THE
Concert Companion

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO SYMPHONIC MUSIC

by

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with an introduction by DEEMS TAYLOR

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Anton Bruckner

BORN: ANSFELDEN, UPPER AUSTRIA, SEPT. 4, 1824. DIED: VIENNA, OCT. 11, 1896.

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, grazing 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 aweful 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.—LAWRENCE GILMAN.

Symphony in E flat major, No. 4 ("Romantic")

I. Allegro molto moderato. II. Andante. III. Scherzo. IV. Finale.

THOUGH THIS Symphony was completed on Nov. 22, 1874, it was not given the subtitle *Romantic* until two years later. It is believed that the composer tacked a subtitle, as well as a "program," on it under the influence of Wagner. The latter, be it remembered, had gone so far as to concoct an elaborate literary interpretation of the Beethoven Ninth. Bruckner knew Wagner. In fact, he had dedicated—with the latter's permission—his Third Symphony to him. He trembled with adulatory excitement at the mere thought of Wagner. If Wagner, therefore, could invent a "program" for the Beethoven piece, was there anything wrong in Bruckner's doing a like service for his own—belatedly?

The beginning of the *Romantic Symphony* Bruckner described as follows: "A citadel of the Middle Ages. Daybreak. Reveille is sounded from the tower. The gates open. Knights on proud chargers leap forth. The magic of nature surrounds them."

Gabriel Engel, in his biography of Bruckner, declares:

That the composer did not regard the "program" seriously is evident from his remark concerning the Finale: "And in the last movement I've forgotten completely what picture I had in mind. . . . The work possesses, however, an unmistakable unity hitherto without precedent in absolute music, for all four parts spring from the main theme, in the first movement. So logical and masterly is the development of this theme in the course of the work that the climax is not reached until the closing portion of the Finale.

The Fourth Symphony underwent two revisions, the first occurring in 1878, and the second during 1879-1880, when the Finale was rewritten.

Seven years after its completion, on Feb. 20, 1881, it was given its premiere at a Philharmonic concert in Vienna. Hans Richter was the conductor. Richter had invited Bruckner to one of the rehearsals. During the playing of one passage, Richter stopped the orchestra, puzzled. He turned to the composer, asking, "What note is this?" Bruckner, ever aiming to please, answered, "Any you choose. Quite as you like." When the rehearsal was over Bruckner presented the conductor with a thaler (a three-mark piece).

Richter later said:

The thaler is the memento of a day when I wept. For the first time I conducted a Bruckner symphony, at rehearsal. Bruckner was an old man then. His works were hardly performed anywhere. When the Symphony was over Bruckner came to me. He was radiant with enthusiasm and happiness. I felt him put something in my hand. "Take it, and drink a mug of beer to my health." It was a thaler.

The conductor kept the coin, not wishing to offend the aging composer. He finally fixed it to his watch chain.

In any case, at the performance the public approved of the Symphony wholeheartedly. Bruckner was called to the stage for bows after each movement.

Another number in that program was a piece by Bülow. It was a symphonic poem going under the trenchant title of *The Singer's Curse*. It was not received favorably. Bülow, quite jealous of Bruckner's success, asked (referring to the Symphony), "Is that German music?" The answer has not been recorded.

The *Romantic Symphony* is dedicated to the Prince Constantin Hohenlohe-Schillingfürst, who was the Lord Marshal to the Emperor of Austria. It was given its initial performance in the United States at New York on March 16, 1888, under the direction of Anton Seidl.

Werner Wolff's biography of Bruckner says of the work,

The word "Romantic" has been used for this symphony in its most popular sense, meaning imaginative, unrestrained, nebulous and mysterious. Nostalgic reverie is also called "romantic" at times and this meaning, too, has been applied to the Fourth.

Gabriel Engel clearly proves how differently this music can be felt. He wrote [in *Chord and Discord*, January, 1940]: "The long chain of dark-tinged compositions preceding the Fourth makes the radiant sunrise which begins that symphony all the more amazing." Again and again he stressed "joyful upheaval."

