years of his life as he wished. His new found leisure permitting, he would often make trips to Germany to hear his works performed.

* * *

Once a chambermaid in a Berlin hotel pressed a note into his hand on his departure for Vienna, in which she expressed great concern for the bodily welfare of her "dear Mr. Bruckner." Naturally, he responded at once, but insisted (this was a matter of principle with him) upon being introduced to the girl's parents. With them an understanding was quickly arrived at and a lively correspondence entered upon, until Bruckner, despite the admonition of his horrified friends, had made up his mind to marry the girl. He insisted, however, that she be converted to Catholicism and this proved in the end the only stumbling block to one of the most curious matches on record. Fortunately, the girl would not sacrifice her faith even for the privilege of nursing her "beloved Mr. Bruckner." He was seventy-one years old when this adventure with Ida Buhz, the solicitous maid, came to an end.

Then there was also his "affair" with the young and pretty Minna Reischl. Add to a pair of roguish eyes a thoroughly musical nature and it is easy to see why the aged lover lost his heart to this girl. She, of course, must have been merely amusing herself at Bruckner's expense, because when she went as far as to bring the composer home to her parents, these sensible people of the world at once awakened him out of his December dream. When he came to Linz shortly after, his acquaintances guessing the truth, teased him, saying: "Aha! So you have been out marrying again!" With Minna, however, who afterwards married a wealthy manufacturer, Bruckner remained very friendly until the end.

In the autumn of 1891 he was created "Honorary Doctor" of the University of Vienna, a distinction which gave the ingenuous composer much happiness. Not long before this he had received from the emperor Franz Joseph an insignia of which he was inordinately proud and which he was very fond of displaying, much as a child will a new toy. This weakness of his for glitter, a characteristic as a rule incompatible with

true greatness, is yet easily to be reconciled with his childishness and the long years spent in a land where titles and decorations were regarded as the highest marks of honor.

The summer of 1893 saw him the central figure at the Bayreuth *Festspiele*. His arrival was enthusiastically greeted by a host of musicians and music-lovers. In the confusion of welcome the trunk containing the sketches of the *Ninth Symphony* disappeared, but after many anxious hours it was located at the police-station, to the composer's great relief. Daily he made his pilgrimage to the grave of the "Master of all Masters." The critic Marsop, once an enemy of his, says he saw Bruckner approach Wagner's grave reverently, fold his hands and pray with such fervor that the tears literally streamed down his face. Perhaps, Bruckner already felt that this visit to Wahnfried might be his last.

In the consciousness of the more enlightened Viennese his name now occupied a place beside the great masters who had lived in the "city of music," and as he passed along the street, voices could be heard whispering with awe: "There goes Anton Bruckner!"

He lived in a small, simple apartment of two rooms and kitchen, tended by an old faithful servant, Kathi, who for twenty years had spent a few hours each day caring for the bachelor's household. In the blue-walled room where he worked stood his old grand piano, a harmonium, a little table, and some chairs. The floor and most of the furniture were littered with music. On the walls hung a large photograph and an oil painting of himself. From this room a door led to his bedroom, the walls of which were covered with pictures of his "beloved Masters." On the floor stood a bust of himself which he was pleased to show his friends, who relate that he would place his hand upon its brow, smile wistfully, and say: "Good chap!" Against the wall stood an English brass bed presented to him by his pupils. This he called "My one luxury." At home he would go dressed even more comfortably than on the street, merely donning a loose coat whenever a guest was announced. Kathi knew exactly at what hours guests were welcome. If the master was composing no one was permitted to disturb him. At other times he went in person to meet the caller at the door.

Bruckner worked, as a rule, only in the morning, but sometimes he would get up during the night to write down an idea that had suddenly come to him. Possessing no lamp, he did this night work by the light of two wax candles. When the faithful Kathi saw traces of these in the morning she scolded him severely, warning him to be more careful about his health. When she insisted that he compose only in the daytime, he would say contemptuously: "What do you know about such things? I have to compose whenever an idea comes to me."

Sometimes, other answers failing him, he tried naively to impress her with his importance, crying: "Do you know whom you are talking to? I am Bruckner!" "And I am Kathi," she retorted and that was the end of the argument. After his death she said of him: "He was rude, but good!"

On the eighteenth of December, 1892, occurred the most impressive performance of his career, when the Philharmonic played his *Eighth Symphony*. Realizing the unprecedented depth of this work, a profundity which only movements of the most colossal proportions could cope with, Bruckner had been much worried concerning the welcome it would receive from the public. The performance, however, was superb and aroused the greatest enthusiasm. Just before the *Finale* the exasperated Hanslick rose to take his leave and received an ovation such as only the consummate villain of the play is given upon a particularly effective exit.

Bruckner's condition at this time was already causing his doctors much concern and it was only owing to the extreme importance of the occasion that they permitted him to be present.

At the close of the symphony, which had been the sole number on the program, the applause was tremendous and threatened never to end. Bruckner, after countless bows to the audience, turned and bowed to the famous orchestra which had at last been won over to his side. It was a true triumph, the first unqualified victory he had ever gained in Vienna. The critics called it the "crown of nineteenth century music," "the masterpiece of the Bruckner style." Hugo Wolf wrote: "The work renders all criticism futile; the *Adagio* is absolutely incomparable." Even the "holdout," Kalbeck, at last admitted, "Bruckner is a master of instrumentation," and "the symphony is worthy of its sole position on the program."

Bruckner was most unhappy that increasing illness often made it impossible for him to hear his own works, the performances of which were becoming ever more frequent. He had been put on a strict diet. "Even my favorite Pilsner beer is forbidden me," he complained to his former teacher Kitzler. His badly swollen feet rendered organplaying out of the question and he had to remain in bed most of the time. Nevertheless it was this same suffering Bruckner who wrote the rollicking *Scherzo* of the *Ninth Symphony*, perhaps the most vital of all his lighter movements.

The end of 1893 saw such an improvement in his condition that he was even permitted a trip to Berlin. This change for the better was, alas, only temporary, for the following days brought such an enduring relapse that he could not attend the first performance of his *Fifth Symphony* in Graz, under that young eagle of the baton, Franz Schalk, April 8, 1894. A devoted pupil of Bruckner, Schalk had fervently embraced the enormously difficult undertaking of love involved in the study and production of this mighty work, with its irresistibly inspiring climax. Only the presence of the ailing master was lacking to render the occasion as happy as it was musically important.

During the summer Bruckner was sufficiently recovered to return to the rustic surroundings of his earlier years, but his seventieth birthday was celebrated quietly, by order of the Viennese doctor who had ac-

accompanied him. Telegrams of congratulation and best wishes streamed into the little town of Steyr from all corners of the earth. Articles about him and his work appeared in all the newspapers. The people of Linz bestowed on him the key of the city; he was elected honorary member of countless musical organizations. In short, not a single sign of esteem the earth might show its kings of tone was now withheld from the ailing genius. The glory he had richly earned twenty years before now came to him when the greatest joy he could reveal at the realization of his universal recognition was a wistful smile in which life-long spiritual pain lurked behind the ghost of a belated happiness.

Unexpectedly, what seemed a swift recovery, in the fall of 1894, found him once more ascending the platform at the university to resume his lectures on musical theory. Only a few such days of grace were granted his shattered body by relentless Fate, for two weeks later he stood for the last time before his beloved students. From then on his health declined steadily and even his mental condition suffered from erratic spells. He was compelled to abandon his *Ninth Symphony* at the close of the third movement, an *Adagio* which, he told friends, was the most beautiful he had ever composed. From sketches found among his posthumous effects we know it had been his intention to add to this glorious work a purely instrumental *finale*, perhaps in the manner of the closing portion of his *Tragic Symphony*.

Yet, little though he realized it, when the last note of this *Adagio* dies out there is no expectation unfulfilled. It is as if he has confessed all, poured out his very soul in this music, so that the work he despaired of ever finishing, the work he died thinking incomplete, now strikes the listener as a perfect symphony-unit needing no prescribed *finale*.

On January 12, 1896, he heard his *Te Deum*, its performance in Vienna having been recommended by no other than Brahms himself, who at last seems to have changed his attitude towards the man he had opposed for years. This was the last time Bruckner ever heard one of his own works. The very last music he listened to in public was Wagner's *Liebesmahl der Apostel*. It was much like a musical farewell-greeting from the Master he had esteemed above all others in his lifetime. During the summer of that year Bayreuth was prepared for the worst, for a strong rumor was afoot that Bruckner was dying. Yet his gigantic vitality outlived the season. Not till October 11 did the dreaded moment come. It was a Sunday. In the morning he had occupied himself with the sketches for the *Finale* of the *Ninth Symphony*. There seemed nothing alarming about his condition. At three in the afternoon he suddenly complained of feeling cold and asked for a cup of tea. A friend who was with him helped him to bed, but no sooner did he appear comfortable, when he breathed once or twice heavily and all was over.

At the burial service Ferdinand Loewe conducted the *Adagio* of the *Seventh Symphony*. Hugo Wolf was refused entry into the church on the ground that he was not a member of any of the "Societies" partici-

pating. Brahms, a very sick old man, stood outside the gate, but refused to enter. Someone heard him mutter sadly: "It will be my turn soon," and then he sighed and went wearily home.

In accordance with Bruckner's implicit wish his remains were taken to St. Florian where they lie buried under the mighty organ that had been his best friend and into the golden majesty of which he had on innumerable occasions poured the troubled confessions of his tragic life.



NBC ORCHESTRA UNDER STEINBERG BROADCASTS BRUCKNER'S
FOURTH (MARCH 4, 1939)

... What distinguished the occasion was the inclusion of a Bruckner symphony—the *Romantic*—for the first time in an NBC Symphony program. Mr. Steinberg led it with authority and sympathy, and the men responded alertly to his wishes. . . .

LOUIS BIANCOLLI, *New York World Telegram*

... Mr. Steinberg brought not only enthusiasm but unusual insight to his interpretation. One would say that he wrang from the symphony all that was best in it, and that Bruckner was fortunate in this representation. The tempi seemed to one who is not an admirer of this symphony admirably chosen, and fortunately not dragged. Some have taken the opening movement, for example, more slowly. It gains much by the energy that the brisker pace imparts, and it is to be added that within the frame of the prevailing tempo Mr. Steinberg established all the appropriate varieties of movement and of dynamics. . . .

If the first movement is the strongest of the four that make this Bruckner symphony, there are other places which must be harder to convey to an audience, as the slow movement. The different movements and their interpretive demands made clear the knowledge, the temperament and sincerity of this leader. . . .

The audience was very appreciative of Mr. Steinberg's efforts. The impression is that the players of the orchestra also held him in esteem.

OLIN DOWNES, *New York Times*

... This was the first time that any music by Bruckner has figured in these concerts. . . .

Mr. Steinberg, who made his debut in this series in the closing concert last spring, disclosed himself in this performance as a conductor thoroughly versed in his technique, with authority and imagination, and able to obtain a convincing realization of his interpretive wishes in the performance by the orchestra, which was characterized by laudable clarity, expressive power, tonal mass and imposing sonority. Warm applause followed the symphony. . . . A group of shorter pieces closed a program warmly applauded by an audience of very good size.

FRANCIS D. PERKINS, *New York Herald Tribune*

Bruckner's *Romantic Symphony*—No. 4 in E flat major—can have had few more admirably conceived and executed performances than which occupied almost an hour of Saturday night's concert by the NBC Symphony. . . .

The interpretation and the playing of the symphony yielded every ostent of conviction. Mr. Steinberg was a fiery evangelist for the Bruckner gospel. He got warmth of tone as he got virtuosity from the players. The brasses built their successive climaxes stirringly. In the intensity of the performance was no sacrifice of clarity. . . .

O. T., *New York Sun*

The "Peace Conference of Amsterdam"

Holland Honors Mahler and Mengelberg

(The following article is Chapter 9 of "An American Musician's Story" by Olga Samaroff-Stokowski, published by W. W. Norton & Co. Inc., N. Y., 1939. The Bruckner Society of America, Inc., wishes to express its appreciation to the author and publishers for permission to publish this chapter.)

THE formal engraved invitations to the Amsterdam Mahler Festival in 1920 were imposing. The programs of the concerts which festival guests were invited to attend strongly suggested inevitable musical indigestion. The whole thing had an official tinge that led experienced and wary musicians to suspect a possible overdose of social entertainment which, however pleasant in itself, might prove to be taxing in addition to the extensive musical program. Nevertheless, when Mrs. James Lanier urged me to accept the invitation and to join her in making the journey, I decided to go.

The Mahler Festival was a celebration of Willem Mengelberg's twenty-fifth anniversary as orchestral conductor in Holland. In the course of that quarter of a century he had won the gratitude of the entire country and occupied a secure place as the leading figure in its musical life.

It was rumored that the first plan to celebrate his twenty-fifth anniversary was the proposed gift of a hundred thousand gulden to be raised by popular subscription. When Mengelberg was sounded out with regard to this possibility, he promptly said that he would much rather organize a Mahler festival on a grand scale and perform all the important works of the Viennese master in a series of concerts to which musicians from all over the world would be invited.

If this rumor is true — and the source from which I learned it seems reliable — no orchestral conductor ever gave a more striking proof of devotion to the music of a composer in whom he believed.

Throughout his career as conductor, Mengelberg had been the steadfast champion of the music of two contemporary composers — Richard Strauss and Gustav Mahler. He performed their works when they were still the objects of hot controversy or derision. He continued to repeat these works until they had a large public following in Holland. His decision to organize a Mahler festival was the logical climax of an important part of his life's work.

Mahler was dead. His fame as a composer was growing, but he still needed champions. Richard Strauss had already won his niche in the hall of fame, but many still denied such a place to Mahler. This was partly the result of enmities he had incurred in life, but the memory of his extraordinary personality was fresh in the minds of those who had known and revered him as a man.

The years during which Mahler was conductor of the New York Philharmonic do not form a very creditable page in the musical history of

the city. Doubtless he was irascible and difficult, but he was a great man, and New York never gave him his due.

He had not been long in America when the Charles Steinways invited me to meet him and his wife at dinner. I was so excited over the prospect that I arrived a full half-hour too soon. Mrs. Steinway greeted me with the words:

"I am seating you beside Mahler at table tonight, but do not expect him to speak. He cannot be made to talk at dinner parties."

Mr. Steinway gallantly murmured something to the effect that "Olga ought to be able to draw him out," but Mrs. Steinway was not disposed to flattery. She reaffirmed her conviction that Mahler would remain silent, and she added mischievously, "If my husband is right and you *do* make him talk, I will give you five dollars."

