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FELIX M. GATZ

AS

BRUCKNER - CONDUCTOR

BY

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The European Music of greatest significance is mainly Austrian. One of the greatest, may be the greatest, composer of Austria is Anton Bruckner (1824—1896) who created 9 immortal Symphonies, 3 wonderful Masses for Choir, Solo and Orchestra and an overwhelming Te Deum.

The epoch-making position of Bruckner has been generally acknowledged, for some decades since, in Austria, the most music-loving country of Europe, and especially in Vienna, the most cultivated musical centre in Europe. Outstanding books in German language have made known Bruckner's grandeur to the world within the last 20 years.

One of those who is deepest inspired by Bruckner is a man whose personality, both as an artist and philosopher, is of highest rank: Felix M. Gatz. Of him we shall speak on these pages, and his own confessions of Bruckner will conclude these leaves.

Felix M. Gatz was born in Germany in 1892. He went in for Music and Philosophy and he was fortunate in having as teachers the greatest masters in both fields. As for Music, he was guided by Arthur Nikisch, an Hungarian by birth, who was the greatest European conductor of his time. As to Philosophy, he was introduced into this science by Georg Simmel, Professor at the University of Berlin, a fascinating philosopher of international reputation and Hugo Munsterberg, the celebrated philosopher of Harvard-University, who, in 1910, was a Guest-Professor in Berlin. In 1917 Mr. Gatz took his degree as a Doctor of Philosophy.

As Aesthetician Doctor Gatz was in activity at various Academies in Germany and Austria. So, among

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other places, he lectured as a Professor of Musical-Aesthetics at the world-famous State-Academy of Music in Vienna, to whose staff Johannes Brahms, Anton Bruckner and other great masters of Music had once belonged.

As a Conductor Mr. Gatz gave concerts since 1918 with the most renowned Austrian, German and Hungarian orchestras. For 10 years (1923—1933) he was in Berlin at the head of the world-renowned Philharmonic Orchestra in the Concerts of the „Bruckner-Society“. It was in this great city of 5 million inhabitants that he fulfilled a mission of truly historical significance.

Before Felix M. Gatz began to perform Bruckner, not even one Symphony of Bruckner had been rendered in a Berlin season. Not even in the 10 wonderful concerts conducted, in every season, by Arthur Nikisch, could Bruckner be heard more frequently.

It was quite different, however, in Vienna. In this city great home-born conductors, for a long time since, had started Bruckner-cycles, with the result that the Viennese public became so familiar with Bruckner as they already were with Beethoven and Brahms. In the first line we will mention the famous conductor Ferdinand Löwe, together with Josef and Franz Schalk, an intimate disciple of Bruckner.

In Berlin, Professor Gatz, in union with Arthur Nikisch, established the „Bruckner-Society“ for the purpose of giving an opportunity to this greatest city of Germany, to penetrate into the sublimity and beauty of Bruckner's works by way of permanent and regular performances. The Philharmonic Orchestra was selected as the best possible instrument for reproducing Bruckner's Symphonies. In order to perform also Bruckner's Choir Compositions, Doctor Gatz called into existence a special Choir, named by him „The Bruckner-Choir“.

It goes without saying that the time-honored propagators of Bruckner such as Ferdinand Löwe in

Vienna evinced the greatest interest both in the Berlin Bruckner-Society and in Doctor Gatz personally, the promotor of this Bruckner-Movement. Arthur Nikisch furthered the work by becoming the President of the Bruckner-Society and Doctor Gatz was appointed Conductor of the concerts.

In the beginning of F. M. Gatz' activities the two seniors died. Thus Doctor Gatz alone was confronted with the difficult task to popularize Bruckner's wonderful work in Berlin, a task whose success was gravely doubted by sceptics in the beginning. Felix M. Gatz ventured to do what none of the older conductors had dared before him: to perform, in each of the concerts of his cycles, one Symphony of Anton Bruckner! And he did so with the enthusiasm and vigor of a thirty year's man who had just attained to the mastership in his art. Owing to Felix M. Gatz' endeavours only Anton Bruckner became popular in this city.

