

PROGRAM NOTES

by RICHARD E. RODDA

Symphony No. 4 in E-flat major ANTON BRUCKNER

Composed in 1874; revised in 1878-1881 and 1887-1888.

Première on February 20, 1881 in Vienna, directed by Hans Richter.

"Bruckner's entire symphonic career was an incredible mass of afterthoughts, of deletions, of additions, of simplifications, amplifications, reorchestrations, revisions, and new versions: some reluctantly permitted on the pressing advice of well-meaning conductors and friends, some taken out of discouragement and fear lest his music prove too difficult to perform or to understand, and some spontaneously as the result of later and finer inspiration." These words of Edward Downes are proven nowhere better than in the Fourth Symphony, a work that occupied some fourteen years of Anton Bruckner's life.

Bruckner began his Fourth Symphony on January 2, 1874, only two days after he had finished the Symphony No. 3; the completed score was inscribed "November 22nd 1874 in Vienna, at 8:30 in the evening." (Bruckner meticulously dated all of his manuscripts, even his sketches, usually glancing at his watch as he penned the last note.) During the following year, the Vienna Philharmonic read through the piece at a test rehearsal for new works, but deemed only the first movement fit for public performance. "The rest," Bruckner was told, "is idiotic." He was hurt by such stinging criticism, of course, but it did not wilt his determination to go on with the Symphony. With his hectic schedule, however, crowded with thirty hours a week of teaching, his duties as Court Organist, the completion of his Fifth Symphony, and the revisions of the Symphony No. 3, he was unable to return to the E-flat Symphony until 1878, when he thoroughly revised its orchestration and fitted the work with a completely new Scherzo and Finale.

In the process of these alterations, which took over two years and brought the Symphony largely to the form in which it is familiar today, Bruckner added to the score the sobriquet "Romantic" (probably in the sense of the Medieval literary romance) and some sketchy programs for three of the movements. (His tacking-on of extra-musical images may well have been influenced by Wagner, Bruckner's adulated hero, who did the same for Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.) The first movement he described as "A citadel of the Middle Ages. Daybreak. Reveille is sounded from the tower. The gates open. Knights on proud chargers leap forth. The magic of nature surrounds them." The third movement was dubbed a "Hunting Scherzo," whose Trio portrayed a "dance tune during the hunters' meal." The Finale depicted a "folk festival." Bruckner, however, seems not to have regarded his own program too seriously — later, when he was asked specifically about the story of the last movement, he said, "I've forgotten completely what picture I had in mind." It is not impossible that the program, added only after the music was complete, was simply a device to make this Symphony, still unheard by the public, more easily accessible.

The revised Fourth Symphony was finally accepted for performance by conductor Hans Richter and the Vienna Philharmonic in 1881, seven years after its first version was finished. Despite some limited recognition that had come his way in the intervening years, Bruckner was still without a major success as a composer, and he followed the rehearsals of the Fourth Symphony with great hope for its triumph. During a rehearsal, Richter stopped the orchestra at one passage that was unclear in the score and asked the composer, "What note is this?" Bruckner, ever eager to please, answered, "Any note you choose, Maestro. Quite as you like." When the rehearsal was done, Bruckner sheepishly approached the conductor, pressed into his palm a thaler, and covered the man with blessings and thanks. "That thaler is the memento of a day when I wept," Richter recalled. "Bruckner was an old man then. His works were hardly performed anywhere. When the Symphony was over, Bruckner came to me. He was radiant with enthusiasm and happiness. I felt him put something in my hand. 'Take it, and drink a mug of beer to my health.'" Richter wore the coin on his watch chain for the rest of his life. The première of the Fourth Symphony on February 20, 1881, probably the first adequate performance of any of Bruckner's symphonies, proved to be an immense success; the composer was called to the stage after every movement, and the Scherzo was encored. Anton Bruckner, at the age of 57, was at long last granted the Viennese recognition that had been denied him since he had arrived in that city nearly a quarter of a century before.

