



The Bruckner Society of America Inc.

WESTERN REGION

FRANK J. PLASH—Executive Member
P.O. Box 2765 • San Bernardino, CA 92406 • Telephone: 714/883-9848

December 12, 1984

Maestro Zubin Mehta
Music Director
New York Philharmonic Orchestra
65th Street and Broadway
Avery Fischer Hall
New York, New York 10023

Dear Maestro Mehta:

It has been a long time since you left Los Angeles and assumed your position as Music Director of the New York Philharmonic, but my contact with you during the tours of Japan and Europe are still vividly recalled. Your performance in Linz in 1974 of the Eighth Symphony by Anton Bruckner was one of the highlights of my life and I will treasure this memory forever.

You may remember that it was in Linz after the concert that I mentioned to you that Dr. Leopold Nowak had expressed to me that your recording of Bruckner's Ninth with the Vienna Philharmonic was in his opinion the best performance ever recorded. Your reply was "Wait until he hears the Eighth."

Bruckner's Ninth Symphony has always been performed in three movements as he left them completely orchestrated. After the completion of the Adagio, Bruckner became very ill, but he was able to spend time sporadically on the sketches for the last movement. On the day of his death, October 11, 1896, he still worked on the Finale. His heartfelt wish to complete it, was not to be fulfilled.

Bruckner's writing for the final movement comprises hundreds of pages of music which show the Finale composed nearly to the coda. In 1979, Jack Diether, a well-known scholar on Bruckner and Mahler and residing in New York, showed the sketches to musicologist William Carragan of Troy, New York. A preliminary piano-duet score was worked out and a workable coda was added. For a number of years, William Carragan worked intensively on the Finale of Bruckner's Ninth and gradually prepared an orchestral score based on Bruckner's extensive sketches and on his own study of how Bruckner could have conceived the unwritten coda.

Carragan's effort was consummated with the world premiere of Bruckner's Ninth Symphony including the Finale in Carnegie Hall on January 8, 1984, with a performance by the American Symphony Orchestra under Moshe Atzmon. It was warmly received by an audience of 2500 people. It proved that the Ninth can now be enjoyed as a four-movement symphony as Bruckner had intended it to be. A second performance



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took place on December 1, 1984 in Santa Ana with the Orange County Pacific Symphony under Keith Clark and was also well received. The next performance is scheduled in Holland by the Utrecht Symphony next spring.

Dear Maestro Mehta, I personally know of your affinity with the music of Anton Bruckner and I could not think of a finer interpreter of his works. I would not recognize a better judge of the merits of Carragan's completed Finale than you. May I, therefore, ask you to look over the enclosed score I borrowed from William Carragan and see for yourself if our hope for offering a fourth movement to Bruckner's Ninth is justified.

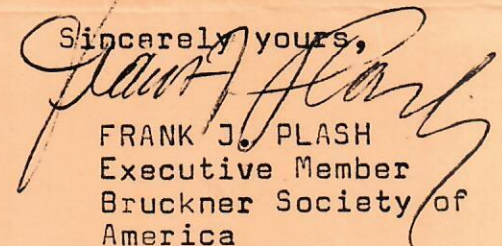
It would fulfil our greatest aspirations if you would consider to perform this movement with whatever orchestra in the world you choose. It would please us immensely, if you were ready to record it with whatever orchestra you select. If you would make this movement a sequence to your superb recording of the Ninth with the Vienna Philharmonic, a dream would come true for us.

If you wish to make direct contact with William Carragan, you are welcome to reach him at this address: William Carragan, 222 Spring Avenue, Troy, New York 12180, (518) 272-6827.

Should you like to get in touch with me, I will be in San Bernardino from December 31. I would also be glad to come to Los Angeles during your coming visit on the occasion of receiving the Technion Award.

We would be most grateful to hear from you.

Sincerely yours,



FRANK J. PLASH
Executive Member
Bruckner Society of
America

Enclosures: Score of Ninth Symphony
by Anton Bruckner, Finale
as completed by William Carragan.
Reprints of Concert Announcements.

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Bruckner-Medal Awarded Mehta in Linz, Austria

AUSTRIA WELCOMES LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC

By Frank J. Plash

The programming of every orchestra leans heavily upon works written by composers who lived and worked at some time or other in Austria. Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Bruckner, Mahler - to name a few - furnish a major part of any seasonal repertory. A small stretch of land - from Mozart's Salzburg over the Bruckner-City Linz to Vienna has thus contributed an overwhelming share of musical literature.

