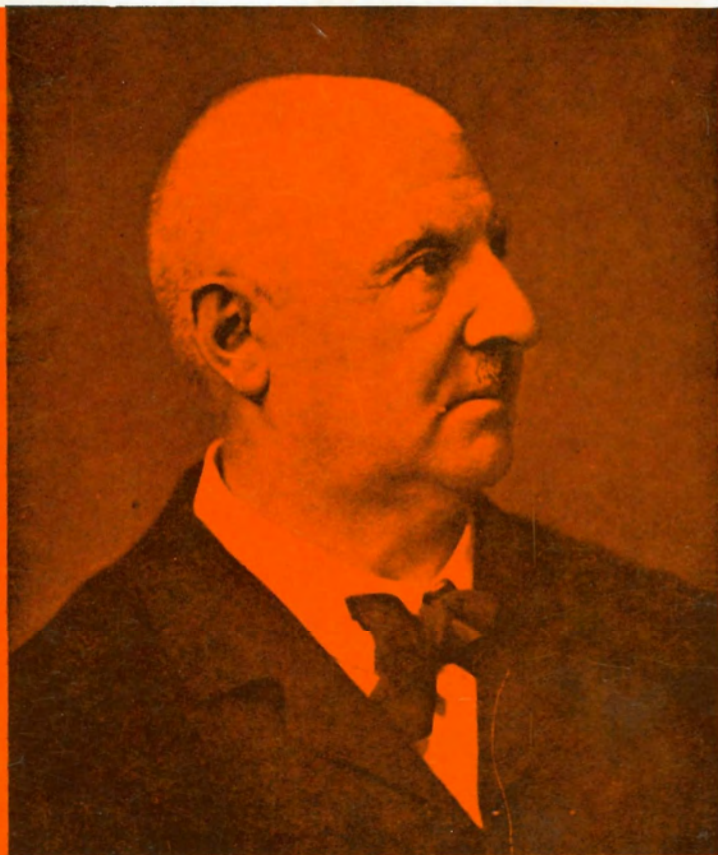


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Christopher Tutin



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BRUCKNER

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By CHRISTOPHER TUTIN

Provincial Austria in the years preceding the uprisings of 1848 remained an almost feudal society, in which there existed a pronounced distinction between authoritarianism, still largely represented by the Roman Church whose pre-eminence dominated everyday life, and the corresponding servility of the peasantry, who were as yet unaffected by the ever-increasing liberalism occurring elsewhere in Europe. It was into this environment that Bruckner was born, at Ansfelden near Linz, and in which he spent his formative years; it was to exert a profound influence on his character and affected the entire course of his life.

Joseph Anton Bruckner was the eldest of eleven children, six of whom died in infancy. His ancestors can be traced back to the early fifteenth century and as landowners they were originally of fairly high social standing, but the family later appears to have fallen on hard times and earned its living at broom-making. Anton's grandfather rose from this lowly status to become a village schoolmaster, and his son, the composer's father, also named Anton, followed in his footsteps. The schoolmaster was one of the most highly respected members of the community, but the salary was a meagre one, and the life hard, since he was obliged to undertake additional duties and was by tradition responsible for music in the local church. Financial difficulties were ever-present. Anton's parents were devout Catholics, and his mother (Theresa, *née* Helm) encouraged him in regular attendance at Mass; it was here that he heard his first music, frequently sitting beside his father at the organ. Hence the most important factor in the moulding of Bruckner's personality, Catholic church ritual and the profound faith which grew from it, was present from his earliest

years, and his simple, even naive, attitude to life and his obsequiousness in the face of social superiority stem directly from his early upbringing. Secular activities were not, however, entirely absent since Anton's family, like the majority of their fellow Upper Austrians, were proficient in local music and dance, and from this sprang a deep love of his native culture.

Anton's father soon discovered the boy's musical gifts and gave him his first tuition in organ and piano. By the age of ten he was sufficiently advanced to be able to deputise on occasions, and his talent was noticed by his godfather Johann Baptist Weiss, himself a noted and prolific composer of church music. Anton was sent to stay with Weiss in nearby Hörsching, where he was taught harmony, figured bass and organ. He became acquainted with the Austrian tradition of church music, including several of the church works of Haydn and Mozart, and began to compose simple pieces. This period ended, however, when at the end of 1836 his father became seriously ill with tuberculosis and Anton had to return to Ansfelden to assist him at the organ. On her husband's death the following year Theresa moved with her children to the village of Ebelsberg. Anton appears to have decided to take up his father's occupation without any thought of becoming a professional musician, and with this in mind he was admitted as a pupil and chorister to the great Augustinian monastery of St Florian. This was, as it transpired, a decisive step, and one which had far-reaching consequences for his future.

