

RECORDINGS

IN REVIEW



D E W E Y F A U L K N E R

And now we have the “New Bruckner.” What could be new about an Austrian composer who died in 1896? In America and England even the “Old Bruckner” was hardly known before the LP era, and he was not liked by the musical establishment. Arturo Toscanini performed only the Fourth and Seventh Symphonies with the New York Philharmonic, and none at all with the NBC Symphony. The music appreciation crowd likewise ignored Bruckner and denigrated his music when they deigned to notice it. B. H. Haggin, for one, mentioned him only when he listed four 78-rpm symphony sets in *Music on Records* (1941), placing this header above the list: “*Symphonies (bad works, all of them).*”

Today Anton Bruckner (1824–1896) and his eleven symphonies have a claim to be among the most important bodies of such works in the latter half of the nineteenth century. His contemporary and Viennese rival Johannes Brahms put off writing symphonies until late in his career and wrote only four. These are typified by their variety, their differences from one another. Bruckner took a different path: he devised a fixed scheme for his symphonies and mostly stayed with it. As a listener grows familiar with his scores, it becomes clear that there is significant variety also among them,

though with important common features: they are long, they are demanding on player and listener alike, they are internally musically complex, and they summon both nobility and enormous power when needed.

And there are multiple versions of most of them – more exactly, there are multiple states of revision. This is the “Bruckner Problem” identified by Deryck Cooke in 1969: “Had he only possessed the normal self-confidence of the great composer, he would have produced, like Beethoven or Dvorak, a single definitive score of each of his nine symphonies.” Nine, not eleven. Bruckner discarded two entire symphonies, along with multiple versions of many that remain, while leaving uncertainty about which versions of many are “definitive.” All very odd, at least until one considers Bruckner’s life and his composing career.

Bruckner lived almost entirely in Linz, then Vienna, moving in 1868 to the capital to teach harmony and counterpoint at the Vienna Conservatory, where he succeeded his own teacher, Simon Sechter. By this date he had written a great deal of choral music and two, possibly three, symphonies. His symphony in F minor was an 1863 graduation exercise. Another in C minor, now called no. 1, was completed in 1866, and yet another in D minor may have been written before leaving Linz. Now called no. 0 (from a number Bruckner scribbled later on its cover), it was completed or revised by 1869, a year after Bruckner moved from the Vienna Conservatory to the university. Between 1872 and 1896 he composed eight more. In 1896 he died in Vienna but was buried in Linz, at St. Florian’s.

Symphonies 1 in C minor and 0 in D minor are part of a pattern in Bruckner’s composition: great symphonies in these keys, the keys of Beethoven’s Fifth (C minor), and Ninth (D minor), were his goal. Rejecting these first two attempts, he composed another pair, no. 2 in C minor (1872) and no. 3 in D minor (1873). He himself conducted both with the Vienna Philharmonic, the second successfully in 1876 and the third disastrously in 1877. After composing the third, Bruckner changed his strategy and turned to symphonies in different (and major) keys, each with a different character: no. 4 in E-flat (1874), no. 5 in B-flat (1876), no. 6 in A (1881), and no. 7 in E (1883). Then he returned to his obsession: no. 8, in C minor, was completed in 1887 and no. 9, in D minor,

was largely done when he died in 1896. In these last two he finally achieved his goals.

So we have two groups of symphonies: numbers 1, 0, 2, 3, 8, and 9 in C or D minor, and numbers 4 through 7 in various major keys. In both groups there are the revisions, the “Bruckner Problem.” These fall into several categories, beginning with an initial touching up of each score done on the manuscripts. (Bruckner saved everything.) Several symphonies were essentially unrevised after this: numbers 5, 6, 7, and 9. Further revisions of early symphonies (and number 8) were made because of problems with conductors and performances. Much later revisions were apparently made because of goading by several of Bruckner’s pupils to make the pieces more acceptable to public taste after Bruckner had begun to gain an audience. These late revisions have been largely discredited, although the conductor and scholar Leon Botstein now champions the 1890 rewrite of the Fifth Symphony, and the scholar Benjamin Korstvedt has promoted the less radical last versions of the Fourth and Eighth.

