THE VISITOR to Austria proceeding eastwards from Salzburg to the capital city of Vienna passes through the hilly districts and fertile plains of Upper Austria, which, as an arch-duchy, once belonged to the Austrian Crown. It is a corn-growing, mountainous country, with little villages and small towns, some of which still preserve their mediaeval buildings and fortifications. The churches of the rural communities are a characteristic feature of the landscape. Their spires stand out against the silhouettes of the Alpine mountain ranges in the background. There are also magnificent baroque monasteries, admired because of their richly decorated churches and fine organs, and renowned for their libraries and archives. Here learning and art have flourished since the Middle Ages.

It is a country inhabited by simple, hardworking and very religious peasantfolk, who like to sing and dance to the tunes which the small village bands play with never-tiring animation. It is in this region of strong, humble and devout peasantry that Anton Bruckner has his roots.

From the organ of the Augustinian monastery of St. Florian, which boasted four manuals, a pedal with 30 keys, 94 stops and about 5000 pipes, Bruckner received lasting inspiration for his own creations. The dances and ländler of the peasantfolk were an inexhaustible melodic source for his rustic, exuberant scherzos. Deep religious feeling and unswerving trust in God not only carried this simple and good-natured musical giant through a life filled with artistic defeats and personal disappointments, but also nourished and generated his creative powers. Bruckner was, as Franz Schalk, his great apostle, once put it, a believer without comparison. The devoutness and force of his belief seemed miraculous. A tremendous gap separated him from the world into which he was born — a world whose "intellectualism" and rational thinking derided his own mediaeval, monastic approach to man and to life. Today we can understand the opposition Bruckner encountered from his contemporaries when his symphonic colossi were first presented to them. The second half of Bruckner's life was a thirty-year war for recognition. It was in the final stage of this struggle — when there were at last glorious triumphs as well as disappointing setbacks — that the Ninth Symphony came into being.

The triumphant reception of the Seventh Symphony, under Hermann Levi in Munich in 1885, not only increased Bruckner's prestige in Vienna and Germany, but also incited his creative impulse. He worked on the Eighth Symphony, which he finished on August 10, 1887. One would think that after the completion of a work of such gigantic proportions, Bruckner would be longing for carefree days and some recreation. It would be natural for a man of 62. But he did not allow himself to rest. On August 12th he began the composition of the Ninth. No doubt he had conceived the Symphony when he put the finishing touches to the Eighth, the score of which he had dispatched to Munich in the firm hope of a performance there under Hermann Levi.

Levi, whom Wagner had entrusted with the direction of "Parsifal" in Bayreuth, was a sincere friend and admirer of Bruckner. He lost no time in studying the new symphony, but he failed to understand it and, admitting his lack of courage, suggested a revision. Josef Schalk, one of Bruckner's most trusted pupils, had to break the sad news to the master. It had an almost catastrophic impact on Bruckner. He suffered a nervous collapse and even spoke of suicide. In the final analysis, the fate of the Ninth was sealed.

BRUCKNER PUT aside the work on the Ninth — a partly preserved score sketch of the first movement bears the date September 21, 1887 — and carried out the revision of the Eighth, which was finished in March, 1890. Then he revised the first, second and third symphonies, published in 1893, 1892 and 1890 respectively, and the Mass in F minor (published in 1890); he supervised the publication of the D minor Mass (1890) and composed and published the 150th Psalm (1892). The capacity for work manifested in these years seems astounding. Yet in the Spring of 1890 he was stricken by a chronic catarrh of the larynx and also showed symptoms of an abnormal nervous condition.

In 1891, his health restored, he took up work on the Ninth again. We are able to follow the different phases of the composition of the work from the dates inscribed by Bruckner in the autograph score, preserved with numerous other Bruckner manuscripts and sketches in the Austrian National Library in Vienna. "End of April 1891" is noted at the head, and "October 10, 1892" and "December 23, 1893," at the end of the first movement. "February 2, 1893" and "February 15, 1894" are the dates at the end of the Scherzo. There are no dates for the Trio. "October 31, 1894" and "November 1894" are entered at the end of the Adagio. The double dating refers to both the completion of the composition and the subsequent revision. The process of revision, manifest in numerous erasures and many places that are pasted over, assumed such dimensions that the replacement of entire leaves became necessary. In the Fall of 1893 Bruckner fell gravely ill with dropsy. He rallied once more, but his physical strength, which had been consumed enormously since 1890 by his creative work as well as by the revision and publication of his symphonies and masses, began to fail him. His physical disability grew greater and greater, and in 1896 his friends noticed with apprehension a change in his mental condition. He fell into the grip of religious mania. Josef Schalk recalled that on the occasion of his last visit, Bruckner did not pay him any attention, but spasmodically recited the Lord's Prayer again and again, repeating single sentences over and over. Nevertheless he continued to work on the finale of the Ninth. Dr. Richard Heller, the physician who attended Bruckner at this time, has this to say:

> Often I found him on his knees in profound prayer. As it was strictly forbidden to interrupt him under these circumstances, I stood by and overheard his naive, pathetic interpolations in the traditional text. At times he would suddenly exclaim, "Dear God, let me get well soon, as you see, I need my health to finish the Ninth."

