



*J. Stohrer sculptor.*

*Anton Bruckner*

*1900*

*Original: Städtische Sammlungen, Wien.*

Shortly before his summer holiday, 1879, Bruckner had completed his famous String Quintet; immediately upon his return to Vienna on September 24th, he at once began the composition of the first movement of his symphony No. 6. With an idealism unbroken by the malice and hatred of his biased critics, by the sarcasm bestowed upon him by the adherents of this hostile clique, and by the lack of recognition from even the best of his contemporaries; undisturbed by such adverse conditions, and without even the hope of ever hearing his music performed, Bruckner pursued the path prescribed by his genius and created one after another of his great works. Such idealism, such firm and unerring belief into his own artistic mission is truly touching to us today when we survey the life and suffering of this artist. For almost two years Bruckner worked upon this new symphony. On September 27th, 1880, he completed the first movement. The Adagio was completed on November 22nd, the Scherzo (begun on December 17th) on January 17th, 1881; the draft of the Finale on June 28th, and the score of the entire work on September 3rd, 1881. Unlike Bruckner's other symphonies, the Sixth is the only which was subjected to no later alterations, but retained its original form.

It is one of the most original of all of Bruckner's compositions. Even in our time, it has not won the popularity which falls to the Fourth, or the Seventh, and is less frequently played. This has inspired the belief that the symphony No. 6 is one of Bruckner's weaker compositions — a belief by no means founded in the facts. This symphony, far from being less perfect than the others, is a masterwork of the highest rank. The first movement breathes calm and grandeur. The Sixth is per-

haps — if this expression be permitted in connection with the symphonic species — less “dramatic” than its sisters: there is in it no strife, no Prometheus-like struggle. This first movement suggests the atmosphere of a mountain solitude with a beautiful, sunlit landscape beneath. The Adagio expresses the same loftiness, perhaps deeper and more fervent still. The Scherzo, however, differs widely from the corresponding movements in the other symphonies; it finds its mate merely in the Scherzo of the Eighth and in the Trio of the Ninth. The Finale is the crowning, festive apotheosis of the work.

Bruckner never had the good fortune to hear the first and last movement of this symphony performed. Wilhelm Jahn, then provisional conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, performed merely the Adagio and the Scherzo, on February 11th, 1883, in the Grosser Musikvereins Saal, Vienna. After Bruckner's death, Gustav Mahler, on February 26th, 1899, performed the complete symphony at a Philharmonic concert — albeit with considerable curtailments. The first uncut public performance of the work was given by the Vienna Konzertverein Orchestra, on December 13th, 1901, under the baton of August Göllerich.

Josef V. Wöss.