

ANTON BRUCKNER AND THE APOLLO MARCH FOR BAND

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Throughout this century bands have included two marches by Anton Bruckner (1824-96) in their repertoire of compositions by major nineteenth-century composers: the March in E Flat Major (WAB 116) and the Apollo March (WAB 115).¹ While there is no doubt that Bruckner composed the former work because it survives in an autograph score signed and dated by him, the Apollo March has no such unassailable claim to authenticity.² No autograph materials survive for this piece.³ Its authorship was questioned as early as 1937 by Max Auer who stated that the authenticity of the work was doubtful without giving any reason for his suspicions.⁴ Auer's reservations notwithstanding, more recent Bruckner scholars, such as, Deryck Cooke, Renate Grasberger, Leopold Nowak, Manfred Wagner, and Derek Watson, have continued, albeit with a certain degree of ambivalence in some instances, to include the Apollo March in the corpus of the composer's works.⁵ This paper will reconsider the question of the authorship of the Apollo March from two points of view: 1) since there is no surviving autograph evidence, how did the piece come to be associated with Bruckner; and 2) do the surviving sources contain any information which would confirm that the work is by the composer?

The earliest reference I have been able to find connecting the march with Bruckner is an obituary which appeared in 1897, a year after the composer's death.⁶ Observing that the march survived in a copyist's score only, the author, Heinrich Rietsch, included it in his list of Bruckner's works without any further elaboration. He did not speculate as to a possible date of composition. Five years later Max Graf wrote that Bruckner had composed the Apollo March and the March in E Flat Major for a military band which was stationed in Linz.⁷ He did not give any source for this information and did not suggest a date of composition for the Apollo March. In 1921 Franz Gräßlinger assigned both the E-Flat-Major March and the Apollo March to the year 1860 without any explanation.⁸ Two years after that Max Auer wrote that Bruckner composed both marches in 1865.⁹ Once again no reasons were given. In 1932 in the third volume of the biography begun by August Göllerich, Auer changed his mind, stating that Bruckner wrote the Apollo March in 1862 as an exercise for his composition teacher Otto Kitzler.¹⁰ Auer must not have been entirely confident about this date either because he gave no evidence in support of it and, at the end of the volume, listed the march among Bruckner's undated Linz compositions. He also observed that only a copy score of the piece survived.¹¹ By 1937, as we have seen, he had begun to doubt that the piece was by Bruckner at all. Subsequent studies have added no new information concerning the march. This brief survey of the literature points out two important facts:

¹ Renate Grasberger, *Werkverzeichnis Anton Bruckner (W AB)* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1977), 128-9.

² Austrian National Library (Wn) Mus. H~. 3168 is the autograph of the March in E Flat Major. The signature and date, 12 August 1865, appear on fol. 4v. at the end of the composition. The work is also preserved in Wn Mus. Hs. 6027, a copy score by Bruckner's principal Linz copyist, Franz Schimatschek. The composer signed this manuscript on fol. 1r.

³ Paul Hawkshaw, "The Manuscript Sources for Anton Bruckner's Linz Works" (Ph. D. diss., Columbia University, 1984), 302.

⁴ August Göllerich and Max Auer, *Anton Bruckner: Ein Lebens- und Schaffens-Bild* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1922-37), 4/4:227.

⁵ Deryck Cooke, "Anton Bruckner," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1980), 3:366; Renate Grasberger, *W AB*, 128; Leopold Nowak, *Anton Bruckner: Musik und Leben* (Linz: Rudolf Trauner Verlag, 1973), 293; Manfred Wagner, *Bruckner* (Mainz: B. Schott's Sohne, 1983), 68; and Derek Watson, *Bruckner* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1975), 156. Cooke, Grasberger, and Watson list the work as doubtful; Nowak and Wagner do not.

⁶ Heinrich Rietsch, "Anton Bruckner," *Biographisches Jahrbuch und Deutscher Nekrolog* 1/1896 (Berlin: Reimer Verlag, 1897), 311.

⁷ Max Graf, "Anton Bruckner: Der Entwicklungsgang," *Die Musik* 1 (1901-02):584.

⁸ Franz Gräßlinger, *Anton Bruckner: Sein Leben und seine Werke* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1921), 114.

⁹ Max Auer, *Anton Bruckner: Sein Leben und Werke*, 2nd ed., (Vienna: Musikwissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1934), 109. The first edition appeared in 1923.

¹⁰ Göllerich-Auer, 3/1:144. The 1862 date has been accepted by most subsequent Bruckner biographers.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 658.

1. No references-i.e. programs, newspaper articles, anecdotes, correspondence, etc.-connecting Bruckner in any way with the Apollo March are known to date from the composer's lifetime.
2. Studies written after Bruckner's death have failed to provide a single piece of concrete evidence which would indicate that he composed this work.

Will a fresh look at the musical sources support the attribution of the work to Bruckner?