No doubt he was conscious of his grave illness and fought a titanic struggle for the completion of the symphony. On the morning of October 11th, 1896, he worked on the finale and then took a walk. In the afternoon death overtook him. The Ninth, a torso, was left behind.

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BRUCKNER'S FRIENDS knew of this legacy but they kept silent for years. No one thought of a performance of the complete movements. Although Bruckner had willed his manuscripts to the Court Library (now the National Library), the autograph of the Ninth, having been entrusted by the composer for safe-keeping to a friend who was not living in Vienna, first found its way into the Court Library several years after

Bruckner's death. Ferdinand Löwe, one of Bruckner's favorite pupils, had in the meantime made a fine record as a conductor and, in particular, as an interpreter of Bruckner. He decided to program the symphony in the concerts of the Vienna Concert Society. He was the regular conductor of the Society and the performance took place on February 11, 1903. The score, edited by Löwe, was published in the same year.

Studies and research undertaken for the Critical Complete Edition of Bruckner's Works, issued by the Austrian National Library and promoted by The International Bruckner Society, revealed that the first editions of the symphonies used all over the world for almost half a century differed considerably from Bruckner's autographs. These scores were, except for the Sixth and the Ninth, published during Bruckner's life-time and the copies which went to the printer must have borne the signature of the composer. This would amount to a de facto authentication of the alterations and changes made in the original text.

Denying the authenticity of the first edition, the Complete Works present Bruckner's creations in their original version *(Original Fassung)*, that is, in the extant version which Bruckner considered the final form for presentation to the public. The term *Original Fassung* must not be confused, as it very often is, with *Urfassung* (the first version). This very complicated problem cannot be presented in detail here. In the case of the Ninth, Ferdinand Löwe assumed full responsibility for his edition. His name is on the title page. In view of this fact, it seems incredible that Dr. Hans F. Redlich, a Viennese-born musicologist living in Great Britain, in his very informative book, *Bruckner and Mahler* (London, 1955), speaks of Löwe as an "anonymous editor." He also deplores the absence of an "editorial note mentioning the existence of extensive sketches for the finale." This completely unfounded reproach can be refuted by quoting Löwe's foreword to his edition of the Ninth Symphony.

> Anton Bruckner's Ninth Symphony, the three completed movements of which are presented to the public herewith, was, according to the master's original intention, to be concluded with a purely instrumental finale. Compelled as he was by grave illness to interrupt the work frequently and often for a long time, Bruckner became more and more afraid of the possibility of being unable to complete his last work. Gradually, he probably arrived at the decision to add the Te Deum as a finale to the three complete movements. Sketches to an "Ueberleitungsmusik" (transition music) on a grand scale are extant; what we gather from them permits us by way of suggestion to guess at the master's last intentions.
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> Though the men responsible for the first performance on February 11, 1903, in Vienna considered it an act of piety to have the Te Deum sung after the symphony, performances without this ending seem absolutely justified; all the more so, since the work in the present form will impress the audience as an entirety.
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> Vienna, August 1903 Ferdinand Löwe

It was precisely Löwe's editorial note which gave rise to the story that Bruckner, realizing his inability to complete the Ninth, wished the Te Deum played as a finale. However, we

know today that Löwe was thoroughly mistaken in defining the extant sketch material as sketches pertaining to an "Ueberleitungsmusik" to the Te Deum, i. e. an interlude which was to connect the softly concluding Adagio (in E major) with the powerful tone masses in C major at the beginning of the Te Deum, sonorities which overwhelm the listener with sheer elemental force. Dr. Alfred Orel, editor of the Original Version, has sifted and analyzed this material and disproved the Te Deum story completely. What Bruckner has left behind is material to a finale, which Orel was able to reconstruct almost to the beginning of the coda (410 measures). In the exposition there is a melodic idea, labelled "Choralthema" by Bruckner, to which he attached the significant words "Te Deum." It was, however, not used to anticipate the appearance of this choral work, but was, as Dr. Redlich has pointed out, an allusion to "Te Deum laudamus," which must have been uppermost in Bruckner's mind as he approached the end of this vast symphony. The Te Deum was composed Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam, and Bruckner wanted to dedicate the Ninth Symphony to his "dear God." But there is, as Dr. Orel has pointed out, no convincing spiritual relationship between Bruckner's last symphony and the grandiose Te Deum.