The music of Bruckner is unique in the history of the art. He has been called the "Wagner of the Symphony," after the mortal whom he revered above all others, but this appellation implies that his work is more derivative than can be substantiated by the musical scores or by his life. Bruckner, scion of generations of Catholic peasants, passed his life in a sort of unending

religious ecstasy and fervent humility that held him aloof from the exigencies of everyday life. Even Wagner, who was as mean and self-serving as any musician who ever lived, could not resist the guileless simplicity and utter sincerity of this extraordinary man. Bruckner's early works were mostly service music, plainly intended to praise God. When he turned to orchestral music later in life — his First Symphony did not appear until he was 42 — the intent and philosophy of his sacred compositions were transferred into the newly adopted genre. Bruckner feared constantly that his work would not please his Maker, that God would catch him lazing about rather than utilizing his time and talent to their fullest capacity. His unsuccessful race against death to finish the sublime Ninth Symphony, which he dedicated simply and appropriately to God, is one of the most pitiable episodes in nineteenth-century music. On many days he forced himself to take pen in hand when he hardly had strength enough to lift a spoon. Still, he felt he had not completely disappointed the Deity in everything. Bruckner often said (and probably constantly thought), "I will present to God the score of my *Te Deum*, and he will judge me mercifully."

The music created by such a visionary as Bruckner needs special care from the listener. His symphonies have often been called "cathedrals in sound," and the phrase is appropriate both in the mood that it conveys and in its implication of grandeur. Such works by their very nature must be large in sonority and temporal duration if the vision is to be realized. A twenty-minute Bruckner symphony would be as ludicrous as the massive baldachino of St. Peter's dropped onto the altar of the neighborhood parish church. It is this very striving toward the infinite, toward the transcendent, that raises Bruckner's best works to a level achieved by few others in the history of music. Those willing to meet Bruckner on his own terms, to partake of the special hour that he grants the listener in each of his symphonies, find an experience as fulfilling and deeply satisfying as any that the art has to offer. Wrote Lawrence Gilman, "He was and is a seer and prophet — one who knew the secret of a strangely exalted discourse, grazing the sublime, though his speech was both halting and prolix. He stammered, and he knew not when to stop. But sometimes, rapt and transfigured, he saw visions and dreamed dreams as colossal, as grandiose, as awful in lonely splendor, as those of William Blake. We know that for Bruckner, too, some ineffable beauty flamed and sank and flamed again across the night."

The Fourth Symphony, one of Bruckner's finest achievements of spirit and craftsmanship, could be (and has been) the subject of extensive analysis. Suffice it to say for the technically minded that the first movement is in leisurely sonata form, the *Andante* is built from three themes that recur in sequence, the galvanic *Scherzo* is provided with a sharply contrasting *Trio* reminiscent of an Austrian *Ländler*, and the Finale draws together themes from all the preceding movements for a cyclical summation of the entire Symphony. The most fruitful approach for those who prefer to listen without labels, however, is to be swept along by the glorious tide of sound, at some times small and intimate and reverential, at others, mighty and heaven-storming. It is from the building of long, controlled climaxes to move from the tiny to the great that the Symphony derives much of its power, as though these rising lines of musical tension were the machines slowly, inexorably opening the cathedral vault to the visionary sky above. Deryck Cooke wrote, "The essence of Bruckner's symphonies is that they express the most fundamental human impulses, unalloyed by civilized conditioning, with extraordinary purity and grandeur of expression; and that they are on a monumental scale which, despite many internal subtleties and complexities, has a shattering simplicity of outline." Perhaps Bruckner was right — perhaps his talent did, indeed, come directly from God.

About the Artists

The **Munich Philharmonic Orchestra** was founded in 1893 through the initiative of Privy Councillor Dr. Franz Kaim, and since 1928 it has been the official orchestra of the Bavarian capital. In the early days, while it was still known as the Kaim Orchestra, such famous conductors as Hans Winderstein, Hermann Zumpe, and Ferdinand Loewe were setting the standard of high quality in orchestral performance. It was Felix Weingartner, chief conductor of the Munich Philharmonic from 1898-1905, who developed the international reputation of the orchestra through an extensive program of tours abroad. During these years, guest conductors such as Gustav Mahler (who led the orchestra in world premières of his Fourth and Eighth Symphonies), Richard Strauss, Max Reger, and Hans Pfitzner conducted performances of their own compositions as well as those of other composers.

From 1905 to 1908, the Finnish-German George Schneevoight was chief conductor of the orchestra. During his tenure, the 20-year-old Wilhelm Furtwängler made his conducting debut on February 19, 1906, the beginning of long and close association between him and the

orchestra. For the next six years, 1908-1914, the ensemble, which had now become known as the Concert-Society Orchestra, was under the chief conductorship of Ferdinand Loewe. He was responsible for the inception of the first major Bruckner cycles and festivals, thus founding a Bruckner tradition for the Munich Philharmonic that exists to this day.

