

The “SPCM” Finale of Bruckner’s Ninth Redux: Revision 2021–2022

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On 30 November of this year, the London Philharmonic, under conductor Robin Ticciati, will premiere the latest revision of the Performing Version of the Finale of the Bruckner Ninth Symphony by Nicola Samale, John A. Phillips, Benjamin-Gunnar Cohrs and Giuseppe Mazzuca, often referred to as the “SPCM” Finale (<https://tickets.lpo.org.uk/events/122320>). Last published in 2012, this score was performed the same year in Berlin and New York by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Simon Rattle, and released by EMI to great commercial and critical success.

Despite the credibility and success of this score, this particular member of its editorial team remained dissatisfied with aspects of it. The purpose of this article will be to put on the record (yet again) what exactly the surviving MSS of the Finale represent, how a credible reconstruction and completion of the movement can be achieved, and, indeed, why we should do so. It reminds readers of the exhaustive scholarship underlying the SPCM performing version and introduce this, its latest revision (2021–2022), the culmination of over thirty years of my personal engagement with the work, and to explain its re-assessment of Bruckner’s late sketches for the coda, now included in their entirety for the first time. The score of this revision is available as pdf and in print, and can be heard in midi realisation accompanying the scrolling orchestral score on YouTube, <https://youtu.be/WGnoOhHLWUE>

What exists for the Finale of the Ninth, and what do its MSS represent?

As it stood by the time of Anton Bruckner’s death, the orchestral score of the Finale of the Ninth Symphony was neither sketch nor draft but a highly advanced *Autograph im Entstehen*, an emergent autograph that, tragically, was dismembered by souvenir hunters after its composer’s death. Today, the manuscripts of the Ninth Symphony, scattered all over the world, can be found in seven libraries under more than thirty separate library signatures, as well as in private possession. A number of the missing pages for the Finale have found their way into official holdings; others remain lost or inaccessible, in private ownership (we know of some of them).

Of the extant 1100 pages for the whole Ninth, including the full score of the first three movements, almost half, some 490 pages of sketches, drafts and score bifolios, survive for the Finale, almost half, demonstrating the extraordinary care Bruckner lavished on the composition of this movement. Careful examination reveals that at least nine of the score’s sequentially numbered ‘bifolios’ (four-page double sheets) that made up Bruckner’s orchestral score of the movement are missing. The extant bifolios extend as far as a bifolio “32”, almost the end of the movement’s reprise; Bruckner had probably brought the composition at least this far some six months before his death (11 October 1896). A carefully dated set of sketches survive from May of that year which refer to a “bifolio 36” and represent a very credible draft for the movement’s coda.

This fourth movement was in no way an afterthought but an integral part of the conception of the symphony from the outset. Its ubiquitous zig-zag, double-dotted motives turn up amongst the earliest sketches for the symphony dated August 1887, almost eight years before Bruckner finally embarked on its actual composition. Indeed, the thematic material of the Finale inextricably links it with the other movements of the Ninth. The tremendous chorale theme which represents the third subject of the Finale (letter G of the SPCM score) is in fact “foreshadowed” in various guises in each of the preceding movements, then emerges most obviously, at letter B of the Adagio, in the sorrowful guise Bruckner referred to as his “*Abschied vom Leben*”, his farewell to life (**Ex. 1a**). Subsequent transformations of this theme, at letter L of the Adagio (**b**) and 4 bars later (**c**), bring it progressively closer to the monumental form it takes on in the Finale (**d**).

Ex. 1. The chorale “Abschied vom Leben” chorale (a, b, c) in the Adagio, and (d) Finale

The image displays a musical score for four variations of a chorale theme. Variation (a) is for Horns and tubas, marked *f*. Variation (b) is for Strings, marked *f*. Variation (c) is also for Strings, marked *f*. Variation (d) is for Violins (8ve) and Horns, marked *ff*. The score includes dynamic markings, articulation marks, and a section labeled '(inversion)' for the Horns in variation (d).

The enigmatic tritone sequences which open the Finale were similarly foreshadowed in the coda of the Adagio (letter V), while the brass entry, in D major, at bar 5 of the Adagio (which movement is in E major) was probably intended to foreshadow the “Halleluja” with which Bruckner intended the symphony to conclude: His 1892 setting of *Psalm 150* accompanies its opening exclamation of “Halleluja!” with a string motive closely resembling this trumpet theme (**Ex. 2**).

Ex. 2. “Halleluja” theme: (a) Adagio, bar 5; (b) Psalm 150; (c) likely intended form in Finale, letter Z of the SPCM score

The image shows three musical excerpts labeled a, b, and c. Excerpt (a) is for 'f Strings, brass' and shows a melodic line with a tritone interval. Excerpt (b) is for 'ff Strings' and shows a similar melodic line. Excerpt (c) is for 'fff Tutti' and shows the 'Hal-le-lu-ja!' text under a melodic line. The notation includes clefs, key signatures, and dynamic markings.

In a more general way, the profoundly beautiful chromatic harmony of Bruckner’s 1892 *Vexilla regis* similarly reveals striking anticipations of the Finale chorale, while his other late, commissioned choral works *Helgoland*, WAB 71, and *Das Deutsche Lied* (or *Der Deutsche Gesang*), WAB 63, inhabit similar harmonic and hermeneutic realms. The Finale of the Ninth was the intended endpoint of a long, elaborate set of foreshadowings and anticipations.

Bruckner was so convinced of the need for a fourth movement for the Ninth that he specified the use of his *Te Deum*, WAB 45, composed 1881–84, as an ersatz conclusion should he not complete the instrumental movement. He also at one stage considered using what at the time was the incomplete torso of the Finale as a transition to this choral work. But he persevered with the instrumental movement; by the spring of 1896, its continuity revised many times over, the Finale had arrived at its definitive form, its exposition fully scored, the remainder of the movement in a minimum of string score, in ink, the essential wind entries notated in ink and pencil.

All of this was established almost thirty years ago now by two volumes on the Finale of the Ninth Symphony edited by the writer and published in the 1990s by Musikwissenschaftlicher Verlag, Vienna, in its authoritative *Anton Bruckner Gesamtausgabe*: the *Rekonstruktion der Autograph-Partitur nach den erhaltenen Quellen* (Reconstruction of the Autograph Score from the Surviving Sources, hereinafter referred to as “AS”, 1994, 1999) and *Faksimile-Ausgabe sämtlicher Autographen Notenseiten* (Facsimile Edition of All Autograph Manuscripts, hereinafter “FE”, 1996). These were followed in 1999 by the *Dokumentation des Fragments*, a performing score presenting *solely* the extant fragments of the Finale, and accompanied by multiple scholarly articles, in both English and German, and my doctoral dissertation, *Bruckner’s Ninth Revisited: Towards the re-evaluation of a four-movement symphony* (2002), which can be googled and freely downloaded online. This comprehensive study included detailed investigation of Bruckner’s compositional methods, his harmony, counterpoint, and the role of an all-encompassing *Mutationsverfahren* or mutation process in his late style, perspectives that provided multiple paths by which restoration of the Finale’s musical continuity and completion of its compositional textures could be systematically undertaken and corroborated. It also investigated the reception history of the Ninth Symphony, revealing why and how its Finale came to be excluded from the sort of canonical prestige accorded its first three movements.

The one performing version of the Finale to accurately and comprehensively bear out the philological and other insights presented by these publications, the “SPCM” performing version of the Finale, has been the product of an enduring international collaboration between Italian composer and conductor Nicola Samale, his late colleague Giuseppe Mazzuca, our German colleague Dr Benjamin-Gunnar Cohrs and myself. Begun in 1983 and last published in 2012, this score was the practical embodiment of the meticulous investigation of the hundreds of pages of surviving manuscript sources, stylistic analyses, and associated primary and secondary literature by a team of specialist musicologists, conductors and composers who remained engaged with the project for decades.

Together with the research published in the Bruckner Complete Edition, performances of the SPCM decisively shifted the official status of the movement, establishing the viability and credibility of performing a four-movement Ninth as its composer intended. My reconstruction of Bruckner’s autograph score would be independently endorsed and at two points amended in the later doctoral thesis of my colleague Benjamin-Gunnar Cohrs, *Das Finale der Neunten Sinfonie von Anton Bruckner* (= *Wiener Bruckner Studien 3*), published Vienna, 2012.

Increasingly detailed commentaries have accompanied the progressive revisions of the SPCM over the course of its long evolution. Brought out in 2012 by Höflich, Munich, the last published edition of the SPCM score, edited by Cohrs, was intended to be definitive, and included many thousand words of detailed commentary on the completion of the score in German and English. While the SPCM Finale had by now been

performed and documented in numerous concerts and recordings since 1986, 2012 also saw the landmark performances and recording of the work by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Simon Rattle.

Why A Finale?

Since the Finale originally existed as a highly organised, integral movement, any approach to its reconstruction or completion should be foremost via what could be termed “forensic musicology” – by using every possible scholarly resource to reconstruct it as accurately and faithfully as possible, rather than by what musicologist Peter Gülke once referred to as “*drauflosbrucknern*”, treating the fragments as an opportunity for historical composition à la Bruckner. A more ethical attitude to a composer’s legacy and to a work of this stature is needed. We in fact know an enormous amount about the various stages by which this score emerged and what it would have looked like by the time of its composer’s death. That naturally begs the question: Assuming we are prepared to be as faithful as possible to what remains, would Bruckner have wanted us to complete and perform it?