St Florian was, as it still is, one of Europe's greatest Baroque buildings and it must have made a deep impression on the young Bruckner after life in Ansfelden and Hörsching. The huge organ was particularly important to his early musical development. Throughout his life he was continually to return there to find solace and respite from the world, the great building epitomizing his piety and faith in God. At St Florian Bruckner received training in organ, piano and violin playing, and in musical theory, as well as a rather limited general education, after the completion of which, at the age of fourteen, he was able to concentrate on becoming a proficient organist. Then in 1840 he was sent to Linz on a course for elementary teachers, and obtained his certificate, the first of many academic qualifications. While in Linz he took the opportunity to broaden his musical horizons, hearing orchestral

music for the first time, including symphonies by Mozart and Beethoven, and continuing his study of musical theory, harmony and counterpoint, in particular Bach's *The Art of Fugue*, with great zeal. The most important of his teachers here was August Dürrenberger, the author of a theoretical treatise to which Bruckner later said he owed everything.

In October 1841 he was appointed assistant teacher at the village of Windhaag, near the Bohemian border. This proved to be a bitter experience: in return for a paltry annual salary of twelve florins he was expected to do unpaid menial tasks, including farmwork, as well as teaching. He was also deputy organist (unpaid), and to augment his income played the violin in dance music at the local inns. His compositions dating from this time testify to the limited resources available to him: the most significant are a short Mass in C (1842) for alto, two horns and organ, the rather similar unaccompanied Mass in F for Maundy Thursday (1844), and a more advanced fragment of a Mass in E flat with orchestra (1846). None of these suggests future greatness, and indeed show just how slowly his development as a composer proceeded. His relationship with Fuchs, his superior, was far from happy, due mainly to the older man's inability to understand his assistant's ambitious nature and fondness for intellectual pursuits. When Bruckner refused to do any more work in the fields he was denounced by Fuchs to his superior at St Florian, with the result that he was transferred as a 'punishment' to the even smaller village of Kronstorf. This in fact proved less of a penalty than was intended. The post was actually an improvement: for the whole atmosphere was a more enlightened one, and he met his first real musical mentor in Leopold von Zenetti, an organist and choirmaster at Enns. The village was also within walking distance of St Florian, to which he paid frequent visits. He was able to practise on a fine organ in Kronstorf and continued with Zenetti his studies in all branches of theory, although he apparently had no particular plans to specialise as a teacher of music. In 1845 he passed the examination which all elementary teachers had to take four years after their initial qualification and returned to St Florian in September as assistant. Here he became Anton Kattinger's deputy at the organ and took over as organist in 1849 when Kattinger moved to Kremsmünster. Among his most important

compositions from this period are a Requiem (now lost) and several male-voice choruses, written for the choir in which he participated as a singer. All of these reveal growing mastery of technique, but are otherwise of little significance. Two works, however, stand out and helped bring his name to public notice: a Requiem in D minor (1849), written in memory of a friend and benefactor, and a Missa solemnis in B flat minor (1854), both of which are landmarks in his development. The requiem, scored for soloists, chorus, three trombones, horn, strings and organ continuo (remarkable in 1849), is even at this early stage unmistakably by Bruckner.

He was to remain in this humble position for a decade, in the meantime continuing his studies to improve his educational standing: in 1850 he began a two-year course with the view to becoming a senior-school teacher, although he was constantly dissatisfied with his profession, being invariably frustrated by the lack of opportunity to express his musical abilities. His colleagues frequently criticised him for devoting too much time to music at the expense of teaching. In addition he had an unhappy love-affair with the sixteen-year-old Antonie Werner, the first of many such infatuations which occurred at intervals to the end of his life, and which only brought him misery. In fact he constantly sought the companionship of a wife, but remained unattractive to the opposite sex, both by virtue of his physical appearance and his unconventional mannerisms. This failure only added to the deep-rooted inferiority complex from which he suffered throughout life and which had serious consequences for his career. Composition, however, continued unabated: a Magnificat in B flat, a Libera me in F minor, and settings of Psalms 22 and 114 were all written and performed at St Florian and show the influence of the Viennese Classical composers, in addition to that of Mendelssohn. They all make characteristically extensive use of contrapuntal technique, containing some impressive fugues.

In 1851 Bruckner seriously considered abandoning his teaching career and took up part-time work as a clerk in the law-courts of St Florian, learning in the process some Latin. In 1853 he applied for a permanent civil service appointment, for which he professed a vocation. Fortunately he was unsuccessful! This preoccupation with study and examinations haunted him continually, and his excessively cautious nature led him to seek constant reassurance of

his abilities in the form of written testimonials. He had doubts about becoming a professional musician and, as always, suffered agonies of mind over the question. He did, however, make several attempts to obtain tuition from a number of prominent teachers in Vienna, acquiring in 1854 a testimonial in organ playing and improvisation to assist him in this. The following year he passed the final examination which made him a fully-qualified schoolmaster, but this did nothing to ease his dissatisfaction. He finally impressed Simon Sechter with his Missa solemnis and, at the age of thirty-one, began a seven-year course under him which covered the entire gamut of musical theory. During that period he abstained totally from original composition, at Sechter's insistence.