The first movement (Allegro molto moderato, E flat major, 2/2) begins with a string tremolo in E flat, and soon a horn call is heard against that. The wood winds imitate the call, out of which the initial part of the first theme is constructed. Its second part consists of what has been called the "typical Bruckner rhythm," two even quarter notes followed by a triplet of three quarter notes. This fragment is given a good deal of development, and presently there is a modulation to the key of D flat. The violas announce the second

theme proper, a subject of "cantabile nature." The cellos take it up, playing it against a contrapuntal imitation in the violins. The first section of the movement ends with a development of the second part of the opening theme. Without repeat, another call-like phrase, this time in the brass, ushers in a sort of free fantasia. The recapitulation comes next, proceeding along well-established lines of form, and the second theme is heard now in the key of B major. There follows a coda, whose chief structural feature is the prominence given to the first fragment of the first theme. The movement concludes very sonorously.

The second movement (Andante, C minor, 4/4) corresponds to a romanza constructed on three subjects. The cellos bring in the first, the violins the second, and the strings and wood winds the third.

The third movement (Scherzo, B flat major, 2/4) is built on a series of hunting-horn calls. There is a free development and a subsequent trio in G flat major entails the development of a theme in 3/4, whose spirit is almost that of a minuet. After the trio, the scherzo is repeated.

The fourth movement (mässig bewegt E flat major, 2/2) opens with softly intoned horn phrases which grow into another theme for trumpets. The full orchestra announces this theme in unison and fortissimo. A second theme, of a livelier nature, is first stated by the strings and later by the whole orchestra. There follows a free development and the movement takes up its various subjects in an elaborate counterpoint. It closes with a "sonorous apotheosis."

The Fourth Symphony is scored for three flutes (one interchangeable with piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, bass tuba, three kettledrums, and strings. The Finale calls for a pair of cymbals.

R. C. B.

Symphony in E major, No. 7

I. Allegro moderato. II. Adagio: Sehr feierlich und langsam (Very solemn and slow). III. Scherzo: Allegro. Trio: etwas langsamer (Somewhat slower). IV. Finale: Bewegt doch nicht schnell (With movement, but not fast).

According to one version of the story, Bruckner was working on the Adagio movement of his Seventh Symphony when news of Richard Wagner's death in Venice reached him. The date of the Adagio's completion is given as Apr. 21, 1883, in this account. Wagner, Bruckner's idol and inspiration, died on Feb. 13. It was thus a matter of simple inference to regard the Adagio as a disciple's lament over a Master's demise. If the story is straight, the coincidence is one of the neatest and most convenient in musical annals.

However, according to a second version, equally if not better substantiated by the record, Bruckner completed the Adagio in October, 1882, or four months before Wagner's death. This version offers three possibilities regarding the Adagio. (1) It is not a dirge. (2) If it is a dirge, then the commemoration of Wagner was an afterthought. (3) Granted it is a dirge and granted it is in memory of Wagner, then the explanation holds that is often made of the funeral march in the *Eroica Symphony; i.e.,* like Beethoven, Bruckner must have been looking a bit ahead and speculating on his own and the world's grief over the dreaded loss.

In support of the third possibility we have abundant evidence. There is the written record, in words and music, of Bruckner's love and reverence for the master. More specifically, there are excerpts from two letters written to his devoted pupil Felix Mottl. In one, first printed in the *Schwäbischer Merkur* in February, 1900, Bruckner states: "One day I came home and felt very sad. It is impossible, I thought, that the Master should live much longer. And then the C sharp minor Adagio came to me." In the other, written while Mottl was preparing the premiere at Carlsruhe, Bruckner makes the plea: "Please take a very slow and solemn tempo. At the close, in the Dirge [In Memory of the death of the Master], think of our Ideal."