The answer to that question, I believe, is an unequivocal yes. We have already seen the immense importance Bruckner attached to his conception of the work. Bruckner was also a pragmatist. He accepted that his original autographs would be “arranged” for performance; he accepted that, in his own time, his works would rarely be performed without cuts and that conductors would make their own changes to his instrumentation, which was in many ways out of step with contemporary aesthetics. As late as 1895, a copy of the first movement of the Ninth made by his secretary Anton Meißner was loaned to Joseph Schalk for the purposes of “arrangement”. The composer even marked cuts in the Finale score himself, aware that its intended length might prove too great. While we have no need of them today, they serve to demonstrate how definitive was the nature of its formal design. Bruckner accepted that his original scores were for a later time and for a “circle of friends and connoisseurs”. And for precisely that reason he took the significant step of willing his autographs to what is now the Austrian National Library.

It took forty years of often acrimonious debate before Bruckner’s original scores finally supplanted the first-edition arrangements in the concert hall. The Finale MSS had meanwhile been scattered to the four winds. What remained of them in Bruckner’s estate, after the “swoop of vultures” (as Bruckner’s doctor Richard Heller referred to it) that followed his death, were entrusted to Joseph Schalk and passed into official custody only in the late 1930s. Virtually nothing was known of them until their publication by Alfred Orel in 1934. By this time, the first three movements had long become accepted and beloved. Tasked with “selling” an unfinished symphony in three movements, Löwe, in the preface to his heavily altered first edition of 1903, dismissed the Finale as “vague sketches”, “too ambiguous to permit us to establish what was intended”, claiming that “the first three movements were perfectly capable of functioning as an artistic whole”. Bruckner, who worked ceaselessly for the last 18 months of his life on the Finale, leaving it largely complete months before his death, would have begged to differ.

So the myth of a sublimely incomplete, but perfect-in-itself, three-movement Ninth entered the world. It negated Bruckner’s own conception of a work he spoke of as a “Homage to Divine Majesty”, dedicated to God and intended to end not with a gentle “farewell to life” but with its Finale’s at times terrifying, Dantesque journey through Purgatory, its apotheosis a “song of praise to the dear Lord” that was to crown his greatest symphonic coda. In three movements the Ninth is no less unfinished; it is actually more unfinished – and less authentic – than if we include the Finale, since we are otherwise denying Bruckner, and ourselves, of what was an integral part of the work’s conception. The Finale can, and should, be part of any performance of the Ninth that claims to honour its composer’s intentions, rather than perpetuating a performance tradition that was founded on outright misinformation.

Its Compositional Genesis

Shortly before completing the Adagio of the Ninth, on 30 November 1894, Bruckner fell ill with severe pleurisy and later pneumonia, necessitating months of bed rest. A note in his calendar, “24. Mai 895. 1.mal, Finale, neue Scitze” probably indicated the start of composition. Not long after the notation of the initial *particello* or short-score sketches, Bruckner began transferring this material into full score, as usual, notated on sequentially numbered bifolios, mostly pre-ruled into sixteen bars with the instrumentation listed in the left margin, partly by his amanuensis Anton Meißner.

This orchestral score, originally continuous and definitive, extended at least as far as the coda, for which sketches most certainly exist. The *particello* or short-score sketches both preceded and accompanied the compilation of the orchestral score, along with multiple *Satzverlaufsentwürfe* or continuity drafts – ruled-up bifolios used to draft the melodic and/or harmonic outline of orchestral bifolios but which never advanced beyond the notation of one or two staves. The score was heavily revised, multiple versions existing for several

bifolios: Bruckner had probably completely scored the exposition and much of the development section, with some of the fully scored bifolios even noted by him, in the lower margin of their last pages, as “*fertig*” – finished (FE 176, 180, 192, 196, 200). No composer bothers to do this with a draft. A cover bifolio exists (FE 328) in which Bruckner set aside the first 12 bifolios of the score, the exposition section, which by that time must have been finalised. The rest of the movement, its development through to the end of its reprise, lay in a minimum of string score, in ink, with indications of significant wind entries that were in the process of being worked up into full instrumentation – Bruckner’s usual working methods.

Bruckner left few dates in the Finale materials. That of 12 December 1895 is found on a later-discarded bifolio for the fugue (17^dD, FE 269), revealing that Bruckner had arrived at what is roughly the middle of the movement by the end of that year. This makes it very reasonable to believe he could have composed as far as the end of the reprise, a section requiring far fewer drafts, by the spring of 1896. At about the same time a report appeared in journals in Linz and Vienna according to which Bruckner had “completely sketched the concluding movement of his IXth Symphony”.

Then, in what was obviously a finalisation of the score, Bruckner split up what by now was a very crowded, and near illegible, 36-bar bifolio 2F (FE 131) into new bifolios, “2”E and “3”E (FE 135, 239), and the first two bars of a lost [“4”], necessitating the renumbering, by one higher, of the final, valid versions of all ensuing bifolios. Nothing about this process suggests the score was by this point in any way draft or fragment; it must by now have been definitive, at least up until the coda and probably well into it.

Bruckner certainly continued to work on the Finale but, since no further orchestral bifolios survive beyond 31E/“32”, we cannot know how much of the later sketches came to be transferred into score. However, the clear harmonic design and intricate counterpoint of this last extant bifolio (cf. bar 529 of the SPCM score) is itself remarkable: it decisively counters the notion that Bruckner, at least by this point in time, was suffering from any kind of mental decline. A 28-bar sketch for a passage most likely intended to begin the coda survives (AS 138, FE 6, letter W); this was initially explored as a beginning of the second section of the movement (FE 13), but later revised and extended. It represents precisely the kind of mysterious, ritual circling with which Bruckner so often began his codas. It most likely led into a final chorale statement. Bruckner included a uniquely harmonised quotation of the chorale in the course of the reprise of the second subject or *Gesangsperiode* (bars 441–4), that has all the hallmarks of prefiguring a later event in the movement. Then, on the back page of the last of his coda sketches from May 1896 (AS 140, FE 46), Bruckner noted down what were probably the last four bars of the chorale statement, diverging from the reprise harmonisation but confirming that it must, indeed, have played a role in the coda. These 28+8 bars would have advanced the score as far as a bifolio 35/“36” (SPCM, letters W–X).

Then, on three pages, meticulously dated, as though of great significance, between 19th and 23rd of May, Bruckner drafted the metrical structure and harmonic continuity of the rest of the movement. A marginal note on the first of these refers to “bifolio 36”, the location in the score where the sequence would begin. To anyone familiar with the unique harmonic character of the Ninth these drafts are an epiphany, and will be discussed latter. A significant later revision of the score has come down to us: Dated 11 August 1896, Bruckner expanded a pre-existing, now lost bifolio [12/“13”] onto two continuity-draft bifolios, a “13a” and “b” (FE 217, 221, SPCM score letter J). These extended the passage of near stasis typical for the beginning of Bruckner’s development sections, and in so doing may have been intended to link the *Te Deum* motive just introduced with an allusion (oboes at bar 217) to the Easter hymn “*Christ ist erstanden*” that Bruckner had meanwhile incorporated into the reprise of the movement, in A minor, on the last page of bifolio 26F/“27”, and which, was probably repeated, transposed back into its original key of D minor, on a lost bifolio [27/“28”] (SPCM bar 453), **Ex. 3**, where its final note, a¹ would have represented the last note of a cut that begins on the preceding bifolio; we will return to this point later.

Ex. 3. Bruckner’s “Christ ist erstanden” allusions in the Finale: (a) his late revision to the development (SPCM bar 199); (b) his allusion in the reprise (SPCM bar 453); (c) use in the ‘correct’ key of D minor in the reconstruction of bifolio [27/“28”] (SPCM bar 473); and (d) the 12th-century German liturgical song, cf. the two motives used by Bruckner.

The image displays four musical staves, labeled (a) through (d), illustrating Bruckner's allusions to the Easter hymn "Christ ist erstanden".

- (a) Te Deum motive in augmentation:** Shows the Clarinet (Clars.) and Trombone (Tromb.) parts. The Clarinet part is marked with a forte dynamic (f) and includes a measure number of (199). The Trombone part is marked with a forte dynamic (f) and includes a measure number of (199). The text "Te Deum motive" and "Te Deum augm." are present.
- (b) Christ ist erstanden allusion:** Shows the Oboe (Ob.) part. The text "Christ ist erstanden allusion" and "Te Deum augm. = Christ ist erstanden allusion" are present. The measure number (211) is indicated.
- (c) Christ ist erstanden in D minor:** Shows the Violins part. The text "Christ ist erstanden in D minor" and "Christ ist erstanden" are present. The measure number (473) is indicated.
- (d) Christ ist erstanden, 12th c. German liturgical song:** Shows the Trombone (Tromb.) part. The text "Christ ist erstanden, 12th c. German liturgical song" and "ff Tutti" are present. The measure number (473) is indicated.

This 12th-century Easter hymn, related to both plainsong *Victimae paschali laudes* and Lutheran chorale “*Christ lag in Todesbanden*”, was apparently of great significance to the composer, who even stated to friends that, had he intended to conclude his Ninth with a *choral* finale, he would have based it on this hymn. And not without significance: the text of “*Christ ist erstanden*” features a threefold repetition of the word “Alleluja”.

