



The Bruckner Organ in the Old Cathedral in Linz

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On 2nd October 1856 Bruckner laid before his employer, Bishop Rudigier, "some remarks on the condition of the cathedral organ for the purpose of possible necessary repairs". These measures, begun in the guise of repairs, turned into a major restoration of the Franz Xaver Chrismann organ - albeit undertaken gradually in small steps – with which Bruckner pressed ahead single-mindedly. This "repair" was carried out by the Ottensheim organ builder Josef Breinbauer, and was completed in eleven years. Bruckner was to leave his beloved organ in the Old Cathedral behind only a year later, immortalizing himself with the words "Lebe wohl" carved into the organ case.

One can easily understand that the sound of the organ, built by Chrismann between 1764 and 1766 in the Italian tradition of the early Baroque, no longer corresponded to Bruckner's ideals. Curiously enough the characteristic Baroque features – the range of the manual and pedal with a short octave and repeating pedal – remained untouched. Otherwise the Baroque Chrismann organ was romanticized. We can therefore see that Bruckner followed the earlier playing practices and clearly mastered them.

#### Impressum

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[www.linz.at/tourismus](http://www.linz.at/tourismus)

Visits to the Brucknerstiege  
are only possible as group guided tours.

Guided tours of the organ and organ concerts for groups

Information: [www.brucknerstiege.at](http://www.brucknerstiege.at)

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ALTER DOM

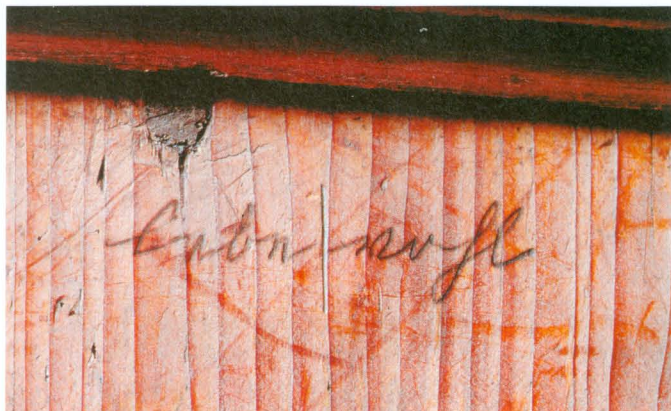


**linz**  
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# BRUCKNERSTIEGE OLD CATHEDRAL LINZ

Anton Bruckner's Linz years  
(1855-1868)

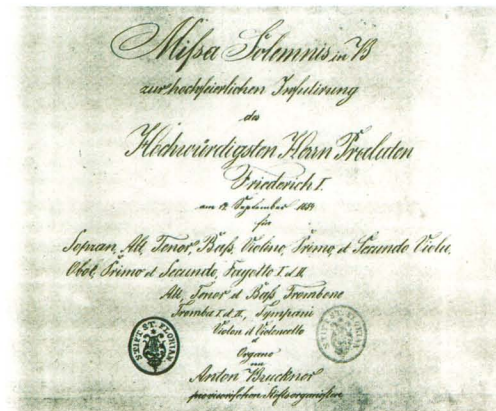




„Lebe wohl“.  
Bruckner's farewell to his beloved organ in Linz.

The time that Bruckner spent in Linz - from 24th December 1855 to the end of September 1868 – was to be an important phase in his decision-making and development: he exchanged the monastic village environment of St. Florian for that of the secular and urban, he took the bold step from teacher to professional musician, and he committed himself to the most rigorous training in musical theory. This was also the period when his encounter with the music of Richard Wagner stimulated and freed him on his way towards a personal musical language.

These years were to be decisive for a shift in the main focus of Bruckner's artistic output as well: in his first major work, the Mass in D Minor (WAB 26) we can already hear the future symphonist at work. In both St. Florian and Linz it was a treasured instrument – an organ with a wide-ranging palette of sounds - which gave Bruckner inspiration and an ideal medium for his work.



Missa solemnis in B flat Minor (WAB 29)  
Title page with dedication

### Bruckner had spent ten years in St. Florian

as a schoolteacher, and for five of these he was also provisional organist in the monastery church. This was a period when he engaged profoundly with the musical tradition of his forbears, a study which bore fruit in the *Missa solemnis in B flat Minor* (WAB 29).



Anton Bruckner.  
Photograph 1854

It was only after much delay and heart-searching that Bruckner applied for the vacant position in Linz. At the auditions for the post of organist he left the other candidates in his wake: he was already at that time “a skilled organist with a sound technique”, to quote a contemporary report. Bishop Rudigier of Linz was one of Bruckner's most important patrons, treasuring above all his talent at improvisation.

Bruckner was also active in the secular musical life of Linz, as a member and - for a while - chorus director of the men's choral society “Frohsinn”.

The great talent of the young man was soon widely recognized, and even the Emperor Maximilian of Mexico – on the recommendation of a mutual acquaintance in Linz – considered him for the post of organist in his residence, which had been designed on a European model.



Failed wedding plans:  
Josefina Lang



Richard Wagner's *Tannhäuser*  
in Linz (Poster)

### During his time in Linz

Bruckner also devoted himself with unparalleled intensity to his studies in music theory with Simon Sechter (Vienna), Otto Kitzler and Ignaz Dorn.

### But while the composer Bruckner

gained progressively more freedom to find his own personal style and musical language, the man Bruckner slipped deeper and deeper into a personal crisis, which had dramatic consequences and forced him to seek a cure at the cold-water sanatorium in Bad Kreuzen. He had only just been declared healthy and discharged when, on 14th September 1867 – the festival of the exaltation of the cross - he began with the composition of the third of his great masses, that in F Minor (WAB 28), a commission from the Vienna Court Orchestra. This presaged his path to Vienna – and thus the parting from Linz.

### However, Bruckner commemorated

his beloved Linz organ in gratitude in his own lifetime: it is not only a precious instrument, but also bears witness to the fascinating progression to maturity of one of the greatest geniuses of the 19th century.