

Anton Bruckner

(1824-1896)

Symphony No. 9

(Original Version)

WHEN Bruckner died on October 11, 1896, it was known that the last of his Symphonies, the Ninth in D minor, had been left incomplete. Precisely what stage of completion Bruckner had achieved, not very many people knew for sure; so that seven years later (February 11, 1903) when Ferdinand Loewe, the so-called "prince of Bruckner disciples," presented the Symphony for the first time, it was generally assumed that the "arrangement" he had made of the original score was a necessary one, and fully in accord with the intentions of the composer. True enough, to many careful students of Bruckner's style the work sounded less rugged than was usually the case with the Bruckner Symphonies. It was a strangely polished Bruckner, in places even "slick," more French almost than German, and in the character of its orchestration, more like Berlioz or Wagner than Bruckner. For thirty years the truly astonishing fraud which Loewe (no doubt, with every honest intention in the world) had perpetrated upon the musical world was left unchallenged. It was only when two well trained musicologists, Robert Haas and Alfred Orel, undertook to investigate the state of the original Bruckner manuscript that the extent of Loewe's distortion became evident. It was discovered that sharp dynamic contrasts had been nullified, the orchestration radically altered, sharp discordant harmonies, titanic dissonances prettified into gentler sounding chords, entire passages omitted in some places, and entirely new passages interpolated by Loewe in others. The original lacked a final movement, but in no other sense could it be considered "unfinished."*

Nevertheless faith in the Loewe revision died hard, for it had been built upon thirty years of performances of that revision, and buttressed by the publication of orchestral parts and miniature scores. Finally a test concert was arranged by the Internationale Bruckner Gesellschaft on April 2, 1932 in the Tonhalle in Munich, where a special, semi-private performance was given of both the Loewe and the original versions in order to determine by comparison the advisability of issuing orchestral parts for the original. This unique concert was given by the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra under the "inspired baton of that eminent Brucknerite, Siegmund von Hausegger." The performance was, of course, decisive in favor of the original, and the Executive Committee of the Internationale Bruckner Gesellschaft promptly resolved that "because of . . . the overwhelming impression made by the original version at its first performance, the Ninth Symphony, in the exact form in which it was left by the master, should no longer be kept from the musical world." It is obvious from the part Hausegger and the Munich Philharmonic played in the resuscitation of the original version, that their recording of this version presented here on a PM Recording is as authentic a performance as the most painstaking Brucknerite could desire. Hausegger also participated in the supervision of the publication of the original edition.**

* For an extended discussion of the history of this Symphony see article by the eminent Bruckner authority Prof. Max Auer in the *Zeitschrift für Musik* Oct. 1932, an English translation of which is available in the Oct. 1933 issue of *Chord and Dischord* entitled "Bruckner's 9th: The Original Version."

** For the original edition see: Anton Bruckner: Sämtliche Werke Vol. 9 Kritische Gesamtausgabe im Auftrage der Generaldirektion der Nationbibliothek und der Internationalen Bruckner Gesellschaft herausgegeben von Robert Haas und Alfred Orel.



Siegmund v. Hausegger

Siegmund von Hausegger

This Symphony was first heard in this country in Chicago where it was conducted by Theodore Thomas on February 19, 1904. When the original version was given in New York, thirty years later, Lawrence Gilman, noted music critic of the Herald Tribune wrote (Oct. 12, 1934): "The Symphony should never be played again from the long familiar score . . . prepared by Bruckner's well meaning disciple, Ferdinand Loewe; for that edition is now demonstrated to be an astonishing perversion and distortion of Bruckner's intentions."

Bruckner's music has been the subject of extended and often bitter controversy both during his lifetime and for several decades after his death. As in Wagner's case, the partisans and the opponents of Bruckner made liberal use of the kind of overstatement which served to sharpen personal antagonisms rather than to clarify the issues involved. One critic advised his public to turn the Allegro of Beethoven's Ninth on its head and watch the Finale of a Bruckner Symphony come tumbling out, while a contrary minded colleague solemnly assured his readers that the composer's work constituted one of the noblest musical legacies of the nineteenth century. Composers as well as critics were lured into extravagant opinions, and here the line of demarcation followed sharply the split between the Brahmsians and the Wagnerites. Wagner accepted the dedication of Bruckner's Third Symphony, invited him to Bayreuth and pontifically sanctified him as the "only one symphonist who approaches Beethoven . . ." The Brahms camp was up in arms, and even Brahms himself, unusually reticent in matters of public controversy, was goaded many years later into the following uncharacteristic outburst: "Bruckner? That is a swindle which will be forgotten a year or two after my death . . . after Wagner's death his party naturally had need of another pope, and they managed to find no better one than Bruckner. Do you really believe that anyone in this immature crowd has the least notion what these boa-constrictors are about?" It needs only this culminating counter extravagance—"a cymbal crash by Bruckner is worth all the symphonies of Brahms with the serenades thrown in"—delivered by one of the most admirably detached and critical of composers, Hugo Wolf, to demonstrate the extent to which uncritical and undetached partisanship dominated musical judgment.