I responded to the challenge, but when Mahler arrived my courage sank. There was something so remote about him at first glance that I could scarcely imagine his taking part in any ordinary conversation. When we sat down to dinner, he never even glanced at me. Oysters on the half-shell received his undivided attention. He did not seem quite so much interested in the soup, however, so during that course I ventured a timid introductory remark. Without looking up he said: "*Ja*," and then relapsed into silence.

I racked my brains for a provocative subject of conversation, but nothing I could find in the animal, vegetable or mineral kingdom elicited any response. Mrs. Steinway began to look distinctly triumphant.

Finally, I remembered that before dinner, when Mahler appeared to be utterly oblivious of everybody present, he had taken *The Brothers Karamazoff* off the bookshelf and turned over the pages as though searching for a special passage. I decided that the Dostoyevsky masterpiece was this drowning woman's last straw. But I also knew that if I did not succeed in establishing a controversial basis of conversation, I would merely get another "*Ja*." So I boldly asked him if he did not consider *The Brothers Karamazoff* a much-overrated book.

"Not at all," said Mahler fiercely, putting down his knife and fork. "You ask that because you do not understand it." He thereupon launched into a long discourse on the subject of Russian psychology and Dostoyevsky's supreme understanding of it, while I settled down to the enjoyment of my dinner (and my triumph!), only throwing in an occasional provocative question when Mahler paused to eat a mouthful.

The signals exchanged between me and the Steinways must have mystified anybody who saw them. Mr. Steinway kept looking at his watch and lifting his glass to me. He teased his wife unmercifully when Mahler followed me out into the drawing-room and spent the rest of the evening looking for passages in *The Brothers Karamazoff* with which to illustrate his points and complete my conversion. I have often wondered what would have happened if he had known we were discussing one of my favorite books.

Before I left, my crestfallen hostess presented me with six crisp new dollar bills. She felt that five would not be enough in view of the length of the conversation!

Playing a concerto with the Philharmonic under Mahler's direction was a privilege I repeatedly enjoyed. The first time I was soloist in one of his concerts on tour was in New Haven. By that time he and I had become good friends, and I had conceived a great liking for his lovely wife who was one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen. She was not with him on this particular occasion and he felt the need of company at supper after the concert. I had lured my dear friend Miss Dehon to accompany me to New Haven. It sometimes amused her to "go on the road" when I played in cities near New York. When Mahler asked us both for supper she pleaded fatigue and went back to the hotel. Probably she had visions of shop talk in German, for Mahler spoke very little English, so she deserted me.

Being in a university town, Mahler expected to find gay cafés filled with students in multicolored caps. When we had searched in vain for something more enticing than a corner drug store, and our hotel had refused to serve what we wanted at such a late hour, his dismay was pathetic.

"*Was für eine Stadt!*", he murmured bitterly. "What kind of students do they have here? No wine, no songs, and not yet midnight!"

It did not seem to comfort him at all when I assured him that Yale students did sing at other times and had pretty much what they wanted to drink on occasions. . . .

He only shook his head. The night-life of New Haven was evidently a great disillusionment to him, and he remained pessimistic about the *joie de vivre* of the American university student.

The only thing I could suggest was to take refuge in the hotel sitting-room I shared with Miss Dehon. I knew she usually kept something in the way of nourishment on hand in case we should be hungry before going to bed. We found her still up and, thanks to her, we feasted on milk and crackers as we talked far into the wee small hours. Mahler's taciturnity was reserved for strangers and social functions. When he was at his ease with friends he was a brilliant conversationalist with a somewhat mordant wit.

It later proved to be fortunate that Miss Dehon and Mahler made friends that night in New Haven over the milk and crackers. When his health began to fail before his final departure from America he lay in bed for weeks at the Netherlands Hotel, weary from his struggles with people and conditions he could not understand, and hurt by the hostility of the New York press. As his strength waned and he sensed that the end might not be far distant, he strove desperately to finish his last symphony, sitting up in bed with his manuscript before him and looking like the ghost of his former self.

He always disliked American hotel food and during these trying

weeks it was almost impossible to induce him to take any nourishment. His wife, beside herself with anxiety, told me about this and I repeated it to Miss Dehon who had inquired about his condition. After that Miss Dehon constantly sent him soup and dainty dishes prepared by her own splendid Swedish cook. I frequently acted as messenger and brought him these things. They helped to sustain him until he left for Europe, where death overtook him.

It is perhaps as well that he did not live to witness the horror of war. Mahler was an idealist and he would have suffered mentally and emotionally more than most men. But I feel convinced that he would have rejoiced to know that the first big festival of his works would also be the first international meeting of musicians after the war. It was a Parisian journalist who baptized the Mahler Festival "The Peace Conference of Amsterdam."

A letter to my father describes the festival better than I could from memory.

Dearest Father,

The first day of the festival has made me glad I came. In one sense I was glad before today, because Harriet Lanier has proved to be a most delightful traveling companion. Some of my New York friends thought I was crazy to share a cabin with her on the boat. She has the reputation of being a fire-eater, and I will admit that Harriet loves a good fight more than most people. But she is really an enchanting person. She looks like a French marquise, exquisite, delicate and always marvelously dressed. Her pugnacity invariably strikes me as comical because it is so foreign to everything about her. Imagine a Tanagra figurine shaking its fist and you can understand what I mean. Perhaps I cannot take her pugnacity seriously and that is the reason why we get on so well. Her house in New York is a gathering place for musicians and artists of all kinds. When one crosses the threshold, one is in France. Everything in the house — except her valuable collection of *Chinoiserie* — is French, even to the monograms on her lovely bed-linen which I particularly enjoy when I stop with her. When I visit her I usually take my breakfast on a tray beside her own bed, for nothing amuses me more than to watch her open her mail. Then it is that Harriet, looking like a piece of Dresden china with the lace frills of a boudoir cap shaking as she gets excited, waxes pugnacious if somebody in a letter or a concert review dares to criticize anything about her "Friends of Music" or Bodanzky.

She has really done a wonderful piece of work in creating the Friends of Music. It is modeled on the historic Friends of Music in Vienna and Bodanzky makes wonderful programs that enable us to hear music nobody else in New York attempts to perform. He and Harriet pay not the slightest attention to popular taste. They continue to perform caviar programs — unfamiliar music, rarely heard compositions, anything in which they take an artistic interest. Their subscription concerts have won a high place in New York musical life and their audiences are the best — in quality if not in numbers — in the city.

Of course, there is a deficit. Harriet either raises the money or pays it herself. She is wonderfully generous.

The only thing she cannot endure is criticism of the people and things she believes in. She would make a marvelous dictator. She would abolish free speech at once, I am sure, and free thought if she could.

If anybody dares to suggest that Bodanzky is not the greatest living conductor, war is declared at once. After some adverse reviews in the newspapers she tried to keep the New York critics out of the concerts of the Friends of Music, but somebody managed to pour oil on the troubled waters — luckily for Bodanzky.

She seems to have arrived at some sort of inner compromise by which she will permit herself to enjoy Mengelberg's conducting during the Mahler Festival without feeling it is disloyal to Bodanzky. But, really, it is such fun being with her on this trip, and she has been so considerate and charming that I spend my life writing postcards to the people who predicted we would not be on speaking terms by the end of the ocean voyage.

We found great bunches of tulips, sent by the festival committee and Mengelberg, in our hotel rooms. Bottenheim immediately came to inquire whether he could do anything for us. Bottenheim is Mengelberg's personal manager and his devotion to his conductor is quite as passionate as Harriet's adherence to Bodanzky. Every time Harriet and Bottenheim are together, I tremble lest they drift into an argument about the relative merits of their respective idols. It would surely end in bloodshed. Fortunately they will both be too busy and too preoccupied during the Mahler Festival for such an encounter.

Bottenheim is in his element these days. He beams and radiates enthusiasm as more and more distinguished guests arrive and give him more and more trouble. He is indefatigable in looking after people, and seems to enjoy working over a mass of details that would reduce any ordinary mortal to a state of despair.

I asked Mengelberg for permission to attend his morning rehearsals with the orchestra. I wanted to hear the relatively unfamiliar Mahler works more than once. He sent me a card that would serve as a general "open sesame," and I got myself up very early yesterday morning. Flat boats loaded with flowers floated on the canals and I enjoyed the walk to the *Koncertgebouw-Hall*. The *Konzertebouw Orchestra* has suffered less from the war than others, and is probably the best in Europe today.

Mengelberg arrived at rehearsal in the same kind of brown velveteen jacket he wore in the green room after conducting *Philharmonic* concerts in New York. I got out the orchestral score with which I had fortified myself and was all prepared for study and enjoyment when, alack, Mengelberg began to harangue the orchestra in Dutch. He talked and talked. It was a veritable torrent of Dutch. I, of course, understood nothing. Mengelberg had rehearsed the orchestra so much before the festival that he now only needed to remind the players of certain things. I heard very little music during the morning — just a few stray passages that needed polishing. In future I am going to sleep late!

Mengelberg has the reputation of talking more at rehearsal than most.

conductors, and he sometimes says very droll things. One of his orchestra men told me the following story:

During the rehearsal of the *Liebestod* from *Tristan*, he rapped sharply on his desk and exclaimed, "Gentlemen, gentlemen, wake up! We are performing the music of *Tristan und Isolde* and you are playing like married men!"

When we reached the hall for the opening concert of the festival last night, it seemed as though all the flowers I had ever seen on the canal barges in the morning had been massed on the stage. There was a perfect riot of color and the floral decorations created a most appropriate atmosphere of festivity.

The Prince Consort was there to represent Queen Wilhelmina, and he and his suite provided another colorful note with their uniforms and orders. Every few minutes some internationally famous musician would enter the hall. The composer Arnold Schönberg arrived, followed by a group of pale young men. We were told they were his pupils. So might a philosopher in ancient Greece have wandered about with his disciples.

Casella, the modern Italian composer, sat near us, and Schnabel and his wife were across the aisle. I cannot begin to list all the musicians who are here, but it was quite dramatic when Florent Schmitt, the Parisian composer (who in spite of his German-sounding name is very French), and Abendroth, the German conductor from Cologne, met in Mengelberg's dressing-room and shook hands for the first time since 1914.

If all the performances are as good as those in the first concert, the festival will be a rare musical experience.

In retrospect certain musical impressions of the Mahler Festival stand forth very clearly in my memory, the most vivid being *Das Lied von der Erde*, with Cahier's wonderful singing of the contralto part; the *Kindertotenlieder*; the Second Symphony and, above all, the Eighth Symphony. The performance of the latter reminded us vividly of the first American performances of the work under Stokowski's direction in Philadelphia in 1915. When we hurriedly left Munich at the outbreak of the World War in 1914, taking with us no personal belongings beyond what we could carry in knapsacks, Stokowski carried the huge score of Mahler's Eighth Symphony under his arm all the way to Philadelphia. He encountered great difficulties in producing the work because a considerable sum had to be raised to underwrite the performances. Once more the Boks came to the rescue. The enlarged orchestra, the huge chorus, children's chorus and soloists were very costly. Stokowski would only undertake it if he could have sufficient rehearsals. The organization of this "Symphony of a Thousand," calling upon the largest instrumental and vocal forces employed in any symphony, the building of a stand to accommodate nearly eight hundred singers, and endless incidental details involved an enormous amount of work besides the expense.

Such musical enterprises are easier in Europe than in America because people are more docile and disciplined. In Philadelphia the chorus members taken from every walk of life seemed to have a veritable

army of relations who stormed the stage door and tried to get into the hall during rehearsals. The doorman — who was generally known as "the Czar" — eventually became so fierce that it was all the musicians themselves could do to get in.

We had eleven sold-out performances in Philadelphia. Trainloads of New Yorkers came over to hear the symphony, and I spent weeks organizing what was needed for their comfort and entertainment. An additional performance at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York was given under the auspices of the Friends of Music. Harriet Lanier and I reminisced for hours after hearing the Eighth Symphony in Amsterdam, and agreed that nothing could ever obliterate the impression made upon us by the first performance in Philadelphia. The opening phrase, "Veni Creator Spiritus," which we then heard for the first time had literally left us breathless. It was a memorable experience. In Amsterdam I had the kind of enjoyment which comes from being familiar with every note of the score.

It was very clever of Mengelberg to organize morning concerts of modern chamber music during the festival, on days between big Mahler concerts. They provided variety and contrast. Some of the musicians who were guests of the festival thereby took an active part in the proceedings, and the composers of the different European countries had their first chance — since the war — to come together in an intimate way and compare notes, so to speak.

Mengelberg asked me to play the Piano and Violin Sonata of Richard Strauss with the violinist Alexander Schmuller. Although the extreme modernists even then rejected Strauss's music as antiquated, Mengelberg was determined to have a Strauss work on the programs. In these chamber music concerts, and in the conversations and discussions that went on during the Mahler Festival, one was made aware that the World War formed a great divide between musical life as we knew it before 1914 and the new post-war period. Barriers were down musically as well as morally. Freedom from rules was just as dear to the musical composer of 1920 as freedom from convention was to young radicals of the period, who snatched recklessly at the joy of life in a sort of revolt against the suffering into which the world had been plunged by the war.

The only thing that aroused my indignation in Amsterdam was the tendency of some of the so-called "modern" composers to try to pull the great masters of the past off their pedestals. Neither the piling up of simultaneous semitones nor the Schönbergian building of chords on fourths worried me in the least, but when I heard conversations in which the speakers scoffed at Beethoven, Brahms and Wagner, my ire was aroused. Today one inevitably begins to compare modern achievements with those of the giants of the past, sometimes belittled by "modernists" of the post-war experimental era, and the result is not exactly favorable to the scoffers — at least that is the way most musicians feel in 1939. Undoubtedly we have been through a transitional period and we are still

too close to it to form lasting convictions that have any value. It will probably have its importance in musical history, but we can point to very few modern masterpieces of any real significance.

One rabid "modernist" was standing beside me in Amsterdam just before I went on the stage to play the Strauss Piano and Violin Sonata. He asked me how I had liked the preceding number. It had been an atonal piece of unrelieved cacophony and I was forced to admit that I had not greatly enjoyed it. He then said very sarcastically: "Never mind, you will now have a great success in E flat!" It was evident that he considered a composition in a fixed tonality as beneath contempt. These experiences interested me because I have always had a lively artistic curiosity and much more receptivity for the new than most musicians of my generation. I am also optimistic about the future. The day is near when we shall have become accustomed to the strange new harmonic idiom of the twentieth century. The period of experimentation is nearing its close and soon composers will begin to express themselves without attaching undue importance to mere innovation.