In November 1855 an opportunity presented itself when the organist at Linz Cathedral died and a competitive examination was held to appoint a successor. Lacking the confidence to enter, Bruckner went to hear the candidates perform. At the last moment he was persuaded to play and was immediately appointed on a temporary basis, the other two applicants having failed to satisfy the examiners in fugal improvisation. Early the following year, after a further examination involving more candidates, he was confirmed in the post. The salary was sufficient to release him from his teaching duties and he moved from the atmosphere of monastic seclusion to the more conducive one of the provincial capital, but not without first receiving the assurance that his job at St Florian would be kept open for him should he wish to return. At Linz he soon came into contact with the Bishop, Franz Joseph Rudigier, who was impressed by his playing and did much to assist him, in particular by commissioning several works, notably the Mass in E minor (1866). Bruckner had to undertake a large amount of work, since in addition to being organist at both the Cathedral and parish church he began to give piano lessons to help finance the costly trips to Vienna to visit Sechter. These took place twice yearly, at Advent and Lent when the organ was not used in the services, and lasted some six weeks at a time. The remainder of the tuition was carried on by correspondence. These studies were the core of his existence, and his industry was prodigious, involving, by his own account, around seven hours study a day in addition to his other commitments. At the end of each term he insisted as usual on examinations as evidence of his progress. In the meantime he

worked assiduously at the organ, and earned something of a reputation for his improvisations.

In 1860 his mother died, an event which caused him much distress and increased his loneliness. Later that year he became a singing member and librarian of the Linz Frohsinn choral society, subsequently becoming its conductor. This was a welcome relief from his theoretical studies and gave him the opportunity later to perform some of his own choral compositions, notable among which are *Am Grabe* (1861) and *Germanenzug* (1863). The latter, for male chorus and brass band, was in fact the first of his works to be published, in 1865. The experience was also useful in bringing him before the public as a composer. He was however only moderately successful as a conductor, and in later years several of his symphonies suffered in performance under his baton. In fact, apart from a modicum of success as a solo organist Bruckner's performing talents were vastly inferior to his creative genius. He apparently lacked skill in accompanying singers and orchestras, and Liszt is said to have complained of dragging tempi in a performance of one of his oratorios. Bruckner's powers as a teacher must have been considerable however, thanks to his fastidious training. He spent only a year with the Frohsinn, resigning after a difference of opinion, although he returned briefly in 1868.

The course under Sechter ended in 1861, and Bruckner then applied to sit the final examination of Vienna Conservatory, in order to be eligible for teaching posts in conservatories throughout Austria. At the end of the examination Johann Herbeck, one of the examiners and later a close friend and admirer, stated that Bruckner should really have examined them. He also applied unsuccessfully for a post at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. His student days were not yet over, however: he had met the young Kapellmeister Otto Kitzler, ten years his junior, and in the next two years studied orchestration and secular composition under him. Through Kitzler he became acquainted with much contemporary music, in particular that of Wagner and Liszt. Kitzler conducted a performance of *Tannhäuser* in February 1863 which Bruckner attended.

The effect of Wagner's music was immediate and far-reaching: it was the turning-point of Bruckner's artistic life. It seemed to provide the spark which fired his creative mind, and transformed

the industrious student into a composer of stature. Beginning in 1863 Bruckner came into frequent personal contact with Wagner, who formed a high opinion of him as a symphonist, but did little to further his career. The influence of his idol can be seen in two orchestral works of that year: the Symphony in F minor, entitled 'Study Symphony', is little more than an exercise, being conventional in style and commonplace in material, but foretelling the future in various details, notably the handling of the brass. The Overture in G minor, on the other hand, is a full symphonic first movement, with a slow introduction (rare in Bruckner), and showing bold use of chromaticism. Also dating from this time is one of Bruckner's few essays in chamber music, the String Quartet in C minor. The contact with Wagner, both artistically and personally, caused Bruckner to be labelled a 'Wagnerian' and brought him much difficulty later by forcing him into conflict with the other main Viennese camp, that of Brahms and his followers.

At the end of this study period Bruckner's long apprenticeship finally came to an end. At the age of thirty-nine he was becoming increasingly dissatisfied in his post at Linz, feeling the need of a broader field of activity. He had been reasonably happy during the Linz years and had enjoyed many local successes, both as organist and composer, but the urge to try his luck in Vienna was becoming increasingly potent. In the seven years following the end of his studies with Sechter he applied in vain for several positions, including that of organist-designate at the Hofkapelle in 1862 and for a lectureship at Vienna University in 1867. During this period he first encountered the hostility of the music critic Eduard Hanslick, a Brahms supporter, who was also a professor at Vienna University and thus in a position to put obstacles in Bruckner's path. In contrast to his initial friendliness Hanslick's vitriolic criticism was later a source of great pain to Bruckner, affecting as it did the onset of his public recognition as a composer. Hanslick hated Wagner for reasons stemming from political activities during the revolution of 1848, and this animosity was fuelled by Wagner's caricature of Hanslick as Beckmesser in *Die Meistersinger*. In fact, Bruckner's relations with many of his famous musical contemporaries were uneasy; he was greatly admired by the younger generation, in particular by Mahler and Wolf, but established musical opinion was not in his favour. Hanslick's opposition

increased with every symphony Bruckner completed and furthermore he and his associates tried their utmost to create prejudice against him. Brahms's attitude was simple: there was room for only one important symphonist in Vienna, and that one was himself.

