THE PHILHARMONIC-SYMPHONY SOCIETY
1842 OF NEW YORK 1878

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1947 ONE HUNDRED SIXTH SEASON **1948**

CARNEGIE HALL

THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 22, 1948 at 8:45
FRIDAY AFTERNOON, JANUARY 23, 1948 at 2:30

4552nd and 4553rd Concerts

Under the Direction of

BRUNO WALTER

PROGRAM

RICHARD STRAUSS "Metamorphosen," Study for 23 Solo String Instruments
(First performance by the Society)

INTERMISSION

BRUCKNER Symphony in C minor, No. 8

I. Allegro moderato
II. Scherzo: Allegro moderato; Trio: Langsam
III. Adagio: Feierlich langsam, doch nicht schleppend
IV. Finale: Feierlich, nich schnell.

These concerts will end on Thursday at approximately 10:45 *.m.*
and on Friday at approximately 4:30 *p.m.*

ORCHESTRA PENSION FUND — *It is requested that subscribers who are unable to use their tickets kindly return them to the Philharmonic-Symphony Offices, 113 W. 57th St., or to the Box Office, Carnegie Hall, at their choice either to be sold for the benefit of the Orchestra Pension Fund, or given to the uniformed men through the local organization instituted for this purpose. All tickets received will be acknowledged.*

SCORES *of the works on this program may be obtained for home study by holders of cards in the New York Public Library. The Music Branch, 121 East 58th Street, has a large collection of music available for circulation.*

PHILHARMONIC FORECASTS — *Lectures on current Philharmonic programs are given by Marion Rous in Steinway Concert Hall on Fridays at 11 A.M. For particulars telephone WAtkins 9-2170 or write to 58 Charles St., New York 14, N.Y.*

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM*

By ROBERT BAGAR AND LOUIS BIANCOLLI

"Metamorphosen," Study for 23 Solo String Instruments

RICHARD STRAUSS

(Born in Munich, June 11, 1864; now living in Germany)

The last page of the printed score of *Metamorphosen* carries the words "In Memoriam! Garmisch, 12 April 1945." The work was composed during the month preceding that date, and the strings involved are the violins, five violas, five 'cellos, and three basses. It was first played by the orchestra of the Collegium Musicum under the direction of Paul Sacher (for whom it was written) at Zurich, January 25, 1946. In this country it was given its initial performance by Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony, in Boston, January 3, 1947, and the same group first presented it here, in Carnegie Hall, January 11, of the same year.

Willi Schuh, discussing this composition after its Zurich performance, wrote, "It had never occurred to anyone to write a large symphonic work for an ensemble of twenty-three solo string players. Strauss at eighty-one has broken a new path, as he did before in his symphonic poems, his *Salome,* and his *Ariadne auf Naxos.* And in those cases it was the nature of the work in hand which led him into the new way, into the new expressive form and means. It has not been a matter of searching and testing: the Straussian mastery finds at once the full expressive medium and the inward secret of presentation in an outward form."

Metamorphosen is written in one movement. Its tempo markings, in succession, are Adagio, Appassionato, Agitato, Piu allegro, Adagio tempo primo. The thematic material is divided into two groups, each having three subjects. And — considering the formal sequence of introduction of material, development, and a return to Adagio, plus a Coda — the single movement can be said to be in sonata form.

The themes are handled as melodic voices, rather always interweaving. There is a separate part for each one of the instruments, and the violins, be it noted, are not split into firsts and seconds. There are reduplications of parts, here and there, as might be expected, and particularly whenever

the composer feels the need to reinforce a solo line, or perhaps a section of one. Moreover *tuttis* do occur during the course of the music, but only in measures of a climactic nature.

About this piece John N. Burk remarks that "The title *Metamorphoses* may refer to the transformation of thematic material, and the subtitle *Study* may simply characterize the score as an experiment in part distribution. Both titles seem non-committal in view of the inscription on the last page of the score and an unmistakable tragic undercurrent in the music itself. The principal theme in C minor, introduced by two violas in the ninth bar, recalls the halting theme of the *Marcia funebre* in Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony. At the very end this similarity becomes unmistakably marked."

It may be recalled that the 81year-old Richard Strauss and his family were living, in April, 1945, at their villa in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, on the door of which, one day, the Americans, then occupying Bavaria, posted a sign reading "Clear Out by Morning." However, through the intercession of A.M.G. authorities, the sign was taken down, and the composer was assured that he would not be troubled further. R.C.B.