If we dismiss most of these late redos we are still left with a substantial body of revisions, primarily of numbers 1 through 4. Much of the New Bruckner movement’s labor has been to promote and record as many of these as possible, effectively deemphasizing priority of any one version. Determining and establishing version priority were major goals of scholars and conductors starting in the 1930s, so this new catholicity of interest has come as a shock and a puzzlement to many older Brucknerians. What should we be listening to, and why?

The New Brucknerians have been discovering the why of most of the revisions. It is one man, Otto Dessoff, conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic, and his periodic *Novitäts-Proben*, or novelty rehearsals, where an aspiring composer could bring a score and parts and hear the work played through by the Philharmonic. Bruckner had studied orchestration and composition, but he had little practical experience with making orchestral scores work in performance, so these trial play-throughs were invaluable to him, providing the basis for making most of his early revisions. He appears to have brought first his Symphony in D Minor (no. 0) to one of these *Proben* in 1869 or 1870, only to have it rejected by Dessoff. This happened again and again, with nos. 2, 3, and 4.

(Apparently, Bruckner also heard no. 1 at a Novitäts-Probe in 1877, for which he revised it into the so-called “Linz” version.) He revised each work before submitting it and, more important, again after hearing it performed, when he actually comprehended how each piece sounded and moved. He abandoned no. 0 but reworked his second D minor symphony (no. 3) twice for Dessoff, failing to win approval both times. Dessoff was dismissed from the Philharmonic in 1875, and Bruckner’s champion Johann Herbeck accepted no. 3 for public performance in 1877, after yet another revision and trial rehearsal.

Bruckner in 1876 had already successfully conducted the Vienna Philharmonic publicly in his Second Symphony at a privately funded concert. Herbeck’s sudden death in 1877 forced Bruckner himself to conduct the concert premiering his Third. It was a fiasco. His audience walked out, and his already hostile critics, led by the feared traditionalist and anti-Wagnerian Eduard Hanslick, shredded it in print.

Meanwhile, Bruckner in 1874 had started on his new path with the Fourth Symphony, which was in a major key, E-flat, was of a sunny and cheerful character, and had both a title (*Romantic*) and a program (soon suppressed). Dessoff had rejected the Fourth at an 1875 Probe, but Bruckner undertook major revisions to it starting in 1878, presumably inspired by the Third’s failure the year before. After a further rewrite of the finale in 1880, the Vienna Philharmonic’s new conductor and arch-Wagnerian, Hans Richter, performed the Fourth in 1881, to great acclaim. This was the turning point in Bruckner’s public fortunes, and the end of his extensive revising.

All the versions/revisions of Bruckner’s early symphonies fall into three categories: initial composition plus initial revision, revisions for Dessoff, and publicly performed version, usually followed by another light revision. Everything was based on hearing the symphonies performed. The most significant states of each are: no. 1 in C minor, written 1866, revised and rehearsed 1877; no. 0 in D minor, rehearsed 1869; no. 2 in C minor, written and rehearsed 1872, revision performed 1876 and retouched 1877; no. 3 in D minor, written 1873, revision performed 1877, retouched and published 1880; no. 4 in E-flat major, written 1874, rehearsed 1875, revised, performed, and retouched 1881.

Bruckner now felt secure. He never submitted his 1876 Symphony no. 5 for rehearsal (and never heard it). His last brush with the *Novitäts-Proben* came in 1883, when Richter's temporary replacement at the Philharmonic, Wilhelm Jahn, rehearsed and accepted Symphony no. 6, although he played only the two central movements in concert, fearing reprisals from Hanslick. Finally, in 1884, Arthur Nikisch performed Symphony no. 7 in Leipzig, to great acclaim. After Richter's success with the Fourth in 1881, Bruckner began his mighty and celebratory *Te Deum*. After Nikisch's success with the Seventh, in 1884, he finished it.