In 1864 Bruckner wrote the work which is undoubtedly his first mature masterpiece, the Mass in D minor. Scored for soloists, chorus, organ and orchestra it is the earliest of his three great masses, and shows all the typical features of his later symphonic style, especially in the integration of thematic material and the descriptive use of the orchestra. It was so well received at its premiere in Linz Cathedral in November that a concert performance was given the following month. It is appropriate that Bruckner's first masterpiece should be a setting of the Mass. Like the symphony (which Wagner had described as 'an extinct species') the mass was out of favour at this time as a musical form. This was the age of Romanticism: the classical symphony was in the process of being ousted by the programmatic works of Berlioz and Liszt with their dependence on literary or other external stimuli, and secular pursuits were of greater interest than religion. Bruckner's mature conception of the monumental type of symphony, deriving from the final symphonies of Beethoven and Schubert, was totally at odds with the spirit of the times. The composer himself, deeply pious and strangely introverted, was the antithesis of the Romantic composer with his sophisticated knowledge of the arts. His concept of the mass, influenced by the techniques of Palestrina and Fux, was out of place, as was his Baroque sound-ideal, particularly noticeable in his frequently organ-like style of orchestration and love of solid brass harmonies. Bruckner wrote no songs of importance, nor chamber music to any great extent; he remained unaffected by literature or drama and developed no interests outside music and religion. These are the most apparent causes of Bruckner's slow development as a composer and of the reluctance with which the musical world accepted his music; it simply did not understand this strange man from a bygone era.

The year before the composition of the mass Bruckner had begun another symphony, in D minor, which did not however reach its final form until 1869. He later numbered it 'Die Nullte' (No. 0), and the manuscript score bears the inscription 'Only an attempt – totally invalid'. Because of this the work was neglected

for many years after his death and it is only comparatively recently that its true significance in his development has been realized. The music is of varying quality, the best of it being superb – in particular the first movement (the last to be written) in which the influence of Beethoven's Ninth is most apparent. He refrained from destroying the work as he later did many others and so presumably held it in some esteem; furthermore he offered it to several influential musicians as evidence of his abilities. Like his first three 'official' symphonies 'Die Nullte' abounds in religious associations (the four are often known as the 'mass symphonics'), and it is closely related to the masses, even to the extent of quoting thematic ideas. It was later used as the source of material for other symphonies: part of the coda of the first movement, for instance, appears literally in the finale of the Sixth Symphony.

The First Symphony, in C minor, is a very different work. It was begun in January 1865, and occupied the composer into the following year. It exists in two versions of equal authenticity, the original 'Linz' version and the 'Vienna' version of 1890 – 1891. The earlier version is a remarkably original work, looking forward in many aspects to Mahler and even to Schoenberg and Berg, in particular in the jauntiness of its themes, with their wide melodic leaps, and the march rhythm of the first movement. It also gives the impression of great power and vivacity contrasting with periods of lyricism, but this is rather mollified in the revision, when Bruckner apparently felt obliged to remove some of the work's youthful boldness. The First is the most secular of the early symphonies.

The basic pattern of a Bruckner symphony was evolved at this time and remains virtually unchanged throughout the series. All have four movements, three of which are basically slow and have their counterparts in the principal sections of the Mass. Only the scherzi are of a wholly secular nature. The symphonies seldom depart from this simple formal plan, unlike, say, Beethoven's, which show a steady development throughout his career.

The other important work of 1866 was the second of the three masses, that in E minor. In contrast to the grandiose style of the earlier mass and the F minor of 1867 – 1868, this is an austere setting for eight-part chorus and wind instruments. There are no soloists. The instruments play a totally subsidiary role, supporting the chorus without undue prominence – the Kyrie can in fact be

sung unaccompanied. Bruckner's masses are among the most important post-Classical church works, but at the time they were felt to fall unsatisfactorily between the ecclesiastical style and that of the symphony concert. The purists of the Roman Church had complained that the earlier setting was too grand in concept and was not suitably liturgical in content, and Bruckner replied with this work in which he employs Palestrinian techniques of imitative counterpoint, giving an atmosphere of medievalism which is skilfully integrated with his own progressive harmony. The Sanctus is actually based on a phrase from Palestrina's *Missa brevis*. The work begins in the Phrygian mode and returns to it towards the end. This is not unique in Bruckner's oeuvre however: a hymn *Jam lucis* and a *Pange lingua*, both of 1868, are in the Phrygian mode, and a gradual *Os justi* (1879) is in the Lydian.