In the beginning of the activities of the Bruckner-Society, Doctor Gatz had some excellent ideas in propagating Bruckner and the Bruckner-Society. In 1924, on the occasion of Bruckner's 100th birthday, Doctor Gatz contrived to arrange a Bruckner-festival in the House of Parliament (Reichstag), at which the then President of the Reich and the German ministers as well as foreign ambassadors attended. Doctor Gatz conducted Bruckner's powerful Fifth. This concert contributed to making the Austrian master Bruckner an official personality in Germany. — A success of at least the same importance was scored by Doctor Gatz' inspiring the Berlin Wireless to arrange an official festivity in the honor of Anton Bruckner in the same year. Doctor Gatz was appointed conductor of this concert whose programme was devoted entirely to the reproduction of Bruckner's works: The 7th Symphony and the Te Deum. It was for the first time that the Berlin Wireless ever transmitted a work of Bruckner! Soon after, it was Doctor Gatz who in the course

of one winter season, conducted the complete cycle of Bruckner's Symphonies and the greatest Choir Compositions! For 10 years Dr. Gatz remained the ardent and unique propagator of Bruckner in Berlin.

Owing to the unusual qualities of the conductor, the concerts proved a great success with the public and the press. The „Bruckner-Society“, under the direction of Felix M. Gatz, soon became one of the greatest Music Associations of Berlin. This was acknowledged even in countries where Dr. Gatz had not conducted as for instance in England. Thus the London „Radio Times“, in November 1933, and on the occasion of the 10 years' Jubilee of the „Bruckner-Society“, recognize that „the Bruckner-Society under the leadership of Dr. Felix M. Gatz has been doing excellent work“ and call him „so thoughtful, sensitive and experienced a musician“ that they quote his views as being leading in matters relating to Bruckner.

„For a number of years“, writes the American journalist Mr. Louis P. Lochner, Chief Representative of „The Associated Press“ in Berlin, „I have had the pleasure of being regular attendant to the splendid concerts of the Bruckner-Society under the conduction of Professor Felix M. Gatz. Just as I was attracted to them, by the unusual qualities of the conductor, who is one of the best and most thorough musicians I know, so undoubtedly were many others who felt as I do about Professor Gatz. For I always found Doctor Gatz' concerts crowded to the last seat“.

Another excellent American judgment on Doctor Gatz has been put forth by the highly appreciated musical scientist of Harvard University (Cambridge) Mr. H. Leichtentritt, B. A. Ph. D., who has lived for a long time in Germany. He wrote in September 1933: „Felix M. Gatz is a first-rate conductor, prominent particularly in the interpretation of his master Bruckner and of high merits for an increase of the general appreciation of the grand Austrian Symphonist“.

As the concerts of the Bruckner-Society, under the guidance of Dr. F. M. Gatz, were as popular and crowded as only those of Mr. Bruno Walter or Doctor Furtwangler, there were many thousands of music lovers who, year by year, were induced by Felix M. Gatz to love the wonderful works of Anton Bruckner.

Felix M. Gatz, as a personality, is the born leader: He knows what he wants and he knows how to realize his will. He is also the born musician: devoted to Music, as it were, possessed by music. Therefore: he is the born conductor. So he was called by the critics when making his first appearance in 1918. This is the same praise met with over and over again in all the critiques published since 15 years in Vienna, Berlin and Budapest. He was named „a conductor of genius“ by the famous Viennese composer Julius Bittner, whose numerous operas are all played at the State Opera at Vienna. „A genius amongst the European conductors“, wrote, after the performance of Bruckner's Ninth Symphony, the composer Max Springer, then Director of the State Academy of Music in Vienna.

In fact, Felix M. Gatz owns all the qualities which make a called conductor a chosen one. The lifting of the baton is done with a certain amount of solemnity. He shows a great tranquillity and self-restraint and above all the sway of superiority and the great suggestive power emanating from a great musical personality.

There are conductors who appeal to the eye of the public and others who are suitable to the orchestra. Doctor Gatz combines both advantages. — The way he holds the baton is noble and aristocratic, and even in the moments of ecstatical enthusiasm he always keeps well within the limits of the aesthetical. Thus he is an elegant master of the baton. But his elegant

gestures are not the result of mere technique or routine. All his conducting virtuosity is rather subservient to the musical substance of the work interpreted by him. All his intention is entirely devoted to the work and never to himself.

