

IS THE TRADITIONAL APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF THE PRINTED EDITIONS OF BRUCKNER'S SYMPHONIES VALID TODAY?

An attempt to find how many different symphonies Bruckner wrote, to explode some myths, and to remove today's confusion about the subject with the help of a new approach.

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1. Introduction

The different existing analyses of the editions of Bruckner's Symphonies, have created considerable confusion, making it today very difficult for the composer's admirers and performers to understand which and how many symphonies he really wrote; or to be convinced if it is now possible to hear a Bruckner Symphony as the composer really created it. Following the recent publication by Professor Leopold Nowak of almost all the different versions of Bruckner's symphonies, I think that this issue, normally called "The Bruckner Symphonies' Problem," must be rethought completely.

The sources of the problem are the differences between the critical printed editions of the symphonies' scores made by Robert Haas and Leopold Nowak respectively; and the existence of different versions, composed by Bruckner himself, of some symphonies.

Significant responsibility for the confusion about which and how many symphonies Bruckner really wrote rests on the composer himself. Apparently, he was never fully satisfied with some of his symphonies, so he rewrote them many times, producing different "versions" of the same symphony. Some of them are written in different styles, or even worse, have some movements replaced with completely different ones! A possible explanation in

some cases, is that he wanted to update his symphonies to the mastery he attained when composing his Fifth Symphony. Because of this attitude, during the years 1876 to 1880 he revised extensively the Second, Third and Fourth Symphonies; moreover, during the last years of his life he recomposed the First Symphony.

In other cases, he revised his symphonies to make them more palatable to the public and to the orchestras of his time. In that situation, he often accepted the advice from his pupils and friends, especially that of the Schalk brothers and Ferdinand Loewe. They were his devout supporters, but they also were unable to understand Bruckner's genius, so their influence on the composer, although sincere, is now considered unhappy. They even "revised" and "corrected" Bruckner's authentic scores when the composer didn't accept their suggestions.¹

¹ Josef Schalk (1857-1901), Austrian pianist and piano teacher at the Vienna Conservatory. He championed the music of Bruckner and Hugo Wolf.

Franz Schalk (1863-1931), Director of the Vienna Court (State) Opera from 1918 to 1929. He conducted the premiere of Strauss's "Die Frau ohne Schatten" (1919). Active in Prague (1895-1898), at the Metropolitan Opera House (New York, 1898-1899) and at Covent Garden (London, 1898, 1907 and 1911).

Another source of today's confusion is the tiresome discussion about the advantages or disadvantages of the "Haas" and "Nowak" critical printed editions of the Bruckner symphonies. I think that this issue should lose its pre-eminence now, as it happened with the discussion about the "original versions" (Haas', Ore'l's, Oeser's, Nowak's, Schoenzeler's, etc.) and the earlier and now forgotten "revised versions" (Hynais', Loewe's or Schalk's). Except for the Second and Eighth Symphonies, the differences between the "Haas" and "Nowak" printed editions are not significant to the ordinary listener, and thus we need to stop giving the impression to the public that the choice between them is a very important matter.

In the present study, these topics are analyzed and a new approach to the problem is proposed, trying to define more precisely when "a version of a Bruckner symphony" should be considered as such.

2. A short description of the state of each symphony

Bruckner wrote eleven symphonies, numbered 00², 0 and 1 to 9. Symphonies N° 00, 5, 6, 7, and presumably N° 0, have only one version each. Symphonies N° 1, 2 and 8 exist in at least two original versions each. Symphonies 3 and 4 have at least three original versions each. Symphony N° 9 is an ambiguous case, because it was left unfinished as a result of the composer's death.³

Before of the creation of the "International Bruckner Society" (IBS), the symphonies were published by different scholars who tried to "improve" them and make them more palatable to the public.⁴ These scores are considered of historical interest only today and have been replaced by the critical scores published separately by Robert Haas and Leopold Nowak, both sponsored by the IBS.

This was not a definitive solution of the problem, however, because the differences of view between Haas and Nowak have produced a considerable amount of con-

fusion, making more difficult the correct understanding of Bruckner's symphonic work.

[A brief note about nomenclature: The actual symphony number (the number by which each symphony is currently identified) is written in standard numerals, e.g., "4", followed by a slash and the version number written in roman numerals. For instance, Symphony No. 4/III means the third version of Symphony No. 4.]

3. The confusion about what the "Haas" and the "Nowak" critical editions of the Second and Eighth Symphonies mean, and how different they are

The case of these two symphonies is very important to analyze, because it is on these two that most of the discussion between the advantages and disadvantages of the "Haas" and "Nowak" critical editions is now centered.

3.1. The case of the Eighth Symphony

Traditionally, one has believed that the "Haas" edition of the Eighth Symphony reflects the 1887 version of it and the "Nowak" 1955 edition reflects the 1890 version of the same symphony.⁵ However, after the publication by Leopold Nowak in 1972 of the authentic 1887 version of this symphony, which has been recorded by Inbal, one realizes that **both the "Haas" and the "Nowak 1955" editions refer to the same 1890 version of the symphony.** The main reasons for this conclusion are that both printed editions (Haas' and Nowak's 1955) are for the same orchestra,⁶ have the same trio of the Scherzo, have the same tonal structure in the Adagio, and have the same ending to the first movement. These factors are totally different in the 1887 version.

The main differences of the two critical editions of the 1890 version are that Nowak assumes that some bars that were crossed out or replaced by Bruckner himself in 1890 belong to the 1887 version (and they should be included there), and that the available manuscripts reflect his

Ferdinand Loewe (1865-1925), Austrian conductor, active in Munich and Vienna.

