

*Klose's Preface to his Organ Work in the Peters Edition:*

**In faithful memory of master Anton Bruckner**

It was in Bayreuth after the premiere of *Parsifal*. A delighted crowd had gathered at "Angermann". I too, the aspiring *musicus*, had come along, and I soon found myself in a lively conversation with two young men from Vienna sitting at my table. They presented themselves as ardent followers of the 'new school' as I too was. Our animated discussion was interrupted several times, as my new friends repeatedly turned to an old man with a splendidly trimmed Caesar cut sitting at a nearby table to offer him a toast, calling out loudly: "Cheers, Herr Professor!". In return, the addressee took a hearty gulp from his own drink.

This procedure was repeated so frequently and in such rapid succession that my curiosity was eventually piqued to find out who this man was at the table across from ours. I asked, and was told that it was no other than the great Anton Brückner. This was for me a most pleasurable surprise, as I had heard his *Romantic Symphony* in the previous winter and this bold and profound piece had made a tremendous impression on me. But would I only dare tell this to the Herr Professor? My Viennese friends, who were former students of Bruckner's, joyfully acquiesced. I was introduced and effusively thanked the master for his splendid work.

That was how I came to meet the man who would end up becoming my teacher four years later! But Bruckner, who at the time had received little recognition and was practically unknown outside of Vienna, was evidently delighted as well to have unexpectedly found such a fervent admirer of his art, and invited me to meet with him the next morning so he could show me around Bayreuth.

It was such a memorable day! We began our peregrinations in the early morning hours with a walk up Festival Hill and ended them in the afternoon with a worshipful visit to the gardens of the *Wahnfried* Villa [Wagner's home]. In the middle of the day came an experience that will remain one of the most cherished memories of my life. As we arrived in front of Bayreuth's main Protestant church, Bruckner walked in, not to show it to me, but rather to... pray. For a long time he just stood there, fervently carrying out his prayers. Suddenly, he turned to me and said: "Now I would like to play you something on the organ." I had heard of Bruckner's mastery of the instrument and thus welcomed his announcement with jubilation. We were all alone in the vast church. Bruckner played, while I trod the bellows. This went on for a while, but then he announced that he would like me to watch him play. This meant finding someone to replace me in my enterprise. Having fetched someone off the street for the task, he positioned me next to him in front of the console. And then he started playing again. Whoever has ever heard Bruckner improvise on the organ will realize what an overwhelming impression this would have had on a young musician like myself, as he began playing an extraordinarily wild and raging theme, arranged it into a skillful fugue, escalating the tension with every imaginable transformation, and crowning this imposing tonal buildup with a compelling pedal point.

The theme began as such:



I hope it will not be interpreted as an act of arrogance on my part that this motif was chosen in memory of that invaluable experience as a basis for the following composition, and that this dedication will be seen as nothing more than a thankful compensation for a precious gift to the one who once bestowed it upon me.

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