Such far-sighted attention to subtle, long-term details suggests anything but intellectual senescence. While Bruckner suffered a further bout of pneumonia in July 1896, and the multiple, almost frenzied renumberings on some of the later bifolios may indeed confirm reports of mental decline in his last months, it is impossible to claim that the vast bulk of the Finale score, even the coda drafts of May 1896, are anything but the work of a musical genius, despite their evident struggle with failing handwriting, dramatically betraying the advancing diabetes and atherosclerosis from which he suffered.

The Movement Itself

What remains of this score, after the depredations of its catastrophic provenance, reveals a highly original, complex and powerful movement that masterfully concludes the formal and hermeneutic arc of the Ninth Symphony, fusing the dictates of Bruckner’s characteristic symphonic sonata form (exposition with three theme groups, development, reprise and coda) with what can only be imperfectly referred to as ‘programmatic elements’. These are a majestic chorale, and a four-note motive Bruckner borrowed from the string figuration of his *Te Deum*, in music-rhetorical terms, a symbol of the cross, and thus, arguably, of religious faith. After all, Bruckner dedicated the Ninth to “the dear Lord” as a “Homage to Divine Majesty”. Devout Catholic that he was, the “farewell to life” represented by the Adagio could not be an endpoint; the journey of the Christian soul continued, through Purgatory, to end in Glory. Even if it had to be his *Te Deum*, a movement must follow the Adagio “in order that the symphony “end with a song of praise to the dear Lord to whom I owe so much”.

While Bruckner’s formal scheme needs no extra-musical explanation to justify it, this ‘program’ serves to explain much that is strange about the Finale. A table summarising the movement’s formal elements, which are clearly apparent from the extant materials, has been given here:

Formal Overview of the 2021–22 Revision of the ‘SPCM’ Performing Version (1983–2012) of the Bruckner Ninth Finale

Bruckner’s sonata-form terminology has been included in quotation marks.
Bar numbers are consistent with those of the 2012 SPCM score as far as bar 588.

Bar Numbers	No. of Bars	Formal Components
“1. TEIL”: EXPOSITION (206 bars)		
1–42	42	Principal theme group Opening tritone sequence & crescendo
43–74	32	
75–122	48	“Gesangsperiode” (2 nd -subject group, motivically related to Hauptthema) 93: “Trio” in F \sharp major
123–128	6	
129–154	26	Transition “Schlußperiode” (closing group) Ascending harmonic sequence, leading to: Chorale, accompanied by triplet figuration
155–206	52	
191: climax & diminuendo over chorale bass line 199 (anticipation) & 203 entry of <i>Te Deum</i> motive		
“2. TEIL”: (i) DEVELOPMENT (90 bars)		
207–242	36	a. Development of principal group with <i>Te Deum</i> motive, beginning passacaglia-like over chromatised chorale fragment, extending into longer chromatic descent
243–250	8	b. 1 st inversion of opening tritone sequence
251–266	16	c. Development of <i>Te Deum</i> motive over chorale-related progression
267–276	10	d. 2 nd inversion of opening tritone sequence
277–296	20	e. Development of Gesangsperiode material
(ii) REPRIS (264 bars)		
297–316	20	Reprise of principal group: Fugal exposition, subject derived from the principal theme 1 st fugal episode (3+3+3 bars) 2 nd fugal episode (6+6+4 bars)
317–325	9	
326–341	16	Climax of fugue in C \sharp minor (3+3+3 bars) Crescendo using motoric quaver figuration
342–364	9	
365–396	32	Climax: horn theme in G \sharp major; transition Reprise of Gesangsperiode, developing lyrical motive from bar 85
397–402	20	
403–460	58	419: “Trio” in F \sharp major 441: four-bar statement of chorale in C \sharp major 453: four-bar quotation of “Christ ist erstanden” in A minor
461–472	12	Chorale incipit combined with self-diminution & dotted rhythm; crescendo “Christ ist erstanden” restatement in D minor
473–476	4	
477–494	18	Reprise of Schlußperiode. Resumption of triplet figuration; transition to: Chorale, with <i>Te Deum</i> motive in quavers, at 523 returning to triplet figuration
495–538	44	
539–554	16	Horn theme restated, leading into: Entry of IX/1 “Hauptthema” (principal theme of first movement)
555–560	6	
(iii) CODA (89 bars)		
561–588	28	a. Introductory crescendo (AS 138) b. Chorale in D major referencing bars 441–4 and May 1896 sketch (AS 142)
589–596	8	
597–604	8	c. 1 st sketch of May 1896: Ascending harmonic sequence (AS 139) d. 2 nd sketch: G \sharp Fm6 F \sharp Es6 (AS 140): IX/1 Hauptthema combined with IX/4 motives
605–612	8	
613–628	16	e. 3 rd sketch: C \sharp F A \sharp (AS 141), continuing combination of IX/1 and IX/4 motives f. Arrival on D (last 8 bars of 3 rd sketch): “Halleluja” theme in trumpets (cf. Adagio, bar 5), <i>Te Deum</i> motive in multiple variants
629–649	21	
641: Halleluja theme in tubas, bassoons; strings reference original texture of <i>Te Deum</i> 645: Triplet fanfare in trumpets over final augmentation of <i>Te Deum</i> motive in horns		

The SPCM score includes references to the bifolios of Bruckner's score and corresponding sources (both Autograph Score and Facsimile Edition), as well as noting other significant features in the lower margin, underneath Bruckner's metrical numbers. The 2012 edition also contained a far more detailed commentary – many thousands of words – on the reconstruction and completion of the score than space allows for here.

Prefigured in the coda of the Adagio (see letter V thereof), the tritone progressions which open the Finale suggest a mysterious, other-worldly realm, as if we are no longer on earth (**Ex. 4**).

Ex 4. Opening of the Finale (SPCM score, reconstruction of a lost, later bifolio [1])

These enigmatic, sequentially repeating tritone progressions are the closest Bruckner ever came to atonality. Obsessively repeating the double dotted rhythm that will characterise the entire movement, a single, zig-zag motive (letter A) builds into an overwhelming, bombastic statement of the elemental principal subject, an encounter with the minatory power of the Divine (**Ex. 5**).

Ex. 5. Principal theme (SPCM, letter B)

This theme is scarcely what one could call music: its dotted rhythm, falling sixth/rising fourth is nothing more than musical DNA extrapolated at multiple levels of sequence, the quality of *self-similarity* characteristic of fractal structures in nature and mathematics – an apt representation of God! It rapidly transitions into an elegiac brass chorale that foreshadows much of what is to come. The desolation of the usually lyrical “*Gesangsperiode*”, as Bruckner termed his second-subject groups, seems to express the abnegation of the soul at such a terrifying confrontation (**Ex. 6a**), to which is added a brief motive that will later come to prominence in the development (**b**). This is followed by a more lyrical passage the editors referred to as the “Trio” (**c**), perhaps suggesting the recall of more comforting memories.

Ex. 6. *Gesangsperiode* elements (SPCM, letters C, D)

The music becomes troubled again and Bruckner commences a second build up (letter F): the magnificent brass chorale that now breaks forth (letter G), music-rhetorically a *katabasis*, is both Divine Majesty itself and the act of homage, of genuflection, before it (**Ex. 1c**, above). In his masses and motets Bruckner often sets references to Christ in sharp keys (a sharp is a Kreuz, or cross, in German) – perhaps the case here.

All too soon this glorious vision collapses in the most catastrophic passage in all Bruckner (letter H). The four-note motive Bruckner borrowed from his *Te Deum* now appears, talisman-like, in the flute (bar 203, preceded by its stealthy pre-augmentation in the clarinets, bar 199; **Ex. 3a**). The development that follows is superbly composed, combining this new, endlessly mutable motive with both principal-subject and chorale elements (J, K). This is followed by a shorter development of the *Gesangsperiode* material (L).

Heralded by a strident dissonance and trumpet fanfare, the principal subject now returns as a daring fugue (M; **Ex. 8**).

Ex. 8. Principal theme reprised as fugue (SPCM, letter M)

The three ensuing episodes of this fugue (letter N) rise to another towering climax, followed by a chase-like further development of the principal material (O). At one point this recalls the “*Aeterna fac*” section of Bruckner’s *Te Deum* (SPCM bar 375) shortly before the arrival of a new, victorious motive in the horns in Gb major (SPCM, letter P, **Ex. 9a**). This motive is strikingly similar to Bruckner’s mutation, in the coda of the first movement (bar 539 thereof) of the last phrase of the principal theme of that movement (**Ex. 9b**).

Ex. 9a. Horn theme following the fugue (SPCM, letter P); 9b its foreshadowed in coda of first movement (bar 539 thereof).