² Some scholars don't like the nomenclature "00", but I do!

³ The score of the first three movements is complete, and the draft of the finale is almost complete up to the beginning of the Coda.

⁴ Although in many cases these editions were heavily "retouched" by the editor, they are of great academic interest because they reflect some performance practices from the Bruckner time.

⁵ For example, the original cover on the LP of Wand's recording of the Eighth Symphony (Haas' version, Deutsche Harmonia Mundi) was labeled "1884/87 version."

⁶ When recomposing the Symphony to its final version of 1890, Bruckner started writing all first three movements afresh, but in the fourth movement he only amended the existing 1887 score. Thus, only the finale of the 1887 version is scored for the same orchestra used later for the whole 1890 version. (I suspect that Bruckner, when composing the finale of the first version, anticipated the desirability of changing the orchestration of the whole symphony before he could be influenced by Hermann Levi's negative opinion about it.)

will to omit them (or replace them) three years later. On the other hand, Haas assumes that some of them were replaced or crossed out by the composer in 1890 as the result of an imposition from others, and they should remain in the 1890 score. Those are valid assumptions, and scholars will surely continue discussing them for many years, but that doesn't allow us to say that both printed editions refer to different versions, three years apart, of the symphony. The only printed critical edition of the 1887 version of the Eighth Symphony is the one published by Nowak in 1972, which includes all the bars in dispute.

3.2. The case of the Second Symphony

A similar conclusion can be extrapolated for the Second Symphony. Traditionally, one has believed that the "Haas" edition of the Second Symphony reflects the 1872 version of it and the "Nowak 1965" edition reflects the 1877 version of the same symphony. In my opinion, both the "Haas" and the "Nowak 1965" editions refer to the same version of the symphony. The fundamentals of my theory are threefold: first, both critical editions are for the same orchestra; second, if you ignore the optional (vi/de) cuts that appear in both editions, they are structurally identical; and third, the differences in orchestration are small so that they hardly justify the conclusion that both editions refer to "substantially different versions" of the same symphony.

It is interesting to compare the main differences between Haas' and Nowak's printed editions of this symphony. Both editions mark the bars that Bruckner intended to cut in 1876/7 between "vi/de" brackets, and both include all of them completely in the main text.⁷ The only difference is that **Haas recommends**, in the preface to his Edition, **that they should be performed**, and **Nowak recommends**, also in the preface to his Edition, **that they should be omitted, both giving the choice to the conductor**. Furthermore, Haas includes only the first ending to the second movement (with a horn solo, composed in 1872), and Nowak includes both original endings (with the horn or with a clarinet solo alternative, composed before 1876), **also giving the conductor the freedom to choose among them**.⁸ Thus, **Nowak includes more music in his printed edition than Haas**.⁹

⁷ They are: bars 488 to 519 (32 bars) in the first movement; 48 to 69 (22 bars) in the Adagio; 540 to 562 (23 bars) and 590 to 655 (66 bars) in the Finale; 143 bars in total. It is interesting to note that in the Adagio, Bruckner didn't intend to cut also the corresponding passage from the recapitulation (bars 121 to 134 in Nowak's score).

⁸ Bars 178 to the end (bar 209). Supposedly, Bruckner would have written the second ending (with a clarinet solo) as an alternative to

In my opinion, **optional (vi/de) cuts** specifically made for a **public performance**, even if it was conducted by Bruckner himself, **must be ignored** because they are of historical interest only. They should not be considered as a significant difference to justify the existence of two versions of the same symphony. Almost all the Bruckner's symphonies were performed in their premiere with severe cuts.¹⁰

Nowak himself increased today's confusion about this symphony. In the preface to his critical edition of it published in 1965 (curiously labeled "II" instead of "II/2," as was his custom) he explains that this edition refers to the symphony as it was in 1877. He also says that Bruckner himself referred to the first version of 1872 as "the old arrangement," and that the differences of both "arrangements" were explained by Haas in 1938, and consisted in "cuts, modifications, and alterations". What is more important, he writes that **he based his edition on the one by Haas, who also based his one on the manuscripts of 1877**. Thus Nowak gives a clear perception that he knew of an unpublished different first version of the Second Symphony ("Urfassung") of 1872, not used by Haas. However, in the preface to Nowak's and Brosche's edition of the First Symphony's second version of 1890/1, published in 1980, you can read the following: "This new edition of the second version of the First Symphony, along with the second version of the Third Symphony, completes the publication of all versions of all Bruckner's symphonies, so that the reader can now detect for himself where the differences between two versions lie." Did he forget that he had not published the "Urfassung" of the Second Symphony that he mentioned in his preface of 1965?

Until recently, there were two possible explanations of this situation; however, none of them implied ac-

be used if the first ending (with a horn solo playing the same melody) proved to be too difficult for the soloist.

⁹ The third difference between both printed editions is that Nowak, according to Bruckner's intentions, omits the repeat marks for both halves of the Scherzo and Trio. One should recognize, however, that many conductors ignore the exposition, Scherzo and Trio repeat marks in most of the symphonies from other composers that have them written in a clear way, like Beethoven, Schubert or Brahms. Also, any experienced conductor should be able to guess precisely where the Scherzo and Trio repeat marks should be, if he or she wants to perform them using Nowak's Edition.