If the E minor mass is the fruit of Bruckner's long study of the polyphonic tradition of the past, and shows his strong feeling of belonging to that tradition, the F minor returns us to his own sphere of the monumental Beethovenian conception. This is a distinctly concert work, on an ambitious scale, the Gloria and Credo in particular being huge canvases. Symphonic features are abundant, and are evidence of the composer's ever-increasing mastery of the orchestra. The mass was first performed in June 1872 in the presence of many of the important musical personalities of Vienna; and Brahms, who in general was antagonistic towards Bruckner's music, was among those to be deeply moved by the experience. It was to be the final work of his Linz years.

In May 1867 Bruckner, overworked, lonely and anxious, had had a severe nervous breakdown, and the mood of the F minor mass is largely determined by his frame of mind at the time. This was the first indication of the nervous disorders which were to trouble him seriously in later years. He went for a three-month rest-cure to Bad Kreuzen, and letters written from there speak of his fears of insanity and thoughts of suicide. He also developed the first symptoms of numeromania and until the end of his life was obsessed with the counting of church spires, statues in the park, logs in a woodpile and the like. The bars of his compositions are carefully numbered and the counting and regularizing of phrases can be seen in the manuscripts. He also developed a morbid interest in corpses, and in death generally, insisting on being present at the exhumation of the

remains of Beethoven and Schubert on their removal to another cemetery. However in August he left the sanatorium completely cured.

In September 1867 Herbeck persuaded him to apply for the post at Vienna Conservatory left vacant by the death of Sechter. This time he was successful and early the following year was appointed, with an annual salary of eight hundred florins. Characteristically he was anxious about the move to Vienna from his secure job at Linz, and even contrived to persuade Bishop Rudigier to retain him for a further two years, overlapping with his new post, in case of second thoughts; but in October 1868 he moved to the capital, with his sister Anna as his housekeeper.

At first he was very happy, especially after Herbeck arranged a special stipend in order to help him with composition. From now on his career was a double-sided life of academic routine intermingled with creative work, offering scope and variety far in excess of his earlier positions. Yet he was still not satisfied and frequently tried to obtain a prestigious post abroad. His financial situation remained unsatisfactory, and was aggravated by the cost of performing his symphonies, for which he was never to receive any fees. He was appointed to an honorary position at the Hofkapelle, where he was in addition vice-librarian and second singing teacher, but he was not a success. He was required only to deputise for the main organist, Pius Richter, and had little opportunity to display his special abilities, as he played only on the lesser occasions. In 1870 help with financial problems came with his appointment as piano teacher at the women's seminary of St Anna, but this came to an end in a disciplinary action which arose when a student believed she had been insulted by him. It was in fact a misunderstanding and his name was soon cleared, but he was transferred to the male section and suffered a severe drop in income. In 1874 the post was scrapped for economic reasons.

The regularity of Bruckner's existence was vitalised by several journeys abroad as organist. In April 1869 he took part in a series of recitals at Nancy, and due to his success was invited to continue to Paris, where he played at Notre Dame to an audience which included Saint-Saëns, Franck and Gounod. As before it was his by now famous powers of improvisation which attracted most attention. The tour was followed in 1871 by a visit to London, where he

performed at the Albert Hall and the Crystal Palace. The English press was more reserved than the French, but nonetheless the success of the trip encouraged him, and he always hoped for a return visit as a composer, believing (mistakenly as it turned out) that his music would find more ready acceptance in England than in his homeland. The triumphs in France were followed in September 1869 by the first performance of the E minor mass outside Linz Cathedral, and later in the year he was made an honorary citizen of Ansfelden.

While in London in October 1871 Bruckner began the composition of the Second Symphony, completing it in Vienna in September the following year. Like the First Symphony it is in C minor, but there the resemblance ends. In contrast to the youthful virility of the earlier work, the Second is a work of elegiac beauty, the emphasis throughout being on lyricism. Earlier criticism founded on the First Symphony caused Bruckner to be haunted by the fear of shapelessness, and here the main thematic events are, in the original version, distinctly separated by fermatas, resulting in the nickname 'Symphony of Pauses'. Deliberately close attention is paid to the rules of sonata form. This was the first of several periods in his career when Bruckner lost his self-assurance because of adverse criticism — 'I had lost all the courage to write down a real theme', he later remarked. Equally noticeable is the return to an ecclesiastical atmosphere, with extensive quotations from the F minor mass in the slow movement and finale. The influence of Wagner is minimal, while that of Beethoven is quite apparent, despite the fact that Bruckner's personal voice is clearly heard at all stages of the music. It is the first symphony to show Bruckner's idea of vast scale, and as a whole it gives a sense of great breadth; the Adagio is the earliest slow movement possessing his characteristic vast tranquillity. On completion he offered the work to the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, but they rejected it as being 'unplayable', and the first performance did not take place until October 1873. Bruckner conducted this himself, having hired the orchestra's services, and the symphony was well received.