Following World War I, Sigmund von Hausegger led the orchestra for eighteen years, during which time the orchestra was officially christened the Munich Philharmonic. In 1938, Oswald Kabasta became chief conductor, and the high artistic level of the orchestra during his tenure is documented by recordings of Beethoven, Schubert, Bruckner, and Dvořák symphonies. When Hans Rosbaud took over in 1946, he re-established the orchestra after the war and extended the range of its repertoire with particular emphasis on the works of contemporary composers. Fritz Rieger was largely responsible for further development of the orchestra from 1949-66, securing its place as one of West Germany's leading orchestras. The illustrious guest conductors during these years included Hans Knappertsbusch, Carl Schuricht, Erich Kleiber, Clemens Krauss, George Szell, Fritz Lehmann, André Cluytens, Joseph Keilberth, and Georg Solti.

Rudolf Kempe followed Fritz Rieger in 1967. During Kempe's tenure, the orchestra made its first tours of Japan and the Soviet Union and recorded the complete symphonies of Beethoven and Brahms. With Kempe's tragic early death in May 1976, the orchestra lost a conductor who had left his mark on the ensemble, helping it to reach new artistic heights.

In February 1979, Sergiu Celibidache came to Munich and conducted concerts of the Munich Philharmonic for the first time. In June of that year, he was appointed general music director of the City of Munich, and thereby became artistic director of the Munich Philharmonic as well. Under his baton, the orchestra completed a series of very successful tours of West Germany, Spain, Italy, East Germany, Switzerland, Austria, France, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Japan. In October 1988, Maestro Celibidache and the orchestra gave three concerts in Moscow's Kremlin Palace, accompanying the German Chancellor on his visit to the Soviet Union. In November 1988, the orchestra made its debut tour of Israel, with concerts in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa.

The Munich Philharmonic has been the subject of several major television productions by the Second German Television Channel (ZDF). The "Summer Festival of the Munich Philharmonic," which attracts conductors and soloists of international reputation, has become an annual highlight of the orchestra's season since its inception in 1983. With the November 1985 opening of the "Philharmonie" concert hall in the Gasteig Arts Centre, the Munich Philharmonic gained its own concert hall again for the first time in forty years. Each season the orchestra gives approximately 100 concerts at the "Philharmonie" and about thirty on tour. With 130 musicians, it is one of the largest symphony orchestras in the world.

Tonight's concert marks the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra's second Ann Arbor appearance, following a concert here in 1985 under Lorin Maazel.

Sergiu Celibidache was born on July 11, 1912, in Rumania and grew up in the Moldavian town of Jassy. From an early age, he started learning the piano and taught himself the principles of harmony and theory. After studying mathematics for a brief time, Celibidache went to Berlin to study composition under Heinz Tiessen at the Academy of Music and two years later began studying conducting under Walter Gmeindl. Celibidache also studied musicology at Berlin's Friedrich Wilhelm University with Arnold Schering and Georg Schuennemann, writing his doctoral dissertation on Josquin des Pres.

Celibidache served as principal conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic from the end of the war until 1952. His close collaboration with Wilhelm Furtwängler during these years was of the greatest importance to the young Rumanian conductor.

Sergiu Celibidache has chosen only to work with orchestras that will provide him with the working conditions and rehearsal time he considers essential for the appropriate preparation and performance of symphonic works. In 1979, he became general music director of the City of Munich and chief conductor of the Munich Philharmonic, which is the only orchestra he now conducts. Since 1976, he has been a professor at the University of Mainz, where he teaches the phenomenology of music. The maestro regards teaching as one of the highest forms of human activity and has made teaching a very important element in his career. He is the composer of four symphonies, a concertino for piano and orchestra, several suites, and a Mass.

From his Berlin years, Sergiu Celibidache has had a great interest in Buddhism. He is now a follower of Sai Baba and considers himself one of the "new Gnostics" who dispute the connection between language, thought, and reality. Like the great teachers of Zen, Celibidache responds to the Zen follower's question, What is the basis of all thoughts? — "The reality."

We welcome Sergiu Celibidache this evening in his first Ann Arbor appearance.