Bruckner's triumph with the Seventh crowned him with new confidence, and he returned to attempting a great symphony in C minor, no. 8, completing it in 1887. He sent the score to Hermann Levi, who had conducted the premiere of Wagner's *Parsifal* at Bayreuth. Levi was totally bewildered by this vast work and suggested that it be revised, which sent Bruckner into a major depression and brought back his lack of self-assurance. He had completed a major revision of no. 8 by 1890 but then made further unnecessary rewrites of Symphonies 4 (1888), 3 (1889), 5 (1890), 2 (1892), and 1 (1893), finally yet again revising no. 8 prior to publication (1892). Having wasted years on these questionable reworks, in 1894 he began his final symphony in D minor, no. 9. When he died in 1896, three movements were done and a finale was well along.

Following the normal belief that latest is best, Bruckner's symphonies were played in these latest rewrites, many including cuts, the changes Bruckner most hated. To rectify this and establish "authentic" texts, the International Bruckner Gesellschaft (IBG) was founded in 1927, with Robert Haas and Alfred Orel at its head. But by 1934 the Gesellschaft had only produced one edition, of the Ninth Symphony.

Enter the Führer and his National Socialists in 1933. Hitler, who like Bruckner was from Linz, offered personal patronage and financial support to the IBG. Consequently, editions started appearing quickly after 1935, and Bruckner's music became a priority for the Third Reich. Hitler disliked orchestral music, but he grew to love Bruckner's, leading him to create the Linz Bruckner Symphony in 1943 with Georg-Ludwig Jochum at its head. At last

(and at least) good editions of supposed “definitive” versions were now available for performance.

The IBG was appropriately de-Nazified after the war, and editions were reissued or reedited under the supervision of Haas’s former assistant, Leopold Nowak. Some revisions were also added. More recently new editions of nearly all the stages of revision for each symphony have been made, especially by William Carragan, and most revisions have been recorded, many several times. The Linz Bruckner Orchestra was refounded in 1967 and thrives. No mention of its origins will be found in its publicity or recordings.

With the IBG under the Reich, and for decades afterward, editions of versions were intended to produce a “purified” text, one that corresponded to Bruckner’s intentions only. Said Wilhelm Furtwängler, “There is greater simplicity, homogeneity, and linearity in the original versions that seem to correspond better with the master’s depth of feeling.” It was mistakenly believed that *all* the revisions were due to interference by Bruckner’s pupils, who wished to tame and conform his originality to popular taste. Somehow, somewhere in the midst of all the revisions would be found an absolutely authentic and final text of each symphony.

Today’s New Brucknerians hold a contrary view: all stages of revision are of equal interest, especially the first versions. A recording pioneer in making these available was the Viennese conductor Georg Tintner, who set down many of the earliest versions for Naxos, now conveniently gathered in a box set (Naxos 8501205; 12 CDs). Tintner favors moderate to slow tempos and his several orchestras sound full, in spacious acoustics. But attacks are blunted, the sound contoured, the performances all a bit bloated and placid. Tintner does not make the best case for his chosen versions, or for Bruckner.

More effective than Tintner with early versions has been Gerd Schaller and his Philharmonie Festiva, made up of players from several Munich orchestras. Schaller uses an odd mix of versions. Symphonies 1 and 2 are played in their earliest states (1866 and 1872, respectively), while 3 is given in an eccentric 1874 revision (Profil 12022; 3 CDs). Schaller’s Fourth uses an equally odd 1878 version (Profil 13049) and his Eighth a conjectural intermediate 1888 revision (Profil 13027; 2 CDs). Schaller’s performances are

clear, clean, steadily paced, full of tension, and faithful to Bruckner's scores, if lacking somewhat in sublimity. They show the New Bruckner at its best.