¹⁰ I believe that if a conductor performs this symphony using the Nowak score but ignoring the optional vi/de marks, and using the included first ending of the second movement, it would be almost impossible for the listener to distinguish if the conductor were using the Haas score instead, but ignoring the repeat marks in the Scherzo and Trio, as many conductors do.

ceptance of Nowak's edition based on sources other than Haas's.

a) The first one was that if there exists a first version of 1872 ("Urfassung") substantially different from the one we are familiar with, it remains unpublished, and both the "Haas" and the "Nowak 1965" editions refer to the same 1877 version of the symphony, obviously with a different approach from each editor.

b) The second one was to consider that there exists only one version of the Second Symphony, composed in 1872, that was amended by the composer in 1876/7, and again in 1891. If this alternative were the correct one, the amendments of 1876/7 would consist only in small changes to the orchestration; and in the addition of 32 bars for an alternative optional ending to the second movement, to be used when the previous one was too difficult for the first horn.¹¹

As a result of a new critical score of the first version of the symphony by Professor William Carragan, who also has published an accurate performing version of the sketches of the Ninth Symphony Finale, the correct answer to these questions proved to be the first one. He showed that an unpublished "Urfassung" of this symphony exists and is very different to Haas' score. This Urfassung has been recorded recently by Kurt Eichhorn.¹²

4. The mistaken but commonly held view that Nowak's critical editions are cut, and Haas' are complete

In my opinion, all Nowak's printed editions reflect his conclusions about how a version of a Bruckner Symphony was put to paper by the composer at a specific date.

¹¹ It seems to me that Leopold Nowak, originally chose the second alternative as the correct one. I think that some curious inconsistencies of his edition, as for example the inclusion "for technical reasons" of the bars that Bruckner intended to cut in 1876/7 between "vi/de" brackets instead of omitting them from the score, or the labeling of this volume "II" instead of "II/2", or the inclusion of both endings to the second movement, must have an explanation. To me, this explanation is his belief that the rest of the changes made by Bruckner from 1872 to 1877 hardly justified the publication of a separate volume of an "Urfassung."

¹² It is interesting to quote Professor Carragan's opinion about the 1877 version: "The vi/de material included in the Haas and Nowak scores will not be printed in the new 1877 score (which is to replace the 1965 Nowak score). Nowak had made this decision by 1983 when contemplating doing a new edition of the Second himself. These cuts came from a rethinking of the whole piece and have internal logic, even if we do not like them. Surely, if people want to hear this vi/de music, they should listen to the 1872 version. As to the Haas mixture, it ought to pass out of use. We have so many versions; why create more?"

However, the source of the common misconception about the "Nowak's cuts" was that **Nowak started publishing the latest version of each symphony, which with very few exceptions always have their movements shorter than the corresponding earlier ones.**¹³ Now, he has published all the initial and middle versions of them all (except for the first version of the Second Symphony), so that this misconception no longer applies. **If Nowak had started publishing the initial versions of the symphonies first, we would be speaking now of the "Haas' cuts" and the "full Nowak's scores."**

5. A complex Story: The case of Symphonies N° 3 and 4

5.1 The case of Symphony N° 3

The case of the Third Symphony is a little confusing. It was composed in 1873, arranged in 1876, rearranged in 1877 and fully rearranged again in 1889, in a continuous, evolutionary form. The first 1873 version was published by Nowak in 1977; the 1877 version was published by Oeser¹⁴ in 1950 and by Nowak in 1981; and the final 1889 version by Nowak in 1959. From the arrangement of 1876, only the Adagio has been published by Nowak in 1980, as an addendum to "3/I".

It has become apparent, however, that the Adagio of 1876 belongs to an "earlier phase" of the second version of 1877. Consequently, this second version would have two phases:

i) To the first phase of 1876, called "a rhythmic revision" by the composer, belong the Adagio of 1876, a revision of the Scherzo similar to the one published by Oeser, that is, without the coda, and possibly including some as yet unpublished material from the Finale.

ii) To the second phase belongs the 1877 version as published by Nowak in 1981 ("3/II"), including the Scherzo's coda.

Since part of the material from the first phase of the Finale has probably been lost, the only complete movement we have from the first phase is the Adagio published

¹³ The main exceptions are the Scherzo of the 1877 version of the Third Symphony and the third of the three different finales of the Fourth Symphony. The second Finale of the Fourth Symphony ("Volksfest"), published by Nowak in 1981, remains unrecorded until now.

¹⁴ Although Oeser's edition was not sponsored by the Bruckner Society, it is a very serious and authentic edition.

by Nowak in 1980. This movement is a rework of the Adagio of the first version of 1873, and similar to it. The Adagio of 1876, a beautiful movement, apt to be performed as a stand-alone piece of music like Mahler's "Totenfeier", has been recently recorded by Rozhdestvensky.

5.2 The case of Symphony N° 4

Symphony N° 4 was originally composed in 1874. It was fully rewritten in 1878, when it received a completely different Scherzo and Finale (the so called "Volksfest," not recorded on CD yet) from the corresponding version from 1874 (4/I). Also, the other movements were fully rewritten. Haas included the score of this finale as an appendix to his 1936 score of the corresponding version from 1880 (4/III), but it was omitted in the 1944 reprint of the same score.

The 1880 version of this symphony has the same first three movements as the corresponding version from 1878, with a different finale which was amended again in 1881-1886.¹⁵ This is the standard original version that is commonly played today, and it should not be confused with a "partially-authentic" version "number III" edited by Loewe and corrected by Bruckner in 1888. This version was commonly used before the Second World War and has been published up until now by Eulenburg.¹⁶ However, although this version (4/IV) was not recomposed by Bruckner alone, he participated very actively in the publication process, and there is no doubt that he agreed with the many changes, some of them foreign to his compositional habits, that his pupil Ferdinand Loewe made in the score to facilitate its performance by the orchestras of his time.¹⁷

¹⁵ Benjamin Korstvedt, personal communication.