During the entire Amsterdam festival I had a strong feeling that Mahler closed a great period. For this reason the festival was truly significant, quite apart from Mengelberg's jubilee, and as the first important international musical event after the war it also deserved to be called, at least in a musical sense, "The Peace Conference of Amsterdam."



DAS LIED VON DER ERDE IN CHICAGO, STOCK CONDUCTING

JANUARY 10, 12, AND 13, 1939

Those who contend that the mood of a composition is never precisely definable and that one single piece of music (for example) may *equally* represent emotions of solemn joy or pangs of tragic grief should listen to Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* and ask themselves whether four of its six movements could express anything but stark pain. The two delicate landscapes which Mahler offers us in this great symphony might conceivably bear titles other than those they own (though surely an atmosphere of the Orient cannot be ignored as one studies them); but across the other pages of this work, the composer has written with tone, "Suffering" beyond chance of misinterpretation. Here a man who has sounded many black depths of life becomes autobiographical. But in a larger sense he describes the hurt that touches, at some time, all hearts. And it is only in his final acceptance of suffering that he loses contact with many who listen to *Das Lied von der Erde*. For, alas! no animating surge of hope crowns that acquiescence. He but dreams "of the luminous blue of distant space!"

The orchestra was at the height of its form last night and Dr. Stock gave a masterly reading of the score. The soloists, Enid Szanthy and Charles Kullmann proved themselves artists sensitive to the Mahler idiom and they as well as Dr. Stock received many salvos of applause from the audience.

MARY R. RYAN

RCA VICTOR RECORDINGS

Bruckner's *Ninth* and Mahler's *Ninth* will be available in record form. Bruckner's *Ninth* will probably be available in January. No date for the release of the recording of Mahler's *Ninth* under the direction of Bruno Walter has as yet been set.

Mahler—Last of the Romantics

BY WINTHROP SARGEANT

TO future historians of music the year 1911 is likely to loom as a very important turning point. To contemporary observers it probably seemed much like any other year. Several great musical figures—among them Richard Strauss and Debussy were enjoying their hey-day. Never before had world-wide intellectual ferment seemed to promise more for the future of art. Never before had there been so many composers, so many skilled executants, such teeming musical audiences. But as we look back at it from the perspective of nearly thirty years, 1911 seems to mark, more definitely than any other date, the end of the great romantic period of music, and the beginning of something else. That year a great drought seemed to dry up the creative source of the romantic movement. People went on composing, but the work of those composers who were big enough to set styles and lead movements, underwent a sudden and strangely unanimous change.

Before 1911 Richard Strauss had turned out one vital composition after another, reaching a peak of creative achievement in *Elektra* (1909). In 1911 he finished *Rosenkavalier*. Since then Strauss has continued to write, but little of what he has written has the sweep, or originality, of his earlier work. It was in 1911 that Sibelius, after three lyric, full-blooded symphonies, produced his bare, enigmatic fourth. The weight and importance of his later work are still to be determined by posterity. By 1911 the best of Debussy's work had already been done. In 1911 Arnold Schönberg finished the last work of his post-Wagnerian romantic style (*Gurre-Lieder*) and plunged thereafter into the dry, abstract mathematics of atonality. In 1911 Igor Stravinsky dropped the conventions of the great classical-romantic musical language, and wrote his boisterous Russo-Parisian ballet *Petrouchka*. Stravinsky was to become more famous, but whether he was ever to write better music is a question. Today, despite manifestos, credos, theories, and all sorts of aesthetic propaganda, it is becoming more and more doubtful, sad as it is to admit it, whether any music of overwhelming importance has been written since that time.

Just why the particular year 1911 should have rung down the curtain on a whole phase of music, and musical philosophy, is hard to understand. But it is evident, if one considers the changing currents of European thought during the whole period from 1900 on, that music was bound to be deeply affected somewhere along the line, and that the effects were likely to disturb the very core of romantic mysticism which had given nineteenth-century music its enormous vitality. As the heroic conception of life was replaced by the realistic, the metaphysical by the scientific, it is natural that composers should begin to regard their art with changed eyes. When the philosophy of materialism was applied to

music, music became purely a matter of substances, combinations, geometric patterns, abstract architecture, aural sensations. And some musicians began seriously to write purely cerebral or purely sensual music, and to explain their own, and other people's music as purely and simply a matter of ingenious combinations of sound. Whether, in accepting this view, they did not throw overboard much that could have given their own work value, is still for future musical audiences to decide. But in applying the materialistic yardstick to the great musical masterpieces of the past they overlooked the very factor that, in the last analysis, made those masterpieces great. True, the abstract architecture of great music makes an impressive study for those interested in technique. But far transcending this in importance is the message that all this architecture was built to convey. For, if we take the word religion in its broadest possible sense, the greatest masterpieces of European music from Bach to Strauss were all essentially religious poems, written in a complex, but widely understood, language of sound.

It was, of course, only a coincidence that Gustav Mahler died precisely in the fateful year 1911. But the coincidence had a certain amount of poetic justice about it. Mahler was, in a curiously inevitable way, the last of the romantics. Strauss' romanticism was always well mixed with a slightly cynical strain. It was often sexual rather than religious. And it was turned off abruptly in what seemed the prime of his creative life. As a romantic, Schönberg hardly got a start. Stravinsky was anti-romantic from the first. Sibelius will, I suspect, be placed ultimately as a sort of symphonic landscapist, a somewhat less important figure than present-day Sibelians think him. For Mahler alone, of that generation, it was permitted to reach full stature while the romantic attitude still survived as a potent source of musical inspiration.

Mahler's peculiar position as the last fully-formed link in a dying tradition goes a long way, I think, toward explaining that troubled, poignant, yet grandiose quality which has made him difficult for some music-lovers to understand. For his music not only expresses the fervor of romanticism; it is permeated as well by a gloomy premonition of the approaching death of the romantic world-view. Technically Mahler was a symphonist of what the late Paul Bekker has aptly described as the Austrian (as distinct from the German) school. His structural methods were descended from the large, simple, linear, melodic style of Bruckner, a style that was Schubert's before it was Bruckner's, and Haydn's before it was Schubert's. To this extent Mahler was a traditionalist. But here the similarity between Bruckner and Mahler ceases. Bruckner's romanticism was serene and unquestioning, the product of a world that was spiritually at peace. Mahler's is already troubled by a changing conception of life. His methods, his equipment are those of the grand manner. But Mahler himself is an intellectually restless man of the twentieth century. What to the relatively simple Bruckner was a self-evident truth, is to the complex and doubting Mahler, a receding vision, a

vision which only a passionate profession of faith will keep alive. Hence, the strenuous "will to believe," the atmosphere of "eternal seeking," the sense of something escaped and forever lost, that permeate so much of his music.

In religion Mahler was an eclectic, instinctively religious as are all real musicians, but too sophisticated and cosmopolitan to accept any religious creed in its primitive form. When asked about his religion he once replied, "I am a musician, that covers everything." His broad, philosophical attitude toward religion made him sympathetic at the same time to the purely doctrinal fervor of Klopstock, the romantic mysticism of Goethe, the negative, and quite un-Christian, poetic passion of Nietzsche, and the pastel-shaded nostalgia of Li-Tai-Po. It also gave him his intense respect for the writings of Dostoievsky, a respect that was so great that it led Richard Specht to consider Dostoievsky one of the most important influences in Mahler's intellectual life. Specht, in his biography, quotes an interesting anecdote from Paul Stefan — about Mahler and Schönberg sitting one day in a park in Vienna chatting with a group of students. Mahler after holding forth at length about his favorite subject, Dostoievsky, was surprised to learn that none of the younger men had even heard of the great Russian novelist. "But Schönberg," he expostulated, "What's the idea? Let the young people who study with you read Dostoievsky too. That is more important than counterpoint!" The episode, which occurred comparatively late in Mahler's life, shows that he was still as concerned as ever about the novelist who had influenced his earliest symphonies.

The religious, ritualistic subject matter of such works as the *Second* and *Eighth Symphonies* is thus the product of no simple, unquestioning piety, but of a complex, sophisticated twentieth-century mind. Mahler still retained some of the strong sap of the romantic movement. But he was troubled by the illusory quality that romanticism was assuming in the twentieth-century world in which he lived. He himself stated that the only valuable experiences in an artist's life are those that occur before puberty. In Mahler's time the world of magic, of the fairy-tale, of the supernatural, of mythical symbols, was already becoming foreign to the adult mind. And that world, upon which nearly every great composer or poet of the past had drawn for his inspiration, remained real, or perceptible, only to the imaginatively unfettered minds of children. The composer, who is the purest and most imaginative kind of poet, was being forced to draw most of the poetic juice of his art from childhood memories. Mahler's preoccupation with children's jingles, folk-like tunes, grotesque military themes, hobgoblin atmospheres, the *Knaben Wunderhorn*, his often deliberately naive religious imagery, were all, I think, symptoms of this struggle to recreate a remembered world far richer in poetic values than the machine-age adult's humdrum world of reality.

It is also, I think, this feeling of the slipping-away of the romantic

view that gives so many of Mahler's works that deeply nostalgic, poignant sense of something forever receding, or lost. I am thinking more particularly of such things as the song *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen*, and *Der Abschied* from *Das Lied von der Erde*. No composer in the whole history of music has expressed, as Mahler has, the loneliness of the individual human soul peering out at eternity.

In the sense that much of his music reflects states of mind and even sometimes describes concrete ideas, Mahler was a "literary" composer. And nothing, it seems to me, is more absurd than the attitude of listeners who approach a Mahler symphony in the abstract without even bothering to find out the ideas and symbols that Mahler himself associated with it. Nor does it seem to me that being a "literary" composer is being a lesser composer. Nearly all the great composers from Berlioz on, and many before him, were "literary" composers. There are those, of course, who prefer to think of the *Ring des Niebelungen* as abstract music, with a troublesome and incomprehensible libretto about vague and unimportant mythological beings. There are those who enjoy Bach's *B Minor Mass* and pretend that its connection with Christian ritual is irrelevant. But such people, I think, are eating the frosting and missing the cake. There is, in reality, very little important music that is purely "absolute."

When audiences understand more about the ideas behind Mahler's symphonies, I think they will find him, not only a great symphonist, but one of the most interesting minds, one of the most imaginative artists, of the early twentieth century. Mahler, in his time, like Mozart in his, used music to express the most poignant poetic experiences of contemporary humanity. If Mahler's poetry is more remote, less fluent, harder to get at, it is at least partly because poets in Mahler's day had to dig deep into the subconscious for their poetry.



SEVITZKY BROADCASTS MAHLER *ADAGIETTO*

In a program broadcast by the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra on February 15th, Fabien Sevitzyk conducted the *Adagietto* from Mahler's *Fifth* with an understanding that must have given much pleasure to his radio audience.

THIEDE CONDUCTS BRUCKNER'S *FOURTH* (FEDERAL SYMPHONY OF MASS.)

A reader reports:

"The Federal Symphony Orchestra of Massachusetts conducted by Alexander Thiede, formerly assistant concert-master for Stokowski in Philadelphia, performed Bruckner's *Fourth* Symphony in Boston on May 14, 1939. There has been noticeable improvement in the orchestra under Mr. Thiede; he was fortunate in having an excellent horn section. The cuts used by Wilhelm Gericke, made by Bruckner himself, were adopted for this performance. Mr. Thiede's reading was inspired. He knew the score thoroughly and his beat was precise and sure."

Bruckner's Symphonic Tetralogy (IV-VII)

BY GABRIEL ENGEL

INTRODUCTION

PERHAPS the first fact that strikes one in considering Bruckner's Symphonies Nos. IV-VII is their uniformity of mode. That these are his only symphonies in major keys (there were seven in minor, including his two preliminary efforts) renders an apparent coincidence merely more curious. Even the fact that the *Quintet* and *Te Deum* (the sole non-symphonic compositions of the decade occupied by the Symphonies IV-VII) are also in major, while the three Masses (all written during the preceding decade), are in minor, may be dismissed as purely accidental. Yet the present writer, moved by Bruckner's naive claim that in setting down his symphonies he was the mere tool of an irresistible inner Voice, decided to examine the scores themselves to determine whether the four symphonies in major are not linked by some definite inner community hitherto unsuspected.

It is general knowledge that most of the thematic life of the Bruckner symphonies radiates from the principal or central theme-groups of the opening movement. Placed side by side, the central themes of the four symphonies in major are readily seen to be of one family. They possess in common vital melodic characteristics distinguishing the central theme of no other Bruckner symphony. Might not these four then have been the product of a single sustained inspiration whose complete unfolding required expression in four successive integral creations?

The long chain of dark-tinged compositions preceding the *Fourth* (there were nine of these including the Overture in G Minor) makes the radiant sunrise which begins that symphony all the more amazing. It is literally the sunrise in Bruckner's soul, suddenly liberated from a stubborn, sullen spell beneath a gloomy sky. He had striven in vain to dispel that gloom. A highly significant fragment of a *Symphony in B-flat Major* penned before his *Second* tells of that effort. Clearly forecasting the *Fifth* in thematic content, this cast-off symphonic scrap not only shows Bruckner's early yearning for a jubilant, major Muse, but also reveals in embryo the very song he felt himself destined to sing.

When just a graduate pupil, though already approaching middle age, he had his first view of Wagner's new orchestral language. It proved so powerful a revelation that he composed his highly original *First Symphony* and *First Mass* in the resulting burst of inspiration. Yet that had only partially freed his voice. When he had finished his dramatic *Third Symphony*, he plucked up the courage to bring it to Wagner in person, then head-over-heels in his *Ring* plans at Bayreuth. The great man's annoyance quickly changed to genuine interest when he was finally persuaded to open the score. Careful examination led to warm expressions

of praise by Wagner. He would be delighted to accept the dedication of so fine a symphony. Yes, he would even produce it himself. This generous gesture proved a galvanizing touch to the discouraged symphonist. In the overwhelming flood of elation that resulted all the pent-up bitterness of the preceding years disappeared.

The *Fourth Symphony* appears to have been a direct sequel to the joyful upheaval that took place in Bruckner's spirit upon that occasion. The sunrise of Nature that opens the *Romantic* is truly the sunrise in Bruckner's soul. It is at the same time a fervent paean of gratitude for his new-found spiritual freedom and an infinitely broadened human perspective.

FOURTH SYMPHONY (ROMANTIC)

Toward the close of his arduous career Bruckner, at length become famous, was awarded an honorary degree by the University of Vienna. He was puzzled by the Greek word "Melipoeos" inscribed upon his diploma to designate the particular nature of his excellence. Scholars whom he asked to interpret the term were divided between "tone-poet" and "tone-craftsman." Bruckner preferred the latter, though more prosaic translation, insisting that the former smacked too much of "program" music.