As to the orchestra, every orchestra-player will feel secure under his superior and fascinating conductorship and, carried off to enthusiasm, will display his highest abilities. Seldom will string instruments sing cantilenas as beautifully as under F. M. Gatz. Orchestra, as well as singers, are by him transformed into an instrument most subtly reacting on all his intentions. He truly plays the orchestra like a pianist a piano! This is surely the highest compliment you can pay to an orchestra-leader.

He excellently understands how to build up a symphony and to prepare and attain to the climax of a work. No matter whether there are gradations of utmost fortissimo or parts of utmost delicacy — in either respect Bruckner's scores abound — Felix M. Gatz always emphasizes the mysterious character of Music. Thus his way of conducting frequently shows truly visionary features!

His is such an affinity to Bruckner's Music, that all his abilities and capacities, as a conductor, show themselves when interpreting the works of the great Austrian. He is so completely a part of Bruckner's works and so absolutely one and all with them that he uses to conduct them by heart, without applying to the score, thereby augmenting the visionary character of his conducting.

There are conductors who conduct without score only in order to impose on the public. Doctor Gatz never conducts by heart before having worked together with an orchestra for a certain time, until he has gained the impression that all the orchestra-

players, like himself, have penetrated into the work, as was the case for instance with the Philharmonic Orchestra in Berlin which he conducted for 15 years, thus becoming aware of the capacities and deficiencies of each player.

The merits of F. M. Gatz for Bruckner cannot be overrated. This has been the opinion of the whole press. The newspapers were teeming with sentences such as the following: There is hardly a conductor who so deeply penetrated into the character of Bruckner's Music as Doctor Gatz does. Bruckner's interpretations by F. M. Gatz can be compared only to those of Nikisch. Felix M. Gatz who, at the 10 year's Jubilee of the „Bruckner-Society“ in 1933, had just become 40 years of age, is a past master in the art of conducting. He is the Bruckner-Conductor par excellence, the greatest Bruckner-Interpreter of our time!

But he does not give such masterly interpretations of Anton Bruckner's works only. The whole range of Austrian Music, from Haydn and Mozart down to the present days, in him meets with a representative of unrivalled capacities. The works of Gustav Mahler particularly, the greatest disciple of Bruckner, have been regularly performed by Mr. Gatz, with the greatest enthusiasm, and they scored the greatest success too. Thus the President of the State Academy of Music in Vienna, Doctor Karl Kobald, writes about Felix M. Gatz on his leaving for America in August 1934:

„Felix M. Gatz, Professor Ph. D., is highly meritorious for propagating abroad, especially in Germany, within the last 10 years, the works of the great Austrian composer Anton Bruckner, and those of living Austrian composers. Thus Doctor Gatz is the very man for conveying to the American public, with absolute authenticity, the understanding of specifically Austrian Music — which, up to this day, is paramount in Europe. This prominent and

highly appreciated conductor is enjoying the confidence of Austrian musicians and composers. So we confidently hope that, by his conducting, he may succeed to bring the American public in closest touch with Austrian Music."

It is of utmost importance that the official Board of Music in Austria, the State Academy of Music, consider Doctor Gatz as the true representative of Austrian Music when going to America!

Professor Gatz is not only an orchestra-leader, but also a fascinating choir-conductor. The „Bruckner-Choir“, established and schooled by him, was able, within a short time, to sing the most difficult and greatest compositions. Admirable achievements of the Bruckner-Choir, under the leadership of Doctor Gatz, were Masses of Schubert, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Mahler's Second Symphony, Anton Bruckner's Masses and Te Deum, these being regularly performed in the concerts of the Bruckner-Society with the Philharmonic Orchestra, the latter being reproduced on Odéon records.

Mr. Gatz also proved a prominent opera conductor. He has been an excellent interpreter especially of the Music-Dramas of Richard Wagner who was called by Bruckner „The Master of all Masters“.

To sum up: Felix M. Gatz is the born musician and conductor! This is the reputation he enjoyed in the capitals of Austria, Germany and Hungary. Now all his abilities shall be devoted to America, having been appointed Professor of Aesthetics at Duquesne University of Pittsburgh Pa., where he is living since August 1934.