¹⁶ In the foreword to this score, Professor Hans F. Redlich calls it "Version IV of 1888". It is the only "revised edition" that was also corrected by Bruckner himself, so it would be very interesting to differentiate more precisely Loewe's and Bruckner's work on it, and to know to what extent the corrections made by Bruckner are significant enough to explain the composer's possible different approach to other parts of this symphony. It was first performed under Hans Richter in Vienna on January 22, 1888. A future critical edition of this Version will be most welcome.

¹⁷ In the case of Symphony 3/III, we have the first three movements in an original manuscript written in Bruckner's hand, and the Finale, in a manuscript written by Franz Schalk, full with corrections written by Bruckner, and signed by him. In the case of Symphony 4/IV, we have all the movements written by other hands, but with Bruckner's corrections. Also, in a letter written by Schalk, he recognizes the extensive work in the orchestration of 4/IV done by Ferdinand Loewe.

6. The confusion about the existence of substantially different versions of some symphonies composed by Bruckner himself. Which of them should we prefer?

The next problem is to answer the following question. There are some symphonies that exist in two or more different versions composed by Bruckner himself: which of them should we prefer? In the past, the answer to this question was normally "the last one", because it was supposed that it represented the last thoughts of the composer. Now, however, scholars tend to assume that the influence of the composer's friends on the last versions of some of his symphonies was too high. To solve this problem, Professor Deryck Cooke proposed to search for a "first definitive version" of each symphony. This one would be the last version of any symphony recomposed by Bruckner before he could receive any strong influence from other people.

6.1. Is it possible now to define a "first definitive version" for each symphony?

When Deryck Cooke tried to solve this puzzle, the earlier versions of many of Bruckner's symphonies ("Urfassungen") were not yet published in print or recorded, so when he recommended that one should prefer the "first definitive versions" and reject the "Urfassungen" ("primitive versions"), I must admit that it was a very wise and interesting recommendation. However, when all the versions of the Bruckner symphonies (except for the first version of the Second Symphony), have been published, printed and almost all recorded, that statement is no longer valid.

As an example, let us compare the history of the composition of the Third, Eighth and Fourth Symphonies.

The Third Symphony was composed in 1873, arranged in 1876, rearranged in 1877 and fully rearranged again in 1889, in a continuous, evolutionary form. Discarding the version of 1889 as a possible candidate, and independently of which of the other versions you like more, what is the reason to say that the 1877 and not the 1873 version is the "first definitive one?"¹⁸ The Eighth Symphony

¹⁸ It is interesting to quote Nowak in the preface to his critical score of the Third Symphony's "Urfassung" from 1873. He says: "The formal integrity of the Third Symphony comes out most clearly in the Adagio. Its 278 bars, later reduced to 251 (1877) and finally to 222 (1889/90), observe the usual balance among the three components and the coda; whereas in the first revision of 1877 the second recapitulation of the first subject and part of the second subject are cut; nor are they restored in the second revision of 1889/90. Only the first version reproduces the whole movement as Bruckner originally conceived it."

was also composed in an evolutionary form, but irrespective of which of the critical scores of the 1890 version you like more (Haas' or Nowak's), why is the newer version the "first definitive one," and not the older one of 1887? This is an important issue, because the version of 1890 was created as a result of the rejection of the earlier 1887 one by the conductor Hermann Levi.¹⁹

By contrast, Bruckner composed the Fourth in 1874 and recomposed it drastically from a new start in 1878 (including a totally new Scherzo and finale), and again in 1880 (finale only), in a revolutionary rather than an evolutionary form, without any inducement from his friends. Then, you could speak of a "rejected version" (the 1874 one) and a significantly different "first definitive version" of it (the 1878 one with the now unrecorded "Volksfest" finale). The problem with this analysis is that the most popular, played and recorded version of it, the one of 1880, would be an afterthought by Bruckner himself, and thus of lesser importance.²⁰

Deryck Cooke himself was also, apparently, confused with this issue. In his classic essay "The Bruckner problem simplified" (The Musical Newsletter, NY, 1975) he says that the "first definitive version" of the Third Symphony is the one of 1877 (thus discarding the "Urfassung"), but in his Bruckner article in the "New Grove" book "Late Romantic Masters" (Norton 1985 page 56) in the catalogue of Bruckner's works it is said that the "first definitive version" of that symphony is the version of "1873/7," printed by Oeser, Nowak 1977 and Nowak 1980!²¹ Also, in the first essay, Cooke states that the "first definitive version" of the Eighth Symphony is the recomposed one edited by Haas (also discarding the "Urfassung"), but in the New Grove book, page 57, it is said that the "first definitive version" of that Symphony is the "Urfassung" of 1884/87 edited by Nowak in 1972.

¹⁹ Hermann Levi (1839-1900), German conductor and a strong supporter of Bruckner's music. He conducted the premiere of Wagner's "Parsifal" in 1882.

²⁰ Another possibility would be to speak of two rejected versions of this symphony (those of 1874 and 1878). Then, "the first definitive version" would be the one of 1880; but it seems to me that the argument needs to be stretched too much to arrive at this conclusion.

²¹ Was the book's editor suggesting that the versions of 1873 and 1877 be combined into one?

