

Hi John,

In answer to your question from the last newsletter, I can name the following recordings as being the most important for lifelong association with Bruckner's music:

1st recording:

Symphony No. 4 - Karl Bohm and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra 1973: This is the first Bruckner recording I owned when I was still at school. I still remember how thrilled I was to own it. I had thinking of owning it for weeks, when I was reading the Gramophone Classical Music recordings guide. It immediately stood out as the recording to have.

A couple of months before I got that recording, I had first encountered Bruckner's music on ABC Classic FM, Australia's classical music radio station. The first time I heard the Romantic symphony, I can still remember being awestruck at the magically beautiful opening, the distinctive "Bruckner rhythm" and that majestic brass chorale. The broadcast I heard could either have been the Karl Bohm recording mentioned above or the Kurt Masur concert with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra broadcast in 1999. It was probably the latter because that was closer to the time I remember first getting interested in Bruckner's music.

2nd recording:

Some weeks later I heard the 9th symphony for the first time. It was Giuseppe Sinopoli's recording with the Staatskapelle Dresden on DG. I remember how forbidding and grim it was at the start, as well as its ethereal conclusion.

3rd recording:

Symphony No. 8 - Herbert von Karajan, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, 1988. I read about this in the Gramophone guide. I read Richard Osborne's reviews, containing phrases such as "*with Karajan it is the Eighth Symphony of Bruckner, perhaps the symphony he loved and revered above all others*", "*somehow more profound, more humane, more lovable if that is a permissible attribute of an interpretation of this Everest among symphonies*", "*Indeed, in such a context it is difficult to forget Bunyan: "So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side". For Bruckner, and for Karajan, may they long go on sounding.*". When you read something like that, you know that this is has to be one of the greatest recordings ever made. I still remember the day I first purchased this recording, and since that night it has been my favourite symphony.

The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra are touring Australia next month. So I will be going to see them play Bruckner's 4th Symphony. I am so excited to see the orchestra that premiered the symphony playing Bruckner!

Kevin Lee