In the meantime Bruckner had pressed on undeterred with his Third Symphony. Written between February and December 1873 it is the first 'monumental' symphony by Bruckner the master. Taking this and a few other works he visited Wagner at Bayreuth in

September 1873, having spent the summer holidaying at Marienbad and Karlsbad; the older man showed great interest in it and delighted the overawed Bruckner by accepting the dedication. It has become known as the 'Wagner Symphony' due to the extent of that composer's influence revealed throughout. The original version contains some rather naive quotations from *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Walküre* which were removed when the work was revised in 1876–1877. Compared to the Second Symphony it is progressive, abounding in dramatic contrasts and combining Bruckner's modern harmony with liturgical hymnody, but it is less satisfactory in construction than either of the two preceding symphonies. Material from 'Die Nullte' is used, notably the trumpet tune in the first movement (it was this theme which prompted Wagner's exclamation, 'Bruckner — the trumpet!'), and from the masses. The trio of the scherzo is a particularly fine example of the Austrian Ländler in Bruckner's work.

Up until this point all five of Bruckner's symphonies had been in minor keys (if we consider the F minor and 'Die Nullte'); in addition three of the five had had liturgical connotations. The next four symphonies are, by way of contrast, all in the major mode, and distinctly secular in tone. Like the previous 'mass symphonies' they form a group, and they include what are arguably his most popular works. They were written, along with the String Quintet and the *Te Deum*, during the years 1873 to 1884, the period of Bruckner's greatest self-confidence as a composer.

The first of the group, the Fourth in E flat, was begun almost immediately after the completion of the Third in 1873, although the work as it now exists is far removed from that original draft. The title 'Romantic' is the composer's own and it is the only one of Bruckner's symphonies to bear an official title, although he referred to the Fifth as 'fantastic' and the Sixth as 'joyful'. The Fourth is not however an attempt to write programme music in the manner of Liszt and the title is of no special significance, but it is the closest that Bruckner ever came to that type of music. The symphony's popularity derives from its melodic inspiration which never abates from beginning to end, but it is not an attempt to write in a popular style, the finale being one of his most complex edifices. The Andante, like that of Beethoven's 'Eroica' symphony (in the same key) is a funeral march. This work was also rejected by

the Vienna Philharmonic in 1875, and was revised in 1878 and 1880 with simplified instrumentation and a completely new 'Hunt' scherzo and new finale.

In 1874 Bruckner renewed his application to Vienna University, applied for a government grant to aid him in composition, and had further thoughts of a move to England, all of which came to nothing. Despite the general lack of public interest in his work and the discouragements caused by the rejection of the Fourth Symphony, he began the Fifth Symphony in February 1875. In this work Bruckner finally mastered the technique and conception towards which he had been working. It is a masterpiece of construction, a work of strength and discipline that contrasts with the previous symphony's simple radiance. It is distinguished from the rest of the symphonies by a slow introduction to the first movement – a series of disparate ideas, separated by pauses. Wagnerian elements are here completely in the background. It is the only one of his symphonies Bruckner never heard performed, and ironically the premiere in 1894 was in an adulterated version made by his pupil Franz Schalk, who attempted to make it more 'acceptable'. In many ways the Fifth is the epitome of Bruckner's personal and artistic misfortunes.

In spite of the continued opposition of Hanslick, Bruckner finally obtained an honorary appointment as lecturer in harmony and counterpoint at Vienna University, and gave his inaugural lecture in November 1875. He was popular with his students, and greatly enjoyed his work; among his admirers, though not one of his students, was Gustav Mahler. He was a lively teacher, with a sense of humour, and well-liked for his warm personality, but was equally as strict as Sechter, and allowed no free composition during the course. In 1880 the Ministry of Education permitted him a small salary for his work here. In January 1877 he applied without success to the church Am Hof for a position as musical director. He himself conducted a disastrous performance of the Third Symphony in December of that year, most of the audience leaving before the end. This failure was a shattering blow, but surprisingly the publisher Theodor Rättig offered to print the work, which duly appeared in score and parts in 1878, and later in an arrangement for piano duet by Mahler and Krzyzanowski. For a year after this experience Bruckner composed practically nothing; he further

revised the Third Symphony, carried out minor revisions to the Fifth, and wrote the new version of the Fourth, but the only new piece of any significance was the motet *Tota pulchra es Maria*.

Bruckner was made a full member of the Hofkapelle in 1878 with an annual salary of eight hundred florins. In December he began work on his only mature chamber work, the String Quintet in F, completing it in July 1879. This is an occasional piece, written for the quartet led by Joseph Hellmesberger. Bruckner apparently found the quartet medium too restrictive, feeling the need of the richer quintet texture. Chamber music never held much attraction for him, and that the task was uncongenial can be seen in places where the music appears to burst the restraints imposed upon it; but these are few and the slow movement in particular is among the composer's best inspirations. Because of its adventurous tonal structure one critic described it as 'an Odyssey of keys', and it reveals as much as any work of Bruckner's his importance as a link between the Classical masters and the twentieth century. The first movement is in the main key of F major, with hints of distant tonalities from the very opening bars. The Adagio is in G flat, a Neapolitan relationship which was a favourite of the composer's, and this association recurs in the scherzo. The finale is basically in F minor, reaching that key only after excursions through the area of G flat, continuing where the Adagio left off. Hellmesberger refused to play the work, being particularly nonplussed by the scherzo; Bruckner replaced this with a more restful intermezzo, which now exists as a separate piece.