Moreover, ten years earlier Bruckner had dedicated his third symphony "To the Master, Richard Wagner, in deepest reverence." He might well have dedicated all his symphonies to the Bayreuth genius, so complete was his devotion. Instead, the names of Franz Liszt, the King of Bavaria, and the Emperor of Austria adorn other dedication pages. The common belief is that, in his unfinished Ninth Symphony, Bruckner reached out beyond royalty and empire, even beyond Richard Wagner, and dedicated it to God!

The matter of Bruckner's intentions regarding the Adagio has puzzled and annoyed commentators. Biographers are divided on the subject, and equally positive. A faint suspicion creeps into some of the writings that Bruckner was induced by certain Wagnerites and Brucknerites to accommodate himself to a slight juggling of chronology. If not that, then some well-meaning member of the cult has tampered with the record. In any case, this much is certain: if the Adagio followed Wagner's death, it enshrines his memory in elegiac form. If it did not, well, Wagner is there anyway, in some other form.

In fact, Wagner, at least in the spirit, was always there with Bruckner. The simple, awkward, unassuming organist and school teacher from the north, the pious 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 going a bit too far. Hanslick had his own ideas about music. Brahms's largely coincided 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 the 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."

One of the strangest phenomena of nineteenth-century European music was that 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—reveled 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 he was the formidable contrapuntist Albrechtsberger 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!"

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 steadily 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 naïveté 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. . . .

The Seventh Symphony is dedicated "To His Majesty the King, Ludwig II of Bavaria, in deepest reverence." Besides the usual strings, the score calls for flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons in pairs, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, four tubas, one double-bass tuba, three kettledrums, triangle, and cymbals.

In the first movement (Allegro moderato, E major, 2/2), the chief theme is given out by the cellos and repeated by the violins and wood winds. The second theme is stated by oboe and clarinet. The Adagio (Sehr feierlich und langsam, C sharp minor, 4/4) is the most famous movement in any of Bruckner's symphonies. After his death this magnificent lamentation was performed in many German cities as a tribute to his memory. The Scherzo (Sehr schnell, A minor, 3/4) is based on two themes, the second of a tempestuous nature. The trio (Etwas langsamer, F major) is of a contrasting character. After it the Scherzo is repeated. The Finale (Bewegt, doch nicht schnell, E major, 2/2) is a rondo beginning with a subject of noteworthy brilliance. It ends with a coda imposing in its power.

Arthur Nikisch introduced the work on Dec. 30, 1884, at a concert in Leipzig given, according to one record, for the purpose of raising money for a Wagner monument. Theodore Thomas led the American premiere in Chicago on July 29, 1886.

L. B.

Symphony in D minor, No. 9

I. Feierlich (Solemnly). II. Scherzo, Bewegt lebhaft (Mosso vivace). III. Adagio, sehr langsam, feierlich (Very slowly, solemnly).

A SYMPHONY DEDICATED to God! Such, at any rate, is the legend handed down about Bruckner's farewell symphony. According to the story, Bruckner, who died while working on the final bars of the Adagio, intended to inscribe the symphony "to the dear Lord."

"I have done my duty on earth," said Bruckner to a caller shortly after his seventieth birthday. "I have accomplished what I could, and my only wish is to be allowed to finish my Ninth Symphony. Three movements are almost complete. The Adagio is nearly finished. There remains only the Finale. I trust Death will not deprive me of my pen." He prayed nightly to God for time to complete it. "If He refuses, then He must take the responsibility for its incompleteness," he remarked.

Despite attacks of dropsy and a dangerous heart condition, Bruckner worked feverishly at his symphony. But he died without finishing it. For some years it was thought Bruckner left sections of the work in an imperfect state. However, the publication of the ninth volume of a critical edition of Bruckner's works in the early thirties proved that the three movements of the Ninth Symphony, as the composer left them, "must be unconditionally regarded and respected as his final intention."

Moreover, it developed that Bruckner had also been engaged for some time on sketches of an Allegro-Finale. Professor Orel, who edited the ninth volume of the Bruckner's works, included a sketch of this unfinished Finale which

revealed Bruckner's main outlines of form and structure up to the beginning of the coda. Unfortunately, there is no hint anywhere of how the symphony was to end. In the words of Willi Reich: "That portion always treated by Bruckner as a grand summation and, hence, probably the most important passage in the symphony, must remain an eternal mystery."

