

# BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA RETURNS

First Concert of Its Season  
Given in Carnegie  
Hall.

## BRUCKNER SYMPHONY GIVEN

His Ninth Heard for the First Time  
Here—A Suite by Bach and Bee-  
thoven's "Leonore" Overture No. 1.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra returned yesterday to New York, where it has long since ceased to appear as a stranger, and indeed has become one of the indispensable elements of the musical season. It returns again under the direction of Dr. Muck, who has impressed an individual quality of his own upon its performances. It returns also with a larger number of new faces in its ranks than has been the case at the beginning of any other season, but its beauty of tone, its pliancy as an instrument in the hands of its conductor, its skill and finesse in executing his wishes, are as they have ever been. Both the orchestra and Dr. Muck were welcomed with joy by an audience as large as the hall would hold.

It must be confessed that the joy was somewhat sobered by the first piece upon the programme. Dr. Muck returned to the propaganda he made for Anton Bruckner's music last season, when he put the Viennese composer's seventh symphony on one of his programmes, by producing in New York for the first time his ninth, an unfinished work of portentous dimensions. New York has never accepted any of this music with anything like patience; and it has not been for lack of opportunity, in years gone by, to become acquainted with the possibilities that a new and unfamiliar manifestation of art may hold within itself. However it may have seemed once, Bruckner's music has now nothing new, nothing that eludes the grasp of the concert-goer of the present day. It is all too easy to grasp the fact that it is, on the whole, a dull, uninspired groping after something that the composer was ambitious to attain but had not the power to.

He had the power to write for the orchestra in a sonorous and immediately imposing style—a power that many learn nowadays in almost an equal measure. He had at times ideas grandiose, pathetic, or vigorous; but they mostly fall sterile, because he had not the power to bring them to any issue, to develop them in any sustained flight of eloquence or charm. This minute symphony is an epitome of his impotence as a composer of symphonic music. There are themes of ponderous weight and imposing promise; the adagio opens with one of true significance and a certain nobility; but once they are stated, the composer is at once in a dilemma.

He goes on at the inordinate length which seems to be an indispensable part of his message; but nothing happens to hold the listener's attention or to satisfy his longing for some logical outcome. Phrases are carried through long strings of progressions like beads strung upon a necklace, with a total lack of connection except that of mere juxtaposition. They are reiterated with all the emphasis that the brass, reinforced by Wagner's tubas, can give; they are piled above long organ-points. They are put together like the pieces of a Chinese puzzle; but when the long task is done the result is no more inspiring or worth the doing than such a puzzle. The utterly arid results of all this are forcibly demonstrated in the two long slow movements of the symphony. The scherzo between them affords a certain relief, in its aerial lightness of orchestration, which is skillfully devised to give a factitious interest to ideas in themselves of little real value.

Bruckner is credited with an ambition to embody in symphonic music the principles upon which Wagner worked. What that may mean has never yet been satisfactorily explained, since Wagner's principles are concerned with the relation between the music and the action upon the stage in the lyric drama. Bruckner, like many another, has learned much from Wagner's orchestration. He has appropriated, with rather more effrontery than most, Wagner's actual property in musical ideas; witness in this last adagio some very obvious helpings from "Eine Faust Overture." It was his fortune, or misfortune, to be played off against Brahms, the great representative of modern symphonic art, as a champion of the Wagnerian side. But those squabbles have to-day only a historical interest; and the peasant composer cuts a pitiable figure to-day in the suggestion of any such comparison. His symphony was superbly played; nothing that Dr. Muck's devotion could do for it was left undone, and all its interminable length was expounded with anxious care and unflagging enthusiasm. The audience listened with amazing patience and attention, but the rustle of applause after the movements was but politeness toward Dr. Muck and his men.

There was refreshment then in two classical works little known: Bach's orchestral suite in B minor for strings and flute, and Beethoven's "Leonore" overture, No. 1. Bach's suite was played with splendid muscularity and vigor, with delicacy and poetical feeling—not, it may be said, with absolute perfection of ensemble. Mr. Maquarre, the first flautist of the orchestra, played the flute part delightfully, which has practically the dignity and importance of a solo, and which is of entrancing color against the hushed strings. The "Leonore" overture, lacking though it does the superb dramatic sweep of its younger brother, the third, is yet a piece of the truest Beethovenian eloquence, and it was heard with satisfaction.