It is likely that the few touches of realism (bird-calls, wood-murmurs, etc.) in the *Romantic* were influenced by the sensational apparition of Liszt's symphonic "poems" in the concert world. Yet Bruckner was not a romanticist of the stamp of Weber or Schumann. In reality, he was even less a romanticist than Beethoven who warned against a too literal story-background interpretation of the *Pastorale*, his lone symphonic venture beyond the strict borders of absolute music. Although a festive *Scherzo* and a "Storm" *Finale* are present in both the *Pastorale* and the *Romantic*, these are only marks of an external community not reflecting the fundamental dissimilarity of the underlying messages in these works. Beethoven's conception of nature and man views them as separate entities, the former a species of recreation, a source of spiritual refreshment for the latter. In Bruckner's *Romantic*, however, there is heard not the echo of the joys of Nature reflected in the soul of man, but rather the voice of Nature itself. As the solo horn sounds the opening theme midst an ecstatic tremolo in the strings, it seems as though the very lips of Nature open in fervent, hymn-like song.

This utterly simple melody, created out of a single interval (a fifth) is one of the most expressive of Bruckner's many superb melodic inspirations. Veiled in deep mystery by the distant murmur of strange, supporting harmonies, it breathes the grandeur of a majestic *adagio*. The veil lifts as new voices (woodwind, strings) take up the theme in imitative dialogue. With broad pulse unaltered, it attains a summit of sonority, generating fresh motivation as it rises. This ascent, portrayed in gracious melody, framed in an unusual rhythm (alternate groups of two

plus three quarter-notes) forms the second portion of the opening theme-group. Quickened by successive recurrences of this rhythm (generally called "Bruckner Rhythm" because it plays so prominent a role in his symphonies) the pulse of the music speedily approaches true *Allegro* character. There ensues a veritable burst of jubilation midst a wealth of melodic fragments in "Bruckner Rhythm," rising and falling as though sounded antiphonally from heaven above and earth below. The whole universe seems to glory in this sunrise! Re-echoing at increasing distances the music subsides, merging with the cosmic mists whence it first issued. Thus, without a trace of welding, are joined into a perfect thematic unit three distinct melodic conceptions. There is about this theme-group a magnificent spontaneity of unfolding beside which the mincing, obviously clever thematic carpentry of more often performed masters pales. Poetically alone is the achievement of this unity simple to grasp. The spiritual message underlying the entire theme-group is like an unbroken spell. Even when the last echoes of the theme-group have died away there persists a hymn-like aura, which surrounds the new theme, the song of the birds. This *Zizibee* (titmouse) love-duet, one of the most famous of Bruckner's numerous double-themes, may also be regarded as an apt mirroring of the yearning of man's soul for union with Nature.

So plastic is the structure of the entire movement, so natural and inevitable the advent of each fresh idea, that one readily understands why the *Romantic* has been the most popular Bruckner symphony with music-lovers for over half a century. The composer himself, perceiving its unusually felicitous union of clear-cut form and simple, ingratiating melody, came to regard it as the ideal introduction to his gigantic later symphonies. Poetically, at least, it is the actual introduction to the three symphonies which followed, exploring and exploiting thoroughly the spiritual and cosmic depths merely glimpsed in a swift, brilliant revelation in the *Romantic*.

The *Andante*, as usual with Bruckner, presents a typical adventure of the spirit on earth, involving ever-present pain and suffering. A song of unrequited love, one of the most wistful of symphonic slow movements, it remains nevertheless fundamentally an expression of affirmation. Even the most inconsolable melancholy of the opening theme, eloquently voiced by the cellos, is interrupted by a motive of hope and surcease, whispered by the violins. Bruckner's genius for instrumentation unerringly selects the poignant voices of the violas for a telling role in this section. The final, irrefutable promise of contentment is expressed in a lofty revelation midst nobly mounting utterances by the trombones.

Strikingly descriptive is the *Scherzo*, with its stirring fanfares of hunting horns. The irresistibly rhythmic *Trio* is an idealized Upper-Austrian peasant dance, fragrant with delicate harmonic turns, carried out in the subtle spirit known before Bruckner to Schubert alone. This *Scherzo*, the second composed for the *Romantic*, was doubtless substituted for

the original in order to strengthen the romantic atmosphere of the entire work. It is certainly a delightful creation, perfect in every detail. The fitness of its interpolation has been universally acknowledged.

It seems almost superfluous to warn listeners not to give too literal attention to Bruckner's own explanation of the content of the *Romantic*. The tones in which the symphony is set are far too vast and deep for any such naive picturing as: "A citadel of the Middle Ages — Daybreak — Reveille is sounded from the tower — The gates open — Knights on proud chargers leap forth — The magic of nature surrounds them." Surely this is all childish after-thought on the part of a man whose creativeness was purely musical, whose acquaintance with literature was limited to Gospel and the prayer book.

Particularly in the *Finale*, framed in elaborate sonata-structure, is revealed the superficial inadequacy of the description "Romantic" for this work. The ominous conflict with which it begins has an import far deeper than the too obvious explanation, "The woods in the grip of a storm." It suggests rather the decisive struggle in which the spirit, beset with earthly fears, overcomes all obstacles on the path to eternal contentment.

Bruckner's *Romantic* is a symphony of Nature — Nature as viewed by a true mystic. Perhaps no composer has given this concept of Nature clearer verbal shape than the Bruckner disciple Gustav Mahler, whose innate mysticism stamped him as a fervent Catholic long before his formal conversion to that creed. The devout Bruckner might have shrunk in horror from Mahler's pantheistic doctrine of the spiritual union of Nature with Man, but essentially it was the same as his own.

Mahler said: "That Nature embraces all that is at once awesome, magnificent, and lovable, nobody seems to grasp. It seems so strange to me that most people, when considering Nature in connection with Art, imply only flowers, birds, woods, etc. No one seems to think of the mighty underlying mystery, the god Dionysos, the great Pan."

FIFTH SYMPHONY (TRAGIC)

The first notes of Bruckner's *Fifth* are played by plucked strings; the second theme is introduced in the same instrumental color. In fact, plucked strings play a notable part in so many salient moments of the work that it was nicknamed the "Pizzicato" Symphony. Many know it as the "Church" or "Faith" Symphony because of its abundance of "Chorale" fragments. Bruckner sometimes called it the "Fantastic," but fearful of programmatic misinterpretation, preferred to speak of it merely as his "contrapuntal masterpiece." Perhaps no name describes the symphony more aptly than the "Tragic," proposed by Goellerich, the composer's authorized biographer.

Better acquainted than anyone else with the circumstances surrounding the origin and execution of the work he was able to penetrate beyond such externals as style and color to its spiritual roots. He saw the

Fifth as the deeply personal expression of a genius doomed to utter loneliness by the scorn and neglect of a misunderstanding world. Neither the *Third* nor the *Fourth* had succeeded in obtaining a hearing. The only performances of Bruckner's earlier works were those advertised as "Bruckner, conducting," meaning to most, "Stay away; Bruckner, the silly ass, is paying to hear his own dull twaddle." Goellerich realized also the abject misery into which protracted celibacy had plunged the physically unattractive Bruckner. The victim of a long series of pitiful jiltings, he was already past fifty. Goellerich refused to be misled by the unrestrained rejoicing that climaxed the *Finale* of the *Fifth*. He knew that in art, as in life, the deepest tragic undertones often lurk beneath the most extravagant jubilation. He caught in the *Adagio* the true spiritual keynote of the work. Its brooding main theme was the despairing utterance of abandoned genius. Through the mighty blare of triumph trumpeted forth by redoubled brass in the *Finale* he saw the transfigured image of the man who found the strength to wrest peace from his agonized soul through renunciation.

In the *Fifth* the characteristics generally regarded as typical of Bruckner's symphonic style find their most convincing expression. Far more than any of his other symphonies it is a polyphonic work, the composer's proud description, "my contrapuntal masterpiece," testifying to the extraordinary care with which he had fashioned its many-voiced strains.

Double-themes previously employed by Bruckner as separated incidents of only local significance assume in this work a progressive, cyclic role. Thus from the first and second theme-groups in the opening movement he has drawn two sharply contrasted motives and united them to form the remarkable double-theme which begins the *Adagio*. The pulse of the upper melody (four-four) conflicts with that of the lower one (six-four). The result is more than a mere bit of subtle rhythmic counterpoint; it is an unforgettable tonal portrait of spiritual desolation. In the *Scherzo* the two motives part once more, each assuming the leading role in one of the two divisions of the movement. In the *Finale* they are welded together again, inseparable at last in the framework ideally suited to the exploitation of the double-theme — the double-fugue.

The principal motives of the *Fifth* haunted Bruckner many years before he felt his mastery of their possibilities equal to their symphonic shaping. A manuscript fragment of a *B-flat Symphony* sketched in the fall of 1869 reveals in essence the pizzicato introduction to the first two theme-groups and a main theme with the same rhythmic contour as that of the *Fifth*, not to mention the downward octave-leap which is perhaps the most striking characteristic of the *Finale*.

The *Fifth* begins on a note of almost hushed awe, like the mystic invocation to a Muse too lofty for more familiar hailing. The listener senses at once that he is about to experience a mighty adventure of the spirit. This concise *adagio* introduction, the only one in all the Bruck-

ner symphonies, is an integral portion of the symphony because it presents the very origin of the main ideas to be exploited. They are heard in the process of creation: tone, to rhythm, to harmony, to melody. The mysterious measured plucking of the basses intensifies the initial air of spiritual uncertainty portrayed by the other strings as they grope upward one by one towards the light. The interruption by a softly uttered chorale fragment is the first glimpse of the only path leading to that Light — Faith.

At first hardly more than an element of devotional coloring it assumes firm thematic shape in a reinforced repetition. Like a halo it hovers over the sturdy motive which immediately takes form beneath it. Issuing out of the main theme of the *Romantic* this majestic, march-like fragment ascends step-wise, its merged romantic-religious flavor suggesting some heroic figure, perhaps the Knight of the Grail, Bruckner's favorite legendary figure. The same motive inverted opens the *Allegro*, whose purpose is to present the scene of conflict between the opposing forces introduced in the *Adagio*. Their hostile banners are unfurled in an elemental outburst of defiance, a characteristic motive formed by two violent octave-leaps, framed in a zigzag line, suggestive of some ominous, irresistible force. The slow introduction occupies only a few measures, yet presents all the source material out of which the gigantic symphony is to be reared. The rest is a record of amazing economy of means, involving almost incredible melodic resourcefulness and structural mastery. The themes of the exposition section of the first movement are in every detail subtle derivations from the motives already presented.

No other great composer since Bach had steeped himself to such a degree in the language of polyphony. The classicists, denied more than a fragmentary acquaintance with the works of Bach (most of which were then unpublished) were wary of injecting more than an occasional brief polyphonic passage into their predominately homophonic symphonies. The wonderful polyphonic *Finale* of Mozart's *Jupiter* is an exception which only strengthens this assertion. True, Wagner had made a special, intensive study of polyphonic problems before proceeding to set *Die Meistersinger* to music. His unerring sense for appropriate dramatic color told him that an effective tonal portrayal of the atmosphere of Hans Sachs' day must be rich in polyphonic color. Yet when the tone-poet of the *Romantic* turned to the composition of his "contrapuntal masterpiece" he brought to it a lifelong devotion to polyphonic expression. So sure was his grasp of the intricacies of contrapuntal dialect that he had become famous for his ability to improvise masterly fugues, and even double-fugues on the organ. The language of polyphony, which he had cultivated with tireless devotion, had virtually become his musical mother-tongue. To other nineteenth-century composers it was an antiquated "study" language, necessary mainly for cultural purposes; to

him it was a living language, capable of expressing a world of vivid emotion.

The heroic source motive already mentioned made its appearance in the opening *Adagio* in major guise. Inverted and quickened, but still in the brighter mode, it was the first to enter the scene of conflict represented by the initial *Allegro*. Transformed into minor it next assumes the dominant voice in the melancholy double-theme of the slow movement. In the *Scherzo* it is reborn, though still in minor. Appearing now as a carefree, lilting melody, it records the lifting of the veil of gloom from the hero's soul. Its final incarnation as the triumphant climax of the *Finale* has already been discussed. This cyclic use of a central motive as the dominating theme of a work in many movements is the realization in symphonic form of one of the principal ideals of the polyphonic era. Common usage in the Masses of Palestrina's time, it expired in the *Suites* of the later seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century composers, to be suddenly revitalized, with a significance greater than it had ever had, in the *Fifth* of Beethoven. Bruckner's unbounded love for that symphony may well have produced in him the longing to emulate its doctrine of thematic evolution. Yet his extensive experience with sacred musical usage before composing his symphonies accounts sufficiently for his cyclic employment of the same source motive in the main theme of each movement. This practice, already noticeable in his *First*, becomes more striking and purposeful with each symphony. Yet even in the *Romantic* it is still a more or less exact recurrence of the same melodic idea at the beginning of each movement, linking all four with a readily identifiable bond of unity. In Bruckner's *Fifth*, however, the idea has been resolved into its melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic elements, which prove far more fertile and pliable material for cyclic use.

The song of earthly sorrow which begins the *Adagio* of the *Fifth* is aptly framed in the poignant tones of the oboe. A lyric interpolation in keeping with the earnest dramatic burden of the entire work, triumph over suffering through renunciation, it yields gradually to strains of increasing hope. Brighter and brighter grows the light surrounding the uplifted spirit. Finally the very gates of heaven seem to open as the golden voice of the trumpet sounds its radiant message of indomitable Faith, scattering the last cloud of doubt.

In his conception of the *Finale* as the scene of highest dramatic intensification Bruckner went beyond his forerunners, endowing the symphony with the crowning stamp of formal integrity. They had been content (doubtless, believed it necessary) to let the opening movement bear the brunt of dramatic emphasis. In their eyes an extended symphonic close, with involved content, framed in the most massive form, would impose upon the patience of the listener already fatigued with concentration on the previous movements. Beethoven's *Fifth* is the outstanding exception to this convenient practice by the classic masters. An

ardent student of the inmost wonders of that symphony Bruckner was convinced from the outset that the *Finale* should present the resumption and successful termination of the spiritual conflict entered upon in the opening *Allegro*. The carefree, dance-character with which the classicists had infused their *Finales* seemed to him ineffectual settings of *Scherzo* moods in pseudo-*Finale* garb. He strove to make the *Finale* the most dramatic and majestic section of the symphony. It must scale summits of power loftier than any attained in the previous movements, a goal of supreme spiritual triumph, resolving and clarifying all that had gone before. This Bruckner *Finale*-conception, already impressively formulated in the *Third*, bore its most splendid fruit in the *Fifth*.