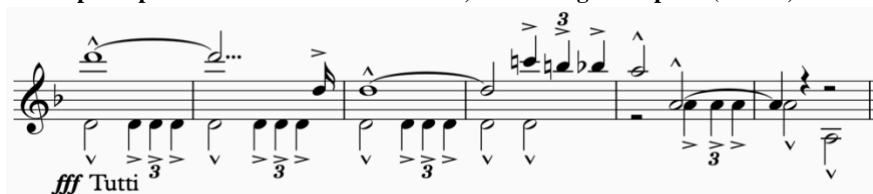


This vision again breaks off in an echoing void. The reprise of the *Gesangsperiode* and its Trio follows (Q, R), during the latter part of which Bruckner makes two pointed musical allusions: firstly, to the chorale (bar 441), probably foreshadowing the form this theme was to take in the coda (**Ex. 14b, d**), and shortly thereafter (457), to the melody of “*Christ ist erstanden*” (see **Ex. 3b** and **c**).

Following a sublime crescendo combining the variant of the chorale he had just introduced with a diminution of itself (bar 461), Bruckner cadences into D minor for the first time since the opening of the fugue; this is apparent from a lengthy sketch that fortunately allowed us to reconstruct missing bifolio [27/“28”]. Based on a clue provided by a cut, or “vi-de” marking, the editors understood that a second, *ff* statement of “*Christ ist erstanden*” followed here, this time in D minor – its and the symphony’s home key. The final note of this statement, a” (at letter T), must have represented the endpoint of a cut from bar 453 and resumption of the triplet figuration found on the next extant bifolio.

The chorale follows (U), now in D major and, at last, united with the *Te Deum* motive (**Ex. 14c**, below): we are coming home at last. The chorale now terminates (V) in a majestic restatement of the horn theme first introduced following the fugue (**Ex. 10a**). With its foreshadowing in the coda of the first movement (**Ex. 9b**), falling minims and crotchet triplets, it may have been intentionally engineered to lead into the recall of the principal subject of the first movement (SPCM bar 555, **Ex. 10**), Bruckner’s procedure at this point in most of his later Finales.

Ex. 10. Restatement of the principal theme of the first movement, concluding the reprise (SPCM, bar 555)



Reference has already been made to the sources for the movement’s coda; its reconstruction will be described in detail below.

Bruckner’s Compositional Process

Can the Finale be completed? Yes. Most clues are supplied by the highly organised formal structure of the movement itself. The continuity of most of the missing bifolios, given that we know their usual length (16 bars) and can therefore reconstruct their metrical scheme from the surrounding bifolios, can be restored with a high degree of certainty from the corresponding particello sketches. Even the metrical structure and harmonic outline of the coda, for which no further score bifolios are extant, survives virtually in its entirety as draft. Given comprehensive knowledge of Bruckner’s working methods, the skill and stylistic discernment to replicate his voice-leading, counterpoint and orchestration (no small feat), even a very defensible completion of the coda is feasible.

Bruckner understood music as a “*Wissenschaft*” – a science. There is probably no composer since the time of Bach whose creative practice was more profoundly informed by theoretical insights, or who composed in a more “logical” fashion. That logic makes his steps retraceable in a way that with other composers is scarcely possible. Bruckner did not merely pass on the Viennese fundamental bass theory of his teacher Simon Sechter: he actively expanded it, adding, for example, ninths (five-note chords) to the triads and sevenths Sechter regarded as the *Stammakkorde* or essential chords of music. Bruckner’s late works, especially the Ninth, his most dissonant, boldly explore the expressive possibilities of not only ninths, but elevenths and thirteenthths. Bruckner even mentioned to his theory students in his final lectures at the University of Vienna the chords he

was using in his Ninth. Its towering dissonances are not wilful conglomerations of notes but the expressive exploitation of the theoretical possibilities of Viennese fundamental bass theory, translating theoretical speculation into compositional resource. While unquestionably indebted to Wagner, Bruckner's advanced harmonic thinking, even in the Ninth, remains analysable by Sechter's fundamental bass steps. Even the metrical periods underlying phrase structures (an important aspect of Sechter's thinking) formed an indissoluble part of Bruckner's theoretical contemplation of musical process; it is from this that the majestic, measured flow of his music derives. While yielding essential information for the reconstruction, the metrical numbers with which Bruckner underlaid every single bar of his sketches and scores reveal their placement within these metrical grids. In a standard eight-bar period, first and fifth bars carry most, third and seventh less, and even-numbered bars least weight.

Bruckner had also, by the time he conceived his late works, developed a strikingly individual compositional method that inextricably, but with profound compositional logic, knit thematic statement together with subsequent development as well as theme with accompanying texture in a single, organic process. This also furnished important clues for the reconstruction of compositional continuity and instrumentation. Even within the course of a thematic statement, motives succeed one another endlessly, gradually transforming as they do so, and often via identifiable contrapuntal procedures, such as the inversion, diminution, augmentation or intervallic variation of a motive, or its reduction to rhythm. Bruckner would have absorbed this process from his grounding in Baroque counterpoint and his own (as he himself admitted) "obsessive tendency" to use imitation wherever possible, and hence generate entire orchestral textures via this means.

As a result, everything becomes functional in the late works, everything is in a constant process of "becoming". Themes are often foreshadowed or alluded to before being outright stated, then continue developing themselves as they proceed. The opening of the Adagio furnishes a good example: the likely "Halleluja" phrase itself that we have already referred to (bar 5), is placed into prominence by the entry of the brass, but it emerges out of the same melodic shape and rhythm as bars 2 and 4, and is followed by a further variant in bar 6 (**Ex. 11**).

Ex. 11. Opening of the Adagio, bars 1–7, the progressive mutation of a single motive

First elucidated by musicologist Werner F. Korte in 1963, the *Mutationsverfahren* or mutation process had been virtually perfected by the time Bruckner composed the Ninth, dominating, perhaps more intuitively, the initial process of composition as well as subsequent, more conscious processes of textural completion, refinement and revision.

Finally, in what is itself a logical outworking of this compositional approach, Bruckner's instrumentation has a consistency, let one not say predictability, about it that readily enables comparison between analogous textures in his completed scores or fully scored passages of the Finale, and unfinished ones. This *Analogverfahren* was an important resource for the SPCM editors.

To summarise: We know an enormous amount about Bruckner's compositional technique. We know, most of all, that his music was deeply anchored in what he considered a musical science, giving it a greater degree of predictability than with most composers. It follows that a movement which had patently attained such a high degree of formal organisation as the Finale, given adequate compositional craft, can most certainly be provisionally "finished" to a degree sufficient to demonstrate the composer's intentions. That we can thereby gain an impression of what the completed four-movement Ninth would have sounded like more than justifies the painstaking scholarly work we had to undertake to ensure that it would represent the utmost in philological accuracy and stylistical credibility.

The Problematic History Of A Lost Movement

While, as we have seen, Alfred Orel first published the sketches and drafts for the Finale in the Complete Edition in 1934, the publication was rushed, and misconstrued aspects of the complex philology underlying the sources. Orel attempted to tease the fragments into five or six "*Fassungen*" or versions, based solely on small variations in the manner in which the score bifolios had been prepared – not in itself significant except as providing indications of compositional order. Then, misidentifying the last extant bifolio, 31E/"32", as an

alternative “21”, Orel brought the entire later course of the movement into question. His publication was then misinterpreted as implying that Bruckner was somehow unsure about the form of the movement. But nothing could be further from the truth. Bruckner simply had new batches of score paper ruled up when he ran out, and 31E/“32” most assuredly formed part of the reprise of the chorale; Bruckner even numbered the bars through from the beginning of the chorale reprise, perhaps in order to check its length against that of the exposition. Leopold Nowak, at that stage still a student, corrected the Orel edition in 1935; his proof copy, a sea of red ink, was later loaned to me, but revealed little advance on resolving the issues Orel had encountered.

As Professor Herbert Vogt (Nowak’s successor as director of the Complete Edition) later informed me, Nowak had remained fascinated by the material, but apparently never arrived at a clear conception of what its, for him, sphinx-like fragments represented. The original material nonetheless remained under embargo for its eventual republication in the Complete Edition. I had the honour of meeting Nowak and discussing the intended republication of the Finale in the Complete Edition three days before his death in May 1991, later to be told I had been the last musicologist to visit him. He responded with approval to the news that a new publication of the Finale was planned. I trust he would have been satisfied with the results.

Although quite a number of realisations of varying extent and quality had been made of the Finale between 1940 and the 1990s (these are documented in my thesis), little was understood of the movement beyond the skewed picture presented by the 1934 edition. A more accurate assessment would remain an enigma for almost a century until MWV’s publication of the “Reconstruction of the Autograph Score” (1994, 1999). This represented a faithful transcription of the extant fragments of Bruckner’s original score, maintaining their exact page layout and representing missing bifolios as empty pages, underlaid wherever possible with the relevant *particello* sketches. Vogt remarked that it struck like a bomb. Up until this time the movement wasn’t even officially considered to have existed beyond the status of sketches and drafts; that random bifolios of what was originally a continuous, integral orchestral score had been lost, rather than having never existed, now became more widely understood, as did the fact that Bruckner had indeed left drafts for the coda (Orel had published them, but omitted Bruckner’s reference to their location in the score on bifolio 36, even stating outright that the coda of the movement “remained entirely in darkness”). Originally, the Finale MSS had even been allotted a separate WAB classification from that of the rest of the symphony and were only officially subsumed within WAB 109 at this time. The 300-plus page Facsimile Edition of all extant Finale MSS followed two years later (1996), a publication which required the supplementation and in some cases correction of Orel’s bifolio classifications.

