

# Anton Bruckner's Symphonies in the Concerts of the Allgemeine Musikgesellschaft Basel (1876-2001)

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The Allgemeine Musikgesellschaft Basel (AMG) was founded in 1876. In the more than 125 years of its existence, Anton Bruckner's symphonies played an important role in the AMG's programs <sup>2</sup>. There was a total of 151 performances (Table 1); in addition, two individual movements were performed: the Adagio of the Fifth during the season of 1899/1900 (the very first performance of a Bruckner work in the AMG concerts!) and the Scherzo of the Fourth in a youth concert of the season 1964/65.

**Table 1: Anton Bruckner's Symphonies in the Concerts of the Allgemeine Musikgesellschaft Basel 1876-2001**

Symphony Nr.	Number of Performances
IV.	26
VI.	20
VII.	20
V.	19
III.	16
IX.	15
I.	13
VIII.	13
II.	7
0.	2
<i>Total</i>	<i>151</i>

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<sup>2</sup> This article is based on the «Festschriften» of the AMG published on the occasions of its 50., 75., 100. and 125. anniversary (W. MÖRIKOFER: Die Konzerte der Allgemeinen Musikgesellschaft Basel in den Jahren 1876 bis 1926, Basel 1926; FRITZ MOREL: Die Konzerte der Allgemeinen Musikgesellschaft Basel in den Jahren 1926 bis 1951, Basel 1951; TILMAN SEEBASS: Die Allgemeine Musikgesellschaft Basel 1876-1976, Basel 1976; RUDOLF HÄUSLER: Allgemeine Musikgesellschaft Basel 1976-2001, Basel 2001).

Among the AMG's chief conductors, three were particularly prominent as Bruckner interpreters:

*Hermann Suter* who was chief conductor from 1902 to 1926 conducted a total of 15 performances (one each of the 1., 3. and 7. and two each of the 2., 4., 5., 6., 8. and 9. Symphony); this was at a time when performances of these works were by no means a matter of course (*Suter's successor Felix Weingartner* conducted only 6 performances of the 4., 5., 7. and 9. Symphony over 11 seasons).

*Hans Münch*, the AMG's musical head from 1935 to 1966, cared for Bruckner's works with all his heart. There were no less than 59 performances of the symphonies during his time as chief conductor (Table 2); it is interesting to note that, in 31 seasons, he conducted the Ninth only once, namely in conclusion of the complete Bruckner cycle during the seasons 1964/65 and 1965/66 (followed by the Te Deum). If we keep in mind that Münch also performed the Bruckner symphonies outside the AMG concerts and that he regularly conducted Bruckner's choral works during his long years as conductor of the Basler Gesangverein, it is not an exaggeration to call him a real Bruckner protagonist. It was mainly due to his pioneering role that Basel was invited to host the XI. Bruckner Festival in December 1952; the AMG contributed performances of the 1., 6. and 8. Symphonies under Hans Münch and Volkmar Andreae.

<b>Symphony Nr.</b>	<b>Number of Performances</b>
I.	5
II.	3
III.	7
IV.	11
V.	9
VI.	8
VII.	10
VIII.	5
IX.	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>59</i>

Bruckner's works were also very close to *Moshe Atzmon's* heart. He acted as the AMG's chief conductor from 1972 to 1986 and conducted a total of 20 performances (Table 3); the only symphony missing is the Fourth which was however performed by Antal Doráti during the Atzmon era.

<b>Symphony Nr.</b>	<b>Number of Performances</b>
I.	2
II.	2
III.	2
IV.	-
V.	2
VI.	2
VII.	4
VIII.	2
IX.	4
<i>Total</i>	<i>20</i>

Together, *Hermann Suter*, *Hans Münch* and *Moshe Atzmon* have almost two thirds of all the Bruckner symphony performances during the AMG's first 125 years to their accounts. Among the other conductors of Bruckner symphonies in the AMG concerts, we have to mention *Wilhelm Furtwängler* (Seventh in October 1949), *Rafael Kubelik* (Sixth in December 1969), *Ferdinand Leitner* (Ninth in November 1962 and Sixth in November 1992), *Joseph Keilberth* (Fourth in November 1966) and *Günter Wand* (Fifth in February 1981). Overall, however, Bruckner performances by guest conductors were rather infrequent because the AMG's chief conductors tended to consider Bruckner's works as their own domain.