The *Finale* of the *Fifth* is the vehicle of Bruckner's deepest and most dramatic expression, equalled in power perhaps by the last movement of his *Eighth* alone. Beginning with a brief introductory retrospect, somewhat in the manner of the last movement of Beethoven's *Ninth*, it soon plunges into the herculean accomplishment still necessary to the final resolution of the conflict. These are the two opposing forces, originally heralded in the opening *Adagio* introduction, now making their final decisive appearance: one, a disturbing, rebellious influence, characterized by octave-leaps and a rough, sharply pointed rhythm; the other, a sturdy chorale, infinitely more heroic in this last transformation than in its original guise in the opening *Adagio*. Each in turn is the subject of a fugue, the unfolding of which suggests a tale of tremendous spiritual struggles, revealing the Soul (as hero) gathering added strength with the advent of each fresh subsidiary theme. At length the tide of conflict is turned, the goal of all this striving glimpsed. In hushed awe the Soul pauses suddenly before the dazzling revelation. Out of the silence rise golden voices singing the song of eternal promise. At first sounded in impressive grandeur by the brass it is softly re-echoed in accents of deep devotion by the strings. Thus on a note of unshakable affirmation begins the celebrated double-fugue, presenting the final inseparable union of the conflicting themes.

SIXTH SYMPHONY (PHILOSOPHIC)

The *Fourth* and *Fifth* were still unperformed. The *Third*, conducted by Bruckner himself, had proved a pitiful fiasco. Loneliness, increasing illness, and financial trouble filled the composer's cup of misery to overflowing. He realized that in work alone could he find consolation and the courage to carry on. The cheerfulness dominating the first movement of the *Sixth*, largely written during a long period of painful sickness, is eloquent of the philosophic resignation that had taken possession of Bruckner's soul. In content this movement is definitely related to the *Romantic*. It too is steeped in the glory of the cosmos, but to this reformulation of the message of the union of Man and Nature Bruckner has brought a more human quality. The vast spiritual wealth amassed in the *Fifth* has yielded interest in a calmer, more disciplined touch. The

sunrise in the *Romantic* is more radiant with ecstasy, but that in the *Sixth* has a deeper, more individual magic. It is shot through with delicately varied instrumental and dynamic shades and subtle melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic nuances.

Bruckner regarded this symphony as his most daring and original expression. It abounds in phrases framed in "Bruckner Rhythm." The very opening notes, struck off by the violins in sharp staccato, present this rhythm in lively form as a pulsating background for the main theme. The latter, drawn softly from the deep strings, begins like a sighing question concerning the ultimate mysteries of existence. The first component of this theme, borrowed from the main theme of the *Romantic*, suggests a definite community of content between these two symphonies. When the next theme-group is introduced by a doleful strain in square rhythm over a plucked accompaniment in triple-rhythm cited from the *Adagio* of the *Fifth* we know also that the *Sixth* is to be a philosophic sequel to the intensely dramatic struggles of the spirit portrayed in the preceding symphony. The air of gloom surrounding the opening bars of this song-theme is but the shadow of a momentary reminiscence, swiftly dispelled by the cheery sway of the gracious melody which bursts from it.

Even the third theme-group, a pounding unison passage in "Bruckner Rhythm," bristling with warlike inclination, vainly searches every plane of tonality for a scene of conflict, only to succumb to the lure of the calm, richly harmonized episode terminating the exposition. This air of peace, firmly maintained throughout the statement of the themes, continues to dominate the development section, devoted to a eulogy of the wonders of Nature. Familiar song-themes rise on ever-broadening wings, the tide of melody surging irresistibly upward toward a climax. The sophisticated concert-goer, on the alert for some subtle bridge leading to the recapitulation, suddenly realizes that he is in the midst of the restatement. Yet nothing abrupt has occurred. In the opening movement of this work, for the first time in symphonic literature, the climax of the development and the beginning of the recapitulation coincide. That this remarkably effective innovation in sonata-form was no mere flying chip in Bruckner's workshop is convincingly proven by its increasingly successful reappearance in his subsequent symphonies.

The slow movement begins with a yearning love-song, the bright counterpart of the melancholy *Ständchen* presented in the corresponding section of the *Romantic* and intensified to utter gloom in the *Fifth*. A brief shadow crosses the sunny path of this three-voiced melody when the oboe intrudes its counterpoint of plaintive sighs. A mournful phrase in the horns threatens to revive some painful memory of unrequited love (Bruckner's life abounded with instances); but the new-found spiritual power, philosophic resignation, easily turns aside all imminent bitterness. The second theme is a soaring, untroubled love-song. The central portion of the movement is occupied with a resourceful contra-

puntal exploitation of the opening theme, its varied restatements resulting in a subtle mingling of rondo and sonata form.

The magic play of elfin spirits characterizes the strikingly impressionistic *Scherzo*, the first of a series of Bruckner *scherzi* to portray the witchery of Pan interwoven with the very roots of Nature. The *Trio* unfolds a fresh aspect of this extraordinary gayety. The woodwind advances fragments of melody based on the opening theme of the *Allegro*, while mischievous harmonic interruptions issue from plucked strings or horn groups in sharply punctuated rhythm.

The comparatively calm atmosphere prevailing over the *Finale* is doubtless accountable to a considerable degree for the extreme rarity of performances granted this symphony. Yet the absence of conflict in the closing movement is consistent with artistic integrity. Since the opening movement advanced no conflict, the *Finale* has none to resolve. Lacking the dramatic character of other Bruckner closing sections it remains nevertheless a *Finale* conforming in essential respects to the accepted meaning of the term. All its thematic factors (and there is an unusually rich store of these—fanfare, chorale, march, and song) move swiftly and smoothly along as though controlled by some mysterious inductive power. Drawn together at last, they become merged into the jubilant reentry of the opening theme of the symphony. Thus, in a convincing Q.E.D., is complete fulfilment attained.

SEVENTH SYMPHONY (LYRIC)

The long, soaring song-theme which opens the *Seventh* is without parallel in Bruckner's symphonies. Yet it is closely related to the main theme of the *Romantic* in harmonic and instrumental color (string tremolo on the tonic). The voice of the horn also introduces this later utterance. The melodic line in both cases is dominated by the same notes (*sol* and *do*). The scope of the later theme, however, is far wider. For the source of its additional melodic elements one need but examine the opening bars of the *Fifth* and *Sixth*. There is present in these a graceful turn similar to the one at the apex of the later theme. In short, the broad-winged melody at the beginning of the *Seventh* sums up the chief thematic elements of the three preceding symphonies, integrating them in a new, final expression of unforgettable beauty.

Beauty of song is the ideal proclaimed at the outset and unwaveringly maintained throughout the *Seventh*. Its extreme popularity (equal to that of the briefer *Romantic*) is directly due to the natural, sustained flow of its melodies. Its huge proportions result from the use of larger thematic structures in place of the concise motivated blocks characterizing the three earlier works of the tetralogy. Particularly because of this is its structure likely to be misunderstood by those who cling too firmly to the antiquated "tenets" of sonata-form. Fortunately, an orderly array of beautiful ideas, possessing all the vital characteristics necessary to the maintenance of interest in an extended orchestral composition

(abundant melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, instrumental, and dynamic variety), will always prevail over any objections that may be raised against such a work from a purely academic viewpoint. Hugo Wolf's enthusiastic recognition of Bruckner's genius rested mainly upon his admiration of the first three movements of the *Seventh*. Years elapsed before he acknowledged the last movement worthy of the others. His long failure to admit the structural integrity of the *Finale* merely reflected the usual reluctance of one revolutionary genius to estimate the accomplishment of another without a standard yardstick.

The successful employment of longer, singing themes represents the very fulfilment of Bruckner's dynamic principle of thematic construction, involving the complete subjugation of form to content. The first theme, a homophonic composite of three ideas, is like an invocation to Song. The second, predominately polyphonic, is a more mobile melody, its peacefulness disturbed only by restless fundamental harmonies. Spinning itself out in little rhythmic turns it evades cadence repeatedly. Not even a complete restatement in inversion alters the innate restlessness of this "Wanderer" theme. The third theme-group consists of two contrasted melodies, one a sharply rhythmic idea of satirical cast, the other a yearning concept of pastoral flavor.

Of all these themes only the satirical one is a really hostile element, hindering the undisputed sway of song in the development. In that section the appearance of the opening-theme exclusively in inverted form is a subtle piece of artistry. It saves the exact restatement of the theme for the recapitulation, where it appears completely fresh. Again, as in the *Sixth*, the climax of the development and the return of the main theme coincide, the superior thematic freshness just mentioned rendering this phenomenon in the case of the *Seventh* more effective.

For the reappearance of the main theme in his *Adagio* Bruckner adopted the general features of the classical variation form as broadened by Beethoven. He abandoned as unsuited to his message the uniformly floreate passages widely cultivated by his forerunners in varying their slow themes. He believed these to be, even when most charming and felicitous, artistically hampered by the too obvious display of technical skill which produced them. To forestall any possible sacrifice of artistic integrity on this score he injected a touch of sonata-form into his *Adagios* through the interpolation of concise passages of thematic development. For his source material he used elements of themes already presented. These "borrowed" fragments he re-created into delightfully fresh melodic shape by a fascinating process scarcely glimpsed by the classicists — that species of unhampered development known to students of sonata-form as "free fantasy."

The gigantic, earnest *Adagio* of the *Seventh* is universally famous as a "funeral ode" in honor of Wagner whose death occurred while Bruckner was still at work upon that movement. Bruckner asserted that a sudden foreboding of his great friend's imminent death was the inspiration

for this *Adagio*. The inexpressibly mournful opening theme, set for a choir of Bayreuth tubas, eloquently corroborates his claim. Yet the actual "funeral music" (according to Bruckner himself) does not begin until close to the end of the long movement, where it is ushered in by a jarring cymbal crash. "At this point," said Bruckner, "the shocking news of the master's death reached me."

Two broad-winged songs (rather than themes) totally contrasted in mood, alternately sway the entire musical content of this *Adagio*. The first, the funeral theme, progresses from stately solemnity to majestic affirmation on the impressive three-chord "Resurrection" motive from the *Te Deum*. The development of this motive becomes the climactic event in the movement. Climbing steadily from plane to plane, the spread of its wings constantly broadening, it becomes a mighty universal "Credo" sweeping aloft to the very gates of heaven. The second theme is a radiant melody sung by the Cherubim, its unique combination of simple charm and soaring nobility a worthy complement to its austere companion. That these melodies alone (the *Adagio* was first performed separately) possessed sufficient magic to make Bruckner world-famous at a single hearing describes them more aptly than might whole volumes of analysis. Some experts venture the claim that in the *Seventh* the *Adagio*, not the *Finale*, is the focal movement. This unstudied view may well have been fostered by those who nicknamed Bruckner the "Adagio Composer."

After this contemplation of Eternity the *Scherzo* comes like a rude awakening to earthly things. The opening theme, a bit of bizarre realism for Bruckner, sounds its drab Reveille, a melodic paraphrase of the crowing of the cock. In a moment all is feverish motion; constantly increasing, the agitation results in a wild dance-orgy. The *Trio* is an idealized, nostalgic *Laendler*-melody, eloquent of Bruckner's yearning love for his Upper-Austrian homeland.

A majestic dome-like structure is the *Finale*, the very order of its themes suggesting an arch. The opening theme is a martial concept, literally the lyric initial theme of the symphony arming for battle. Martial rhythm underlies even the prayerful chorale-theme that follows. One of the world's most famous conductors, mistaking Bruckner's intentional subordination of the chorale for ineffectual instrumentation, rescored the melodic line for brass, whereupon at least one leading American critic (this was almost a decade ago) insisted that the symphony had been made to sound better than Bruckner had written it. A "third" theme, in reality the opening theme at last fully armed, completes the array of spiritual forces involved in the conflict about to take place. The development section, involving the most resourceful manipulation of this given material from gentle playfulness to titanic grandeur, is a miracle of inspired artistry.

SOPHIE KARST SINGS MAHLER SONGS OVER WNYC

On February 17, 1939, Sophie Karst sang a group of songs by the much neglected composer, Gustav Mahler. The program consisted of *Lieder aus der Jugendzeit* and two of the *Wunderhorn Lieder*. The singer revealed a beautiful voice, and interpreted the songs in such a manner as to leave the listener with the hope for other Mahler programs. She was ably assisted at the piano by Herman Neuman.

STOCK AWARDED KILENYI BRUCKNER MEDAL OF HONOR

After a performance of Bruckner's *Ninth* in Chicago on March 23, the Bruckner Medal of Honor was presented to Frederick A. Stock by Dr. Martin G. Dumler of Cincinnati, President of the Society, in recognition of Stock's long continued efforts to create a greater interest in and appreciation of Bruckner's music. Dr. Stock is one of the oldest Bruckner pioneers in this country. According to Mr. Eugene Stinson of the *Chicago Daily News*, "this was the 25th occasion on which Mr. Stock had listed for performance one of the six Bruckner symphonies known to Chicago."

RODZINSKI AWARDED KILENYI BRUCKNER MEDAL OF HONOR

After a performance of Bruckner's *Eighth* in Cleveland on March 16th, the Bruckner Medal of Honor was presented to Artur Rodzinski by Adella Prentiss Hughes, Vice President of the Musical Arts Association, on behalf of the Bruckner Society of America, Inc., in recognition of his efforts to create a greater interest in and appreciation of Bruckner's music in this country. Dr. Rodzinski gave the first Cleveland performance of Bruckner's *Seventh* last season and introduced the *Eighth* to Cleveland audiences this season. The Cleveland Orchestra under Rodzinski's direction broadcast the *Seventh* over an NBC hook-up in March 1938.

GUSTAV MAHLER — EXCERPTS FROM *THIRD SYMPHONY*

University Symphony and University Girls' Glee Club, Conducted by Thor Johnson, in Hill Auditorium, Ann Arbor, January 23, 1939.

... The climax of last night's concert was as overwhelming as it was surprising. Few people in the audience had ever before heard any of the music of Gustav Mahler's *Third Symphony*, and the performance of the fifth and sixth movements from this tremendous work brought to all a musical experience so fresh and so powerful that "Why have we not heard this before?" was upon every tongue. Tumultuous and sustained applause left no further doubt as to the heartiness of Mahler's Ann Arbor reception, and repeated demands for more will no doubt lead to a performance of the *Symphony* in its entirety sometime in the future.