Other unusual texts have been recorded as well. Dennis Russell Davies leads the modern Linz Bruckner Symphony in the earliest versions of 4 (1874) and 8 (1887) in clean and well executed performances from which most of the life and excitement have been drained (Arte Nova). The earliest versions of 3 (1873), 4, and 8 are far more incisively and perceptively played by Eliahu Inbal and his Frankfurt Radio Symphony (Warner and Warner Apex). And for the curious about late versions, Bruckner's 1888 final revision of the Fourth can be heard blandly played by Osmo Vänskä and the Minnesota Orchestra, with liner notes by Benjamin Korstvedt that are more interesting than the performance (BIS SACD-1746).

Another New Bruckner concern is with *how* a symphony is performed, which means that it should not be performed as it was in much of the past century. Perhaps most noticeable is the rejection of all those accelerandos and ritardandos that earlier conductors put into Bruckner's music in order to articulate his vast structures. Bruckner did not write them in his autograph scores, so why play them? They often appear in early printed scores, but the assumption is that there they were added by Joseph Schalk or other disciples. Even so, Bruckner appears to have sanctioned some of them. He told Arthur Nikisch that in Symphony no. 7, "in the score many important, frequent tempo changes are not marked," and he told Felix Weingartner to "please freely modify the tempi (as necessary for clarity)" in Symphony no. 8. Wilhelm Furtwängler insisted that they must be observed (and he certainly did), authorial or not: "The differences [in versions] lie in the orchestration and tempo indications. . . . If the original versions are performed absolutely as written, down to the letter, which some musicologists want, the result would be impossible." But where should they go? Better, why attempt them at all? The New Bruckner's approach is merely to play the music as the composer wrote it. The results are by no means "impossible" and are more often than not effective and convincing. Ironically, many older conductors did the same and avoided sudden changes in tempo, among them Bruno

Walter, Otto Klemperer, and Jascha Horenstein. In this respect the New Bruckner is following the Old.

Most typically today, in general the Old Bruckner's "Feierlichkeit," solemnity, is largely banished, along with attempts at spirituality, "Innigkeit." The slow tempos that supported these notions in many older performances are rejected in favor of faster ones, some quite fast indeed. Orchestral weight and mass are likewise rejected in favor of sonic transparency, with clean and clear articulation of quite audible inner voices. One recently favored method for achieving this is modifying the Bruckner sound by reducing the size of the orchestra – that is, by cutting down the string section and bringing the winds and (less so) the brass to the fore. The New Bruckner is seen as improved with chamber orchestras – or less.

The most noted of these attempts is by Mario Venzago on CPO, where the ten symphonies from 0 to 9 have been recorded with reduced string sections but full complements of winds and brass. Six separate orchestras play in six different halls, all set down by the same production crew. To achieve the desired balances and clarity, winds are foregrounded while brass are often made to play less emphatically than the score requests. At worst, everything sounds flattened into one plane (as in no. 0 with the Tapiola Sinfonietta). Even at best, sonic perspectives often sound artificially engineered. Playing is generally good, although the Berne Symphony struggles with no. 3. Venzago and Hartmut Becker contribute splendid notes to each set in which they name their approach the "andere Bruckner," the alternate Bruckner.

Yes, there's a "but." Actually several. Venzago all too often ignores Bruckner's tempo markings, slowing for themes that he considers derived from Marian devotions, shifts that place his performances in the Old Bruckner category. He is textually inconsistent, at times using odd editions, especially the late and drastic revision of no. 3 (1889). The version of no. 1 played is not the claimed 1866 original but the 1877 revision. Base tempos are often outrageously fast, particularly in no. 5, frequently compounded by the feeling that the music isn't being properly moved forward and shaped into a whole, an absolute requirement in Bruckner. There is some fine music-making in these ten CDs, but not enough. The

best of the lot is probably no. 2 with the Northern Sinfonia (CPO 777735), which is given a distinguished reading.