Finally, at Vogt’s behest, I compiled the “Documentation of the Fragments” (1999), an orchestral score presenting only the surviving fragments, but between them providing the opportunity to explain to the audience the form of the movement and likely contents of the missing bifolios. While Leopold Nowak assured me one should not have to perform the movement in order to appreciate it, and it was better if people learned to read music (a commendable, if tall order), this score was generated by the attempt to reconstruct an accurate, complete performing version of the Finale. The Documentation drew a careful line between reconstructing missing bifolios directly from relevant *particello* sketches, as in the AS, and the few points where in the SPCM score we had to make carefully considered *inferences* in selecting existing sketch materials or careful adaptations of them in order to fill in the remaining blank spots.

It was, of course, already breaking a serious taboo in conservative Vienna to do anything with these ‘holy relics’, but it thus came about that the first-ever orchestral performance of the Finale in the Musikverein (by the WSO under Nikolaus Harnoncourt, who later recorded it with the WPO for Teldec), was of the “Documentation of the Fragments”. This took place in November 1999, 103 years after the death of a composer who had spent the last months of his life writing it in the lodge of the Belvedere Palace a mere 1.5 kilometres away. The following year, MWV’s republication of the first three movements of the Ninth in the Complete Edition, edited by Cohrs, now made explicit that the first three movements of the Ninth were just that, not “the” Ninth. With repeated performances and recordings of the SPCM Finale (of which there were more than two dozen worldwide in the 1990s alone), Harnoncourt’s performance and recording of the Documentation, the affirmative reception of the Complete Edition publications and of multiple scholarly articles in German and English, informed musicological opinion began to change.

One has, alas, to specify ‘informed’, because all too often the same misinformation about the alleged inadequacy of the Finale in comparison with the first three movements had continued to be trotted out by commentators who neither knew nor cared about Bruckner’s intentions or understood the painstaking philology that went into the reconstruction. True, the movement was not entirely completed, but it was left as a definitive, authoritative score. And the surviving materials more than suffice to gauge just how magnificent it would have been.

Why should that statement be so surprising? Like the rest of the Ninth, the Finale was a masterpiece composed with extraordinary care by a composer at the height of his powers, who by then had spent at least nine years thinking about how he would complete his *opus summum musicum*. Bruckner wrote the Finale as a final demonstration of his compositional craft. The Fifth Symphony, with its monumental choral and fugal Finale, had a similar aspect to its conception at a stage when Bruckner, mid-career and still seeking financial subvention or an adequately remunerated teaching position, wanted to place his contrapuntal and harmonic skills on record. The Ninth was a similar account of what Bruckner had done with his earthly talents, one this time intended for his god. Writing his last work for eternity, Bruckner was far beyond caring if people ‘liked’ it or not, but such subjective judgements reflect in no way whatsoever on what was by all objective indices a stunning demonstration of compositional skill, no less than a profoundly moving testament communicating the faith and fears of a human being on the verge of death.

Like so many things, the appreciation of classical music represents a kind of belief system; subjective attachments, habituation dominate. People have had a century to grow accustomed to the first three movements, and learned to love the Adagio ending (which Bruckner would surely have abhorred, although it surely inspired Mahler’s sublime Adagio endings, among others), and been swayed by a century of patently misinformed commentary into believing that the aging composer either couldn’t finish a Finale, somehow leaving only fragments, or that some quasi-magical dividing line exists separating a composer’s emergent score from the near-miraculous status accorded by traditional musicology to an “autograph”.

In fact, Bruckner left far more for this Finale than Mozart left for his Requiem; we accept the Requiem as “Mozart” despite a significant part of its musical continuity and almost all of its instrumentation having been the work of Süßmayr. There are no such gaps in the reconstruction of Bruckner’s score that cannot be bridged forensically, either by the use of the *particello* sketches in their intended location, or, in a few cases, by the ready extrapolation of their compositional material. Yes, Bruckner could have made further revisions. Of course, he could have rewritten his entire output given enough time. But he didn’t. And the changes Bruckner made in later revisions involved nothing of great musical substance. They were merely intended to establish closer connections between existing musical material.

So after thirty years of engagement with this movement, I can attest unequivocally: Bruckner left us a masterwork. Should anyone doubt this, look closely at a section of the score between letters L and N, the later development section and exposition of the fugue. As inspection of the AS shows, everything compositionally significant had already been drafted here. Look at the intricate motivic transition at 271-6 where, in multiple interlocking parts, Bruckner micro-transitions from the upbeat double-dotted motive beginning with semiquaver, to the downbeat one at L. Look at the exquisite counterpoint featuring the “lyrical theme” at 287, where Bruckner deftly fragments and mutates its constituent micro-motives into elements he then reassembles in the daring counterpoint of the fugal exposition at M. And one cannot but be struck by the magnificent crescendi of the movement, those preceding letters B or G, the dark grandeur of the climax of the fugue at 342 (reconstructed; the complete orchestration survives from 345), or the dynamism of the ensuing episode between O and Q, for which, like much of the later chorale reprise, not a single sketch is extant; the entire passage was most likely composed directly in score. Who could not be deeply moved by the sublimity of the chorale reprise between U and V – although bars 513-28 had to be (but could be, and effortlessly) reconstructed as a precise inversion of the chorale. Or astounded by the intricate contrapuntal web Bruckner suddenly and spontaneously generates in the strings at 523 – despite the fact that bars 1-2 and 5-6 of that metrical period had to be (but could be, and faultlessly) reconstructed.

The more one examines and understands this movement, the more one finds to admire and wonder at. Had the Finale been a damaged old master, fresco or building of great historical significance imagine the sort of care and accountability that would have been lavished on it. One thinks of the restoration work currently ongoing on the cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris: an entire consortium of experts assembled to deal with a priceless historical artefact, their restorative interventions carefully considered and painstakingly documented. In an infinitely smaller way we tried to do just that with this tragically ruined piece of music. No one should do anything less. The Finale emanates a fascination shared by many Bruckner aficionados around the world: the thrilling magnificence of this music, its compelling formal and hermeneutic answer to the riddle proposed by the first three movements, the tragedy of its fragmentation and the arrogant dismissal and exclusion of the movement from the Brucknerian canon by a woefully misinformed posterity. It was that which compelled us in our decades of efforts to rescue this benighted movement from its undeserved musical oblivion, and restore it to its rightful place alongside the first three.

The Evolution of the ‘SPCM’ and the 2021–2022 Revision

Like the score itself, the editorial team behind the 40-year evolution of the SPCM Finale has undergone multiple vicissitudes. Begun in 1983, the initial *Ricostruzione* of Nicola Samale and Giuseppe Mazzuca was published by Ricordi in 1985 and recorded by Eliahu Inbal the following year. Mazzuca took his leave of the project in the late 1980s as Benjamin-Gunnar Cohrs was welcomed in. Mazzuca played no further role in our deliberations. I was taken onboard by Maestro Samale in 1990: My collaboration with him, incorporating the results of my analysis of the original sources and reconstruction of a more authentic coda, resulted in our self-publication of the score in 1992, memorialised in the recording of Kurt Eichhorn (1992) and its 1996 revision recorded by Johannes Wildner (1998). Cohrs later rejoined us, and the progressive changes made over the following years were finally integrated into the 2012 publication of the score illuminated by his extensive and insightful commentary.

All four members of the team were finally brought together physically for the first time in Berlin in February 2012 for the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra’s ground-breaking performances of the complete Ninth under Simon Rattle. Giuseppe Mazzuca would pass on the following year. EMI’s release of the recording was strikingly successful, remaining at the top of the UK classical charts for months and voted Best Orchestral Release of the year by readers of *The Gramophone* magazine. Rattle and the Berliners took it to New York later in 2012 and performed it again in four European cities during Rattle’s final orchestral tour with them in 2018. It was during that tour that the completed Ninth would finally be performed in the location and acoustic Bruckner originally envisioned for it: the Musikverein in Vienna.

Optimistically designated its “*Letztgültig Revidierte Neu-Ausgabe*” (Definitively Revised New Edition), the 2012 publication of the SPCM score was intended to set an endpoint to its by then almost 30-year evolution. I remained convinced, however, that aspects still merited reconsideration. Solutions like the probable final form of the *Gesangsperiode* in the exposition (14 bars longer in the 1992 score and MWV publications) had long been amended with my whole-hearted agreement, but I was still sceptical in regard, firstly, to the use of a set of early sketches to bridge missing bifolio [19/“20”] midway through the fugue, and secondly, to our solution to the coda, virtually unchanged since its first publication in 1992, despite the fact that its completion had formed a major part of my contribution to the SPCM project back in 1990/91.

Accordingly, I had a “dissenting opinion” included in the commentary to the 2012 publication (p. 273 thereof). Not long after its appearance that year I believed I had arrived at a better alternative, but with understandably little enthusiasm from my colleagues for any further editions of our “Definitively Revised New Edition” I entrusted my ideas to a partitello sketch and left it there.

Nine years went by. In late September 2021, at the behest of Australian colleague Dr Jim Wafer, I agreed to undertake a transcription of the Finale for organ. I realised at that point that I finally had to get the movement right according to my own lights and dug out my old sketch. The revision of the orchestral score began in October 2021, the organ transcription was concluded in May of 2022 and first performed in July, while the revision of the orchestral score was concluded in September, Bruckner’s 198th anniversary.