Symphony in C minor, No. 8 — ANTON BRUCKNER

(Born at Ansfelden, in Upper Austria, September, 1824; died at Vienna, October 11, 1896)

Of all the strange phenomena of nineteenth century European music, this tops all — that Anton Bruckner, a simple, naïve, lonely, and sensitive man, with thoughts fixed on God and eternity, should have been one of the most cordially hated composers of his time. The adoring band of followers partly made up for it in loyalty and fighting spirit, and the Viennese public soon came to recognize his worth. But in the enemy camp his very appearance was cause for ridicule. Hanslick even taunted him on his "Emperor Claudius head," and the triumvirate — Dömpke, Kalbeck, Hanslick — revelled in descriptions of the comical, ill-dressed figure forever bowing acknowledgments to his embattled flock. Some felt, too, that there was no place in gay Vienna for this boorish ascetic from the provinces, with his sheltered, unromantic life and his funny, homespun dialect. To Hanslick there was always something ludicrous in the spectacle of this pious man, steeped in textbook counterpoint and churchly lore, swept off his feet by the new current and going over, body and soul, to Wagnerism. He saw Bruckner as leading a double life. In one of them he was the formidable contrapuntist Abrechtsberger returned to life. In the other he was Wagner. And Hanslick thought he had dealt the fatal blow with the line: "Behold Albrechtsberger walking arm-in-arm with Wagner!"

Actually, Wagner, at least in the spirit, always accompanied Bruckner. The simple, awkward, unassuming organist and school-teacher from the north, the devout villager of peasant stock described as half yokel and half seer, had encountered the music of Wagner and lost his head and heart to it. To adapt the Master's theories to absolute music and to find a place for them in the symphony became a fixed goal. For better or for worse Bruckner had formed a lifelong attachment. In some ways he paid dearly for it. Vienna was an armed camp. In the press Wagnerites and anti-Wagnerites fumed venomously at each other. To those who trooped

after Richard of Bayreuth Eduard Hanslick was a kind of devil incarnate. For the perfect Wagnerite to be seen in affable conversation with the critic of the "Neue freie Presse" amounted to artistic suicide. His reviews bristled with acid gibes at the Wagner cult. And when the Brucknerites set up their idol as a kind of *alter ego* of the Bayreuth master, Bruckner's doom was sealed. The Hanslick faction pursued the new quarry like Greek Furies. They saw him deliberately pitted against their own standard-bearer, Brahms, and raged still more.

Disciples of Bruckner affirmed that Hanslick lay awake nights "plotting his destruction," that he tried to have him ejected from the Vienna Conservatory, that he intrigued to prevent performances of his work. Hanslick no doubt went all lengths to demolish Bruckner as a composer. That he schemed to discredit him as a teacher is a bit thick. Hanslick had his own ideas about music. Brahms's largely co-incided with them. Wagner's did not. For Hanslick it was bad enough to have Wagnerism wreck opera, as he saw it. To find it poaching on symphonic grounds under another's name was adding insult to injury. That was his temperament. To the very end he refused to accept Wagner and Bruckner, and he went to his grave a byword and a monster to their camp-followers.

When Bruckner's Seventh Symphony, after triumphing in Leipzig, Munich, and Graz, finally reached Vienna in a performance by the Philharmonic under Hans Richter's direction, the anti-Brucknerites were ready for it. They especially resented the action of a sturdy Bruckner wing among the subscribers in recalling the composer four or five times after each movement. Hanslick, admitting quite frankly that he found himself unable to judge Bruckner's music dispassionately, nevertheless proceeded to blast away at it as "unnatural," "inflated," "sickly," and "decayed." Max Kalbeck, writing in the "Presse," confected a wild jingle from well-known lyrics to illustrate Bruckner's style of composition. "We believe as little in the future of the Bruckner symphony," he went on, "as in the victory of chaos over cosmos." He observed of the chief theme of the first movement, "No one knows where it comes from or where it is going; or rather, it comes from the Nibelungs and goes to the devil." To Kalbeck the theme of the Scherzo was a "mixture of swagger and beggarliness." G. Dömpke of the "Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung" could do nothing better, in his rage, than scream out: "Bruckner composes like a drunkard!"