Professor Gatz is a great music-aesthetician too. His musical writings show quite a particular character because, contrary to most of Professors of Aesthetics

in Europe, he penetrates into Art and Music as an artist and musician, not as a mere scientist or historian. His books that had appeared in Germany and Czechoslovakia have been styled as truly „epoch-making“, meeting with unparalleled recognition in the quarters of philosophers, scientists and composers (among these Richard Strauss!) in Vienna, Prague, Berlin, London and even America. As to America, his book „Musical-Aesthetics in its principal directions“ has been already honorably mentioned by Doctor W. A. Hammond, Professor of Philosophy at Cornell University, in his „Bibliography of Aesthetics from 1900—1930“ characterizing it as a clear and most valuable advocacy of the idea of Autonomy of Music. Later on, on another occasion, he wrote: „It is an admirable book for anyone interested in the general History of aesthetic theories. It is, of course, especially valuable for the clear exposition of the autonomy doctrine. We need such books in the United States.“

And Mr. G. Engel in New York, the meritorious author of the first book in English on Master Anton Bruckner, writes about Professor Gatz: „The boundless scholarship and universal grasp of musical aesthetics he reveals in his great book makes the music lover inclined to speak of it in a whisper.“ As Professor Gatz, in this essay, is merely to be considered as the Bruckner-Interpreter, these few words will suffice as to his aesthetical achievements.

What Bruckner means to him, may be explained by himself. In 1926 he conducted at the tomb of Bruckner, at St. Florian, in Austria, a group of Berlin Bruckner admirers. Here he made a confession of faith in Bruckner with the following words.

## **Anton Bruckner**

Address delivered, in the Bruckner-Vault,  
at St. Florian

by

**Felix M. Gatz.**

„When I shall have ceased to be, relate to the world what I have had to suffer and how they persecuted me“, Bruckner once said.

Why was Bruckner persecuted? The reason is that he was a stranger on the earth, residing here as though passing through only. Bruckner was a man who was entirely absorbed in the cosmic world, in transcendental spheres. In the profound sense of the word, he was a mysticist.

Mysticists as such will walk their ways solitary, as they contemplate the earth with the views of men living in the absolute. This necessary and inevitable loneliness of the mysticist was augmented, in Bruckner, by the fact that he lived at a time that was altogether unmythical, and that looked upon him as being a personified impeachment, not only a personified protest.

It is true, this epoch, in some of its figures, was still „romantic“. Bruckner, however, has not been a „romanticist“. For every „romanticism“ in its characteristic longing for the infinite, wanders on ethereal walks, whilst Bruckner, the mysticist, stood far off, living in the infinite spheres which „romanticists“ are merely striving for. As compared to Bruckner every romanticism may be called earthly.

Bruckner's epoch was thirsting for beauty as well. Thus Bruckner's sound visions were of inexpressible beauty, his melodies and cantilenas being the most melodious imaginable. But they are even more than that, as in their beauty dwells simultaneously a religious ethos.

But above all, this time bore a materialistic stamp intrinsically: This epoch did not believe in the spirit, it did not grasp the sense of the assertion that spirit is a fact! Bruckner, the mysticist, however, was the harbinger of the faith in the existence of spirit. He believed in the spirit without any „positivistic“ limitation. Bruckner was a mysticist. And there is a profound connection between mysticism and music: as to both mysticism and music, the world and her objects do not exist!

Bruckner proclaimed the world of the spirit. This does not mean that he strove to describe his faith in music, as many composers endeavour to do who pretend to depict facts and details of life. He proclaimed the world of the spirit and bore witness on its behalf by producing sounds mystical and mysterious in themselves. This differs widely from depicting mystical and mysterious subject-matters as other composers aimed to do. And just so his sound visions have become a true witness of the spiritual realm.

Thus Bruckner hallowed the humanized and worldly-minded music.

Bruckner, however, was too unconscious a mediator of the spirit as to be able to express, in words, the part attributed to him and to proclaim his ideas on music in essays and books, as Wagner did, in manifesting his mission to the world. Nor were the Bruckner-antagonists, and those who were strange to him, able to characterize the very spirit of his music as we do, but all of them felt it. Hence the hatred they bore against him who was more absolute than his century.

It is only we who have recognized the false supremacy of materialism and positivism, who are slowly beginning to get an idea of Bruckner's remote and world-far genius.

In St. Florian the master underwent the change

from boyhood to youth, here he worked in the years of his maturing into a man.