The revision also generated a more highly nuanced and effective MIDI realisation, with accurate reproduction of tempi, dynamics and nuancing using Sibelius/NotePerformer, which could be posted on YouTube and serve to both promote the score and provide a guide for subsequent performances.

Not unexpectedly, planned performances of the Finale had been stymied during 2020-21 by pandemic measures. The SPCM’s editorial team was further reduced in 2021 with the decision of Benjamin-Gunnar Cohrs to resign from the project; as general editor of the new Anton Bruckner Urtext Complete Edition (Hermann Verlag, Vienna) he understandably now viewed this as his greater priority.

So the current revision represents, for better or worse, my final views on the work. That is not to say the changes made here are in any way subjective; they have only been undertaken because they can be fairly claimed to represent advances in stylistic credibility, accuracy and authenticity. In late 2021 the revision was given the enthusiastic endorsement and approval of my old friend and colleague in Rome, Maestro Samale, in partnership with whom, in 1990 and 1991, I had spent such stimulating and fruitful months. The 2021–22 revision goes forward with his blessing.

As mentioned, this score is due for orchestral premiere in London by the LPO under Robin Ticciati, London, 30 November 2022. Aside from a comprehensive review of tempi, dynamics and articulation, it restores what this editor regarded as a more effective and stylistically credible solution to the missing 16-bar bifolio in the fugal section – the ‘composition’, effectively, of a mere three bars, since the passage was almost certainly part of a sequence – while in the coda it deletes 12 bars of ‘faux Bruckner’ – our ‘combination of themes’ episode – and restores 12 bars of Bruckner’s original continuity in the form of two hitherto overlooked sketches for the coda from May 1896 (further discussion in section 5). This has meant a significant increase in the coda’s authenticity. Incrementally improved MIDI realisations of the revision have been available on

YouTube since October 2021 and by September 2022 had received in excess of 3000 views, prompting many personal emails from Bruckner aficionados around the world endorsing it.

The significant points of the revision were itemised under five headings in the Introduction to the revised score, but much abbreviated here. Ideally, these explanations should be read in dialogue with the more extensive commentary in the authors' 2012 publication, which commentary it was in no way intended to replace.

The bar numbers of the 2012 score match those of the revision as far as letter X (589, only the continuity of 329-341 having been altered), then at X omit 12 bars. Four bars of Bruckner's continuity have been restored at (new) 593, the conjectural continuation of Bruckner's first sketch of May 1896 revised at 601–604, and letter Y moved to 605, where the eight-bar, second sketch of May 1896 has been restored. This re-establishes the entire original continuity of the composer's drafts for the coda for the first time. At 649 bars, the SPCM Finale is now four bars shorter than in 2012. 440 bars represent the continuity of surviving, numbered score bifolios (roughly 68%, more than two-thirds), 122 were reconstructed from sketches or continuity drafts incorporated at their intended locations in the score (19%), leaving only 87 bars (13%) that have had to be restored "by inference" from sources, 9 bars less than in 2012.

1. Tempi

Practical decisions regarding tempo, as well as the largely routine work of marking dynamics and articulation, rarely concerned Bruckner until the essentials of composition and instrumentation had been finalised. The extant score fragments nonetheless reveal a number of tempo alterations that been notated by the stage at which work broke off. Despite its striking motivic unity and sense of forward drive, the formal structure of the Finale is complex; as some of the intended tempi and their interrelationship remained unclear in earlier versions of the SPCM Finale, a comprehensive re-examination of the issue was undertaken; the changes and their rationale are explained in detail in the Introduction to the score of the revision.

2. Dynamics, articulation

Among other matters, *crescendo/diminuendo* (or *messa-da-voce*) hairpins were rarely used in the 1992 score; in fact, Bruckner employs them abundantly in the *Gesangsperiode* of the first movement and in the Adagio. In the Finale he appears to have reckoned with expressive dynamic shaping of the chorale; this was suggested by a hitherto overlooked ">" accent at the fifth bar of its second statement (bar 159, FE 200); these now make the expressive power of this deeply moving music more explicit. Further dynamic markings, denoting variations rather more subtle than Bruckner customarily indicated, have been incorporated in cue-sized type, principally to assist with orchestral balance and the very real (and very Brucknerian) problem of how to achieve further dynamic intensification once *fff* has been reached.

The older versions of the SPCM Finale indicated string tremolo in quaver figuration, as at P and from X onwards, in semiquavers. Throughout his later works, however, Bruckner universally notated tremolo in demisemiquavers. While making rather more work for the poor players, this unquestionably accords better with Bruckner's orchestral practice and has been amended. Bruckner also never uses accents in conjunction with tremolo; understandable, since accents are virtually impossible with such rapid bow strokes. Tenuti and slurs have been added for the repeated triplets in the woodwind between letters X and Z, in accord with Bruckner's articulation at letter Z in the Finale of the Eighth. MWV's 2000 edition of the first three movements of the Ninth (ed. Cohrs), similarly recommended the use of *portati* for the woodwind triplets in the coda of the Adagio.

3. Minor revisions to composition and instrumentation

Apart from the two more major compositional revisions that will be covered later, the new score addressed a number of smaller issues. Among them:

At letter C, the reconstruction of the exposition *Gesangsperiode* was 14 bars longer in the first SPCM score of 1992 and its 1996 iteration, likewise in the writer's MWV publications in the Bruckner Complete Edition, the AS (1994, 1999), Documentation (1999) and doctoral dissertation (2001). Samale had assumed, in line with his previous *Ricostruzione* prior to 1990, that the continuity draft "#D (FE 155) represented the draft of a *second* bifolio 5, and that Bruckner intended to extend what in his original sketch (FE 33, 4th system) was a four-bar statement of the "lyrical counterpoint" (bar 85 of the present score) to six bars. It appeared from "#D that this must have been followed by eight bars of repetitions of the *Gesangsperiode* theme harmonised in G major, perhaps *ff*, then *p* (cf. FE 163). I felt obliged to endorse my senior colleague, and so this solution was perpetuated into my publications. Cohrs subsequently argued that "#D might simply have been misfolded, since it reproduces the original content of bifolio 5A when folded in reverse (pp. 3–4, then 1–2), but also that the eight-bar period of harmonic stasis in G major entailed by the "#D hypothesis (my misgiving also) seemed formally out of place. This issue was eventually resolved to the satisfaction of all editors, set to rights in the 2012 score and explained in its commentary. The only change made to the passage in the current

revision is that at 85 the roles of 1st and 2nd violins have been swapped in order to give greater prominence to the “lyrical counterpoint” and to match Bruckner’s assignment of these roles in the reprise at Q.

Finally, along with the more extensive compositional revisions to the coda (see below), the counterpoint and orchestration of the 21-bar “Halleluja” (Z) were revised in order to enhance both orchestral clarity and stylistic credibility. Even if solely of interest to scholars, its metrical structure, formerly 8+8+5, has been altered to 12+9; this conceptually gives the arrival point at 641 (= reinforcement of the *fff*) greater prominence and fuses the final 9 bars into a single span.

4. The missing bifolio of the fugue

In comparison to the 2021 score, the SPCM’s older solution to the first nine bars of the missing 16-bar bifolio that occurs midway through the fugue, [19/“20”] (bars 329–337), has been restored and its counterpoint improved. This in all essentials was the solution first proposed for the passage by Samale and Mazzuca, maintained in the 1992 and 1996 scores and documented in my doctoral dissertation. The continuity of the last seven bars of the bifolio are apparent from a sketch (FE 23) which dovetails convincingly into the ensuing bifolio; given the extant sections of the fugue which precede and follow it, every evidence suggests the passage was likewise conceived as a threefold sequence (6+6+4 bars). As the first three bars of this sequence survive at the end of bifolio 18D/“19”, the effective “composition” of only three bars was required. The use of a series of earlier exploratory sketches replaced this threefold sequence in the 2012 score, but it is a vague and amorphous improvisation compared with the highly structured and contrapuntally driven “*Spiegelbild*” sequences (= simultaneous *rectus* and *inversus* versions of a fugal subject) of the surrounding passages on 18D/“19” and 20D/“21”. No one need lament the excision of the early sketches nor claim their choice was stylistically more convincing or appropriate here than the earlier, more insightful and more effective SMP solution.

5. The revision of the coda

The version of the coda presented here for the first time embodies everything we actually know from Bruckner’s sketches and verbal statements. It omits 12 bars of what was effectively “faux Bruckner” (the “combination of themes” episode in the older SPCM versions), but restores 12 bars of Bruckner’s own continuity from his sketches for the coda from May 1896.