No wonder that Vienna is still the musical heart of Europe. Two institutions, the Vienna State Opera and the Vienna Philharmonic, have preserved their reputation of the past and maintain a standard par excellence and any orchestra visiting here will be scrutinized by comparison.

The Los Angeles Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta passed the test with flying colors. The major work was 'EIN HELDENLEBEN' by Richard Strauss, a tapestry of marvellous sound that exposes every section of the orchestra to its utmost capability. Not only did the capacity audience in the famous Musikvereinssaal approve of it with roaring applause, but praise came from the most respected critic of the 'Presse': "The conductor and the orchestra were totally in their element with wonderful and rich sound. The technical brilliance of every musician reminds us that we had an American orchestra before us that could lay claim to self-evident perfection. It was a grandiose performance !"

The other city visited in Austria was Linz where the life and work of Anton Bruckner was strongly influenced and where he began as a symphonist. Mehta had chosen the composer's 8th Symphony, a monumental work of a dimension and impact few other works have ever reached. To the critic, who had listened to other major orchestras perform Bruckner here, the comparison persuaded him to call Zubin Mehta a 'Star-Conductor' and the orchestra a 'Star-Orchestra': "Mehta is an artist through and through. He has the gift to convey his musical and spiritual feeling upon the orchestra. If the Californians are compared with the Chicago Symphony, one must give preference to the Los Angeles Philharmonic". Another reviewer headlined 'ZUBIN MEHTA'S NEW BRUCKNER' and said: "We had the enjoyment to hear Bruckner in an altogether new, extremely delicate version. Mehta always preserved his perspective, a gigantic monument of fascinating sublimity arose. Rather conscious that they had heard a Bruckner never presented before, the audience reacted with enthusiastic applause."

Before the concert in Linz, the writer, as representative of the Bruckner Society of America, presented Zubin Mehta with the American Bruckner-Medal for 1974. The award was given to the conductor for his effort to perform the works of Anton Bruckner in the U.S.A. and abroad and for the excellence of recordings made available by Zubin Mehta and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. The 8th Symphony by Anton Bruckner has just been released.

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Zubin Mehta, long a champion of the works of the Austrian composer Anton Bruckner, will be honored Tuesday in the Bruckners' home town of Linz when he receives the 1974 Medal of Honor from the Bruckner Society of America, Inc. Designed by sculptor Julio Kilenyi for the exclusive use of the society, the medal is given each year to "conductors and others who make significant contributions in acquainting the public with Bruckner's great music." In Linz, where the Los Angeles Philharmonic is scheduled to play Bruckner's Eighth Symphony Tuesday night, the medal will be presented to Mehta by Frank Plash, executive member of the society.

★



Frank J. Plash

Frank Plash to give medal to Mehta

Special to The Sun-Telegram

VIENNA, Austria — Frank J. Plash, official of Bruckner Society of America, is here to present Zubin Mehta the 1974 Bruckner Medal in recognition of his efforts "to expose the works of Anton Bruckner to audiences in America and Europe." Mehta and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra are on tour of Europe and are including the Bruckner Symphony No. 8 in their repertoire in honor of the composer's 150th anniversary.

Plash joined the orchestra in Venice and will continue on tour through Geneva. He is reviewing the concerts for the International Bruckner Society. On Oct. 3 he will attend the premier of a new film on Bruckner in Vienna and will meet with the producer, Dr. Hans Conrad Fischer, to discuss plans to bring the film to America.

Mehta Receives Medal

LINZ, Austria (AP) — The Bruckner Society has awarded its 1974 Bruckner Medal to Zubin Mehta, music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

The LA Philharmonic began its six-week European tour by performing Anton Bruckner's "Eighth Symphony" on his 150th birthday in Royal Albert Hall, London.

The orchestra also has recently recorded that symphony, played it here in Brucknerhalle and will play it at Carnegie Hall during its first concert back in the United States.

The medal is given "in recognition of contributions of presenting Bruckner's music here and abroad."

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OVATIONS FOR THE L.A. PHILHARMONIC IN ITALY.

By FRANK J. PLASH

For hundreds of years, Venice has fascinated visitors for its unique way of life. Built on canals, the waterways are the only avenues of transportation and the narrow streets - without cars - remain sidewalks. The hustle and bustle of noisy traffic has been kept out and some architects have called Venice the most modern vision for central cities.