St. Florian, for him, was the Holy Grail, the messenger of which he felt to be, when descending to the world. It was here that he sought peace in the decades of hard struggle, and having fulfilled his mission he was recalled, as it were, magnetically to the place, in whose solitude he found the last rest, guarded like a saint by the priests of the monastery of St. Florian.

Few musicians have lived a life that so obviously coincided with their artistic life as was the case with Bruckner. For the only thing he owned was music. Thus music was the true expression of his all-comprising, mystical and religious experience of the world. Nobody will be able to approach his Art unless his attitude to the world be the same. Therefore we will try again and again to pierce the realm of the spirit which we have departed from and where Anton Bruckner has been antecedent to us, the surviving.

That this realm really exists, Bruckner's Works bear witness of.

In May 1933 the „Bruckner-Society“ in Berlin celebrated its 10th anniversary. Doctor Gatz, as usual, conducted a symphony of Bruckner. It was the 4th, named the „romantic“. This night, Dr. Gatz surpassed himself. This was his last conducting in Germany as well as the last concert of the „Bruckner-Society“ in Berlin.

The concert was a festival to all those who filled the big hall of the „Philharmony“ to the very last seat, and it will remain unforgotten in their memories for ever.

In the absence of the President of the Bruckner-Society, Doctor W. Marx, for many years the Chancellor of the Reich and chief of the German Government, the Vice-President made a speech celebrating Felix M. Gatz as the creator of the Bruckner-Movement in Berlin and as the great Bruckner conductor!

Amongst the international acknowledgements given to Professor Dr. Felix M. Gatz on this occasion, we mention the Papal Decoration of the Gold Cross „Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice“.

Doctor Gatz himself wrote an essay on Anton Bruckner, for the first time published in the programme-book of this memorable concert. This essay penetrated deeply, with rare intuition, into Bruckner's personality and his unique and incomparable art. The profundness of the insights revealed by this essay, characterizes Bruckner no less than Felix M Gatz, his conductor, and may conclude these leaves.

## The Essence of Anton Bruckner's Music.

An Essay written on the Occasion of the  
10 Years' Jubilee of the Bruckner-Society

by  
Felix M. Gatz.

Seven years ago I had the rare honor to make a confession to Bruckner at the opened sarcophagus, before Austrian and German admirers of Bruckner. What I then confessed, at this solemn place, has more and more become my conviction in the years of incessant absorption into the world of Bruckner's Works: the belief in the unique and incomparable quality of Bruckner's Music.

The admirers of Bruckner fully render justice to the genius of his two great contemporaries, Wagner and Brahms. We do not deny that either of them fills a place remarkable not only in an historical sense, that is to say in the development of the Music of the 19th century, but also exceedingly remarkable for its high aesthetic value. But to us Bruckner means more than Wagner and Brahms: His Music is altogether unique and outstanding and, as it were, Music to a greater extent, „more“ Music than that of these two great masters who so strongly impeded the fame of Bruckner even in the years of his greatest maturity. We devoutly believe that Bruckner's Music is not only a culmination of the second half of the 19th century, but the purest incarnation of the very spirit of Music, comparable only to what we find in Beethoven's last Quartets and in certain (by far not all) masterpieces of Bach. We ascribe to Bruckner's Music a value to last for thousand years — not to say an eternal value — just as to Plato's dialogues, which though growing older, will retain their worth as long as mankind exists.

### I. Bruckner as a man and his views of the world.

The philosophy of a man depends on his character, says Fichte (Was für eine Philosophie man hat, hängt davon ab, was für ein Mensch man ist). The same applies to Music: The Music of a composer depends on his character too. In other words: The composer's character is embodied in his compositions.

Now what sort of a man was Bruckner?

He was rather grotesque, some people say.

Others again want to make us believe that — though being a great artist — he was peasant-like, like the peasants and village schoolmasters in his home country, the Austrian province of Upper-Austria. They really try to persuade us that Bruckner as a man was by no means different from the rest of his Upper Austrian countrymen and that, therefore, a part of Bruckner could be traced in every Upper-Austrian peasant. They attempt to persuade us that Bruckner is equal in quality, though not in quantity, to his compatriots. Bruckner's being much greater than they are, is of course, admitted; nevertheless they regard this genius as a mere multiplication, as it were, of his countrymen. In this way you can hear people speak, in the environs of Linz and St. Florian — the places in the province of Upper-Austria where Bruckner lived for 20 years — as of „our“ Bruckner. It undoubtedly manifests much love for the great master, but at the same time it expresses too little respect for his genius.