The reconstruction of bifolio [32/“33”], continuing the musical content of the last surviving score bifolio 31E/“32” into a *fff* recall of the principal theme of the first movement (letter V, cf. **Ex. 9a**), dates back in its essentials to the earliest stages of the Samale-Mazzuca *Ricostruzione* and with its tritone progression, to G major from Bruckner’s C# major at 547, then via plagal cadence into D at 555 (cf. **Ex. 10**), remains so persuasive that its solution has never been called into question. One can also readily assume that Bruckner would have truncated the principal theme in some way, probably ending with a bar-line fermata as at letters L and M earlier in the score. If Bruckner had terminated the theme on the a' a' octave of its sixth bar, the score would have arrived at the end of bifolio [32/“33”], and the coda begun on the following [33/“34”]. The fugue beginning the reprise similarly commences at the beginning of bifolio 17°D/“18” (letter M).

i. Letters W to X

The ensuing 28 bars from W to X (16+8+4 bars, a typical Brucknerian “accretionary spiral”) could be entirely based on Bruckner’s sketch for a slowly ascending, and gradually accelerating, sequence of tritone progressions (AS 138, FE 6; **Ex. 12** reproduces my transcription of this sketch as published in the AS, **Ex. 13** (much simplified) its realisation in the SPCM score. The initial notation in ink breaks off after 24 bars; Samale in the early 2000s realised that the additional 12 bars sketched by Bruckner in pencil and headed “2te Dominante” (apparently implying the dominant of the written pitches) represent a transposition of the last eight bars of the 24-bar draft by a perfect fourth downwards, extending it by a further four bars in minims. This leads the passage directly to d^{III}, but means the first 16 bars of the progression be similarly transposed to begin on a Bb6 chord (In the 1992 and 1996 scores the pencil continuation was ignored, the final four bars freely supplemented.) The Bb6 with which the coda now begins recalls the first crescendo of the movement at bar 13; it begins with the same chord. Assuming Bruckner continued the composition of the score on 16-bar bifolios, the whole passage would now arrive at the final page of a bifolio [34/“35”].

Ex. 12. Transcription of the tritone progression sketch (AS 138)

Particellskizze ÖNB 3194/3^r; F.-A. 6.

The image shows a transcription of a tritone progression sketch. It is divided into four systems of piano accompaniment. The first system contains measures 1 and 2. The second system contains measures 3 and 4. The third system contains measures 5, 6, 7, and 8, and includes a section labeled '2. Dominante' with harmonic labels: C d[ur], Fis d[ur], D, Gis, E d[ur], B d[ur]. The fourth system contains measures 1 and 4.

Ex. 13. Realisation of tritone sketch in the SPCM score (letter W)

The image shows the realization of the tritone sketch in the SPCM score. It consists of four systems of orchestral parts. The first system is for Strings (561) and Oboe (569). The second system is for Oboe (569) and includes the instruction '(Oboe continues)'. The third system is for Violins (8ve) and Woodwind (8ve) (577), with the instruction 'cresc. poco a poco'. The fourth system is for Woodwind (583) and includes the instruction 'f cresc. sempre'.

ii. Letters X to Z

At letter X (bar 589) in the older SPCM versions began the contrapuntal combination of the four themes of the symphony. However, no surviving sketch or statement by Bruckner suggested the Finale was to include anything like an “overlay of the themes of each movement as in the Eighth Symphony”; that idea derived solely from questionable and in fact self-contradictory statements by Bruckner biographer Max Auer. While Auer’s statements were documented in the AS (138), and realised in all versions of the SPCM including the 2012 publication, my doctoral thesis expressed diffidence about their credibility. The solution went back to the *Ricostruzione* of Samale and Mazzuca; what they conceived was well intended, but in the final analysis less than convincing. Quite apart from the strident, un-Brucknerian counterpoint, wrenching the Adagio theme onto the tonic falsified its harmonic function, while the timpani quotation of the Scherzo rhythm was tokenistic,

and somehow a little too clever. Had Bruckner intended such a thing, there would surely have been some indication, *somewhere*, in the hundreds of pages of MSS for the four movements, that he intended to do so. There is none. Samale expressed his own doubts about the validity of the “combination of themes” to me in 1991; unfortunately, I dismissed his concerns.

Moreover, the tritone progression which opens the coda would unquestionably have led to a statement of the chorale in D *major*, not a combination of themes in D *minor*. Nowhere in the surviving fragments of Bruckner’s score does such a crescendo lead into D *minor*; in both exposition (letter G) and reprise (U), Bruckner cadences into the chorale via a tertian (third-related) progression, which here in the coda, as at letter U, would have been from F# to D. The last chord of the final four bars of the tritone progression sketch is – precisely – F#6.

While the element of *coagmentatio*, of thematic coalescence, in the coda can be justifiably expected, there was no need to resort to the insertion of an isolated episode to accommodate it. If it occurred, the space for such a process must have been present in Bruckner’s surviving drafts, and Bruckner left a further eight bars for the coda to which the SPCM had until now turned a blind eye. If we accept all *three* of Bruckner’s sketches of May 1996 (FE 45–47) for what was surely intended as the grand denouement of the work, rather than cherry-pick the first and third, the passage forms a final developmental episode in which mutations of first-movement and Finale themes can interact, a more organic, Brucknerian process than any literal “combination of themes”. I had argued against the idea and for the inclusion of the second coda sketch in a “dissenting opinion” in the critical report on the 2012 score (p. 273) but didn’t arrive at a contrapuntal solution to the problem until later that year. The new score shows that the issue can be resolved, and with great stylistic credibility; not surprisingly, the Finale’s conclusion is the better for it.

Ex. 14 provides an overview of the manner in which the chorale mutates over the course of the Finale. Its statement in the coda (**14e**), in the deeply moving form Bruckner used for its “quotation” at bars 441–444 (**14b**), now arrives at (new) letter X, along with improvements to counterpoint and orchestration that better respect Bruckner’s characteristic separate functions of woodwind, brass and string groups in tutti (cf. the coda of the Fifth). A further notation from the May 1896 sketches including the notes g' g' f#' e' d' (AS 140, FE 48) fell into place only this year: it implies that Bruckner must indeed have used something very like the bar 441 harmonisation of the chorale, but intended the last four bars (formerly g' f' eb' d', the literal transposition of bars 443–444) to deviate from it, and altering their implied harmonisation to Em Bm C G. This harmonic recursion towards G major now far more logically sets up the ensuing progression C B F# C#m, melodic line e' f# g#, which begins the first of the May 1896 sketches (AS 193, FE 45).

As is also evident from **Ex. 14**, a deeper rationale becomes apparent. The chorale in both its exposition and reprise statements begins by descending stepwise over a sixth (**14a, c**). In what Samale liked to refer to as the “chorale memento” at bar 441, this is extended to an octave, modulating enharmonically from Cb to E major (**b**). Then, the final statement of the actual chorale reprise at bar 531 steps down seven notes of the Eb major scale to end on f' (**d**). The melodic line of the final chorale statement in the coda (**e**), would similarly appear to have descended the octave as foreshadowed at bar 441, but this time via a complete D major scale. It is as if the ‘task’ of the chorale was intended to conclude at this point, its final statement heralding the D major of the Halleluja.

Ex. 14. Evolution of the chorale in the Finale: (a) descent over a 6th at G; (b) descent over an 8ve at bar 441, probably foreshadowing later statement; (c) descent over a 6th again at U (chorale reprise); (d) final statement of chorale reprise, descent over a 7th; (e) probable form of final chorale statement in coda, last four bars, deviating from (b), given in late sketch.

a. Violins (8ve) *ff* Brass (155) descent over a 6th

b. *pp* Strings (441) Cb6 Eb7 Fb Cb C Em6/5 Am E (Bruckner's harmonisation) descent over an 8ve, likely foreshadowing final chorale statement in coda, transposed to D (d c# b a g f e d)

c. Strings (= *Te Deum* motive) *ff* Brass (495) descent over a 6th

d. *p* Strings, woodwind, brass (531) descent over a 7th

e. final descent over an 8ve - complete D major scale (589) *fff* Tutti D6 F#7 G D (= harmonisation of bars 441-2) (last four notes as given by Bruckner in May 1896 sketch (changed from g f e d) *dim. poco a poco* Em Bm C G (likely harmonisation)

Bar 597 (formerly letter Y, now moved eight bars further to bar 605), marks the beginning of the harmonic sequence drafted by Bruckner in May 1896. **Ex. 15a–c** reproduces the main sections of these three sketches from their complete transcriptions in the AS; an outline reduction of the whole passage, as realised in the 2021–2022 revision, is provided by **Ex. 16a–c**.

Transcriptions of the three main coda sketches of May 1896 (AS 139–141, relevant sections)

Ex. 15a.

Particellskizze¹³ ONB 6085/45^r; F.-A. 45.

Ex. 15b.

Particellskizze ONB 6085/47^{r1}; F.-A. 46.

Ex. 15c.

Particellskizze ONB 6085/43^{r1}; F.-A. 47.
am 21. Don[er]s[ta]g, 22. freitag, 23. Samst[ag]²⁰

Ex. 16a–c. Realisation of the three main coda sketches in the 2021–2022 revision

a. Horns, tubas (woodwind, strings omitted) + Trumpets
pp
 (597) C B F# C#m Ab Eb Cb Gb (Bb Ab Eb Bbm F F7)
 (Bruckner's harmonisation) (continued as sequence)

b. First-movement theme
 Trumpets
 Horns Tubas
 (605) Gb Fm6 Fb Eb6
 (Likely harmonisation of Bruckner's bass notes) *cresc. sempre*

c. Trumpets
 Horns
 (613) Cb6 Fugal theme F *cresc. sempre*

Trumpets (8ve, cf. bar 295)
 Horns
 (621) *fff* Tutti A¹¹ g#/*bb*
 Te Deum in woodwind
 Halleluja
 (629) D Te Deum in tubas, bassoons etc.