6.2. How many symphonies did Bruckner write?

I think that now, we need to rethink the problem of the versions of the Bruckner symphonies in a completely different way. First, we need to start by asking how many symphonies did Bruckner write? Are they eleven, including number 0 and 00 (the so called "Student Symphony"), or maybe more?

My solution to the problem is analogous to the answer to the question of how many overtures Beethoven wrote to "Fidelio," and the answer there is four. I don't think that any serious scholar would say that both overtures "Leonore 2" and "Leonore 3" are simply a result of different viewpoints of two critical editions of different scholars, or would try to combine both "Leonoras" into one supposedly definitive version, as Haas tried to do in his version of Bruckner's Eighth Symphony.²² **In that sense, Bruckner would have written not only eleven but maybe 18 or 20 authentic symphonies or "symphonic essays," with individual values and rights to be considered for each one.**

Take for example the Fourth Symphony. Both versions of 1874 and 1880 respectively, are very different. The structures of all four movements are different and they even have a completely different Scherzo and Finale. Why should both versions be considered the same work? Why should they not be considered as two different implementations of the same idea, as with "Leonoras" 2 and

²² In the "New Grove" book, Cooke refers to the Haas' critical edition of the Eighth Symphony as a "composite version" (page 57). On page 36 he says: "But Haas was thinking of a conductor's score that would be in constant use, and his edition stands as a conjectural restoration of what Bruckner's revision would have been like without Josef Schalk's interference." I personally agree with his preferences for pure musical reasons, but is not that sentence a practical definition of what a "performing version" is?

In my opinion, a better "unorthodox" solution would be the following: Because the finales of both the 1887 and 1890 versions are very similar in orchestration and structure, and because the 1887 finale is more related to the full version of 1890 than to its accompanying first three movements, would it not be more faithful to Bruckner's score to perform a "mixed version", that is, to use the first three movements from the 1890 version (using Nowak's score), and to use the finale from the 1887 version? (also from Nowak's score). This might appear heretical to some, but let me make a comparison with "Fidelio". You might agree or not with a conductor who performs the 1806 score of it using "Leonore" No. 2 as the overture, instead of "Leonore" No. 3. But surely you would reject a performance of that opera whose conductor had arranged the score of "Leonore" No. 3, to include in it, music from "Leonore" No. 2 that he or she particularly liked, whether or not the added bars fit with the score. So why should we accept a solution for Bruckner's works that is unacceptable for Beethoven's?

3, or as both Symphonies that share the number 4 of Prokofiev, Opus 47 and 112, respectively?

That will also solve the problems of style that the serious listener easily perceives. Why is Symphony number 3, that many conductors such as Von Karajan and others play, more related to Symphony number 7 or 8 than to number Two? Why is the First Symphony that almost all conductors play (excepting Wand and Chailly) more related to the "Nullte" (number "0") and to number 3 of Inbal than to Von Karajan's Third? The answer is simple: it is because Von Karajan's Third is number 15 or 16 in the series and Inbal's Third is not the same but the ninth or tenth, which was written 16 years earlier!

My suggestion is that Bruckner scholars should define the series of authentic "symphonic essays" by Bruckner, treating each of them as a self-living work of the Master, without pretending to decide subjectively which of them is the "definitive-and-most-authentic" version of each symphony.

That means that we need to answer some new questions, as for example, how many different versions of the Second Symphony really exist? Is the revision of 1886 to the finale of the Fourth Symphony sufficient to allow us to speak of a different "symphonic essay" to the 1880 version of the same symphony?²³ Do revisions of the same caliber to symphonies from other composers, like Berlioz's "Fantastic Symphony", make the scholars consider them as two different versions of the same symphony, or are these revisions only considered amendments?

Let us suppose that a conductor performs the standard version of the Fourth Symphony but uses the second finale of 1878, the so called "Volksfest," instead of the normal finale of 1880. Is he or she performing a different "essay" to the same symphony's 1880 one, with which it shares the first three movements? In addition, scholars also doubt if some "essays" were really written and subsequently destroyed by the composer, like the "essay" of 1864, the supposed first version of symphony number "0".

²³ The revision of 1886 of the Fourth Symphony was discovered after the publication of the symphony's 1880 score by Haas, and it is thus included only in the Nowak edition of the same version published in 1953. The most important change made by the composer was in the last nine bars of the finale, where he reintroduced the main subject of the first movement played by the horns. Bruckner made this change for a performance of this symphony in New York, under Anton Seidl. In my opinion, the 1881-1886 changes to this symphony are not sufficient to allow us to speak of a different 1886 version of it.

An important question regarding the determination of this series is the following. **Should we reject the authentic versions made by Bruckner himself under a strong influence, or even imposed by others?** If that were our choice, we would need to reject the version of 1889 of the Third Symphony, which is its most popular, widely played and recorded version. However, we will need to accept both versions of the First Symphony. **In my opinion, this position is not valid.** If it were so, we would also be forced to reject most of the mature symphonies from Prokofiev or Shostakovich, and many of the successful symphonies of the eighteenth century that were composed in a style to satisfy the taste of the composer's patron.

There is another important issue. **Should we reject for performance the finished original versions that were withdrawn by the composer for concert usage, like some "Urfassungen" and Symphonies number "0" and "00"? I don't agree with this opinion either,** because we would then have also rejected for performance the first three Beethoven's "Leonoras", keeping them for study by scholars only.