A distorted view of Bruckner's music was the inevitable result. More often than not, he was condemned or glorified without a hearing, and, needless to say, the distorted "arrangements" made after his death did very little to clarify the thick fog of ignorance and confusion surrounding Bruckner's work. The listener now has the opportunity to make his own decision in the clear light of an authentic manuscript authentically performed.

Bruckner began work on the 9th Symphony in the summer of 1887 immediately after completing the instrumentation of the 8th Symphony. A simple chronological account of the progress of this Symphony reveals the slow painstaking manner in which Bruckner worked. At that time (1887) he carried the orchestral setting of the first movement as far as the conclusion of the second Theme-Group. Three years elapsed before Bruckner resumed work on the Symphony, for in that interval he was engaged in the revision of his 8th and 1st Symphonies. He took up the 9th Symphony again on February 18, 1891, completed the scoring of the first movement on October 14, 1892 and its final revision one year later on October 23, 1893. Between the scoring and the revision of the first movement, Bruckner completed the Scherzo (February

Anton Bruckner: Symphony No. 9 in D minor (Original Version)
 DIE MÜNCHNER PHILHARMONIKER:
 Dr. Siegmund von Hausegger (1872-1948)
 Recorded in 1938

27, 1893) although the present form of the movement (after Bruckner's own revisions) was not achieved until the following year (February 15, 1894). After considerable revision, the Adagio was completed on October 31, 1894.

It is not possible in this space to render more than a brief outline of this Symphony. The work opens with an extended introduction, and to those who harp incessantly upon the length of Bruckner's music, we offer the gentle reminder that the introduction to Schubert's *Great C Major Symphony (No. 9)* is just as long. The opening motive, simple, slow-moving and dignified



is taken by eight horns in unison over a tremolo ("misterioso") in the strings. It is developed into a more widely spaced, upward leaping horn call, and then succeeded by an expressive, chromatic melody given to the violins.



Two other brief motives follow. The first (taken by flutes and clarinets and answered by violins and oboe) is distinguished by the octave leap which is so essential a part of the first main theme yet to come. The second is notable for the expressive quality which the tremolo of the violins imparts to its chromatic line.



A climax is built up upon the last cited motive, the full orchestra participating, and we arrive at the first theme, as powerful and as grand an utterance as can be found in the whole of symphonic literature.



It is succeeded by a lovely descending melody taken pizzicati in the strings, punctuated beautifully by wide interval leaps in the wood-winds and horns.

We proceed to the second grouping. The term Theme-Group has been applied in the analysis of Bruckner's Symphonies to indicate the fact that here, for example, we are dealing not with a single second theme, but with a cluster of related themes, which taken together, compose the second theme (subject or section) of the exposition. The principle of a Theme-Group is not original with Bruckner. Instances do occur in the work of Haydn and Mozart. (For example, the Op. 3, No. 5 quartet of Haydn no fewer than four distinct melodies taken together constitute the second theme, or Theme-Group, of the first movement.)



Anton Bruckner

The principal melody of the second Theme-Group in this work runs as follows.



a lovely oboe melody



prepares the way for the third important melody.



The remainder of the movement is constructed upon the above.

The Scherzo and trio require little discussion.

The fast moving little Scherzo theme heard at the very outset of the record played by the violins pizzicati, is transferred in Loewe's "arrangement" rather needlessly to the flute.

The Adagio movement, like almost all Adagio movements requires as little talking about and as much listening to as possible. In order to facilitate the organization of the musical material in the listeners mind, the two most important melodies are cited below.



Abraham Veinus

Hans Richter conducts
 a Bruckner Symphony
 and receives praise
 from the composer.
 Silhouette by Dr. Otto Böhler.

A. Veinus
 Syracuse, New York