Bruckner's particello drafts of May 1896 represented the coalescence of his conception of the climax of the Finale, his Ninth Symphony and therewith, arguably, his entire symphonic oeuvre. They would have been of enormous significance to him. Determination of metrical structure and harmonic outline would have been his first consideration; he would doubtless have already known the themes and motives he intended to use here, and it is not unreasonable to imagine that they can be logically reassembled from everything we know about the movement.

The marginal annotation on the first of the three, dated "19." (= 19 May 1896, AS 139, FE 45), refers to a "bifolio 36": With the combination of themes episode eliminated, this musical material now falls in that location on a *renumbered* "36": this accords with the idea that the renumbering took place *prior to* Bruckner drafting of the coda. The first sketch (Ex. 15a, cf. 16a) will be discussed shortly. The second, dated "21." (AS 140, FE 46, Ex. 15b, 16b), omitted in previous SPCM scores, has now been restored to its proper place as bars 605–612 (letter Y has now been moved to 605). Its first eight bars appear to outline the bass, but in a high tenor register, of an eight-bar harmonic sequence alternating root position with first inversion chords, Gb Fm6 Fb Eb6. The ensuing bars of the sketch reveal these bars were to be followed by the extended harmonic progression outlined in the third sketch, dated 21–23 May (AS 141, FE 47, bars 613–636), Ex. 15c, cf. 16c. The treble notes cb^{'''} a^{''} of this sketch were decoded as implying four bars each of Cb6 and F, then, based on the A⁷ notated in the bass stave with d^{'''} in the treble above it, seven bars of an A¹¹ chord, followed by an apparent split of the bass note a into g#/*bb* in the eighth bar, followed by eight bars of D. Bars 381ff of the first movement similarly climax with a monumentalised tritone progression, B⁹ Fm6 – a typically Brucknerian example of overarching symmetry. The original composing-out of the coda drafts was largely my work, but neither Samale nor I had been prepared to decipher the second sketch; it was simply omitted, continuing Bruckner's ascending progression in minims (only the first bars of which appear definitive in Bruckner's sketch in any case) to lead directly into the Cb6 of the third sketch. That continuity became accepted, but was never anything more than stop-gap: it is perfectly clear that Bruckner intended the passage to be at least eight bars longer.

While it is possible that Bruckner finalised the passage on a lost score bifolio, the first sketch of May 1896 had not arrived at a definitive form for the second four bars of what was most likely an eight-bar period. As Ex. 16a shows, bars 601–604 of the revision now leads this progression up to the high Gb chord beginning the second sketch; in so doing it proved possible to rescue a further chord from the fourth bar of Bruckner's first system (= F# minor, treble c#, bar 600 being notated enharmonically here), and begin these four bars as a transposition, a major sixth higher, of Bruckner's first three. This seemed the least intrusive approach to what

are now the only bars of the harmonic continuity of the coda not directly underlaid by Bruckner's sketches *in situ*.

The restoration of the second sketch reveals a higher structural logic at work, one unlikely to have occurred by chance. While the first crescendo of the coda (**Ex. 13**) progressively *accelerates* the rate of harmonic change, from two-, to one- and finally half-bar units, the second (**Ex. 16**) does the reverse, progressively *retarding* an initial ascent in minims (first sketch, bars 597–604) into four two-bar harmonic units (second sketch, 605–612), then two units of four bars (the C \flat 6 F progression beginning the third sketch, 613–620), then an eight-bar unit (621–628) – apparently a final, “catastrophic” dominant eleventh on A. Here in 1992 we reintroduced the fanfare announced by Bruckner two bars prior to letter M, a harmonically similar situation perhaps intended to foreshadow this great climax. Bruckner uses a very similar fanfare in *Helgoland* at the words “*Allvater! Ein Erretter aus Tod und bitt'rer Not!*”, a possible hermeneutic link to its significance in the Finale.

The final split of the a into g \sharp and b \flat at the eighth bar of this period, implying an augmented sixth chord, precipitates the final cadence into D major; the very first harmonic progression of the first movement (bar 19) similarly splits the opening d into db/eb. The 1892 score, in line with earlier versions of the *Ricostruzione*, broke off here and began a further 16-bar build up from *pp*; by 2012 the authors had agreed this was redundant and cut directly at letter Z to the *fff* Halleluja theme into which the octaves of the trumpet fanfare now perfectly segue.

The harmonic progression implied by the second sketch allows variants of the first-movement theme (trumpets) to contrapuntally combine with the Finale motives (horns and tubas) and even statements of the fugal subject (horns), see **Ex. 16b** and **c**. The root notes of the progression themselves, g \flat f b \flat e \flat , reference the descending chromatic triplet motive of the first-movement theme, c b \sharp b \flat a, as well as the d c \sharp c \sharp b \sharp of the passacaglia-like passage that opens the development (**Ex. 3**). The restoration of these eight critical bars permits us to finally gauge what Bruckner most likely intended for his ultimate symphonic coda: Prompted by the resurgence of the ominous first-movement theme, the music rises towards the last glorious epiphany of the chorale – a final act of “homage to Divine Majesty” – rises again in a retrospective *coagmentatio* demonstrating the underlying unity of the work's principal themes, before cadencing, via a final, terrifying passage of sustained dissonance – perhaps signifying judgement – into the “Glory” of D major.

iii. Letter Z – the Halleluja

As we have seen, the proclamation in the trumpets, in D major, at bar 5 of the E major Adagio, of what most likely was the intended theme of Bruckner's “song of praise to the dear Lord” is too striking not to have represented the motive intended for later apotheosis in the Finale. While stated three times in the Adagio (bars 5 and 81, then again at 89 a tone higher – significantly, minus the brass) it is not further developed there. But everything has function in late Bruckner, nothing is incidental, nothing random: Why would Bruckner have so significantly profiled this phrase yet not have intended to do something with it? From the memoirs of his last doctor Richard Heller we learn that the symphony was intended to conclude with a “song of praise to the dear Lord”, based on a theme borrowed from an earlier movement, Bruckner explaining it was to be the “Allelujah [sic] of the second movement”. Is it possible that Heller misheard, misquoted, or that at some stage the Adagio may actually have been the second movement, the Scherzo succeeding it?

In fact, the morphology of all of these themes ties them in with an extensive set of motivic linkages throughout Bruckner's output (these were laid out in my doctoral thesis, cf. Vol. 2, Mus. Ex. 21 thereof). There *is* a similar phrase in the second movement of the Ninth, at bar 89 of the Scherzo, but it is generated as an inversion of the opening motive of that movement. Moreover, the augmented chord used there, c' e' g \sharp ' c" d" e", makes it less likely this phrase is *the* “Allelujah of the second movement” referred to by Heller; it lacks the obvious prominence given the Adagio phrase. In a footnote to his 1924 article on Heller's memoirs, Max Auer identified the “Allelujah of the second movement” with an analogous phrase in the Trio of the Eighth Symphony (cf. letter C thereof) that had, so he wrote, “allusions to the *Te Deum*” (specifically, to its concluding “*In te, Domine speravi*” fugue); this led Samale and me to choose it in our 1992 score over the Adagio theme. But a stronger clue, as we have seen (**Ex. 2**), is provided by the string figuration accompanying the exclamations of “Halleluja!” which open Bruckner's 1892 setting of *Psalm 150*: c" d' e' g' c" d" e" g" c". Despite the second movement reference, the Adagio phrase seems morphologically the more appropriate choice, strongly resembling the *Psalm 150* figuration, but beginning with the same august falling octave that dominates the principal theme of the first movement.

Aside from this small change to the theme and, in this latest revision, improvements to the counterpoint and clarity of the orchestration, few changes have been made to the conclusion of the SPCM score since its conception in 1991. While referencing the conclusions of Bruckner's *Helgoland* and other symphonic

movements, the relevant musical materials – Halleluja, *Te Deum* motive (in multiple variants), triplet fanfare (foreshadowed by Bruckner in the trumpets in a background role in the chorale reprise), falling octave and dotted rhythm – were allowed to generate the entire compositional texture. It is doubtless no accident that the Halleluja theme combines effortlessly with the *Te Deum* motive in multiple ways. The trumpets rise in three successive ascents to a" at 641, at which point even the earthbound tubas and bassoons begin to rise upwards, while the strings quote the literal figuration of the *Te Deum* (cf. Bruckner's allusion at bar 375 to the string writing of the "Aeterna fac" movement of the *Te Deum*). Finally, prompted by the insistent triplets of the trombones, the Halleluja motive fragments into triplet diminutions which circle like fanfares above a final, irrefutable affirmation of the *Te Deum*/faith motive in the horns (Ex. 17).

Ex. 17. Closing bars of the SPCM

The musical score for Ex. 17 shows the closing bars of the SPCM. It is written for four parts: Trumpets, Trombones, Tubas/Bassoons, and Horns. The score begins at bar 641. The Trumpets part features a triplet fanfare that ascends three times. The Trombones part has a triplet fanfare that fragments into triplet diminutions. The Tubas/Bassoons part plays a Halleluja theme. The Horns part plays a Te Deum motive. The score ends with a final cadence.

This conclusion may be far from what Bruckner himself would have achieved, but is difficult to fault stylistically, and at least allows us an impression of that vision of heavenly glory the composer intended to evoke.

The SPCM completion attempts no more than that.

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