Another series featuring a reduced body of strings is conducted by Ivor Bolton, far better known for work in far earlier music. Using the Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra, Bolton to date has recorded all of the symphonies except 0 and 2 (Oehms). These performances make the specified numbers of winds and brass extremely prominent but simply make the strings sound scrawny, which falsifies Bruckner's balances. Bolton pushes and pulls tempos outrageously, frequently slowing to unauthorial full stops. It's very much Old Bruckner inadequately clothed in the garb of the New.

Even more reduced performances have recently been presented on CD. Trevor Pinnock has commissioned a reduction of no. 2, for which he created his own edition taken from multiple versions (oh dear). Orchestration was done by Anthony Payne, who uses six strings and a large contingent of winds and brass; Pinnock conducts the Royal Academy of Music's Soloists Ensemble (Linn 442). The scoring makes this version sound less aggressive than the original while preserving the sounds of the original's winds and brass, and Pinnock conducts sympathetically. Still, there is no plush in the strings, which significantly alters the character of the slow movement, and the brass do not dominate climaxes, which alters the character of the whole. It's all quite cozy and domestic, virtues not found in Bruckner's original. (One positive note: the passage that ends the *Andante* movement is played as originally written, and quite well, on the horn, not the clarinet.)

Pinnock's model was orchestration reductions done for Arnold Schoenberg's Society for Private Musical Performances (VPMA), which functioned between 1918 and 1921. Schoenberg in 1921 actually commissioned a version of Bruckner's Seventh Symphony in E Major from Erwin Stein, Hanns Eisler, and Karl Rankl, but the society disbanded before it could be played. There are two recordings of the VPMA original, by the Linos Ensemble (Capriccio WDR 3) and by the Thomas Christian Ensemble (MDG 6031313). The VPMA instrumentation uses five strings, clarinet, horn, piano, and harmonium, so it sounds thinner, more string oriented, and more dependent than Payne's on its keyboard instruments to fill out textures. Payne wants to approximate Bruck-

ner's sound; Schoenberg's trio of arrangers wanted to re-create the work's essence, and did.

Of the two CDs the Linos version is slower and more intense, recorded in a flattering acoustic, with the necessary harmonium balanced more closely. More than in the Thomas Christian version, which is fast, light, and clear, the Linos musicians penetrate the symphony's essence, no small feat. Although with a small ensemble one cannot re-create the massive, glorious climaxes of the Adagio, nor the full solemnity and despair of the following (brass) peroration, Stein's single horn and harmonium do come close in the Linos's penetrating performance.

A new rearrangement of the VPMA original also has just appeared. Henk Guittart and the Gruppo Montebello add a flute and redistribute the two keyboard parts in a performance engineered so each player is clearly heard rather than blended into an ensemble (Et'Cetera KTC 1483). Tempos are not distorted and the playing is fine, but overall this is a less convincing reading than the Linos version.

Bruckner's original orchestrations are also being presented in new ways. One approach is to use the score in an assault, as Iván Fischer and his Budapest Festival Orchestra have recently done to the Seventh (Channel Classics 33714). The orchestra plays beautifully and the recording clarifies all voices in the texture, in a spacious acoustic. But basic tempos are fast, the infrequent changes to them are exaggerated, and the piece is consequently sectionalized and without much coherence or character. It all sounds rather punched out and played for shock value.

Following the same score and observing many of the same tempo shifts, Nikolaus Harnoncourt and the Vienna Philharmonic avoid Fischer's result. The Austrian-raised Harnoncourt is the elder statesman of "Historically Informed Performance," and he subjects Bruckner to the same clarifying articulation as he does Bach and Haydn. His orchestra in the Seventh is the one that Bruckner consistently heard perform his music, the one for which he wrote it. Harnoncourt's Seventh has a power and majesty undreamt of by Fischer, as in the sublime coda of the opening movement and in the entire Adagio that follows, which is indeed "Sehr feierlich und sehr langsam" as the composer specifies — although it

might benefit from being a bit more *langsam*. Tempos are appropriate, the strings radiant, and the brass massively imposing in their chordal passages. An admirable performance.