I assert: It is impossible for a man to be a great artist, but to be only a mediocrity as a „man“. The artist and the man, in my opinion, cannot be separated in such a mechanical way. And the story of the great artist's being but an average as man, is particularly wrong regarding Anton Bruckner.

I ask: What do we mean by „man“? The way he dresses, the way he moves in society? If so, Bruckner as a „man“ was indeed a mediocrity. Or is

it rather the relation of a soul to the cosmos, to God, what we call „man“?

What was Bruckner then as a „man“ in the deepest sense of the word? No one who knew him could ignore his profound piety. The essence of all piety is the absolute conviction that there exists something supernatural and absolutely holy, as compared to which all earthly things vanish, and, moreover, the certainty that, nevertheless, there must be a connection between the supernatural divine and the earthly sphere! In other words: The consciousness of the existence of something supernatural and divine, and, on the other hand, the belief in this holy Power penetrating into the earthly sphere — this is the essence of all true piety.

One must not think such piety to be a frequent occurrence. It needs much more than a theoretical acknowledgment of some maxims or dogmas: The whole soul must rather be absorbed into the conviction of the existence of the supernatural, or God. Such piety requires even highest intellect, imagination and the capacity of abstracting from individual events.

For, otherwise it would be rather impossible to have the impression of supernatural greatness and justice in the world, because we would not perceive anything but the realization of physical laws of nature with their immanent and inevitable cruelties. In short, such piety demands an idea of the absolute relativity of earthly things. And this presupposes real greatness of the soul!

May be that greatness of the soul will spring also from other sources, but no doubt that he is truly great who, at every step, perceives the relation and connection between the natural and the supernatural. The man who is pious and religious in this sense, is a „great“ man, even though he may not „achieve“ anything else than this belief. Bruckner was such a man. Bruckner was a great man!

A philosopher is he who is able to express, by way of notions, his views of the world, so to speak, his relation to the cosmos. A philosopher is a man who knows how to elevate his views of the world to systematical notions. Bruckner, though not a „philosopher“ in this sense, had undoubtedly a relation to the cosmos and to God, and thus he had a „view of the world“, and so lofty that even philosophers could envy him! Or should we say: Bruckner had not this view of the world, but he was possessed by it, Bruckner was the incarnation of this profound view of the world, Bruckner himself was this view of the world? For, what else is the very substance of a „man“, if it is not his view of the world, his attitude towards the cosmos and God? —

Bruckner's view of the world was piety and mysticism, before which the world of things vanishes into nothingness.

## II. Bruckner's conception of Music.

Connected with a man's view of the world is his view or conception of Music. What is „conception of Music“? It is what Music is expected to be and what we understand by the word „Music“.

The conception of Music depends on the conception of the world and is its consequence. Now which is the conception of Music that is the consequence of the mystic view of the world, as characterized by things regarded as „non-existent“?

According to such a conception of Music, as a matter of course, Music cannot have the aim to deal with the world of things, that is, with physical nature and the feelings of the soul!

Bruckner's was this conception of Music.

What I call a conception of Music is not at all a „philosophy“ of Music. What is the difference? Just as science and general philosophy are the elevation of

the instinctive „view“ of the world to „notion“, system and theory, so Philosophy of Music (or „Musical Aesthetics“) is the elevation of the instinctive conception of Music to notion and systematic theory of Music. Bruckner had no Musical Aesthetics, but he had rather a conception of Music. (It is impossible to hear Music or to compose without having a „conception“ or an idea of Music).

Bruckner's conception of Music was the belief in the mystery that Music is a sphere absolutely different from that of all other things, particularly from what we call „nature“ and „soul“! Nature and soul, as everybody knows, can be explained and described in words and notions. Music, however, being absolutely different from nature and soul, cannot be described in words, cannot at all be translated into notions! Bruckner was completely aware of this, he was absolutely absorbed — without being able to formulate this wisdom in the language of words — by the mystery, called the „Autonomy“ of Music!