The Emperor Franz Joseph is said to have asked Bruckner once to name a wish and it would be granted. Whether facetiously or not, Bruckner is supposed to have requested him to stop Eduard Hanslick from insulting him in print. Composers have their own way of shaking off the accumulated quills of a lifetime. Bruckner reserved final judgment on Hanslick until late in his career, when his pupil Carl Hruby credited him with the statement: "I guess Hanslick understands as little about Brahms as about Wagner, me, and others. And the Doctor Hanslick knows as much about counterpoint as a chimney-sweep about astronomy."

Some of the finest words ever written about Bruckner came from Felix Weingartner not long after the Austrian composer's death. They make bracing reading after the oafish blasts of the Hanslick-Dömpke-Kalbeck battery.

"Think of this schoolmaster and organist, risen from the poorest surroundings and totally lacking in education, but steadfastly composing symphonies of dimensions hitherto unheard of, crowded with difficulties

and solecisms of all kinds, which were the horror of conductors, performers, listeners, and critics, because they interfered sadly with their comfort.

"Think of him thus going unswervingly along his way toward the goal he had set himself, in the most absolute certainty of not being noticed and of attaining nothing but failure — and then compare him with our fashionable composers borne on by daily success and advertisement, who puzzle out their trifles with the utmost *raffinerie*. And then bow in homage to this man, great and pathetic in his naïvete and his honesty. I confess that scarcely anything in the new symphonic music can weave itself about me with such wonderful magic as can a single theme or a few measures of Bruckner. . . .

"In the strife between the Brahms and Bruckner factions in Vienna I was once asked my opinion of the two men. I replied that I wished that nature had given us one master in whom the characteristics of both composers were united — the monstrous imagination of Bruckner with the eminent possibilities of Brahms."

To which may be appended the glowing estimate of Lawrence Gilman, who doubtless sensed a kindred soul in the mystic, far-seeing Bruckner:— "For a few he was and is, at rare intervals, a seer and a prophet — one who knew the secret of a strangely exalted discourse, grazed the sublime, though his speech was often both halting and prolix. He stammered, and he knew not when to stop. But sometimes, rapt and transfigured, he saw visions and dreamed dreams as colossal, as grandiose, as awful in lonely splendor, as those of William Blake. We know that for Bruckner, too, some ineffable beauty flamed and sank and flamed again across the night."

* * *

Bruckner began work on his Eighth Symphony in Vienna some time in 1884, finishing the original version of the opening Allegro during the winter of that year. In the course of the next six years he returned to the symphony again and again, revising it repeatedly, until it was completed in 1890. Hans Richter conducted the world premiere of the new work at a concert of the Vienna Philharmonic on December 18, 1892. Hanslick, still unrepentant as Bruckner's sworn foe, was obliged to report the stupendous ovation given Bruckner:— "Boisterous rejoicing, waving of handkerchiefs from those standing, innumerable recalls, laurel wreaths." It is possible he did not witness the demonstration himself, for the story is that he beat a hasty but conspicuous retreat before the Finale. Max Fiedler introduced the symphony to America at a concert of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Boston on March 13, 1909. On March 18 the visiting band performed the work in Carnegie Hall. And one month later Fiedler was prompted to repeat the new symphony in Boston "by request." On the occasion of its New York premiere, the late Pitts Sanborn reviewed Bruckner's latest work as follows:—

In this symphony one hears the real Bruckner, not the crabbed, half-ludicrous pedant who boasted that he was doing for the symphony what Wagner had done for the opera, and then matched Beethoven by putting forth his symphonic message in nine instalments.

The Bruckner of the Eighth Symphony dwells upon the heights and speaks the language of the immortals. In melodic invention, in structure, in orchestral treatment, in sustained interest this symphony is far removed from the symphonies of Bruckner heard here before. Of the garrulous,

the pedantic, the unimportant, the tiresome there is little in the work; of genuine music, great music, a wonderful profusion.

Take the Scherzo. Call it, if you will, "the German Michael," the merry-making clodhopper. But what vigor, swing, strength are in it, what hearty humor! And the Trio has the caressing warmth of sunlight falling peacefully upon the peasants' dance.

Then comes the Adagio, said to be the longest symphonic adagio in existence, and by some (Mr. Fiedler among others) the greatest. Music of such lofty inspiration cannot seem long, and even after this sublime Adagio the Finale is not an anti-climax, but a true culmination in its thrilling immensities of sound.