The Sixth Symphony in A was begun only two months after the completion of the Quintet, but it took two years to write, work being interrupted in 1880 by the final extensive revision of the Fourth Symphony. Also that year Bruckner spent a summer vacation at St Florian, followed by a visit to the Passion Play at Oberammergau, and journeys in Switzerland. The Sixth is more modest in dimensions than Bruckner's other mature symphonies, and is the least spectacular, both in technique and in size. Bruckner regarded it nonetheless as one of his most daring works, and it is certainly among his most original, and beautiful. It appears to be the result of the experience gained in writing the Quintet, and its harmony similarly explores Neapolitan affinities. Like the Fourth its appeal lies in its melodic invention.

In February 1881 the Fourth Symphony in its latest version was performed under Richter and its triumph was Bruckner's greatest victory to date. It marked the beginning of his long overdue public acclaim, and the tide finally turned in his favour with the premiere of the Seventh Symphony in Leipzig in December 1884. The Seventh is the first of the final group of symphonies which represents an ultimate phase in the composer's development. The individual members of the group again bear a variety of resemblances to each other. These common features include their great length (greater even than that of earlier works), which involves massive expansion of each individual movement, and a wider range of orchestral sonorities. Religious elements again reveal themselves and all are solemn in character with the emphasis on the slow movements. All three employ Wagner tubas in the slow movements and the finales. Wagner had died during the composition of the Seventh Symphony and the Adagio is Bruckner's tribute to him. The third and fourth movements, however, are the most joyous he ever wrote. With the notable exception of Vienna, this work brought Bruckner recognition from all quarters, the applause after the first performance lasting some fifteen minutes.

The atmosphere of growing acclaim was intensified by the completion of the *Te Deum*, which Bruckner had first drafted in 1881. This triumphant work, often regarded as his greatest choral composition, proclaims above all the depth of its creator's religious fervour. It is scored for soloists, chorus and orchestra, with optional organ, and like the Seventh Symphony was an instantaneous success. Its grandeur is immense, almost barbaric in nature, culminating in a double fugue leading to a vast climax. Lasting a mere thirty-five minutes it is a compact work: Bruckner obviously did not intend a choral masterpiece on the scale of the later symphonies. The harmony is modal in tendency, and the thematic matter derives from short motivic cells, which in turn have their origin in plainsong. The year 1884 also saw the beginning of the composition of the Eighth Symphony in C minor on which work continued until September 1887. His sixtieth birthday was celebrated at his sister Rosalie's home at Vöcklabruck, where the town band honoured the occasion, and where he became involved in another of his affairs of the heart with a teenage girl, Marie Denmar. The following year was a successful one as regards

performances of his music since the Seventh was heard in several cities in Europe and America, but Bruckner refused to allow it to be played in Vienna 'on account of the influential critics who would only be likely to obstruct the course of my dawning success in Germany', a judgement which was proved correct the next year. Gutmann agreed to publish the work for the fee of one thousand florins, and it was dedicated to King Ludwig II of Bavaria. Liszt became an admirer on hearing the Adagio and did much to further Bruckner's career, arranging a performance of the String Quintet and part of the Fourth Symphony. During the year he worked on the Eighth despite the first signs of declining health, including the onset of a form of dropsy. In June 1886 he was decorated with the Order of Franz Joseph, being personally received by the Emperor, who granted him a payment from the imperial purse and accepted the dedication of the Eighth.

On completion he sent the new symphony to his staunch admirer Hermann Levi, but the most severe setback of his career soon followed when Levi admitted to being baffled by the work. The result of this rejection was a return to despair: the symptoms of his neuroses reasserted themselves and he once again spoke of suicide. He began an intensive period of revision which was to prove disastrous as far as work on the projected Ninth Symphony was concerned; one may well conjecture that this would have reached completion but for the energy and time spent on the revision of earlier works. The revised version of the Eighth was written between October 1887 and March 1890, and in the course of it Bruckner allowed himself to be persuaded by various pupils into making many alterations, not always for the best. At the same time his daily life was still filled by teaching duties, and in addition he undertook new versions of the First and Third Symphonies, and further revised the F minor mass. These labours proved detrimental to his health, and in that same year he suffered from chronic catarrh of the larynx, as well as further deterioration of his nervous condition. In the autumn he was forced to resign his post at the Conservatory. A small work for male voices, *Träumen und Wachen*, written in December of that year, was his only composition written during the entire period of revisions, 1887 to 1891.

Bruckner considered his Eighth Symphony to be his finest. It is a gigantic work, larger and more complex than any of its predecessors, on a heroic scale displaying huge contrasts in emotional forces, and filled by a sense of grave crisis, particularly in the first movement. It was performed in its revised version in Vienna in December 1892, again with Richter conducting. The occasion was another triumph for the composer, who received several laurel wreaths, and the symphony was even praised by Brahms.

