

## DO WE REALLY NEED A 'PERFORMING VERSION' OF BRUCKNER'S 3<sup>RD</sup> SYMPHONIE?

*(Or, why the 3<sup>rd</sup> Symphony makes us so much trouble.)*

### **Personal Thoughts, about the Score offered.**

Somebody so will ask, when reading the score first. My God, we have so many versions of Bruckner's Symphonies, why do we really need another version? And of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Symphony we already have three versions, being in conflict with each other. What can a further version make better?

Quite a similar thought was presented to the musical world, when in the 1970's; Franz Beyer offered his edition of Mozart's Requiem. But before the Beyer-Version was published, many musicians knew about the great deficiencies of the traditional Süssmayr-Version. When Leopold Nowak published his revised score in the New Mozart Complete Edition, the very first time you could see what Mozart had written and what had been added by Süssmayr and, surprisingly for many, by Joseph Eybler.

Richard Strauss made his mocking commentaries about 'Lacks in Orchestration' and even Bruno Walter would have been happy to have a better orchestrated version. Joseph Krips, Eugen Jochum and some other conductors made some ad-hoc-retouching, but that was all.

Beyer was a complete 'outsider' and brought much wholesome unsteadiness into 'Mozart's wonderful World'. At once we had the usual division into three parts: The practitioners were happy about the improvements, the musicologist partially very sceptical – only a few accepted the work – and the 'salesmen' waited until the right time had come to use 'the right train in time'. The score nowadays is used more and more, for quality always gets through. Leonard Bernstein's use was certainly helpful. The famous conductor became interested in his later years with this version and conducted it several times.

But Bruckner himself had finished his 3<sup>rd</sup> Symphony, contrary to Mozart's Requiem. The different versions need no 'helping hand' for performances, and the final version (1889/90) is well established. But since all versions of the symphony and all original scores of the other works are available, the uneasiness has become great. So concise as are the 4<sup>th</sup> until 8<sup>th</sup> Symphony in their mature form, but no such version of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Symphony appears. Even the 2<sup>nd</sup> version (First Print Version 1878/80) written without the disciple's influence, seems to retain some of the clumsiness, harking back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Symphony and keeps many conductors from performing this score. The finale's main theme, without the horn- and trumpet -fanfares seems to be very pale in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Version. And this fact is valid for the whole symphony: 'Strong parts' follow 'weak parts.' But, when replacing the Last Version's 'weak parts' by similar parts, taken from the First Print, surprisingly you get concise results. Some 'grey veil' falls down from the entire work. The verve of the mature version, together with the clear voice leading of the 'early Bruckner', has some overwhelming force.

In Central Europe, especially in the classical musical countries of Germany and Austria, since 1945 the contact between scientific research and practical making-music, much was feared. But Robert Haas clearly has shown that the past was quite different. He himself was always very interested in performing practice. Musicologists in Anglo-Saxon countries have learned much from emigrants coming from Austria and Germany and remained pragmatically close to musical practice. Hans Ferdinand Redlich, educated in Vienna and naturalized as an

emigrant in Great Britain, suggested in the preface of his new Eulenburg Edition (No.461) of Bruckner's 3<sup>rd</sup> Symphony (Second Print Version 1890), a "7<sup>th</sup> final version". His idea fell on fertile ground and I was quite surprised that necessary compilations were quite easy. But it takes some time to work on a symphony with about 60 to 65 minutes duration and more than 250 pages of score.

But only a few knew: back in 1890, the editors kept the second (First Print) Version for some parts. They made a very wise decision. The Complete Edition printed the 3<sup>rd</sup> Symphony in 1959, before that the 1890 print was used, but as late as 1967 George Szell conducted his famous recording with 'his' wonderful Cleveland Orchestra using this score. Already in 1890 the practitioners of Bruckner must have felt what might be good for his music. But they often were also too busy, forcing Bruckner to make ugly retouchings and cuts. 'Where is much light, there is also much shadow' (Friedrich v. Schiller, German Poet).

For me personally, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Symphony was the first of Bruckner's compositions. I first took notice of it when I was 17. There was a radio broadcast from the Wiener Festwochen with George Szell conducting the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. Beginning from that moment, I no longer could resist that music. During my musical studies I had the good fortune to meet one of his pupils, Wolfgang Edward Rebner. His job was to teach us young Kapellmeister-students score playing and to make with us some Chamber music. Later he became my personal teacher, opening my eyes for many things in music and in daily life; finally he was a close paternal friend until his death in the spring of 1993.