And, even as concerns the two movements already heard, such a performance would be most welcome, because the parts can not really find their true effect save as a part of the whole. While the fifth movement, with its pealing bells and exultant voices singing *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, was utterly charming by reason of its tunefulness and the freshness of its orchestral coloring, it still lacked the stature it would have attained had it come as a scherzo-like contrast after the meditative, *gedankenvoll* alto solo of the preceding movement.

As it was, it remained for the final movement to sweep one aloft to regions truly sublime. Such infinite peace as that of which the movement at first discourses could flow only from the soul of the profoundest of philosophers; and when at the end this peace rises to triumph and exaltation, one knows that it is something more than flesh and blood speaking, speaking with a passion beyond and above that of mere men. Mahler himself is but the prophet, his colossal orchestra but the voice, of that universal force, that cosmic soul, which is Nature. As Wagner immortalized in sound the passions of men and women, gods and goddesses, Mahler here apotheosizes in music the vital spirit of the universe.

WILLIAM J. LICHTENWANGER, *University of Michigan and Michigan Daily, Ann Arbor, Michigan*

NBC ORCHESTRA UNDER WALTER BROADCASTS MAHLER'S *FIRST*

(APRIL 8, 1939)

. . . Still, the symphony is sufficiently intelligible without the programmatic hints other than those which a listener can derive from the music itself, and offers many measures of freshness and charm especially in the first movement, and in the sturdy *ländler* rhythms of the third. It is true that Mahler's copious melodic invention does not express itself in all the themes with equal distinction, and that impressions of lengthiness are noticeable at times, mainly in the finale. . . . Nevertheless, despite certain drawbacks, this is a disarming work.

Mr. Walter, who was a close friend of Mahler, directed an interpretation marked by insight and persuasive eloquence, as well as the customary high standards of performance which mark this orchestra's work, and was ardently applauded by the large studio audience. . . .

FRANCIS D. PERKINS, *New York Herald Tribune*

. . . The symphony written when the composer was twenty-eight, ranges curiously over widely scattered realms of feeling, which in some instances are incongruously patched together, in others welded with strikingly dramatic effectiveness. The first two movements reveal clearly the Brucknerian influence in the folkish quality of the themes, in their square cut, diatonic mould. A simple response to nature motivates the entire first movement, while a pictorial quality, evident throughout the work, is here pointed by frequent imitations of bird calls and the pastoral tranquility that predominates. . . .

. . . This is obviously an imperfect work of a youthful hand. But it is useless to deny the prophecies of genius in its abundant vitality, its power and eloquence, its genuine compulsion. Discounting its glaring inconsistencies, its frequent naivete, its frequent reminiscences of Bruckner, Wagner and Tchaikovsky, it is, after all, the music of a man who had something to say.

G. G., *New York Times*

. . . It is a work that contains many elements of popularity, in spite of a diffuse and over-long finale. The performance as directed by Mr. Walter, a veritable disciple of Mahler, was a masterpiece of understanding sympathy and eloquence in which the orchestra followed the conductor with exemplary care.

PITTS SANBORN, *New York World Telegram*

GUSTAV MAHLER: SONG SYMPHONIST

BY GABRIEL ENGEL

It is perhaps the best life of Mahler extant. . . . The reading public owes a debt of gratitude to the Bruckner Society for issuing this comprehensive brochure; it tells all that is necessary and it is informative.

HARVEY GAUL, *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*

(Price \$1.00 plus 6 cents postage)

LIST OF PERFORMANCES—SEASON 1939-1940

BRUCKNER

Seventh Symphony—Boston Symphony (Koussevitzky) October; Philharmonic Symphony Society of N. Y. (Barbirolli) December; Kansas City Philharmonic (Krueger); St. Louis Symphony (Golschmann).

Fifth or Seventh Symphony—Philadelphia Orchestra (Ormandy).

MAHLER

Adagietto (Fifth Symphony)—Philharmonic Symphony Society of N. Y. (Barbirolli).

Das Lied von der Erde—Boston Symphony (Koussevitzky).

Second Symphony—Cincinnati Symphony (Goossens).

Ninth Symphony (Finale)—Boston Symphony (Koussevitzky).

Kindertotenlieder—Zighera Chamber Orchestra.

Symphonic Chronicle

A Record of Critical and Popular Reaction

GUSTAV MAHLER
SECOND SYMPHONY—
SECOND MOVEMENT

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Fritz Reiner, Conductor. December 9, 1938.

... We owe Mr. Reiner a debt of thanks for giving the first time in Pittsburgh part of a work of Gustav Mahler, one of the titans of musical art whose contributions to orchestral literature were way ahead of their time and are only beginning to be recognized for their true worth. The piece played on this occasion was the second movement of the Second Symphony.

This beautiful extract of one of the greatest symphonies ever penned refutes the accusation that Mahler's music is dull. Here is lovely music, full of inspiration and exquisite form, that leader and orchestra projected in a way that evoked demonstrations of approbation. We hope that this morsel of Mahler is but the forerunner of performance of this entire Second Symphony and others of this composer's impressive output. We should like to listen to a cycle of Mahler works similar to that of Beethoven being given here this year. . . .

RALPH LEWANDO, *Pittsburgh Press*

By far the most interesting feature of last night's Pittsburgh Orchestra concert in Syria Mosque was the audience. It was a lengthy program, one that might become tedious to the best listener; yet those thousands of music lovers sat enrapt and were enthusiastic to the end.

Fritz Reiner is bringing us up to date. We heard one movement from a Mahler symphony, the Andante from his Second Symphony composed some fifty years ago, the first fragment of such a work to be played here, although Mahler himself played for us thirty years ago.

For those who know Mahler songs, the charm of this andante is no surprise. . . .

J. FRED LISSFELT,
Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph

GUSTAV MAHLER:
DAS LIED VON DER ERDE

Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Frederick A. Stock, Conductor. Soloists: Enid Szanthe and Charles Kullmann. January 10, 12 and 13, 1939.

... He worked furiously away in that summer of 1908 and succeeded in creating an authentic masterpiece. The music's message is one of darkness and despair, but this darkness and despair are expressed so well that the resulting product becomes something superlatively fine. Mahler at the time (only three years before his death) had mastered the technical side of his art as few men have done. He knew how to bend both voices and instruments to the expression of countless subtleties of feeling.

In the passages of rueful gaiety his methods are as successful as in the more doleful sequences. The gaiety is made to seem full of thoughtfulness, as though a man in the middle of a headlong reel should occupy his mind with speculations as to whether he would ever live to dance another one.

The performance had intensity and directness. . . . Mr. Stock conducted with a fine feeling for the idiom of the difficult music. . . .

EDWARD BARRY, *Chicago Tribune*

... Dr. Felix Borowski, eminent musician and program annotator, tells us that Mahler was a sick, depressed man—suffering from a heart ailment, later fatal—when he wrote this music. Burdened with a broken heart, Mahler reflected an embittered, hopeless spirit in his outlook on life, and found his personal views echoed in the fatalistic utterance of century-old Chinese poetry. He used them as the basis of a freely-styled symphony to point in pathos of sound the forlorn, nostalgic meaning of the words as they too lived more beautifully in chanted, intoned lyricism of song.

In mirroring his morose views on man's finite existence, Mahler has per-

versely achieved immortality himself, it seems to me! . . . For with exquisite sensitivity—he reflects so many thoughtful moods, not always brooding, but generally foreboding.

JANET GUNN, *Chicago Herald Examiner*

. . . Mr. Stock's purpose has not been to give the work a casual and isolated hearing; he plans to keep it a recurrent item in the orchestra's repertoire.

And that is good news. Mahlerites consider it the composer's masterpiece; certainly it is a peculiarly personal work and a peculiarly successful one. . . .

"Das Lied von der Erde" was composed at the end of Mahler's days; it has its moments of gigantic energy and projection but it is a score in which everything is fundamentally at peace and in which Mahler's genuine love of the orchestra moves freely, boldly and beautifully in an exceedingly rich and evocative instrumentation. The work invites repose of spirit and its performance on Tuesday was both vocally and orchestrally superb and fitting. . . .

EUGENE STINSON, *Chicago Daily News*
1/11/39

. . . The aim of Chinese poetry is to suggest sentiment in the vivid and concentrated glimpse of small human activities. The most Chinese aspect of Mahler's score is that he, too, holding fast to the literal, writes music that gives off vivid and concentrated glimpses of small orchestral activities.

For the texts are the paramount reality of "Das Lied von der Erde." The music strikes their mood and gives their incidents illustration, but the charm of the score as a whole is its suggestion of evanescence, its minute use of a large orchestra and its wonderful use of graphically conceived material for the sake of suggesting a vague, haunting and unwordable nostalgia in which the heart yearns to find the substance of its own longing.

This is music which invites affection even before one has completely grasped it and in which, with its insistent recurrence of motifs, and its distinct suggestion of a perfect timing and a perfect proportion, it seems well worth while to lose oneself, as Mahler himself may very likely have done.

EUGENE STINSON, *Chicago Daily News*
1/13/39

GUSTAV MAHLER:
*LIEDER EINES FAHRENDEN
GESELLEN*
HUGO WOLF—FIVE SONGS

Zighera Chamber Orchestra, Bernard Zighera, Conductor; Cleora Wood, Soloist. Boston, January 18, 1939.

. . . It may well be that in such smaller forms as those of the "Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen" and the "Lied von der Erde" (itself a cycle of songs rather than a symphonic unit) Mahler's enormous talent found more satisfactory expression than in the pretentious and sometimes blatantly pompous symphonies. A delightful intimacy of expressive vocal line, a charming transparency of orchestral texture, an aptness and economy of instrumental color make these songs exceptionally well suited to chamber-orchestra performance. . . .

STEPHEN SOMERVILLE, *Christian Science Monitor*

. . . The finest by all odds of this music was the "Songs of a Wayfarer" by that still much-debated figure of a generation ago—Gustav Mahler. . . .

While a good deal of tonal archeology now goes on with forgotten composers before Bach, listening experience in the case of Mahler is hard to come by because his works are badly and unjustly neglected. A neat commentary on our state of musical civilization! "The Songs of a Wayfarer," written when he was about twenty-three and stimulated by a brief love affair, seem to be lyric masterpieces and show that Mahler even at twenty-three was already a master of orchestration who had developed a style of his own.

The melodic naivete of these four songs came unmistakably, as others have said before, from Mahler's love of folk-song. This quality stands in contrast to the technical complexity and sophistication which he must have possessed when quite young. To Mr. Zighera, who conducted most sympathetically, and to Miss Wood for her beautiful singing is offered the heartfelt gratitude of at least one listener. . . .

. . . A large audience applauded most cordially.

C. W. DURGIN, *Boston Globe*

. . . It was particularly interesting to listen to these familiar Wolf Lieder with

first rate orchestral accompaniment. Neither "Gebete" nor "Verborgtheit," perhaps, gains by the transcription; but how much more vital are the lively songs, like "Er ist's" and "Ich hab' in Penna," and how effective is the woodwind in "Auf ein altes Bild!" Here the orchestra points Wolf's ideas.

To those who have sometimes groaned under the weight and tedium of Mahler's symphonies the earlier "Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen" must have come as a welcome surprise. They are extraordinarily lovely and passionate songs, without the depth that Wolf commanded in his finest creations but well worth more than the very rare hearings that they receive. Miss Wood was at her best in these and well deserved the applause that she received. . . .

ALEXANDER W. WILLIAMS, *Boston Herald*

Thanks to Cleora Wood's singing of Mahler's "Songs of a Travelling Journeyman," an inspired performance of inspired music, the concert of the Zighera Chamber Orchestra at Jordan Hall last evening, which might otherwise have gone the agreeable way of such events, became an important occasion. These songs with orchestra, two of which found their way into Mahler's "First Symphony," were written when that much misunderstood composer was but twenty-three and, although their harmonic idiom is simple indeed, as compared with that of "The Song of the Earth," they are still very much alive today; and there is in them the poignancy that is Mahler's own.

Last sung here at a pair of Symphony Concerts in 1915, these songs, if memory serves, made not the impression then they did last evening. Credit for this significant accomplishment goes not only to the singer but to the orchestra of Symphony men and to Mr. Zighera, who here displayed unsuspected eloquence as conductor. Not before has he given us music which required of him the degree of sympathy and understanding so necessary in the interpretation of this dramatic and highly personal music. . . .

. . . There was the usual socially distinguished audience, and from it Miss Wood received something of an ovation after the songs of Mahler.

WARREN STOREY SMITH, *Boston Post*

. . . But one would not have parted easily with the other vocal-instrumental selection, Mahler's "Lieder eines Fahren-

den Gesellen." . . . It was rather the intrinsic music that engrossed the listener, music of a poignancy, simplicity of statement and wonderful command of the orchestral medium that set Mahler apart from almost every other composer in the history of music. The mood of resignation, in depicting which Mahler was so great a master, is in these four songs, as in "Das Lied von der Erde" and some of the symphonies. . . .

A distinguished audience that filled most of the seats in Jordan Hall applauded the performers, particularly Miss Wood with gusto.

MOSES SMITH, *Boston Evening Transcript*

ANTON BRUCKNER: SECOND SYMPHONY

Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Eugene Goossens, Conductor. January 20 and 21, 1939. (First Performance of Bruckner's Second in Cincinnati.)

. . . His failure to take hold outside of Austria and Germany may be explained in several ways. Prejudice had as much to do with it as anything. . . .

In any event, it has been a long time on its way to Cincinnati—more than sixty-five years, in fact. Judging by the way this genial work sounds at these concerts, I see no reason why it should not appeal to concert audiences.

Bruckner poured some of his choicest melodies into the mill when he ground out this symphony, and he put a variety of color into the scoring. More than that he was brief—for him, that is. The symphony, with the cut sanctioned by the composer and the short one made by Eugene Goossens, the conductor, for this performance, does not run much longer than thirty-five minutes. . . .

Bruckner's Second Symphony is lyrical in character, made up as it is for the most part of song and dance tunes. Evidently the composer was enjoying life at the time when he wrote it. The slow movement, an andante, instead of being infused with pain as many of his adagios are, sounds like a prayer and closes quietly with a blessing—the Benedictus from his Mass in F-minor. His South German nationality crops out in portions of the first and last movements, but conspicuously in the Landler-like scherzo.