Reich, in an article appearing in *Chord and Discord*—the magazine of The Bruckner Society of America—now assailed the frequent practice of using Bruckner's *Te Deum* as a choral finale to the Ninth Symphony. "One glance at this mighty torso of a Finale," he stated, "is enough to convince us that the practice . . . corresponds in no respect to the composer's true intention, for this final choral work shows no relationship to the thematic world unforgettably established in the three completed movements of the symphony."

This conclusion coincided with Professor Orel's own contention in the first published version of Bruckner's original score: "Bruckner's clear intent to conclude the Ninth Symphony with a gigantic instrumental Finale proves the utter futility of any attempt to establish a spiritual connection between it and the *Te Deum*—an attempt so frequently made by conductors, despite the insuperable period of a decade separating the conception of the two works in the mind of the composer. Furthermore, the Adagio of the Symphony . . . attains symbolic significance through the realization that the inexorable grip of Fate wrested the pen from the aged master's hand almost at the very moment in which he would have sealed the work with a completed, formal Allegro-Finale."

The appearance of this authentic edition of Bruckner's Ninth caused something of a stir in musical circles because of the so-called "Loewe Version" long in use. For years it had been supposed that Bruckner's manuscript had been left in a highly unsatisfactory state, that thanks to Bruckner's faithful disciple Ferdinand Loewe a rough garbled manuscript had been rendered playable through a polished arrangement. There had been a sensational premiere of Loewe's version on Feb. 11, 1903, in Vienna, under his own direction. Many Brucknerites, who had not even suspected the existence of this posthumous work, were astounded by the revelation. This, incidentally, occurred seven years after the master's death. In 1904, Loewe published the edited score. Some years after the Vienna premiere, doubts began to arise among Bruckner scholars about Loewe's emendations. Drastic, uncalled-for changes of orchestration were suspected, and glaring instances of un-Bruckner-like transitions were noted.

Max Auer wrote as follows in the *Zeitschrift für Musik* (later quoted by *Chord and Discord*):

> Listeners began to notice frequent details in the music which seemed inexplicable in the light of Bruckner's frank and sturdy symphonic character.
>
> When the Scherzo leaped lightly forth, all-aglitter with typically French *esprit*, the audience was reminded of the scintillating manner of Berlioz's instrumentation.

In the minds of many there arose some such questions as these: Where are those abrupt, Bruckneresque transitions between the passages? Why do the various phrases end in gentle expirations? In short, whence comes this odd finesse, this smooth polish, into the work of a composer universally noted for his rugged individuality?

The answer was provided by two important events. One was the *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* of Bruckner's music, sponsored by the Bruckner Gesellschaft. The other was a semiprivate performance—also sponsored by the Bruckner Gesellschaft—at the Tonhalle in Munich on Apr. 2, 1932, of both the "Loewe Version" and the original. The conclusion was unanimous: "So far from being unplayable, the original version far surpassed the 'Loewe Version' by the splendor of its orchestral coloring and the power of its dynamic contrasts. The two versions differed so vastly in spirit that they might be said to belong to different worlds." Thus Bruckner's Ninth Symphony became available to the world in two widely opposed versions. It should be pointed out that Professor Orel arrived at his thesis of Bruckner's own "definitive" version only after an arduous study of all the detailed revisions made by the composer. He established that three movements of the Ninth Symphony were the final stage in a long process of evolution. As evidence, Professor Orel traced the Symphony's slow growth through six separate versions!

There was never any question of Loewe's good intentions in all this. Actually, it was regarded by the less embattled Brucknerites as a case of misplaced zeal. Professor Orel himself stressed this in a subsequent lecture at the University of Vienna. Loewe, he affirmed, had been actuated solely by the desire of a devoted friend and disciple "to render more acceptable to the ears of his contemporaries the general tonal ruggedness of this symphony as left by the master" (Willi Reich). Ironically, it was probably modesty that restrained Loewe from divulging the changes he had made in Bruckner's orchestration. He regarded the task as a labor of love. And despite growing critical suspicion, his version stood for thirty years as a standard repertory score. Such as it was, he had rendered a service somewhat parallel to Rimsky-Korsakoff's in editing *Boris Godounoff*.