But if Bruckner could not express it, how can we know that he knew it? Shall we, from his way of composing, draw a conclusion onto his conception. No, this would be a *circulus vitiosus*. There is a better means to learn his ideas on Music: His assiduous and constant study of Music for decades until nearly his fortieth year of age! Nobody dare assert he had to do so because he had so little talent. Therefore I say: Had Music been for him merely a means to describe, represent, or express nature and feelings, he could have dispensed with the continuous study of this art into the fourth decade of his life, which the uninitiated might easily think grotesque and rather pathological, or based upon the inferiority complex of the former village school-master. In order to describe nature or feelings, he would have needed only to observe or to listen to nature and soul, as a preparation for composing — not to speak of the indispensable ele-

mentary knowledge of musical theory which, by the way, Bruckner was familiar with already when a boy. What he really aimed at, by his constant learning, was to *listen to Music*, instead of listening to the voice nature and soul! No doubt his constant study was superfluous. But one thing is evident from this assiduity not at all resulting from the inferiority complex of the former village organist: His conviction that Music lies beyond nature and soul, his faith in the self-sufficiency of Music, his belief in the Autonomy of Music!

### III. Bruckner's Music.

As a man's conception of Music is the consequence and the result of his conception of the world, thus a composer's conception of Music is the basis for his composing.

This must not be misunderstood. The first condition, to begin with, is that the composing individual is gifted for Music! Otherwise his conception of Music will be of no use when composing; and, all in all, it is possible to compose good Music even on the basis of a wrong and bad conception of Music (So Wagner's splendid score of the „Valkyrie“ has been achieved by him in spite of his wrong conception of Music which, by the way, he later on revoked). But if a great composer has the right conception of Music, its essence, structure and aim, as Bruckner had, there necessarily must result Music that may be called „eminently musical Music“.

All Music is „musical“, absolute and „autonomous“ — the bad as well as the good Music, Music born out of a wrong conception as well as that born of a right conception of Music, Music with the intention of being description and symbol of nature or feelings no less than Music whose composer had the intention to write „autonomous“ Music. All Music is

autonomous, and nothing occurs in Music but Music — though in various degrees. For there are degrees in Music. That means: There is Music which is, as it were, „more“ Music than other Music. And likewise: There are degrees regarding the Autonomy of Music. We will have to realize, at last, that the first principle of Musical Aesthetics is: „All Music is absolute and autonomous“, and that the second principle of Musical Aesthetics is a slight restriction of the first and may be expressed by saying: „All Music is autonomous — though of various degrees“.

Bruckner's Music has always been thought to be particularly „unliterary“, that means: nothing seemed to „happen“ in his symphonies. But „un-literary“ Music is nothing but „absolute“ or „autonomous“ Music.

Just the very critics of his Music who completely lacked any understanding of his grandeur, felt instinctively that Bruckner did not aspire to describe scenes of nature and life, and that he so little acted after the model of nature and feelings that even listeners showings literary intentions and attitudes — that means un-musical listeners — would not at all succeed in forcing upon his Music „subject-matters“, ideas, „contents“, not even of the most general kind. Unhappily sometimes even the would-be friends of Bruckner's tried to do what his enemies thought impossible: to force subject-matters upon his Music. And Bruckner was too amiable to contradict their insinuations with the necessary energy. In doing so, they did not render him any useful service. Though they loved him, they misunderstood him still more than his foes. When his foes harassed him, they did so on the basis of their acknowledgement of the un-literary and absolute character of his Music. In a certain way they understood his intentions better than many of his admirers. Thus Bruckner was persecuted because his Music was evidently (and more evidently than any other composer's Music) the purest, absolu-

test and most autonomous Music, obviously expressing nothing but itself.

Indeed all Music is, less or more, absolute and autonomous. But amongst all creations of Music, Bruckner's Works belong to the most absolute creations which the genius of Music is capable of. Bruckner's Music is the purest incarnation of the very spirit of Music.

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O hope having succeeded in giving a true portrait of the artist Professor Dr. Felix M. Gatz and his everlasting merits in propagating Bruckner's Music. My words about Dr. Gatz and his own words on Bruckner will show every reader that Dr. Gatz is the best imaginable Bruckner-Interpreter incomparably one and all with the incomparable Music of Anton Bruckner.