

Dear John

You asked 'which recordings of Bruckner's music were responsible for your life long association with his music'

Well I've fashioned my response in my own way because it would be too easy just to make a list of list favourite recordings so I've concentrated on live performances – they do have more impact.. I've kept it down to just over 400 words which seems enough from one person giving their own particular view.

Regards

Tony

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I am pleased to respond to the request concerning what provokes one's interest in Bruckner's music but I feel that concert performances are the really important factor so I have mixed revelatory early experiences with those later occasions when I became more aware of what makes a great Bruckner event. Therefore I shall limit my comments on recordings to only the first one that I heard.

My very first experience of Bruckner's music was at the Royal Festival Hall when Eduard van Beinum conducted the 4<sup>th</sup> Symphony with the London Philharmonic Orchestra - he repeated it a few days later and I went to both concerts - I had read about Bruckner and was determined to find out what his music sounded like. Above all it sounded very grand and I listened attentively to every detail of the instrumentation. I was most impressed by the viola solo in the slow movement - the 1936 Haas edition would have been used - years later I was privileged to work with Frederick Riddle and he confirmed to me that he was the soloist so I was able to tell him how that moment had made a deep impression on a young person who knew nothing about Bruckner.

The first recording of Bruckner I heard was the famous Klemperer Vox No.4 - I have always enjoyed it and now knowing a little more about the composer I am amazed how his extraordinarily fast tempi do not seem to be at all hurried (is this actually the fastest performance on record?)

I shall obey the editor's length restrictions and limit myself to mentioning briefly four more concert performances. Eugen Szenkar and the Dusseldorf Symphony Orchestra in Bruckner 7; memorable for the cymbal player whose family and friends were in the choir seats behind him chatting to him before the conductor arrived and he certainly dwelt on his single moment of glory for he had a huge pair of cymbals which he clashed and held high for a great length of time, the resonance taking ages to die away. Then there was a wonderful Bruckner 5 with Rudolf Kempe - the final brazen coda emerging naturally from the preceding music - none of the usual over-emphasis here. Then there was a notable Sir John Barbirolli No. 7 in which the heavy chords of the finale were superbly welded into the flow of the music. Finally Günter Wand's magnificent, deeply felt performance of No. 9 in London's Royal Albert Hall in September 2001 only six months before his death.

Anthony Hodgson