Harnoncourt has recorded live performances of all the major symphonies except the Sixth. On Warner Classics he performs the Third and Fourth with the Royal Concertgebouw, the Seventh with the Vienna, and the Eighth with the Berlin Philharmonic (2564 65626; 4 CDs). On RCA he performs the Fifth (RCA 88875 00680) and the Ninth (RCA 82876 54332; 2 SACDs), both with the Vienna. The Ninth includes a lecture with orchestral illustrations of the incomplete finale as well. Only Harnoncourt's Eighth and Ninth are of less than the first rank. The Eighth lacks tension and drive to sustain its great length; the Ninth lacks the final degree of sustained intensity to capture its essence fully.

Harnoncourt is not the only "period instruments" practitioner to pursue clarity in Bruckner. Roger Norrington has conducted the Third on both early and modern instruments, the latter part of a series containing the Sixth, Ninth, and others, all played by the Sudwestrundfunk Orchestra in Stuttgart (Hänssler Classic). The Ninth begins as specified ("Feierlich, Misterioso") but takes Bruckner's change to *moderato* as the starting gun of a race. Later violent tempo shifts are straight out of Old Bruckner and would appall even Furtwängler and the Jochum brothers. In the Sixth Symphony, Norrington takes the finale so fast as to give the impression that he cannot wait for it to end. (It does. Quite soon.) Whereas the Viennese Harnoncourt was born into the tradition, Norrington, like Fischer, Venzago, and Bolton, is a new boy with "ideas" about it, most of them inappropriate.

Stepping back, if we look realistically at current Bruckner interpretations, we really are not much advanced from where we already were. Before the New Brucknerians most younger conductors were moderate in tempos, not indulging in the violent shifts favored by Furtwängler, the two Jochum brothers – most notably Eugen – Carl Schuricht, and Hans Knappertsbusch. The earlier, sensibly pacing Walter, Klemperer, and Horenstein were succeeded by the similarly inclined Günter Wand, Bernard Haitink, and Claudio Abbado. What we have today are their fidelity to the scores in tempos plus new clean textures in place of clotted masses of sound, even

using the same large orchestras. And we also have now Bruckner's multiple versions, which frankly are of less interest.

Some symphonies have gained more than others from all this. One that has profited is the Fifth, which requires special clarity for its many contrapuntal lines to be heard. It also requires orchestras with considerable power to deliver the massive *fff* passages that end its first and fourth movements, and it requires conductors capable of maintaining sufficient drive and tension to sustain its grand length. With its slow introduction, unique in Bruckner, and that introduction's repeat in the finale, where it is treated playfully (also unique in Bruckner), the piece appears to be an exposition of the composer's personal interests. On CD, Harnoncourt and Schaller are exceptional, keeping the piece moving at effective speeds, providing both clarity and power as required.

Like other Bruckner symphonies, the Fifth in our century can be watched in performance through the novelties of DVD and Blu-Ray video (BD), the latter with stunning sound. Its several BD recordings reflect the full spectrum of today's interpretations, from Old Bruckner to New. Daniel Barenboim leads his Staatskapelle Berlin much in the earlier traditions, with constant tempo changes. Yet his balances and clarity are exemplary, with superb winds fully audible against strings and brass (Unitel ACC 102175). Christian Thielemann conducts the Staatskapelle Dresden in a reading that combines beautifully shaped, glowing sound with a centrist interpretation that leans to the traditional (Unitel 717904). His Adagio is indeed "sehr langsam": at twenty minutes, made into a major Bruckner slow movement. (Barenboim takes fourteen.) Harnoncourt, in his farewell concert with the Royal Concertgebouw, performs the piece as written, with the exception of overly recessed winds (and occasionally horns). Harnoncourt here races through the Adagio in twelve minutes, much in line with recent thoughts on Bruckner's use of cut time in it, while losing entirely Bruckner's specification of "very slow." (On the Vienna CD he took fifteen minutes.) The BD surround sound is spectacular throughout (RCO Live 14106). All these conductors take from both New and Old Brucknerian practices what suits them.

