

BRUCKNER

1824-1896

Symphony No. 2, in C Minor

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| 1. MODERATO. | 3. SCHERZO. |
| 2. ANDANTE, FEIERLICH ETWAS BEWEGT. | 4. FINALE. |

THE first movement of Bruckner's Second Symphony is in the ordinary sonata form, opening with a tremolo of violins and violas, accompanying the introduction and the first theme which is given out by the 'cellos, with responses from the horns. The theme is repeated by 'cellos and double basses to a more vigorous accompaniment, and leads to a climax. At its close the 'cellos give out the second theme, followed by a motive in the strings in unison which dominates the movement through the first part. Then follows the free fantasia with reentries of the themes, stated in much the same manner as in the beginning of the movement, after which, and a short passage in slow time, an elaborate Coda brings the movement to a close.

The second movement, in A flat major, is constructed upon two themes in rondo form, the first given out by the first violins with accompaniment of the other strings, and the second, or minor one, by the horn with pizzicato string accompaniment. These two themes are developed in a very skilful manner, especially the principal one by the wind instruments in the close, just before the Coda.

The third movement, in C minor, opens with a somewhat dignified and consequential theme for a Scherzo, which is at first stated in unison by the strings, wood winds, and horns, and afterwards is richly developed and leads up to a most resonant climax. The Trio is in waltz time, the theme being

given out by the violas with a violin tremolo, and at its conclusion the opening of the movement is repeated and followed by a Coda.

The fourth movement, in C minor, is built up on three themes which are worked out at great length in succession and with most painstaking elaboration, the movement closing with a tremendous climax. This symphony, like all of Bruckner's, is a masterpiece of musical mechanics and mathematics.

Symphony No. 4, in E Flat. (Romantic)

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| 1. ALLEGRO MOLTO MODERATO. | 3. SCHERZO. |
| 2. ANDANTE. | 4. FINALE. |

The Fourth of Bruckner's symphonies was first produced in Vienna in 1881 and was performed for the first time in America in New York in 1888. Like all of this composer's symphonies, it is so elaborately constructed and full of musical complications that it is only possible, in a volume of this kind, to present a bare sketch. The first movement opens with a passage in the horns accompanied by the strings, which, several times repeated, prepares the way for the introduction of the first and second principal subjects, both of which present two themes. These, with their working up and the treatment of subsidiary ideas, constitute the learned structure of the movement which closes with a return to the horn passage of the opening.

The Andante is impressive and sombre in character, opening with a funeral march with characteristic refrains, followed by a melody for violas with string pizzicato accompaniment. After the development of this melody the march theme is restated most impressively and the movement closes with drum taps as the second theme dies away.

The Scherzo is a hunting movement, built up on two lively and graceful themes, after which is a country dance which furnishes the material for the trio. The movement closes with a repetition of the hunting scene music.

The Finale, Wagner fashion, introduces all the principal ideas of the other three movements, which are worked up and combined with the utmost skill. It is in reality a *résumé* of the whole symphony. Old forms are restated, and new forms growing out of them are presented. The workmanship is solid and the learning of the composer is everywhere apparent.

Symphony No. 7, in E Major

1. ALLEGRO MODERATO.
2. ADAGIO: SEHR FEIERLICH UND LANGSAM.
3. SCHERZO: ALLEGRO.
4. FINALE: BEWEGT, DOCH NICHT SCHNELL.

Bruckner's Seventh Symphony was first performed at Leipzig, December 30, 1884, and was played for the first time in America in Chicago, July 29, 1886, under Theodore Thomas' direction. The opening theme of the first movement is stated by the 'cellos, supported by the violas and clarinets. It is then repeated by the violins and wood winds, and leads up to the second theme, given out by oboe and clarinet. In the fantasia, both themes are worked up most skilfully, and are followed by the Finale, which is complicated though regular in form, and closes with an impressive climax.

The second movement, an Adagio, is based upon a most impressive theme nobly worked out, and of a nature to appeal even to the uneducated hearer. Though treated most elaborately, the contents of the Adagio are very emotional, and the coloring so beautiful as to appeal to every one. The Scherzo is in regular form, and the opening is full of spirit and vivacity. The first violins give out the theme of the trio, and the movement closes with a repetition of the first part.

The last movement is in rondo form, the violins giving out a brilliant theme, worked up in a fascinating manner, and leading into a second theme of a more solid nature, also stated by the first violins. The movement closes with a powerful climax, in which the opening theme of the first movement is heard again.

Symphony No. 9, in D Minor (Unfinished)

1. FEIERLICH.

3. ADAGIO.

2. SCHERZO.

Bruckner's Ninth (and last) Symphony was written 1891-1894, and was first heard in Vienna, February 11, 1894. Its first performance in America was given at Chicago, February 19, 1904, by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Bruckner had designed closing the symphony with a choral movement in the manner of Beethoven's Ninth, but his death intervened and left the work unfinished.

The opening movement is so elaborate in its construction as to render it impossible to convey any intelligent description of it in the condensed form required by this volume. It contains four principal themes, each leading up to powerful climaxes. The movement, indeed, might be called a series of climaxes, for after the reconsideration of each theme and its fresh development, the movement closes with a new climax, which only the word "tremendous" can fitly describe.

The Scherzo is a relief after the tempests of the opening movement, being in dance rhythm, followed by the Trio, and a repetition of the first part. The Adagio movement consists mainly of the complicated development of two principal themes leading to another powerful climax, but closing pianissimo. The symphony is mostly interesting to musical scholars. The layman is apt to be thankful the work was left unfinished, though it would have been interesting to have had Bruckner's choral ideas.