The piece is preserved in two manuscripts in the Austrian National Library in Vienna: Wn Mus. Hs. 6026, a copy of the full score; and Wn Mus. Hs. 19.682 fol. 1r.-4r., August Stradal's piano two-hand arrangement which was published in the Göllicherich-Auer biography.¹² Stradal's manuscript, which attributes the work to Bruckner on the title page, served as the engraver's copy for the first edition and was dedicated to Max Auer, "President of the International Bruckner Society".¹³ Since the International Bruckner Society only came into being in 1927, Stradal's manuscript could not have been finished until more than thirty years after the composer's death.¹⁴ On that basis alone it must be discounted as a source of irrefutable evidence that Bruckner composed the march. The only surviving musical source which could provide proof that Bruckner composed the Apollo March is the copyist's score Wn Mus. Hs. 6026.

Wn Mus. Hs. 6026 consists of three folios of twenty-line oblong paper measuring approximately 245 X 315 mm. The first page of the score, fol. 1 v., is reproduced in [Plate 1](#). A comparison of the handwriting on this page with the handwriting in [Plate 2](#), a reproduction of fol. 1r. of Wn Mus. Hs. 3168, Bruckner's signed autograph of the March in E Flat Major, reveals that the Apollo March manuscript is not in Bruckner's hand. Compare, for example, the treble and bass clefs and the eighth-note beams.¹⁵ Since the manuscript is not autograph, is there anything in it to confirm the piece is by Bruckner? The answer, quite simply, is no. Neither Bruckner's name or that of any other composer appears anywhere in the source-not on the title page, the first page of the score (as is evident in Plate 1), or at the end of the piece. Nothing in the entire manuscript can be shown to be in Bruckner's hand. Moreover, because the anonymous copyist was not involved in the preparation of any other manuscript of any Bruckner Linz composition, the march cannot be attributed to the composer on the basis of his known association with the copyist.¹⁶

Given that there is no evidence which proves that Bruckner wrote the Apollo March and plenty indicating that he did not, why were the early biographers so willing to attribute the work to him? At this point one can only speculate. One possibility is that they had access to another copy score which allowed them to be more certain of the attribution. A piece of evidence in support of this theory is that Stradal's manuscript, Wn Mus. Hs. 19.682, has some minor discrepancies in dynamics and rhythm from Wn Mus. Hs. 6026, suggesting that he may have had another source from which to make the arrangement. Another possibility is that Wn Mus. Hs. 6026 was in the composer's library when he died and, as a result, the early biographers assumed the piece was by Bruckner even though there was nothing in the manuscript to indicate that. When Bruckner died most of his major autograph scores-symphonies, Masses, etc.-went to the Austrian National Library. Some other materials were distributed to friends, students, and organizations throughout Austria. A substantial body of material was sent to his sister, Rosalie Hueber, whose family eventually sold it to Max Auer.¹⁷ The card catalogue in the Austrian National Library indicates that Auer donated Wn Mus. Hs. 6026 to the library in 1934. It could well have come from Bruckner's library, through the Hueber family to Auer. Because very poor records were kept concerning the distribution of the composer's effects, there is no longer any way to confirm whether Bruckner owned the manuscript.¹⁸

If he did own the manuscript and the piece was not his composition, why would he have had it in his possession? The answer to that question may have something to do with the March in E Flat Major. Robert Haas has already pointed out

¹² Göllicherich-Auer, 3/2:21-25. This volume appeared in 1930. This was the first publication of the Apollo March. The remainder of Wn Mus. Hs. 19.682 contains Stradal's piano two-hand arrangement of the March in E Flat Major.

¹³ The dedication to Auer and the attribution of the work to Bruckner appear on fol. 1r.

¹⁴ Göllicherich-Auer 4/2: 130.

¹⁵ For more details on the appearance, structure, and handwriting in Bruckner's Linz autographs see Hawkshaw, op. cit., 15-76.

¹⁶ Ibid., 356. If the manuscript had been prepared by one of Bruckner's standard Linz copyists-i.e. Franz Schimatschek or Anonymous L1-one would be more inclined to accept the attribution.

¹⁷ Göllicherich-Auer, 4/3:608-10.

¹⁸ Göllicherich-Auer, 4/3:610.

some of the striking similarities between that work and the Apollo March.¹⁹ Both pieces are in E Flat Major; both have a Trio in the subdominant; both are in A B A form with each of the A and B sections divided into two repeated subsections; and, perhaps most important of all, both are scored for the same ensemble. Outside of the completion date of 1865, nothing is known about the circumstances surrounding the composition of the E-Flat-Major March. Is it possible that, in 1865, Bruckner was required, for whatever reason, to produce a march for a specific military ensemble, and the score of the Apollo March served as a model for the March in E Flat Major? Although Bruckner studied the march form with Otto Kitzler in 1862, he may well have needed the model for the instrumentation.²⁰ No other works of his are scored for this particular ensemble.²¹

All of this, of course, is sheer speculation, and we may never know the answers to the questions surrounding the Apollo March. What is clear is that, at the present time, there is no evidence to indicate that Bruckner composed the work.

¹⁹ Robert Haas, Anton Bruckner (Potsdam: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1934), 55.

²⁰ The march was covered early in 1862 as part of the composer's study of two-section song form. Hawkshaw, op. cit. 95.

²¹ There are five other Linz works which call for large wind ensemble: Auf; Briider, auf! Und die Saiten zur Hand (W AB 60), Auf Briider, auf zur frohen Feier (WAR 61), the Festkantate (WAR 16), Germanenzug (WAR 70), and the Mass in E Minor , (WAR 27). In each case the ensemble required is quite different from that of the two marches.