When Otto Klemperer and the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Society offered the American premiere of the restored original version in Carnegie Hall on Oct. 11, 1934, Lawrence Gilman called it a "consecrational disclosure." With several others he then concluded that the Loewe version, with which the music world had been familiar, was an "astonishing perversion and distortion of Bruckner's intentions." He now spoke of Loewe's edition as "unauthorized, injudicious, and impertinent." Students who followed the performance with the old score, he ventured, "must have noticed the instances in which not only Loewe the tonal chiseller, but Loewe the superfluous decorator, was put to rout, and something native and strong and unmistakably Brucknerian restored to the structure of the score."

Continuing, Mr. Gilman wrote:

They must have noticed here the omission of an excrescent wood-wind phrase or kettledrum solo, there the restoration of significant chord passages, or the felicitous substitution of violas for bassoon, or the assumption by tubas, with magical effect, of a passage given inexplicably to muted cellos and violas, or the alteration of dynamics and tempo marks. Above all, they must have listened incredulously to the climax of the Adagio as Bruckner actually wrote it, a passage exalted from banality to greatness merely by the simple and honest process of letting it sound as its creator intended.

This point about the Adagio was dwelt on at greater length in Gilman's Sunday article in the *New York Herald Tribune* two days later:

If the student will turn to page 136, bar 3, of Loewe's edition of the orchestral score in the Universal Ed. (page 186, bar 1, of the Eulenburg miniature score) he will find that Bruckner apparently builds the climax of the movement at this point upon a fortissimo proclamation of the main theme by the trombones, tuba, string basses, and bassoons under a simple chord of E major sustained and reiterated by woodwinds, horns, tubas, and a repeated figure of the violins—a sonorous but hardly distinguished treatment of the subject.

But one has only to examine Bruckner's original score (page 180, bar 1) to see at once that what Bruckner said and clearly intended to say at this point was something utterly different from what Loewe has represented him as saying. As Bruckner wrote the passage, the mighty theme in the basses, with its upward leap of a tenth, is heard against an audacious and magnificent dissonance formed by the simultaneous sounding and reiteration (in the woodwind, violins, and upper brass) of the notes E, F sharp, G sharp, A, B, and C. The effect is unforgettable—an inspiration of sheer genius that, at a stroke, alters the passage from rather empty rhetoric to poignant eloquence.

But Loewe seems to have been shocked by it. He preferred something smoother and more decorous. So he sandpapered Bruckner's superb dissonance, removed offending notes from the chord, and turned it into an orthodox E major, retaining only the passing and innocuous F sharp in the violin figure. Thus manicured and made harmoniously presentable, the passage might have been composed by Mendelssohn himself in one of his more daring moments.

Another example of Loewe's tampering with the original occurs in the first movement, page 41, bars 4 to 5. There Bruckner pauses on a seventh chord. The orchestra is silent for a bar and a half. Like nature, Loewe apparently abhorred a vacuum, the result being that the silence was filled with a phrase of his own for oboe and clarinet. As a rule Loewe's changes were in the instrumentation, but these bristle on every page of the score. Loewe, it was suggested, was evidently resolved to translate Bruckner's economy into Wagner's luxury. For Bruckner's scoring almost foreshadows modern technic in expressive instrumentation. In one place Bruckner achieves a contrast by dividing a theme

between strings and wood winds. Loewe joined the instruments in a combined statement of the theme, thus destroying the intended color effect.