Rebner loved the 3<sup>rd</sup> Symphony more than all other Bruckner Symphonies, regarding this work as the 'first real Bruckner Symphony'; the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> he did not accept. Surprisingly he admired the '0<sup>th</sup> Symphony'. I had interested him in this early work. As an excellent piano player, growing up with classical chamber music (his father Adolph Rebner, had been lead violinist of the Rebner String Quartet at Frankfurt/Main) he was quite sad about the fact 'that throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Romantic musicians could not handle problems of form'. Even Bruckner and his pupils he accused in that way. "*Why didn't his pupils show him how to write a symphony no longer than 45 or 50 minutes? So he might be one of the greatest composers. Nowadays he is only known in Germany and Austria. The retouching was not necessary; the real problem was quite different.*" I often heard these words.

Rebner's contact to Bruckner was also of a very personally nature, and sometimes he told me a story of his father, an infant prodigy. When Adolph played at the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra a performance of the Last Version, he couldn't help laughing during the endless figuration of the violins (1<sup>st</sup> movement) and got a 'Watsch'n' (box on the ear) for his bad manners.

My 'official' teacher in composition, Peter Jona Korn also loved Bruckner, but had less rigorous opinions regarding form. He usually said: "Play Bruckner in the version that is the >best one<." Every single case decides what has to be done and he hated most of the short, illogical cuts, interrupting the 'flow'. Some cuts of the first print of Bruckner's 8<sup>th</sup> Symphony he very rigorously took into task. [For instance only **four** bars before **Uu** finale, bars 671 - 674 (Haas Edition).] He never could understand that the Complete Edition re-introduced that cut again in Nowak's 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. But on the other side he found some cuts logical and made a great cut in Bruckner's 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony (bars 315-354, development finale) not unlike the first print. Also Löwe's cut at the finale of the 4<sup>th</sup> Symphony he accepted and the Andante seemed boring to him and he suggested and even encouraged cuts. He was a really >free spirit<, and nobody could forbid him to have an own opinion.

Already during my musical studies I began to adopt a score of the Last Version, by adding the bars in photocopy that were omitted during the elaboration of 1888/90. Then I wrote some alterations, mostly where the orchestration differed too much from the 1878 First Print. Then I set the work aside. During my summer vacation in 1993, I finally had enough time and leisure to make a 'score for work' of the finale. Those bars I took from the First Print, I took as a photocopy from the Complete Edition, the other bars became written new as inserts. I never did more than Dmitri Shostakovich did in his versions of Mussorgsky's music, regarded usually as 'very close to the original score'. Nearly always I had a good original version from Bruckner himself.

The Editor's Notes (Vorlagenbericht) were written during the summer of 1998 and during that time, I decided to offer some improvements to the other movements. In this intermediate form some parts became copy-printed. The response from conductors and musicologists was quite good. But no orchestral material yet existed. The original planning was as follows: a score of the finale is made, together with all parts. For the other movements we planned to adopt the printed parts of the Second Print (1890 version) and sell as rental material. This idea was still valid when, by computer-based programmes, the score of the new finale was made in good legible form. The nice appearance of the new score was the main reason to make a completely new score by computer. In this way, I could make many improvements and the edition had a professional level and standard. Thanks to modern technologies we happily could produce the work in good quality and at a reasonable cost. The 'Vorlagenbericht' (an English version on preparation) was written anew and reports on what a version I had taken for some parts. The orchestral parts were produced in 2005/2006 and printed by TRIO MUSIK in 2007.

Urs Schneider the well-known Swiss conductor was enthusiastic about this new score – my colleague Karl-Ernst Eschborn had shown him the score during a conductor's workshop – and spontaneously decided to premier it in December of 2007 in Bucharest, together with the 'Filarmonica George Enescu', a first rank orchestra in Rumania.

More than thirty years working with that symphony has come to an end. Now the musical world has to decide how the score becomes accepted. I for my part can insure that, quoting Martin Luther's words, "Thou shalt accept the word of the Lord, but thou shalt not cling to words".

Wiesbaden, October 14<sup>th</sup> 2008.

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NB: This article is found in German and English, at the end of the Study Score (ed. 2005), sold by TRIO MUSIK EDITION. This earlier version is slightly different.

I thank John F. Berky for his help in improving my English version.