When a musical scholar like Donald Francis Tovey makes the statement that Bruckner's symphonies always begin with

"Rheingold" harmonic breaths and end with "Goetterdaemmerung" climaxes I feel that he has tossed off a neat phrase but in doing so has libeled Bruckner.

In the Second Symphony, at any rate, Wagnerisms make themselves rather scarce. All of the commentators of course pounce upon Rieni's prayer *motiv* which may be heard in the first movement. There is little else except possibly the fortissimo passage at the end of the slow movement. The influence, if any, comes from Franz Schubert, I would say. Listen to the second theme of the first movement.

If the Vienna Philharmonic musicians found the symphony unplayable, the members of the Cincinnati Orchestra do not. As a matter of fact they manage it with almost as much fluency and smoothness as something that has been long in their repertory. . . .

FREDERICK YEISER, *Cincinnati Enquirer*

The last few days have found me in feverish communion with the available literature on the life and music of the Austrian composer, Anton Bruckner. This to prepare myself for my initial contact with his C-minor Symphony and fortify myself for this notice which I had approached with considerable trepidation. I read of controversies: as to who really composed Bruckner symphonies, Bruckner or his pupils; I read with misgiving of his length, his peculiarly Germanic appeal, his mysticism, his profound religious approach, his laborious mannerisms and pedantic technicalities, his fragmentary construction; I read that some considered him the equal of Brahms and others a bore equal to none. I read and my step was heavy as I climbed to my seat in Music Hall Friday afternoon for the Cincinnati premiere of this work, Eugene Goossens conducting and Martin Dumler, president of the Bruckner Society of America, on hand to see that his master got a square deal.

Consider then my surprised delight to find the confused and ponderous observations above fade in the pleasures of a composition which struck me as only mildly scholastic, as calmly religious, not passionate or profound, as genial and serene, as melodious and not too exciting in its orchestration and above all not "intellectual" in its content. Mr. Goossens made two generous deletions in the last movement and he cut the "grand pauses" to a single beat, thus materially

shortening this work which is one of Bruckner's shortest symphonies to begin with. Mr. Dumler looked pleased; so did the audience and even so casual a Brucknerite as myself was immediately impressed by the organ-like beauty of the slow movement. . . .

GROVERMAN BLAKE, *Cincinnati Times Star*

ANTON BRUCKNER: THIRD SYMPHONY

Indianapolis Symphony, Ferdinand Schaefer, Conductor. First time in Indianapolis February 3 and 4, 1939.

. . . The Bruckner symphony is a masterpiece of such strength and beauty that we can only wonder why it is seldom heard. Finely planned on a magnificent scale, heroic in concept and deeply religious in mood, it is at once a mighty drama of life and a fervent profession of faith. Its style, once too novel for the comfort of a conservative audience, is still striking but no longer daring enough to disturb the idealistic impressions it so eloquently conveys. It is music with a stirring appeal to the emotions, as well as a challenge to the listening mind. It is uplifting music and great. The adagio is a glowing gem, the finale an arch of triumph. The orchestra's task, then, was considerable and it responded to the admirable simplicity and directness of Mr. Schaefer's conducting with a warm, expressive reading. Mr. Schaefer's spry, sparse gestures elicited the lustrous qualities of tone for which the young orchestra is already celebrated. . . .

CORBIN PATRICK, *Indianapolis Star*

. . . Many a time it happens that the works of great composers are neglected because the works are not worthy of the effort it takes to play them. That unkind charge can not be placed against the music on this week-end's concerts, however. . . .

Bruckner has been almost entirely neglected hereabouts so that his name is far better known among local concertgoers than any of his music. The Third Symphony is characteristic of a certain period of his career for it is intensely melodic, although the melody is not "sung" in the traditional manner, and it is intensely romantic. . . .

WALTER WHITWORTH, *Indianapolis News*

ANTON BRUCKNER:
EIGHTH SYMPHONY

Boston Symphony Orchestra, Serge Koussevitzky, Conductor. Boston, February 4 and 5; New York, February 10, 1939.

... The combination proved very successful at yesterday's concert. Bruckner appears to be making his way with Boston audiences. No doubt the propaganda for him has had its effect; but without question his music has a strong direct appeal to many listeners. It is not difficult to understand why it should, especially at this period of enthusiasm for Wagner, who was Bruckner's chief admiration. Many of Bruckner's themes are salient, his writing is clear and his structures solid. In this Eighth Symphony there are some lovely pages, particularly in the Adagio. . . .

The performance yesterday may well have made new converts to the Bruckner fold. It was magnificent in its sonority and its expressiveness. It is doubtful if anywhere else in the world so fine a report of Bruckner's symphony could be made today. . . .

L. A. S., *Christian Science Monitor*,
Boston

... The Boston conductor has been one of the apostles of the Brucknerian (as of the Mahlerian) tradition, and both he and the music are beginning to reap just reward. At yesterday's concert the Symphony, which, even after liberal cutting, consumed more than an hour of exhausting attention, was followed by a long round of applause and even cheers—rare phenomenon from a matinee audience. . . .

These objections, like others, are familiar. In the end, perhaps it is the very quality of naivete that constituted the essence of Bruckner's genius. For it was accompanied, fortunately, by a grandeur of imagination rarely encountered in the history of music. A man with such an imagination had to work not only with big themes but also—as a corollary with widespread movements. Certainly the adagio, for example, has inordinate length. But if Bruckner had attempted to compress his ideas into a movement of more usual proportions he would have missed fire. Again it was possible to observe that length and huge orchestra and grandiose expression were the neces-

sary implications of the man's thoughts. MOSES SMITH, *Boston Evening Transcript*

... Already Dr. Koussevitzky has restored the Austrian symphonist to the place he once held. It is now his opportunity to make that position stronger even than before. By token of the aforementioned enthusiasm yesterday and of the applause that greeted the more easily assimilated Seventh Symphony, when it was last played under Dr. Koussevitzky's direction, Boston is eager for the particular emotional, spiritual and musical experience that a Bruckner Symphony can provide.

With Bruckner there are three stumbling blocks: the Symphonies are long; they achieve real momentum only in the always masterly Scherzos, the greatest since those of Beethoven, and there is likely to be a want of continuity. Nevertheless, these objections do not seem to weigh very heavily with our audiences—even the chief objection, that of length.

Despite much-to-be-regretted cuts, particularly in the Adagio, the Eighth Symphony consumed yesterday over an hour. In this restless, nervous age we are supposedly impatient of operatic and symphonic longuers. But it does not seem to work that way. The public dotes on Wagner and, when given a chance, it rises to Mahler and Bruckner, as the audience rose yesterday to the latter's Eighth and last season to the former's Fifth.

And why? Because in these works there is a notable depth and richness, an earnestness and elevation, a wealth of moving melody, of satisfying harmony and of glowing, resplendent sonorities—things in which the music of our own day is, as a rule, sadly lacking.

If there ever was a time when the world needed art as a means of escape, that time is here and now. And escape is something which Hindemith and Stravinsky and their swarm of imitators hardly offer us. They give us, instead, what we already feel, not what we wish we felt. . . .

WARREN STOREY SMITH, *Boston Post*

... Bruckner unquestionably had the strongest of emotional inspirations in writing this symphony, with its long and moving adagio. That is the core and meaning of the piece, and the first movement, scherzo and grandiose finale do but surround and encase it. If the

adagio, then, does not move you, be assured that the symphony as a whole does not contain much meaning for your ears.

With yesterday's splendid performance and Dr. Koussevitzky's persuasive interpretation one would have to be fantastically out of the mood not to sense the power of the Eighth Symphony. Bruckner's faults are not inherent flaws, not abscesses of the soul; they lie on the surface and should not fend us off from the music. . . .

ALEXANDER WILLIAMS, *Boston Herald*

. . . The playing left nothing to be desired. In gorgeous tone, nuance, climactic building up, sustained balance it was gripping from the first chord. The serenely eloquent adagio was superbly unfolded. . . .

L. B., *New York World Telegram*

The deeds of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and its builder and leader, Dr. Serge Koussevitzky, grow with the doing, if not with the telling. To the sensational effect, now historic, which this conductor and orchestra achieved when they played the Eighth Bruckner Symphony last Friday night is to be added the record of the performances yesterday of an adorable symphony of Mozart; the repetition from an earlier New York program of Hindemith's "Symphonic Dances"; the performance of Ernest Bloch's "Schelemo." . . . We now maintain that Dr. Koussevitzky owes his New York audiences at least two other repetitions. One is of the delicious humor of Prokofieff's children's tale of "Peter and the Wolf," with Richard Hale as Narrator. The other is of the Bruckner Eighth Symphony.

OLIN DOWNES, *New York Times*

No doubt as much to his own surprise as to that of any member of the audience, Serge Koussevitzky enjoyed a remarkable success last night in Carnegie Hall with the playing of the Bruckner Eighth Symphony by the Boston Symphony Orchestra. It might even be whispered that the conductor had thought seriously of revising the evening's music by substituting a Haydn symphony and Scriabin's "Poem of Ecstasy" for the mammoth work (an intention conveyed by a slip in the program-book). But when the concert began it was with the Bruckner Symphony, whose last notes, an hour later, were followed by a prolonged demonstration.

It was reasonable to attribute some of this enthusiasm to the extraordinary response of the players to the vivifying direction of Mr. Koussevitzky, which was of an intensity and concentration to animate the musical equivalent of an Egyptian mummy. Nor could it be overlooked that in preparing the work for performance, Mr. Koussevitzky had cut close to twenty minutes from its various movements, presumably pages of repetition and prolixity.

In any case, it was an hour of Bruckner to which the audience listened and responded. Mr. Koussevitzky's treatment of the work gave it an impression of unity and cohesiveness that is not usually granted to works by this composer. There was genuine eloquence and rapt musical beauty in the adagio, where Bruckner's head was truly among the stars, and a boldness of utterance in the finale that might usher in the crack of doom. Some doubts remain about the first movement, which becomes entwined in its own complexities at several points, but in consideration of the fresh impact of the work as a whole, it might be well to rest the case of Bruckner, until further evidence of this relevance is presented. . . .

IRVING KOLODIN, *New York Sun*

. . . Last night the Eighth lasted over an hour. If Brahms and Beethoven symphonies are considered as tonal canvases, the Bruckner C minor demands comparison with the mural. It is a thing of vast proportions and deep perspectives. Its huge framework contains structures of rhythms and color, a variety of technical resources, an amplitude and intensity of musical expression that are so far beyond the scale of nineteenth-century symphonic form as almost to seem unrelated to its precursor. . . .

. . . The interpreter's task is to adjust those emotional torrents to the ears and minds of mere mortals, who are limited by reason and reality to credible degrees of ecstasy. He must do this by viewing the work from a high perspective, and by shaping its musical thought into a natural growth. It was thus that Dr. Koussevitzky led us, almost by the hand, to rarefied heights that revealed the symphony to its farthest horizons. For his accomplishment he was rewarded by the acclaim of a rapt and deeply moved audience.

It was music and music-making that almost dwarfed the succeeding perform-

ance of the Mussorgsky-Ravel "Pictures at an Exhibition" to mere virtuosity.

G. G. *New York Times*

. . . The eighth symphony has the drawbacks customarily associated with Bruckner's work in this form, such as length, occasional iterativeness, and unevenness of inspiration. But on repeated hearings these become of less consequence; there is largeness of style and vision as well as temporal length, persuasively sincere eloquence, whose most convincing expression is in the great adagio with its meditative lyric depth, tenderness and the moving grandeur of its climaxes. . . .

FRANCIS D. PERKINS, *New York Herald Tribune*

ANTON BRUCKNER:
FOURTH SYMPHONY

The Bridgeport Federal Symphony, Fritz Mahler, Conductor; February 23, 1939.

. . . The composition exhibited a variety of emotional effects and musical patterns; soft, mournful tones blending with hushed staccatos. From gentle, misting music, the melody grew to pelt-ing rains of sound-storm. There seemed to be a continuous see-saw of lyricism and solemnity. With distinct artistry, Mahler built up a series of climactic moments of dramatic intensity.

The piece, made up of sustaining, buoyant sound patterns, was well chosen to hold an audience. A variety of moods mingled gaiety, spring passion, and solemn ceremony. The fine coordination of the musicians, and their unity with the conductor were remarkable. At the end of the composition, the audience applauded with enthusiasm. . . .

Bridgeport Telegram

ANTON BRUCKNER:
EIGHTH SYMPHONY

Cleveland Orchestra, Artur Rodzinski, Conductor. March 16 and 18, 1939.

Dr. Artur Rodzinski received a medal last evening at Severance Hall for directing the Cleveland Orchestra in a first performance here of the Anton Bruckner Eighth Symphony.

And Dr. Rodzinski deserved it. We mean that in the right sense. There are

some, undoubtedly, who might suggest that the audience should have a medal, too. But we do not agree with them.

We found the Bruckner music tremendously interesting, gorgeous at times, dramatic, full of conflict and contrast. It is the outpouring of a master of orchestration. And Dr. Rodzinski and the symphonists—the maestro quite visibly indisposed—gave it a virtuosic performance. . . .

ELMORE BACON, *Cleveland News*

. . . The fact that the symphony is about fifty years old and that it never before had been presented in Cleveland is another indication of the difficulty that Bruckner's music has had in gaining recognition.

Yesterday's performance ought to win Bruckner numerous new friends. As the final notes of the restless, somber first movement died away, it was easy to feel that one was in the presence of a spirit of no common rate. In the long adagio the composer combines a Schubertian sweetness and a Wagnerian magniloquence to convey a remarkable impression of calm and exaltation.

Perhaps my as yet unconsecrated ears will be pardoned for having a few reserves as to the last movement. Though I carefully followed every note of the performance with the score, it was impossible to overcome a feeling of undue discursiveness and discontinuity.

The performance showed off the extraordinary accomplishments of the Cleveland Orchestra. If any special praise is to be bestowed it would be upon the brass players for their fine work in their long and taxing parts. All credit to Messrs. Puletz, Davidson and Dittert and their respective sections; also to the players of the so-called tuben, the special, low horns which both Bruckner and Wagner often specify for their scores.

Bruckner's music is now the beneficiary of an active propaganda. At the close of the symphony, Adella Prentiss Hughes, vice president of the Musical Arts Association, addressed the conductor. Speaking in behalf of the Bruckner Society of America, she said: "In the absence of our acting president, Mr. Lewis B. Williams, I now have the privilege and the pleasure of presenting to you the medal of the Bruckner Society of America, which has enrolled the name of Artur Rodzinski among the illustrious conductors who are so well serving its cause." . . .