The answer to the question which versions were performed in the AMG concerts is in the dark for almost the first 60 years<sup>3</sup>; it emerges for the first in 1934 time when, in connection with a performance of the Ninth under *Felix Weingartner*, the original version of Alfred Orel is mentioned. From the beginning of the Münch era, only the versions published in the

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<sup>3</sup> With a few exceptions, the lists of performed works contained in the AMG Festschriften unfortunately do not mention the versions.

«Kritische Gesamtausgabe» of Bruckner's works were performed, and the concert programs normally contained detailed explanations.

In summary, it can be said that the AMG performed Anton Bruckner's symphonies regularly right from the beginning of the 20th century<sup>4</sup>, and that *Hans Münch* in particular established a Bruckner tradition in Basel long before Bruckner performances became a must in the conductors' repertoires and in the world's concert halls.

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<sup>4</sup> It does not detract from the AMG's merits that, in the beginning, the programming around Bruckner's symphonies was rather unusual measured by today's standards: When the Eighth was performed for the first time in November 1903, it was followed by an aria from Bellini's «Sonnambula», the Mozart Notturmo in D (KV 286), four Lieder by Liszt, Richard Strauss and Schumann as well as Weber's Overture to «Freischütz»! In a similar vein, the first performance of the Ninth in February 1908 preceded two arias from Mozart's «Così fan tutte», the slow movement from Schubert's 2. Symphony, four Lieder by Schubert and Wolf and Weber's «Abu Hassan» Overture.

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<i>Symphony Nr.</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Month</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Orchestra</i>	<i>Conductor</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
5	1899	12	3	Orchestra of the AMG	Alfred Volkland	Adagio only
8	1903	11	29		Hermann Suter	
4	1907	1	6		Hermann Suter	
9	1908	2	2		Hermann Suter	
7	1913	3	2		Hermann Suter	
4	1918	3	9		Hermann Suter	
3	1921	1	8		Fritz Brun	
3	1921	1	18		Hermann Suter	
5	1921	11	26		Hermann Suter	
5	1921	12	20		Hermann Suter	
6	1922	11	18	Orchestra of the BOG*	Hermann Suter	
6	1922	12	12		Hermann Suter	
8	1924	3	1		Hermann Suter	
1	1924	11	29		Hermann Suter	
9	1924	11	29		Hermann Suter	
2	1926	2	27		Hermann Suter	
2	1926	3	16		Hermann Suter	
4	1927	1	29		Fritz Hirt	
5	1929	11	16		Felix Weingartner	
4	1931	2	14		Felix Weingartner	
4	1931	3	17		Felix Weingartner	
7	1932	4	2		Felix Weingartner	
3	1933	2	25		Felix Weingartner	
9	1934	1	20		Felix Weingartner	Original Edition A. Orel
4	1936	3	10		Franz von Hoesslin	
6	1937	2	23		Hans Münch	
7	1937	12	14		Hans Münch	
4	1939	3	7		Hans Münch	
6	1940	4	16		Hans Münch	
5	1941	2	18		Hans Münch	Original Version
7	1942	1	27		Hans Münch	
4	1942	10	27		Hans Münch	
1	1944	2	1		Volkmar Andreae	Vienna Version
5	1944	12	5		Hans Münch	Original Version
4	1945	3	14		Hans Münch	
8	1946	2	12		Hans Münch	
2	1946	12	17		Hans Münch	
2	1947	1	24		Hans Münch	
4	1947	11	18		Karl Schuricht	
7	1948	4	21		Hans Münch	
7	1948	4	23		Hans Münch	

7	1948	4	27	Hans Münch	
3	1949	5	3	Hans Münch	
3	1949	5	6	Hans Münch	
7	1949	10	25	Wilhelm Furtwängler	
7	1949	10	26	Wilhelm Furtwängler	
6	1950	2	21	Hans Münch	
6	1950	2	22	Hans Münch	
1	1950	10	11	Hans Münch	
1	1950	10	13	Hans Münch	
3	1950	11	8	Hans Münch	
3	1950	11	10	Hans Münch	
4	1951	1	17	Hans Münch	
4	1951	1	19	Hans Münch	
6	1951	2	28	Hans Münch	
6	1951	3	2	Hans Münch	
8	1951	5	16	Hans Münch	Original Version
8	1951	5	18	Hans Münch	Original Version
5	1952	5	19	Hans Münch	Original Version
5	1952	5	20	Hans Münch	Original Version
1	1952	12	1	Volkmar Andreae	Linz Version (XI. Bruckner Festival)
6	1952	12	1	Volkmar Andreae	Original Version (XI. Bruckner Festival)
1	1952	12	2	Volkmar Andreae	Linz Version
6	1952	12	2	Volkmar Andreae	Original Version
8	1952	12	13	Hans Münch	Original Version (XI. Bruckner Festival)
7	1954	2	22	Hans Münch	
7	1954	2	23	Hans Münch	
4	1955	3	16	Hans Münch	
4	1955	3	18	Hans Münch	
9	1956	1	10	Volkmar Andreae	
5	1957	4	29	Hans Münch	
5	1957	4	30	Hans Münch	
7	1958	4	29	Hans Münch	
6	1959	1	20	Hans Münch	
4	1960	3	14	Hans Münch	
4	1960	3	15	Hans Münch	
6	1960	12	19	Rafael Kubelik	
6	1960	12	20	Rafael Kubelik	
5	1961	4	21	Hans Münch	
3	1962	3	19	Hans Münch	
3	1962	3	20	Hans Münch	
9	1962	11	14	Ferdinand Leitner	
9	1962	11	15	Ferdinand Leitner	
7	1964	4	8	Hans Münch	
2	1964	10	14	Hans Münch	
4	1964	11	18	Hans Münch	
4	1964	12	2	Hans Münch	Scherzo only (Youth Concert)