I think that all the published critical scores by Nowak make a very good starting point for the determination of the series, providing we add the first version of the second symphony. That should give us some 18 or 20 self-supporting authentic Bruckner symphonic works! **If we get accustomed to call them by a different "Opus Number" (in the same way that we refer to the four Fidelio overtures by their number and not as "the version of 1806 of the overture to Fidelio"), we will be simplifying the general understanding of Bruckner's symphonic work.** Maybe it will take some time for the public to familiarize itself with this new nomenclature, as it took years for some of us to become familiar with the Koechel numbers of most of Mozart's works, but that is an effort that will be worthwhile for the general understanding of the problem. We must be grateful to Professor Leopold Nowak for giving us the possibility to become familiar with all of Bruckner's "symphonic Leonoras", and not only with some of them (the supposed "definitive" ones).

It should be noted that it is not our interest to change the actual numbers of the symphonies. Our interest is, first, to know how many symphonic works Bruckner did really compose, thus discarding unimportant arrangements from himself or from his disciples; and secondly, to establish for them a unique "Symphonic Opus Number" that could be, in the future, the origin of a generic "Opus Number" for all the works of the composer.

7. A definition and a tentative list of Bruckner's "symphonic essays"

The essence of my proposition is the formulation of the concept of "Symphonic Essay" regarding Bruckner's Symphonies. **This concept is related to the Composer only (thus completely different from the concept of "Printed Edition", which can be beyond his control);** and different from the classic concept of "Version" as it is normally understood. Regardless of the fact that he composed only eleven Symphonies, the number "eleven" and the plain concept of "Symphonies" (in the plural) are not capable of defining his Symphonic output completely.²⁴

Thus, the concept of "Symphonic Essay" should agree with the following five criteria:

7.1) *The form criterion.* **This means that the Essay should have the form of a Symphony.**

7.2) *The origin criterion.* **This means that the Composer should have showed the intention of making a new Symphony, or a new reworking of an earlier Symphony, with the intention of replacing the earlier one, and not only making some improvements in an existing score.**

7.3) *The finished product criterion.* **The Essay should be the result of a finished product, that the Composer recognized as such, suitable for public performance or for publication in print.** Of course, the finished product should be *authentic*.²⁵

This criterion raises interesting questions, because normally most of the "Essays" have a *prehistory*. For example, Professor Carragan has shown that Bruckner made some small changes and cuts in the 1872 score of Symphony No. 2/I when attending rehearsals for the first performance in 1873. In similar situations, should

²⁴ You can number them with a "BSWV" number ("Bruckner Symphonische Werke Verzeichnis", parodying Bach's), or, if you allow me a little sense of humor, with a "JIC" number!

²⁵ Regarding Symphony 4/IV of 1888, I have decided to give it an "Essay Number" of "Supplemental 1 to be listed after Essay 14" ("Suppl. 1/14+"). In my opinion, as I mentioned earlier, and according to my knowledge of today's research on the subject of Bruckner's Symphonies, this is the only version of a symphony without an original manuscript written by the Composer that qualifies for a "Supplemental" number of a Symphonic Essay.

we reintroduce the omitted material into the critical scores, when it isn't there?²⁶

7.4) *The differentiation criterion.* **This means that to be included in that list, a Symphonic Essay has to contain at least one movement that the serious listener would perceive as significantly different from the corresponding movement in an original or earlier version of the same Symphony, even if the music is based on the same or related thematic material.** Of course, this criterion is subjective, but what definition isn't?

Please note that the above criterion is a *practical one*, not an academic one. That means that if some Version of a Symphony has been lost, we are unable to know if it would have agreed with this Criterion, so no Essay number should be assigned to it.

7.5) *The fit - in - the - Composer's - history criterion.* This is the most difficult criterion to define, but what I want to say is that **an Essay should have been composed by Bruckner as either the result of some event in his life; or the result of his psychological need to adapt his previous works to some new stage of his creative development, that he thought justified it.**²⁷

8. Why is a concept like "Symphonic Essay" needed?

The answer to the above question is very complex; let me explain some of the reasons.

a) As I mentioned earlier, to say that Bruckner "composed eleven Symphonies" doesn't precisely describe his symphonic output. For example, the differences among the different versions of the Fourth Symphony are so dramatic, that we cannot say that only one Fourth Symphony exists. Should we say that there are two or three Fourth Symphonies and give a different number to each one? I don't think that this is a good choice, because the Composer's intention, when composing the last versions of it, was clearly not to compose a different, new Symphony.

²⁶ To my knowledge, with some exceptions (like Symphony No. 2/I), the *prehistory* of the different versions of each symphony has not been studied in depth.

²⁷ An **optional (vi/de) cut** (as Haas and Nowak mark from bar 270 to 373 of the Finale of the Fifth Symphony) **should be ignored** and not be considered a significant difference.

b) Should we try to define the “best” version of every Symphony, as Deryck Cooke pretended, and discard the others? I discussed this issue at length before, so I don’t want to repeat my arguments here. I fully disagree with his theory of reserving the “other” versions for a small group of privileged people only.

c) Haas’ intents to combine several versions into one to make the “ideal” one should also be discarded. As Professor William Carragan has demonstrated, Haas himself had to compose a passage for the First Violins, in bars 541 and 543, in his edition of the Finale of the Second Symphony, in order to be able to fit different sources from different versions into one score of a Symphony, that in any case can be considered “unfinished”.²⁸

d) Should we be continuing to differentiate the versions by the name of the Editor, and the composition date? In my opinion, this tendency has been unfortunate (should I say ominous?) to the popularity of the Symphonic Oeuvre of the Composer. To say that a conductor performs “Nowak’s Edition of 1877” or “Haas Edition of 1890” of some Symphony, as the sleeve notes of the recordings normally say, doesn’t mean a thing to the public, the music critics and even the conductors (with the memorable exceptions of very few). I am sure that the reader will remember thousands of articles in important music magazines around the world, written by well-known music critics, that are unable to describe which version the conductor of a recording was performing. And what will happen in the next 20 to 50 years, when it is logical to suppose that many new printed editions will appear?