A millenium of Western civilization is reflected here and the buildings and churches form a museum of architectural history. As to music, Venice was the birthplace of the builder of the 18th century concerto, Antonio Vivaldi, as well as other composers as Tommaso Albinoni and Benedetto Marcello. Many of the great composers like Wagner and Mendelssohn visited here to enjoy the warmth and peacefulness radiated from this unusual environment. Offenbach's Barcarole in 'Tales of Hoffman' describes, in sound, the movements of the gondolas.

A few months ago, the musical life of Venice was interrupted when the government stopped paying the salaries of the Venetian musicians. In protest, the labor unions closed down the TEATRO LA FENICE and posted signs 'Il Teatro e' Occupado' (The Theatre is occupied). The Chicago Symphony cancelled their concert and only when the Los Angeles Philharmonic offered to give a benefit free for the public, the unions permitted their performance.

After playing in many concert-halls and some churches in Europe, the TEATRO LA FENICE offered the first performance in a traditional theatre. It was founded in 1792 and follows the interior of the European horseshoe oval.

Zubin Mehta had chosen the Overture to 'RIENZI' by Wagner, 'ROMEO and JULIET' by Tschaikowsky and the 7th SYMPHONY by Beethoven. The orchestra showed itself in excellent spirit and the Venetian audience showered the Americans and Zubin Mehta with waves of applause. An encore, the Overture to 'LA SFORZA DEL DESTINO' - fittingly chosen for this occasion - brought the house down with a standing ovation.

The 'Scala de Milan' is, of course, one of the best known opera theatres in the world, ranking in status with the Metropolitan Opera in New-York and the State Opera in Vienna. Not as well known is that it is also the home of the Orchestra of the Scala under well-recognized conductor CLAUDIO ABBADO who also conducts the Vienna Philharmonic.

The Los Angeles Philharmonic have their longest stay here, four concerts in a row. The opener featured an all-Beethoven program: The LEONORA OVERTURE No. 3 and the SYMPHONIES No. 7 and 8. In a city accustomed to appearances by fine orchestras from all over the world, this was an important event for Zubin Mehta and his musical ambassadors from Southern California. Unending applause followed the performance and

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'Bravos' were too numerous to be counted. The shouts 'Bis, Bis' (More, More) echoed through the hall and an encore had to be offered to quiet the enthusiastic crowd. It was nothing short of a triumph in a city rich with musical experience and knowledge.

The Los Angeles Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta have become a world-acknowledged orchestra.

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December 30, 1974

To inform you and other members of the Executive Council of the Bruckner Society of America, I am sending you a brochure covering the presentation of the 1974 Bruckner Medal. Zubin Mehta had requested that the presentation should take place during the concert of the Los Angeles Philharmonic in Linz, Austria where they performed Bruckner's 8th symphony.

During my trip to Europe, I had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Hans-Conrad Fischer, the producer and director of the new film 'Anton Bruckner, his Life and Music', in his home in Salzburg and, at his invitation, I attended the Gala-Premiere in Vienna. The picture is now being shown publicly in Europe, both in German and English. A shorter version in English has been submitted to the Academy of Motion Pictures and Sciences in Hollywood for a possible nomination for the Academy Award.

Judgment about the film could be personal, but I found it musically rewarding and inspiring. The original version is over two hours long and relates to all phases of Bruckner's life. The photography is from actual locations, the story is being told by narration. For those knowledgeable about Bruckner, the film could serve as a documentary, but an even greater impact can be expected as a means of persuasion and as an aid to propagate wider acceptance for the music of the composer.

It was also my pleasure to meet with Dr. Leopold Nowak who promised to furnish an essay for 'Chord and Discord', and with the President of the International Bruckner Society, Dr. Horst Haschek. The listing of Bruckner performances in the U.S. and Canada shown in the enclosure will be reprinted by the International Bruckner Society.

Dr. Fischer is awaiting the outcome of the nomination for the Academy Award before proceeding with the distribution of the film in the U.S. He plans to visit the U.S. some time in the future and maybe we could arrange a meeting with our executive council. I will keep you posted.

I take this opportunity to wish you a Happy New-Year and hope that 1975 will bring you health and happiness.

Sincerely

FRANK J. PLASH