7	1965	1	13	Hans Münch	
8	1965	4	28	Hans Münch	
1	1965	10	13	Hans Münch	Vienna Version
6	1965	10	13	Hans Münch	
3	1965	11	17	Hans Münch	
5	1966	1	12	Hans Münch	
9	1966	4	13	Hans Münch	Followed by Te Deum
4	1966	11	9	Joseph Keilberth	
4	1966	11	10	Joseph Keilberth	
1	1968	4	24	Hans Münch	Linz Version
1	1968	4	25	Hans Münch	Linz Version
8	1968	11	27	Leopold Ludwig	
8	1968	11	28	Leopold Ludwig	
4	1971	4	14	Milan Horvat	3. Version
4	1971	4	15	Milan Horvat	3. Version
5	1972	4	12	Hans Münch	
5	1972	4	13	Hans Münch	
7	1974	5	8	Moshe Atzmon	
7	1974	5	9	Moshe Atzmon	
5	1974	11	27	Moshe Atzmon	
5	1974	11	28	Moshe Atzmon	
3	1976	2	25	Moshe Atzmon	
3	1976	2	26	Moshe Atzmon	
4	1976	11	24	Antal Doráti	
4	1976	11	25	Antal Doráti	
9	1977	12	14	Moshe Atzmon	Original Version
9	1977	12	15	Moshe Atzmon	Original Version
6	1978	10	25	Moshe Atzmon	
6	1978	10	26	Moshe Atzmon	
1	1979	9	26	Moshe Atzmon	Linz Version
1	1979	9	27	Moshe Atzmon	Linz Version
8	1980	2	6	Moshe Atzmon	2. Version
8	1980	2	7	Moshe Atzmon	2. Version
5	1981	2	4	Günter Wand	
5	1981	2	5	Günter Wand	
9	1983	1	5	Moshe Atzmon	
9	1983	1	6	Moshe Atzmon	
2	1985	2	13	Moshe Atzmon	Version 1877
2	1985	2	14	Moshe Atzmon	Version 1877
7	1986	3	5	Moshe Atzmon	
7	1986	3	6	Moshe Atzmon	
9	1987	12	16	Antal Doráti	
9	1987	12	17	Antal Doráti	
6	1988	5	18	Horst Stein	
6	1988	5	19	Horst Stein	
8	1988	12	7	Horst Stein	
8	1988	12	8	Horst Stein	
0	1990	2	7	Basler Sinfonie-Orchester	Mario Venzago
0	1990	2	8	Basler Sinfonie-Orchester	Mario Venzago

7	1990	10	17	Horst Stein	
7	1990	10	18	Horst Stein	
5	1991	3	20	Hanns-Martin Schneidt	
5	1991	3	21	Hanns-Martin Schneidt	
6	1992	11	18	Ferdinand Leitner	
6	1992	11	19	Ferdinand Leitner	
3	1993	2	10	Yoav Talmi	
3	1993	2	11	Yoav Talmi	
4	1994	9	21	Walter Weller	
4	1994	9	22	Walter Weller	
4	1996	2	21	Mario Venzago	
1	1996	3	6	Claus Peter Flor	Linz Version
1	1996	3	7	Claus Peter Flor	Linz Version
3	1997	11	12	Mario Venzago	
3	1997	11	13	Mario Venzago	
9	1999	4	14	Mario Venzago	
9	1999	4	15	Mario Venzago	

\* Basler Orchester-Gesellschaft