THE MUNICH PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

First Violins
Werner Grobholz
Concertmaster

Sreten Krstić
Concertmaster
Edmund Pusl
Karel Eberle

Asst. Concertmasters
Mathias Freund
Adolf Lehmann
Josef Kahlscheuer
Erich Bieder
Hans Schuster
Max Fischer
Carla Moll
Manfred Hufnagel
Theresia Ritthaler
Katharina Krüger
Masako Shinohe
Claudia Ruf
Philip Middleman
Nenad Daleore
Peter Becher
Regina Matthes

Second Violins
Klaus Mynter
Alexander Uszkurat
Christian Gansch

Principals
Günter Klein
Julie Hessdörfer
Friedrich Eisler
Alfred Brandlhuber
Wolfgang Prohaska
Karlheinz Wetzel
Jürgen Gottmann
Ilona Weninger
Berthold Götschel
Dietmar Forster
Gustav Kolbe
Josef Thoma
Martin Manz
Raimund Eckertz
Zheng Hu
Avithal Steiner

Violas
Annemarie Binder
Helmut Nicolai
Martin Albrecht Rohde

Principals
Deinhart Goritzki
Tivadar Popa
Peter Chr. Steinkrauss
Gero Rumpff
Rafael Wojsyk
Hans-Dietrich Rave
Jorge Sutil
Max Spenger

Klaus Kosbahn
Herbert Stoiber
Wolfgang Stingl
Günter Pretzel

Cellos
Heinrich Klug
Helmar Stiehler
Michael Hell

Principals
Stephan Haack
Ernst Faehndrich
Hermann Durr
Willi Schmid
Paul Holzfurtner
Erich Bruckner
Jörg Eggebrecht
Johannes Fink
Erhard Dimpfl
Herbert Heim
Veit Wenk-Wolff

Basses
Herbert Duft
Josef Niederhammer
Matthias Weber

Principals
Yoshinori Suzuki
Stephan Graf
Erwin Götz
Otto Bernhard
Franz Urbas
Frank Jörg Sirch
Wolfgang Nestle
Holger Herrmann

Flutes
Max Hecker
Michael Martin Kofler

Principals
Hans Billig
Piccolo
Jürgen Borchers
Albert Müller

Oboes
Ulrich Becker
Michael Helmuth
Principals
Gerhard Hermann
Bernhard Berwanger

Clarinets
Karlheinz Hahn
Principal
Martin Spangenberg
Wolfgang Schröder
Peter Flähmig
Wilhelm Mehls
Bass Clarinet

English Horn
Susan Goetting

Bassoons
Richard Popp
Friedrich Edelmann
Principals
Josef Peters
Jörg Urbach

Contrabassoon
Jürgen Popp

Horns
Eric Terwilliger
Wolfgang Gaag
Principals

David Moltz
Hartmut Hubert
Robert Ross
Alois Schlemmer
Wieland Wagner
Karl Hammer

Trumpets
Uwe Komischke
Principal
Erich Rinner
Hermann Göss
Franz Unterrainer

Trombones
Dankwart Schmidt
Dany Bonvin
Abbie Conant
Principals
Robert Meissner
Bernhard Weiss

Tuba
Thomas Walsh

Timpani
Peter Sadlo
Stefan Gagelmann
Principals

Percussion
Arnold Riedhammer
Walter Schwarz
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*The Munich Philharmonic's first tour of the United States under
Sergiu Celibidache has been made possible by Audi and the City of Munich.*

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Remaining Concerts

ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA / LEONARD SLATKIN Thurs. Apr. 20
Steven Stucky: Dreamwaltzes; Haydn: Symphony No. 85;
Shostakovich: Symphony No. 10

Pre-concert Presentation

In the Rackham Amphitheater — free and open to the public.

Thursday, Apr. 20 at 7:00, preceding St. Louis Symphony Orchestra

Speakers: Robert Alexander and Judy Dow Alexander, Producers and Arts Consultants

Topic: *Performing With and Managing American Orchestras*

96th Annual May Festival — April 26-29, 1989

Hill Auditorium, Ann Arbor, 8:00 p.m.

Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig

KURT MASUR, *Music Director and Conductor*

The Festival Chorus, DONALD BRYANT, *Director*

ANNEROSE SCHMIDT, *Pianist*

HERMANN BAUMANN, *Horn*

ANNE-SOPHIE MUTTER, *Violinist*

JESSYE NORMAN, *Soprano*

GAIL DUBINBAUM, *Mezzo-soprano*

STEPHEN BRYANT, *Bass-baritone*

VINSON COLE, *Tenor*

J. PATRICK RAFTERY, *Baritone*

Wednesday — Mendelssohn: "Ruy Blas" Overture; Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 4;
Schubert: Symphony No. 9 ("The Great")

Thursday — Beethoven: "Leonore" Overture No. 3; Strauss: Horn Concerto No. 1;
Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 4 in F minor

Friday — Brahms: Violin Concerto in D major; Mendelssohn: "Die erste Walpurgisnacht"
(Festival Chorus, Dubinbaum, Cole, Raftery, Bryant)

Saturday — Strauss: "Four Last Songs" (Norman); Bruckner: Symphony No. 7

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