ARTHUR LOESSER, *Cleveland Press*

... So much adverse criticism has been written concerning Bruckner that the uninitiated will turn away without giving a hearing. It is well to add that many who have written in such manner have not heard enough of him to be able to judge sensibly. Although we may be able to detect influences of Wagner, Beethoven or Schubert, his music is highly individual. There is an exaltation in the spirit of his scores which grows out of his intense religious convictions, approaching at times a feeling of mysticism. His symphonic writings are pure music, untouched by programmatic influences of his time.

A powerful characteristic of Bruckner's music is his simulation of organ registration and effective use of the wind instruments; and the chorale treatment, which forms such an important thematic part, is a direct outgrowth of his religious root. . . .

At the close of the concert Dr. Rodzinski was presented the medal of honor of the Bruckner Society of America in recognition of his efforts to create a greater interest in and appreciation of the music of Anton Bruckner in America. The presentation of the four-inch bronze medal was made by Adella Prentiss Hughes, vice president of the Musical Arts Association, in the absence of Lewis B. Williams, acting president.

STEWART MATTER, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*

ANTON BRUCKNER: NINTH SYMPHONY

Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Frederick A. Stock, Conductor; March 23, 24, 1939.

... The serious Bruckner was never more serious than in this last work—especially in the slow movement with which it now ends. The performance last evening did justice to the urgency and nobility of his thought. The music was long of line and possessed of an austere beauty of texture. . . .

EDWARD BARRY, *Chicago Tribune*

... The symphony chosen for the occasion was the Bruckner Number Nine D Minor (unfinished), a work of considerable length and profundity, albeit its too obvious ponderosity, except for the Scherzo which is a gem of imaginative beauty, in its striking percussive effects. To the

three big B's in the symphonic world should be added the names of Anton Bruckner and Hector Berlioz. Stock whipped his men into the finest shape to regale us with this considerably important Bruckner work, and permitted Dr. Martin G. Dumler of Cincinnati to confer another honor upon our chief, in recognition of his efforts to foster the Bruckner music in the United States. A medal, which Stock can add to his decorations, was handed to him by the president of the Bruckner Society of America.

HERMAN DEVRIES, *Chicago American*

... This was the twenty-fifth occasion on which Mr. Stock had listed for performance one of the six Bruckner symphonies known to Chicago. The ninth has been most frequently performed of all; this was its eleventh listing. Its rotund and majestic beauties are clearly recognized; the extravagance of its thematic invention is accepted as having a necessary part in the work of a composer whose mind was extraordinarily simple, sought nevertheless for amplitude and never lost touch with beauty. The bigness of the score must delight Mr. Stock, who played it with magnificent breadth, intensity and eloquence.

His power as an expositor of Bruckner's music has been equalled by his determination to make public the works of a master whom many feel to be unjustly neglected. . . .

EUGENE STINSON, *Daily News, Chicago*

GUSTAV MAHLER: EIGHTH SYMPHONY

Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and Festival Chorus, Eugene Goossens, Conductor. Soloists: Helene Kessing, Hilda Burke, Josephine Antoine, Lillian Knowles, Elizabeth Brown, William Hain, Julius Huehn, Norman Gordon. Cincinnati, May 3, 1939.

... This monumental work, which draws upon all the powers of contrast found in a mixed chorus, as boys' choir, an octet of soloists, an augmented orchestra, organ and piano, contains some of the greatest climaxes known in choral literature. . . .

... The prelude to the last chorus, which makes use of the treble register instruments, is indeed an inspiration and

effectively introduces the thrilling close. Mahler's "Eighth" is a sublime work of art.

HOWARD W. HESS, *Cincinnati Times-Star*

One of the oldest musical institutions in the country is Cincinnati's May Festival, which this year enjoyed the attention of a nationwide audience when the Columbia Broadcasting Symphony presented a representative portion of one of its most interesting programs (WABC).

Research would disclose, no doubt, that there is scarcely a representative choral work that has not been offered in Cincinnati long before it has earned a place in the regular concert-hall repertory. On this occasion (Wednesday evening) the work was Gustav Mahler's eighth symphony, a profound and moving score which is virtually unknown here. Certainly it would be an adornment of the World's Fair musical festival if such a performance, already rehearsed and ready for presentation, could be imported. But it does not seem that such attractions will be available.

Whether or not Eugene Goossens is known in his native England as a Mahler conductor (a species of leader as specialized, so we are told, as a Berlioz or a Bruckner conductor) his broadcast performance was incisive, comprehending and communicative. The orchestral playing and the choral singing were thoroughly good, and he was also fortunate in having such excellent soloists as Lillian Knowles, William Hain, Julius Huehn and Norman Cordon.

IRVING KOLODIN, *The Sun (New York)*

... Following the intermission a performance of the Mahler symphony was given that was nothing short of stupendous. . . .

To Mr. Goossens belongs the major meed of praise; for, to conduct two such difficult works successfully, and with such a degree of artistry, demands musicianship of high degree. The orchestra gave excellent support, and this concert will doubtless prove to be one of the high-lights of the entire festival.

LILLIAN T. PLOGSTEDT, *Cincinnati Post*

... Like most of the other of Mahler's symphonies, this one is cumulative in its effects and the final fulfillment of the original appeal does not take place until the last bars of the rhapsodic second part. But it is the first movement which

governs the other and contains in the great double fugue the most powerful if not the most moving section in the work.

At short range, however, I find that I was most taken by the way in which Mahler managed to keep the music soaring high toward the end of the "Faust" scene until it could finally go no higher. Then after a gradual descent came the entrance of the ecstatic chorus, beginning "All things of mundane worth."

Mahler was a marvelous architect, and he designed his symphony symmetrically and logically. That much Eugene Goossens's firmly balanced direction made clear beyond any doubt.

He whipped the first movement along at a good energetic pace which kept the chorus and soloists on the jump. At this pace big double fugue mounted to a hair-raising climax. The members of the chorus once more came through magnificently.

Mahler gave one of the most beautiful of all the solos to the baritone in the second part. Here Julius Huehn again rose to the occasion. Another grateful solo fell to William Hain, who followed suit. Norman Cordon, well known in Cincinnati as an opera singer, made much of the stubborn bass solo. Hilda Burke, Josephine Antoine, Lillian Knowles, Elizabeth Brown, and Helene Kessing also took care of their assignments most competently. All in all, a memorable performance.

FREDERICK YEISER, *The Enquirer, Cincinnati*

ANTON BRUCKNER: SEVENTH SYMPHONY

Boston Symphony Orchestra, Serge Koussevitzky, Conductor, October 20-21, 1939.

... We in Boston are indebted to Dr. Koussevitzky for comparatively frequent performances of two or three symphonies each by Bruckner and Mahler. . . .

Lyrical, harmonically, and in its brave orchestration, the Bruckner Seventh is great music. Bruckner was inspired; he had noble visions. Proof exists in the distinguished nature of his themes. . . . When the sheer living beauty of his music is considered, however, strict analysis is shown up as whiskered pedantry. . . .

C. W. D., *Boston Globe*

. . . Not yet can one write of a Bruckner performance without mention of the music itself, so baffling is the combination of strength and weakness that these extraordinary symphonies present. But this much may be said: if the Finale of the Seventh comes as an anticlimax, after the Adagio, it is difficult to imagine a movement that would not have made that unfortunate impression. The Scherzo, one of the few really superlative scherzi since Beethoven, is perfectly in place as foil to the preceding movements. . . . Dr. Koussevitzky's reading of the first movement was masterly to a degree, while, throughout, the ear was ravished by the orchestral sound. Here was the wonderful Bruckner brass at its finest.

WARREN STOREY SMITH, *Boston Post*

GUSTAV MAHLER:
ADAGIETTO (FIFTH SYMPHONY)

Philharmonic Symphony Society of New York, John Barbirolli, Conducting, October 26-27, 1939.

The Mahler piece, a soaringly eloquent meditation streaked with melancholy, came in for sensitive treatment. The audience's warm response should encourage Mr. Barbirolli to carry on his explorations in Mahler territory.

L. B., *New York World-Telegram*

Glowingly played by strings and harp, the Mahler symphonic segment had about the substance—and the sentiment—of a Strauss song much extended.

OSCAR THOMPSON, *The New York Sun*



FRITZ MAHLER BROADCASTS *ADAGIETTO* FROM MAHLER'S *FIFTH*

On February 5, 1939, the Philadelphia Federal Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Fritz Mahler performed the *Adagietto* from Mahler's *Fifth* Symphony. On February 6th Mr. Mahler broadcast the Mahler excerpts over Station KYW, Philadelphia.

IN MEMORIAM

Harriet B. Lanier	1931
Mrs. Joseph Leidy	1933
Max Loewenthal	1933
Egon Pollak	1933
Jakob Wassermann	1933
Otto H. Kahn	1934
H. T. Parker	1934
Ludwig Vogelstein	1934
Emanuel de M. Baruch	1935
Max Smith	1935
Josef Stransky	1935
James P. Dunn	1936
Ossip Gabrilowitsch	1936
Henry Hadley	1937
Mrs. A. S. Hubbard	1938
Emma L. Roedter	1938
Major Theodore Bitterman	1938
Lawrence Gilman	1939
Artur Bodanzky	1939

December 10, 1939

Mr. Robert G. Grey
New York City

Dear Mr. Grey:

For the past two years I have taken a serious interest in the music of Anton Bruckner and Gustav Mahler. I have tried to foster this interest both by hearing as often as possible their works performed at concerts or on the few recordings that are available to us. Unfortunately, I find that such great music as these two composers left us is heard all too infrequently. I must be content for the present with listening to the *Fourth* and *Seventh Symphonies* of Bruckner, *Das Lied von der Erde* and the *Second Symphony* of Mahler. Recently the Boston Orchestra performed Bruckner's *Eighth Symphony*, and just this last week they played the last movement of Mahler's *Ninth*. You are probably well aware of how few hearings this beautiful, but neglected, music is given.

To most people Bruckner and Mahler are merely names. To others, the fact that a symphony lasts over an hour scares them away. However, others who have sat through an hour or more, and have opened their ears to these long compositions, are always impressed. Yesterday the audience, when hearing the closing strains of the "Adagio" of Mahler's *Ninth*, was so affected that all coughing was suspended and not a person could be heard moving in his seat. Naturally there were a certain number of people who after the performance, despite the fact that they were tremendously moved, resumed their stuffy attitude and decried the movement as long and trying to create an effect of seriousness which music cannot arrive at. Now, it is foolish to try to find fault with a piece of music which has almost hypnotized you. Nor would it be fair to say that either Bruckner or Mahler wrote faultless music. What I am aiming at is to prove that both Bruckner and Mahler are so despicable to some people merely because past generations found fault with them. I feel sure that more frequent hearings will gradually cause a great change in attitude.

Of course, it is obvious that there are difficulties in trying to give a symphonic programme, if one number is to last more than an hour. Most people have not got the patience to sit through a Wagnerian music-drama. Yet, when they have done it once, they never again complain that it is long. I am a staunch admirer of Wagner—that's what made me open my ears to Bruckner—and I am fully aware of the long, and almost drawn-out second act of *Die Walkuere*. But there is real music in that act. If something is long and has little music of note in it, then we have reason for leaving it aside. This criticism has been leveled at Bruckner, and unfairly. I defy anybody to tell me that any of the four movements of either the *Fourth*, *Seventh*, or *Eighth Symphonies* of Bruckner lack what we call music. People today tend to play up the faults of music to such an extent that they are inclined to overlook the virtues. Most music on first hearing fails to leave a real favorable impression. Two years ago, for the first time, I heard Sibelius's *Seventh Symphony*. It bored me so much that I said I never would hear it again. About six months later I had the occasion to listen to it again. It was a real musical treat. The trouble is that most people don't take the trouble to hear a composition a second time if they didn't like it at first. That's the main reason why the public is still so cold to the works of Mahler and Bruckner.

But there is one good way of remedying the situation and of making possible more hearings of this neglected music. And the conductors, one and all, are coming around to realize that it is the best solution possible. They have come to the conclusion that it is too taxing for the people to hear the hour-long symphonies of Bruckner. So they take one or two movements from a symphony and present it or them at a concert. The movement may last ten or twenty minutes and is easily digestible. I know the majority of the public will be impressed to such an extent that they will have the curiosity to listen to the rest of the symphony.

After all, consider the popularity of some operas today. How often do singers choose arias from operas and present them on radio programmes. The people are attracted by these songs and wait for the day when they shall be able to see the rest of that opera. The same situation is the case with many a symphony—the *Second Movement* of the Tchaikowsky *Fifth* and the first movement of the Beethoven *Fifth*, just to mention a couple of examples. I know that the same success would result if we would be allowed to hear "selections" from Bruckner or Mahler symphonies. Barbirolli seems to have realized the situation; that explains the *Adagietto* of the Mahler *Fifth*. The same goes for the *Adagio* from the Mahler *Ninth* played by the Boston Orchestra.

I am very anxious to spread interest in the works of Mahler and Bruckner. I am trying to get the younger people to listen to these neglected masterpieces, and I only wish the day were near at hand when we could look forward to the musical season with the assurance that both Bruckner and Mahler would be given the hearings they deserve.

Sincerely yours,
HOWARD MENDEL
Cambridge, Mass.



MAHLERIANA

A particularly notable addition to The Bruckner Society's collection of Mahleriana is an impressive bust of the great symphonist by Victor Frisch, acquired through the generosity of Mrs. Artur Bodanzky, widow of the celebrated conductor of the Metropolitan Opera House. To Bodanzky, a devoted Mahler disciple, this image of his master had been a constant source of inspiration throughout the years. As Honorary Member of The Bruckner Society, he would surely have approved the presentation of his cherished Mahler bust to the American organization, one of whose chief aims is spreading the gospel of Mahler's art.

ST. LOUIS PREMIERE OF BRUCKNER'S *SEVENTH*

The first performance of Bruckner's *Seventh* in St. Louis, and incidentally the first symphony by the Austrian master given in that city in twenty-seven years, took place on Dec. 1 and 2, 1939, Vladimir Golschmann conducting the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra in a truly enjoyable interpretation. Contrary to the usual expectation of audiences, which have never listened to Bruckner before, not much cared to listen because of prejudicial warnings as to length and dullness, the concert-goers of St. Louis were most pleasantly surprised with the extreme melodiousness of the work. Mr. Golschmann must have felt much encouraged in his praiseworthy efforts to popularize Bruckner's symphonic art. It is to be hoped that as a result of this successful Bruckner revival in that city other symphonies by him will be given in St. Louis in the near future.

Copies of CHORD AND DISCORD are available in the principal public and university libraries in the United States.



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