What the New Brucknerians have done especially well is reveal

how to perform the Sixth Symphony. In special, Gerd Schaller and Jaap van Zweden show how its opening movement is propelled on an insistent repeated (and recurring) one-note rhythmic figure first heard in the violins. They treat this as lightly as if it were by Mendelssohn and aerate Bruckner's textures throughout, which keeps the movement from soggly miring itself in thick sound (the usual result with earlier performances). Now light, vital, and varied, the initial Majestoso becomes the perfect contrast to the warm, solemn Adagio that follows. Of the two conductors Schaller is more precise in execution and has clearer sound (Profil 14021). Van Zweden in the work observes more the traditional Brucknerian characteristics of majesty, mass, and power, despite his quicker tempos – except in the Adagio, which is “sehr feierlich” indeed, as Bruckner specifies. Van Zweden's light, rapid, but driving Scherzo takes its character from his opening movement, and his finale is powerful (Challenge CC72552). The Sixth Symphony has proved intractable for all earlier conductors but at last sounds right under Schaller and van Zweden.

What most New Brucknerians have *failed* to do is say anything new or even significant about the final three symphonies, which require insights beyond adjusting balances and choosing versions. Symphony 7's two transcendent opening movements work together to create an arc rising to a grand fortissimo climax, which yields to a brief, severe lamenting chorale for a consort of tubas and horns. In a good performance these movements are as close as one comes to representing the religious mystic's attempt to pierce for an instant the “cloud of unknowing” surrounding the divine, followed by inevitable failure and intense sorrow. One does not undertake such music lightly.

Likewise the next two symphonies. Both begin with menacing themes that rise from the depths of the orchestra – and from the subconscious, both Bruckner's and the hearer's – with a power hitherto unknown in symphonic music. In the revised Eighth the opening Allegro moderato dies away at the end; in the Ninth the corresponding Feierlich, misterioso ends in a crushing, terrifying climax. Both works next have ferocious Scherzi, followed by sublime Adagios. In the Eighth the sounds progress in higher and higher waves but fail to achieve transcendence; in the Ninth the Adagio is structured around three identical massively discordant

climaxes, finally dying into silence. The Eighth concludes with a huge finale that moves with enormous weight and mass: power and terror and triumph incarnate in sound. Bruckner was working on a similarly imposing finale to the Ninth when he died. Qualities such as these are unknown to, and apparently unwanted by, today's aging and timid audiences. Nor do our New Brucknerians appear to be culturally or psychologically equipped to generate them.

Even so, the New Bruckner movement has shed welcome fresh light on a composer who has often been found difficult. It has revealed more of what we already knew that Bruckner at his best brought to the symphony: opening movements of enormous ingenuity and skill; slow movements that restore the earlier solemnity missing in most later nineteenth-century symphonies, with their trivial intermezzi; Scherzi that restore the rhythms of the countryside, as heard in Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven; and finales of ennobling power. What the new movement generally does not yet have, and possibly never will, is *Feierlichkeit* and *Innigkeit*, the ability to reveal the secrets of the depths within the mind and of the cosmic forces without, that earlier interpreters, steeped in more thoughtful and informed cultures, regularly found in this music. Wilhelm Furtwängler claimed that Bruckner sought "to introduce the divine into our human world." We await, probably vainly, interpreters who can realize that truth in our belated lifetimes.