The dedication of the Eighth Symphony reads: "To His Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty Francis Joseph I, Emperor of Austria and Apostolic King of Hungary, in deepest reverence." Bruckner's Seventh Symphony also carries a royal dedication, similarly "in deepest reverence," to King Ludwig II of Bavaria.

During the premiere of the symphony in Vienna, Philharmonic patrons were edified by descriptive clues in the printed program. They were told, for example, that in listening to the first theme of the first movement they should envision the "Prometheus Bound" of Aeschylus. Other portions of the opening Allegro were intended to depict "the greatest loneliness and silence." The Aeschylean hero suffers something of a let-down in the Scherzo, according to the Viennese annotator. There "the deeds and sufferings of Prometheus are reduced in the way of parody to the smallest proportions." In short, the Scherzo was entitled, "Der deutsche Michel"—a far from complimentary reference usually denoting an Upper-Austrian yokel or clodhopper. One is scarcely surprised to find Hanslick remarking sarcastically:— "If a critic had spoken this blasphemy, he would probably have been stoned to death by Bruckner's disciples; but the composer himself gave this name, 'the German Michael,' to the Scherzo, as may be read in black and white in the program." In an issue of "Chord and Discord" some years ago, Gabriel Engel dwelt at some length on the use of this term as a motto for the Scherzo movement of Bruckner's Symphony. Since the term recurs in all discussion of this Symphony, it is well to heed his words:—

Most, if not all, of the naive "Michel" story, was a mere afterthought, much as the narrative background Bruckner attributed to the Romantic. *The original manuscript at the point of the first entry of the "Michel" motive bears the notation "Almeroth." Carl Almeroth, a lovable, genial Upper-Austrian provincial, was one of Bruckner's dearest friends. A native of the charming little town of Steyr, where Bruckner composed the* Scherzo *and later movements of the* Eighth, he (*and not the symbolic "Michel"*) *was the character the composer intended to embody in this lumbering, sturdy, good-natured motive. Doubtless it occurred to Bruckner afterwards that Almeroth's nature was typically Austrian. Thereupon he evolved the rest of the "Michel" background for the symphony, carrying some of the incidents over into the* Finale. *As a valid commentary on the Promethean happenings mirrored in the score it is certainly inadequate. Not unless one is willing to concede Bruckner that peculiarly Mahlerian trait of symbolism is the miraculous transformation of "Michel" to "St. Michael," allegedly celebrated in the closing triumph of the symphony, in the least plausible.*

Letters Bruckner wrote to the critic Helm and the conductor Wein-

gartner years after the work was finished are the chief authorities for the details of the "Michel" legend. Said Bruckner to the former with special reference to the Scherzo, *"My Michel typifies the Austrian folk-spirit, the idealistic dreamer, not the German spirit, which is pure* Scherz [*jest*]*." Thus unconsciously, perhaps, Bruckner made his "Michel" a self-portrait. During the years (six in all) he spent in shaping and reshaping the symphony the figure of "Michel" virtually came alive for him. If the setting of any passage containing the "Michel" motive proved particularly troublesome he would exclaim in vexation, "Look out, Michel! Better not annoy me too much!"*

A representative portion of Bruckner's commentary on the Scherzo *follows, "Michel, pulling his cap down over his ears, presents his head, crying, 'Punch away! I can stand it.' —Wearied by the shower of buffets he would like to sleep, but recurring blows keep him awake. He swings about him desperately, scattering his enemies, and emerges victorious through his persistence. — [Trio] Michel dreams of the country — He longs for his sweetheart — He prays — Sighing, he wakes to rude reality."*

In the Finale: *"Michel, from a place of concealment, steals a view of the pomp and ceremony [The meeting of the emperors] — He is pursued and captured by Cossacks — The trombones begin a funeral chorale for him — He squirms away and, chuckling, disappears high up in the flutes."*

The absence of reference to "Michel" in Bruckner's remarks concerning the first and slow movements is added proof of the synthetic nature of the whole legend.

In all fairness to Bruckner, who may have been intimidated by Hanslick's gibe, it should be added that the rustic motto does not appear in the published score.

