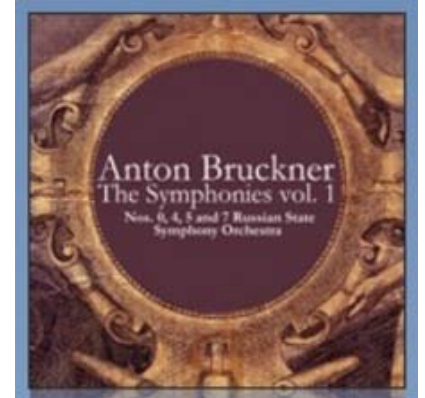


**The Rozhdestvensky Downloads – A Discographic Mess**  
**By John F. Berky**  
**(Updated September 19, 2011)**

Gennadi Rozhdestvensky's Bruckner cycle for Melodiya was an excellent production. Rozhdestvensky's Bruckner is known for its rugged strength. But what made this cycle so special was the inclusion of varying versions of the symphonies. The set was hard to complete on LP due to Melodiya's sporadic distribution and the complete cycle was briefly issued on CD only in Japan as licensed by BMG. The set was issued in 8 individual two-fer cases (16 CDs). A later release on the Russian Venezia label omitted the alternative versions and was offered in a 9 CD boxed set. Venezia then offered the complete multi-version cycle in a two volume set but all of these editions have now been deleted.



It should be noted that the Rozhdestvensky cycle never included the 1887 first version of the Symphony No. 8.

Recently, some of these Rozhdestvensky recordings have become available on I-tunes and Amazon downloads. The price is amazingly cheap (\$5.99 for each of two volumes). But let the buyer beware!

Volume I contains:

Symphony No. 0 'Zeroth'  
Symphony No. 4 'Romantic' (Mahler Orchestration)  
Symphony No. 5 'Tragic'  
Symphony No. 7 'Lyric'

Volume II contains:

Symphony No. 3 'Wagner'  
Symphony No. 6 'Philosophical'  
Symphony No. 8 'Apocalyptic'  
Symphony No. 9 'To God the Beloved'

Recently, the entire two volumes together (along with some organ and choral music) was available all for just \$7.99.

While the Melodiya cycle featured the USSR Ministry of Culture Orchestra, the Symphony No. 3 in this download set is actually an earlier recording by the Moscow Radio & TV Symphony Orchestra. We do not know where all the symphony titles came from, but we have seen a few of them before. The orchestra listed for all the download recordings is the Russian State Symphony Orchestra. Another drawback is that the two volumes do not include all the symphonies. The f minor, and Symphonies 1 and 2 are missing.

But we save the best glitch for last! The Symphony No. 7 in this download set is not the recording that Rozhdestvensky made for Melodiya. The timings:

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do not associate with any known Rozhdestvensky recording. It does however match the timings for the recording by Yonas Alexis and the Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Individual downloads of the Rozhdestvensky recordings are fraught with problems. There are two albums featuring Rozhdestvensky performing the Bruckner 5th. It is the recording of 24 Feb 1984. Those appear to be OK, but there is also an album of the Bruckner 2nd and 3rd symphonies where the cover offers Rozhdestvensky, but the download credits Hans Zanotelli. This is one of the infamous South German Philharmonic recordings often attributed to a Henri Adolph. The Third Symphony is the Rozhdestvensky recording from 1972. There is also an album offering Rozhdestvensky conducting the Bruckner 6th and 7th Symphonies. The cover tells nothing more, but the download says the conductor is Cesare Cantieri (another S. German Phil. recording) The B7 credits the performance to a Marian Bittner (a new name to us!) This recording is actually the one credited on other discs to Yonas Alexis.

My thanks to Ulrich Baukloh who researched these recordings and Sol Siegel who identified the Bruckner 7th.