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AFTER THE Original Version of the Ninth Symphony became available, the International Bruckner Society decided to determine in a semi-private performance whether the original was sufficiently practicable to warrant the publication of its orchestral parts. On April 2, 1932, both versions, the one edited by Löwe and the Original Version, were played in Munich under the baton of Siegmund von Hausegger. The impression gained at this unique concert led to the immediate publication of the parts of the Original Version. The International Bruckner Society issued a statement to the effect that with all due respect to the great services rendered by Ferdinand Löwe, the Committee resolved that the Ninth Symphony in the exact form in which it had been left by the master should no longer be kept from the world. The first public performance was given on October 23, 1932, by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra directed by Clemens Krauss.

In its vast dimension, scoring (eight horns, four interchangeable with Nibelungen tubas), and intensity of musical language the Ninth is a companion piece to the gigantic Eighth. Analyzing their architectural designs one cannot speak of themes but only of theme groups, or complexes. The first "theme" of the opening movement *(feierlich, misterioso)*, stretching over 76 measures, contains four distinct musical ideas, which are of different emotional character. There is a gradual melodic climbing-up paired with an increase of dynamics. The climactic outburst of the fourth theme is followed by a retrograde motion which continues on to the second theme group. Orel aptly described the last theme of the opening group as *Absturzthema* (falling-down theme). The first movement shows, in principle, the sonata structure, with one important deviation from the traditional pattern: the telescoping of the middle section and recapitulation. The exposition is three-sectional: opening group, "song group" *(Gesangs-Gruppe*, to use Bruckner's terminology) and epilogue which, after reaching a dynamic climax, recesses to absolute quietness in typical Brucknerian fashion. The middle section which elaborates on ideas of all three groups of the exposition is brought to a climax with the reappearance of the *Absturzthema*, with a display of all the tonal strength that the whole orchestral apparatus is able to muster. At this point the middle section and recapitulation are fused together. There is no let-up in the violent tension and emotional strain and the process of thematic development continues. It is only from the beginning of the "song group" that the recapitulation conforms with the exposition. The shortening of the "song group" and the modification of the epilogue are logical consequences of the preceding symphonic events. Finally, there is a coda of great proportion, climaxing not in the *Absturzthema*, but instead in the ascending horn call of the exposition. The symbolic meaning is obvious. But the existence of conflict and tension is indicated by stating the motive in D minor and E-flat major in a polytonal way.

The Scherzo *(bewegt, lebhaft)* is a piece of perfect regularity and high originality, which enthralls the listener from its tender beginning to its tremendous conclusion. The composer keeps the listener in suspense during the first 44 measures by the sustained c-sharp, sounded by the trumpet, before he reveals the tonality. The piece is studded with technical difficulties for the musicians. There are many pizzicato passages to be executed in a fast tempo and there are difficulties in the intonation of phrases to be played in high positions. The quick motion increases in the Trio in F-sharp major in 3/8 time, a meter never employed by Bruckner before. The formal design could be expressed by the formula A - B - A - B (expanded) - A - B - A.

The Adagio *(langsam, feierlich)* corresponds in its solemnity and design with the slow movements of the two preceding symphonies. Here, too, the middle section and recapitulation are fused together. The following diagram may help to make clear the intricacy of the formal structure:

Exposition	First theme group (opening theme — horn call)
"	Second theme group (A - B - A) A-flat B-flat A-flat
Middle Section	Opening theme
Recapitulation	Second theme group [only B (A-flat)] Transition to Coda
Coda	A of second theme group — horn call of first theme group

Wide interval skips (seventh, octave, ninth) are very characteristic features of the melodic treatment. Note the ninth in the opening theme and in the horn call. Note also the uncertain tonality at the beginning, which is matched at the conclusion by the sustained tonic E heard during the last 25 measures, except for two. Note also the majestic character of the Adagio, which Bruckner called "Farewell from Life." For this reason the quotations from the slow movement of both the Eighth (Adagio) and Seventh Symphonies (First Movement) in the concluding measures assume great significance. The peaceful conclusion seems a natural solution of the great conflicts of the symphonic drama we have witnessed. And listening to the coda and its stirring peroration, we are deeply moved that a man in the grip of a deadly illness could grow beyond himself to such greatness and strength to create this passage of overwhelming power.