As an anecdote, I remember the recent review of Harnoncourt’s recording of the Third in a famous magazine. The only explanation of what Harnoncourt was conducting was a reference to the “Nowak Edition”. But the reader should remember that Nowak has published three different complete scores of this Symphony, plus an additional Adagio, so the reviewer’s comment didn’t clarify the matter. Another important magazine made a similarly common mistake; in the recent review of Rahbari’s Second they commented that the Conductor used *Haas’ edition of the full 1872 original score*.

e) There are also other arguments stressing the importance of clarifying this issue. Sometimes

one hear that the market doesn’t want the earlier versions, and the conductors don’t want to learn them. I am sure that the reason for this assumption is that the market is tired of what it sees as an incomprehensible discussion of specialists, instead of perceiving the possibility of knowing other extra Symphonic Works of the Master, which have been almost unknown up to now. In other words, the market perceives that the discussion about the characteristics of “the Edition of 1873” or “the Edition of 1889” of the Third is a boring discussion between a few academics, and not a possibility of hearing more symphonic Bruckner. So, why should we be surprised if Conductors prefer to perform what it is “safer”?

f) There is another argument which is worthwhile considering. I think that the public deserves to be informed in a clear way about which one of the Composer’s works it is hearing at a concert or in a recording. Don’t forget they pay for that! I have in my hands the last issue of the “Oesterreichische Musikzeitschrift” (in English, 1996), which it is dedicated to Bruckner. They report on more than 70 concerts to be performed during the rest of the year in several cities around the world, but *in none of them*, is the version of the work to be performed indicated. Do they think that for the public it will be the same to hear the version of 1874, or the one of 1880, in a concert of the Fourth Symphony? Would they have considered it appropriate to announce a Beethoven concert “in which the Leonore Overture will be performed”? So, why do we have to accept such imprecision for Bruckner, if nobody accepts it for Beethoven?

g) Finally, **one of the beauties of a numerical listing of the Symphonic Essays, as I suggest in this article, is to show the evolution of Bruckner’s style over time.** It shows, for example, that Essay No. 17, despite being titled Symphony No. 1/II, actually follows Symphony No. 8/II (Essay No. 16).

In this sense, I fully disagree with the “WAB” catalog (“Werkeverzeichnis Anton Bruckner”, compiled by Renate Grasberger), philosophically and practically. **I think that it is detrimental to the understanding and general appreciation of Bruckner’s Oeuvre for the “Official” catalog of his works to adopt the philosophy of giving only one number to each Symphony (or to each major work), regardless of how many versions of it exist.**

²⁸ Haas described the sources of this passage, as being “in private possession”. When Nowak did his edition of the Symphony, the location of the source was then unknown and he marked his drafts with the sentence “Die Streicher, woher?” (Where do the strings come from?). (Personal communication, William Carragan).

A list of Bruckner's "symphonic essays"

Essay No.	Sym. No.	Year cpsd.	Publisher and year (Bruckner Society)	Recorded (Conductor)
1	00	1863	Nowak, 1973	Rozhdestvensky, Inbal
2	1/I	1865/77	Haas, 1935; Nowak, 1953 ²⁹	many ("Linz version")
3	0	1869	Nowak, 1968	Chailly, Inbal, Rozhdestvensky
-	"B flat"	1869/70	None	no (unfinished sketch)
4	2/I	1872/3	Carragan	Eichhorn (See main text)
5	3/I	1872/3	Nowak, 1977	Inbal ("Wagnersymphonie")
6	4/I	1874	Nowak, 1975	Inbal, Lopez Cobos
7	5	1876/8	Haas, 1935; Nowak, 1951	many
8	2/II	1877	Haas, 1938; Nowak, 1965	many (See main text)
9	3/II	1876/7	Oeser, 1950; Nowak, 1980/81	Haitink, Kubelik, Sinopoli
10	4/II	1878	Haas, 1936; Nowak, 1953/81	no
11	4/III	1878/80	Haas, 1936/44; Nowak, 1953	many ("Romantic Symphony")
12	6	1879/81	Haas, 1935; Nowak, 1952	many
13	7	1881/3	Haas, 1944; Nowak, 1954	many
14	8/I	1884/7	Nowak, 1972	Inbal
S.1/14+	4/IV	1887/8	None	Furtwaengler, Von Maticic, Knappertsbush
15	3/III	1888/9	Nowak, 1959	many
16	8/II	1887/90	Haas, 1935; Nowak, 1955	many (See main text)
17	1/II	1890/1	Haas, 1935; Nowak & Brosche, 1980	Wand, Chailly
18	9	1887/96	Orel, 1934; Nowak, 1951	many

9. Which works should be included in a "complete" series, for concert or recording purposes?

Traditionally, the answer to this question has been the following: choose the first version ("Linz") of the First Symphony, the second version (Oeser's edition) of the Third, and the last versions of the rest, but using Haas' scores. Good examples of this are the "complete recordings" of Barenboim (Chicago) and Haitink (Amsterdam).