Theodore Thomas conducted the American premiere of Bruckner's Ninth Symphony at a concert of the Chicago Orchestra on Feb. 20, 1904, only a year after the Viennese premiere. Karl Muck first directed it in Boston on Nov. 1, 1907, bringing it to New York a few days later, on Nov. 7. There has naturally been speculation as to whether Bruckner deliberately chose the key of D minor with Beethoven's own Ninth Symphony in mind. Bruckner anticipated this. "It grieves me," he once remarked to his friend August Goellerich, "to have conceived the theme of the Ninth in D minor. People will say: 'Obviously Bruckner's Ninth *must* be in the same key as Beethoven's Ninth.' But I cannot discard or transpose the theme because it appeals to me just the way it is, and it looks well in D minor." The former practice of adding the *Te Deum* as a choral finale only strengthened the analogy in people's minds.

The three movements are marked as follows: I. Feierlich (Solemnly), D minor, 2/2; II. Scherzo, Bewegt lebhaft (Mosso vivace), D minor, 3/4; III. Adagio, Sehr langsam, feierlich, E major, 4/4.

The First Movement is unorthodox in structure. Each of the four major themes is built up to a resounding outburst. After some prefatory material, the spacious first theme rings out boldly in D minor from the top of a crescendo. The second theme, slower and more lyrical, is brought in by the first and second violins in A major, ending in a C major phrase. Violins and violas presently take up the third theme, and then expound a fourth theme, which is an extension of the third. There is a crescendo, mounting to a shattering climax, and soon the second main section of the movement—free fantasia and review—begins. The chief theme dominates the coda. There a motive from the introduction is heard too.

The second movement, substantially a classical scherzo with trio, is broadly worked out. The main theme first appears pizzicato among the strings. This is freely elaborated at some length, after which the trio (F sharp major, 3/8), faster than other interludes of this kind, begins. Two themes, one for strings, spiccato, the other, etwas ruhiger (somewhat quieter), for strings and oboes, are developed in the trio, and the scherzo proper returns.

The Adagio is substantially in sonata form. The first theme is given out by the violins. "This deeply earnest theme," said Gilman, "with its upward step of a minor ninth, is characteristically Brucknerian, though the wraiths of Liszt and Wagner do unmistakably peer out at us through the bars." Later the second theme is introduced in broad style by the first and second violins. Its key is A flat major. There is detailed development of both themes. The pace sharpens as a last Bruckner crescendo gets under way. The orchestra recalls the first theme fortissimo, and there is sudden peace, ghostly and elegiac. "The

flickering violins and the dark-tinged tubas," wrote Werner Wolff, "convey the picture of the deeply absorbed composer writing the last pages with a trembling hand. This time Bruckner tells us a story—the story of his end."

L. B.

Overture in G minor

In 1862, at the age of thirty-seven, Bruckner, dissatisfied with the dull and academic instruction of the Viennese Simon Sechter, switched to Otto Kitzler, who was conducting opera at Linz. Kitzler, an arch-modernist of the time, coached him in theory and composition and introduced him to the magic world of Richard Wagner, who remained Bruckner's musical deity to the end.

An early symphony, in F minor, lacking a scherzo, dates from the Kitzler regime, but shows the influence of Mendelssohn, rather than of Wagner. The G minor Overture, more directly inspired by Kitzler's worship of Wagner, also belongs to this period, its composition dating from January, 1863. Kitzler himself thought well of the work, though he grouped it with two or three other pieces, among them a march, under the benevolent label of *Schularbeiten*.

Wagnerian traces are unmistakable in the harmonic scheme, and the finale suggests Wagner's Magic Fire motive, though the resemblance is doubtless pure accident. Contrasting with a strict classicism, Bruckner's own romantic flair asserts itself sturdily. A theme for strings in the body of the overture foreshadows in melodic structure the chief theme of the first movement of the Eighth Symphony, and the very last pages bear a similarity to the finale of the Fourth Symphony. Bruckner's contrapuntal skill is clearly manifested, and a recurrent cello phrase of querying nostalgic mood is enough to stamp the overture Bruckner's.

The work was buried away with other early Bruckneriana until Felix Weingartner put it on a Vienna Philharmonic program in October, 1921. The manuscript is now in the Vienna State Library.

L. B.