After turning Prometheus into an Upper-Austrian country-bumpkin, the annotator of the Vienna premiere now made ample amends in the last two movements. To his worshipful eyes and ears the Adagio depicted none other than "the all-loving Father of mankind in his measureless wealth of mercy." The Finale was a continuation of the idea — "heroism in the sense of the Divine," the trumpets announcing eternal salvation as the "heralds of the idea of divinity." While the published score again offers no verbal support of such a cosmic program there is a supporting clue in the manuscript of the Finale. At the point where the four main themes of the symphony burst out together in polyphonic exultation a word appears in Bruckner's handwriting — "Hallelujah!"

A vast array of instruments is called for in the scoring of the Eighth Symphony. This consists of three flutes, three oboes, three clarinets, three bassoons (one interchangeable with double-bassoon), eight horns (horns 5-8 interchangeable with tenor and bass tubas), three trumpets, three trombones, contrabass tuba, kettledrums, triangle, cymbals, three harps, and the usual strings. Quoted below is Pitts Sanborn's terse analysis of the symphony:—

The first movement (Allegro moderato, C minor, 2-2) has as chief subject a strongly rhythmed motive marked by an upward leap of a sixth. It is given out pianissimo by the violas, 'cellos, and double basses. The second subject, which has been termed "questioning," is announced by the first violins. Woodwind instruments reply. The movement is richly elaborated.

The Scherzo (Allegro moderato, C minor, 3-4) begins humorously with a theme allotted to the violas and 'cellos. In contrast, the violins

whisper a mysterious figure that leads to a mighty crescendo. There is a reminiscence of a rhythm in the Eighth Symphony of Beethoven. The mysterious figure returns inverted, and there is a repetition of the first section. The Trio (Langsam, A-flat major, 2-4) opens delicately in the strings. The horn enters upon their soft contentment. E major harmonies are heard. A second subject brings back A-flat major. The opening of the Trio is heard again with changes of tonality, and the whole first part of the Scherzo, which ends in C major, is repeated.

The Adagio (Feierlich langsam, doch nicht schleppend, D-flat major, 4-4) after two measures, introduces a long cantilena of the G string for the first violins, accompanied by the second violins and the lower strings, reinforced presently by wind instruments. The 'cellos give out the second theme,which is followed by the tranquil song of the tubas. In the course of this movement appears the rhythm for horns of Wagner's Siegfried motive. The Adagio ends with a peaceful coda, indicating pianissimo in the third and fourth measures before the close the principal rhythm of the Finale.

This Finale, marked "Feierlich, nicht schnell" ("Solemnly, not fast"), in C minor, 2-2, has as first subject a three-part theme that may allude to the meeting of the emperors! The slower second theme is of an ecclesiastical character. There is a third theme introduced by woodwind and strings which amounts to a double theme, the lower voice assuming special importance. The triumphant ending of the symphony, in C major, gathers together exultantly the principal themes of all four movements.

The "meeting of the emperors" is a reference to the celebrated parley of Franz Josef and the Russian Czar at Olmütz — an occasion of vast pomp and circumstance. It has been widely assumed that Bruckner sought to convey the panoplied splendor of that imperial encounter through a huge symphonic tapestry. That he should have been overawed by the ceremonial spectacle of empire is not surprising when one understands the man's simple and unquestioning reverence for authority. "Bruckner's worship of rank and pomp can only be understood as closely akin to his devout participation in every detail of the church ritual," writes Mr. Engel. "The emperor was to him a temporal symbol of divinity." Hence, no doubt, the dedication of the Eighth Symphony to the "Emperor of Austria and the Apostolic King of Hungary." Whatever the source of Bruckner's inspiration — royal, divine, or both — the Finale is a stupendous fabric of elaborate and brilliantly sustained polyphony. The bringing together of the four chief themes in the Coda, after an intricate contrapuntal drama of contrast and conflict produces an overwhelming effect. Mr. Engel has described that moment:—

"A last powerful, austere presentation of the opening theme in the trombones; an equally heroic last appearance of the "Michel" motive in broad augentation in the trumpets; and the tonal stage for the great triumph is set. The gloom of the initial key, C minor, has been transformed (as in that other great symphony of Fate, Beethoven's Fifth) to the bright splendor of C major. Now in the utmost imaginable splendor resounds the consummately welded choir of the symphony's four principal themes, a veritable apotheosis of Bruckner's polyphonic genius."

After such a tribute to earthly majesty it would seem only fitting that Bruckner's next symphony — his Ninth and last — should be dedicated to God!

L.B.