I would prefer, however, that a "complete set" would include the 18+ Essays that I have recognized as independent symphonic works of the Master, but I am sure

²⁹ The case of Symphony 1/I poses a big question mark. To what extent should a version that it took twelve years to compose be assigned to a one "Essay" number or split into two? The answer to this question will surface when a detailed study of the autographs will be made, clarifying the different states of the Symphony between the Bruckner Linz (1865/66) and Vienna days (1876/7). Until now, the International Bruckner Society has published (edited by W. Grandjean) only two fragments of this symphony dated from 1865/6: a fragment of an Adagio, similar to the actual one but much simpler, and a Scherzo without the corresponding Trio. Could these fragments be part of a new "Symphonic Essay" that has not been discovered yet?

that this perspective might need another fifty years to be generally accepted. So, what to do in the meantime?

In this case, my recommendation would be the following:

- i) Please, include Symphonies N° 00 and 0
- ii) Choose the first version ("Linz", 1865/77) of the First Symphony, and shift also to the first version (1872) of the Second. For this symphony, Carragan's edition is the only choice now.
- iii) Prefer the first version (1873) of the Third Symphony. Nowak's (1977) edition is the only choice for this score available now.
- iv) Please, include **both the first and the last** versions of the Fourth Symphony (1874 and 1880). They have two movements completely different, and the rest is also developed in a very different way by the composer.
- v) If you are very audacious, perform the Eighth Symphony using the standard 1880 Nowak's score in the first three movements, and using the score of 1887 for the

Finale, as I mentioned earlier. That is better and more faithful to the manuscripts than the traditional Haas' mixture.³⁰

vi) For the rest of the symphonies use either Haas' or Nowak's scores.

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³⁰ Because the finales of both the 1887 and 1890 versions are very similar in orchestration and structure, and because the 1887 finale is more related to the full version of 1890 than to its accompanying first three movements, would it not be more faithful to Bruckner's score to perform a "mixed version", that is, to use the first three movements from the 1890 version (using Nowak's score), and to use the finale from the 1887 version? (also from Nowak's score). This might appear heretical to some, but let me make a comparison with "Fidelio". You might agree or not with a conductor who performs the 1806 score of it using "Leonore" No. 2 as the overture, instead of "Leonore" No. 3. But surely you would reject a performance of that opera whose conductor had arranged the score of "Leonore" No. 3, to include in it, music from "Leonore" No. 2 that he or she particularly liked, whether of not the added bars fit with the score. So why should we accept a solution for Bruckner's works that is unacceptable for Beethoven's?

A comparison of the length of the different "Essays"

With the exception of Symphony 2/I and Symphony 4/IV, the numbers are according to Nowak's scores.

Essay No.	Sym. No.	First Mov.	Adagio	Scher-zo	Trio	Finale	Total	Duration (min.)
1	00	625	128	90	39	372	1254	51
2	1/I	351	168	159	39	396	1113	47
3	0	353	160	192	56	317	1078	46
4	2/I	583	211	154	125	806	1879	67
5	3/I	746	278	152	116	764	2056	67
6	4/I	630	246	362	132	616	1986	71
7	5	511	211	382	148	635	1887	74
8	2/II	570	209	157	121	702	1759	61
9	3/II	652	289/251	160/201	116	638	1855/58	60
10	4/II	573	247	259	54	477	1610	59
11	4/III	573	247	259	54	541	1674	64
12	6	369	177	110	52	415	1123	57
13	7	443	219	272	136	339	1409	69
14	8/I	453	329	211	105	771	1869	86
S.1/14+	4/IV	571	247	256/180	54	507	1581	62
15	3/III	651	222	160	116	495	1644	54
16	8/II	417	291	195	93	709	1705	81
17	1/II	345	171	166	44	393	1119	48
18	9	567	243	250	264	>700	>2024	61

The First Performances of the symphonies of Anton Bruckner (1824-1896) (Including the Editor and the year of publication of their first and non-critical scores)

The scores initially used in Nos. 5, 6 and 9 were significantly different from Bruckner's originals.

Essay No.	Sym. No.	Year publ.	Editor	First Performance
1	00, f	1913 (Andante)	C. Hynais	Franz Moissl (18-III/12-X-1924)
2	1/I, c	-		Anton Bruckner (9-V-1868)
3	0, d	1924	K. Voess	Franz Moissl (12-X-1924)
4	2/I, c	-		Anton Bruckner (26-X-1873)
5	3/I, d	-		Josef Keilberth (1-XII-1946)
6	4/I, E flat	-		Kurt Woess (20-IX-1975)
7	5, B flat	1896	F. Schalk	Franz Schalk (8-IV-1894)
				Sigmund Von Hausegger (20-X-1935)
8	2/II, c	1892	C. Hynais	Anton Bruckner (20-II-1876)
9	3/II, d	1878	J. Schalk	Anton Bruckner (16-XII-1877)
10	4/II, E flat	-		?
11	4/III, E flat	-		Hans Richter (20-II-1881)
12	6, A	1899	C. Hynais	Gustav Mahler (26-II-1899)
				Karl Pohlig (14-III-1901)
13	7, E	1885	J. Schalk, Loewe	Arthur Nikisch (30-XII-1884)
14	8/I, c	-		Hans-Hubert Schoenzeler (2-IX-1973)
S.1/14+	4/IV, E flat	1888	F. Schalk, Loewe	Hans Richter (22-I-1888)
15	3/III, d	1890	J. Schalk	Hans Richter (21-XII-1890)
16	8/II, c	1893	M. Oberleithner	Hans Richter (18-XII-1892)
17	1/II, c	1893	C. Hynais	Hans Richter (13-XII-1891)
18	9, d	1903	F. Loewe	Ferdinand Loewe (11-II-1903)
				Sigmund Von Hausegger (2-IV-1932)