In 1886 Bruckner, still in search of honours, had taken advantage of his success in America and applied for a doctorate to the universities of Philadelphia and Cincinnati, but without success. In July 1891, however, Vienna University bestowed on him the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It was the first time the award had been made to a musician and the honour pleased him enormously. His finances were also aided by an award from the Upper Austrian parliament. But the accolades had come too late. His health was now failing rapidly, leading to his resignation from the Hofkapelle in 1892. He was however able to compose a last choral work that year, a setting of Psalm 150 for the Allgemeine Deutsche Musikverein festival. The text is a German version of the 1884 *Te Deum*. Both works have much in common. They are in the same key, C major, share the same rapturous mood and neither are intended for a religious service, being purely concert works. The same year he also completed a secular piece of minor importance, *Das deutsche Lied*.

Constant stomach ailments made dieting a necessity, and for most of 1893 Bruckner was confined to bed. At this time he seemed more than ever aware of his loneliness, although recognition was increasingly coming his way: he received honorary membership of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, and several works were published during the year, notably the First Symphony. Also in 1893 he wrote what was to be his last completed work, *Helgoland*, for male chorus and orchestra, and made a will in which he bequeathed his manuscripts to the Hofbibliothek in Vienna, 'for later times'. The following year saw his resignation from the University; but with an improvement in his condition he was able to travel to Berlin to hear performances of several of his works, all of which were loudly acclaimed. However, in April he was too ill to

attend the premiere of the Fifth Symphony. In the summer he visited St Florian and Upper Austria for the last time, spending his seventieth birthday at Steyr, where he was presented with the freedom of the city of Linz.

Ever since 1887 Bruckner had been working fitfully at his final, unfinished composition, the Ninth Symphony. By November 1894 the first three movements were complete and he went ahead with the finale, on which he spent the remaining two years of his life. He was now increasingly troubled by periods when he was incapable of rational thought and work progressed very slowly. Had it been completed it would have been his largest work, and its dedication *den lieben Gott* points clearly to the essence of the music which is in the nature of a summing-up of the whole of its composer's preceding work. Here his mystical nature is most clearly revealed and his range of expression greatly widened. It is an immensely forward-looking work, standing on the threshold of the twentieth century, in which Bruckner approaches the sound world of the early expressionist composers - the first inklings of this are clearly perceptible in the advanced harmonic language and wide melodic intervals. The first movement sums up Bruckner's D minor world and it is arguably the greatest music he ever wrote. He described the Adagio as his 'farewell to life', and its coda, which is now the end of the symphony, is infused with a serenity which stands in profound contrast to the disturbed utterance of all that precedes it. It is a fitting end to a life such as Bruckner's, in which earthly struggles are finally transcended by an all-embracing religious faith. The existing sketches of the finale are extensive and more or less in full score, and while they are sufficient indication of the movement's ambitious scale, their nature is such as to make a construction of the movement impossible by anyone but the composer himself.

By now Bruckner was unable to climb the stairs to his flat and in July 1895 he moved into the gatekeeper's lodge at the Belvedere Palace, put at his disposal by the Emperor. The following January he attended his last concert in which the *Te Deum* was performed in a programme including works by Wagner and the young Richard Strauss; he was now so ill that he had to be carried into the hall. His final months were clouded by neurotic symptoms and a vestige of religious mania. On 11 October he worked for a time in

the morning on the sketches of the Ninth Symphony finale, and in the early afternoon took a walk in the beautiful gardens surrounding his house. He died peacefully soon after his return. The funeral took place three days later in the Karlskirche, and was attended by throngs of admirers. The Adagio of the Seventh Symphony was played in an arrangement for wind band. His remains were taken to St Florian, as he had wished, and now lie in a sarcophagus beneath the organ. Not long before his death he had told his doctor that the Ninth was to be dedicated 'to the King of Kings, our Lord, and I hope that He will grant me enough time to complete it'; that this was not to be is the crowning tragedy of a tragic life.

LIST OF BRUCKNER'S PRINCIPAL WORKS

Symphonies

Symphony in F minor, 'Studiensinfonie'	1863
First Symphony, in C minor	1866
Symphony in D minor, 'Die Nullte'	1869
Second Symphony, in C minor	1872
Third Symphony, in D minor	1873
Fourth Symphony, in E flat, 'Romantic'	1874
Fifth Symphony, in B flat	1877
Sixth Symphony, in A	1881
Seventh Symphony, in E	1883
Eighth Symphony, in C minor	1887
Ninth Symphony, in D minor (movements 1-3 only completed)	1894

(The above dates indicate the year in which each work was first completed. For detailed information on the revisions see Edwin Doernberg, 'The Life and Symphonies of Anton Bruckner')

Large-scale choral works

Mass in D minor	1864
Mass in E minor	1866
Mass in F minor	1868
Te Deum	1884
Psalm 150	1892

Smaller choral works

Preiset den Herrn	1862
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Chamber music

String Quintet in F	1879
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