Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
2019-2020 Mellon Grand Classics Season

October 18, 2019

MANFRED HONECK, CONDUCTOR
IGOR LEVIT, PIANO

MASON BATES — *Resurrexit*

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART — Concerto No. 22 in E-flat major for Piano and Orchestra, K. 482

I. Allegro
II. Andante
III. Allegro

Mr. Levit

Intermission

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH — Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Opus 47

I. Moderato — Allegro non troppo — Moderato
II. Allegretto
III. Largo
IV. Allegro non troppo

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
2019-2020 Mellon Grand Classics Season

October 19, 2019

MANFRED HONECK, CONDUCTOR
IGOR LEVIT, PIANO

JAMES MACMILLAN — *Larghetto for Orchestra*

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF — *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*
for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 43
Mr. Levit

Intermission

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH — Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Opus 47

I. Moderato — Allegro non troppo — Moderato
II. Allegretto
III. Largo
IV. Allegro non troppo

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
2019-2020 Mellon Grand Classics Season

October 20, 2019

MANFRED HONECK, CONDUCTOR
IGOR LEVIT, PIANO

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Concerto No. 22 in E-flat major for Piano and Orchestra, K. 482

I. Allegro
II. Andante
III. Allegro

Mr. Levit

Intermission

ANTON BRUCKNER

Symphony No. 9 in D minor

I. Feierlich, Misterioso
II. Scherzo: Bewegt, lebhaft
III. Adagio: Langsam, feierlich

AT A GLANCE CONTENT

MASON BATES

Resurrexit

Mason Bates was born in Philadelphia on January 23, 1977, and currently resides in the Bay Area. He has served as the Pittsburgh Symphony's Composer of the Year in the 2012-13 and 2014-15 seasons, and composed several works for the ensemble, including his Violin Concerto, premiered in December 2012. *Resurrexit* was composed in 2018 in celebration of Manfred Honeck's 60th birthday, and was most recently heard at the premiere performances in September 2018. The score calls for two piccolos, three flutes, three oboes, English horn, E-flat clarinet, three clarinets, bass clarinet, three bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, piccolo trumpet, four trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, piano, celesta and strings. Performance time: approximately 14 minutes.

JAMES MACMILLAN

Larghetto for Orchestra

James MacMillan was born in Kilwinning, Ayshire, Scotland on July 16, 1959. He composed his Larghetto for Orchestra in 2009 as a piece for chorus, titled *Miserere*, and orchestrated it for the Pittsburgh Symphony in 2017 in honor of Manfred Honeck's 10th season as Music Director. The Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh gave the Pittsburgh premiere of the choral work *Miserere* with Manfred Honeck conducting in June 2017, as part of MacMillan's Composer of the Year Residency, and *Larghetto for Orchestra* was received its world premiere in October 2017. The score calls for two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp and strings.
Performance time: approximately 13 minutes

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Concerto No. 22 in E-flat major for Piano and Orchestra, K. 482

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg on January 27, 1756, and died in Vienna on December 5, 1791. He composed his Concerto No. 22 in E-flat major for Piano and Orchestra, K. 482 in 1785, and it was premiered in Vienna by the Tonkünstler Society orchestra with Mozart as soloist on December 23, 1785. The Pittsburgh Symphony first performed the concerto at Syria Mosque with conductor William Steinberg and soloist Rudolf Serkin in November 1953, and most recently performed it with conductor Nikolaj Znaider and soloist Emanuel Ax in March 2012. The score calls for flute, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani and strings.
Performance time: approximately 33 minutes

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Opus 47

Dmitri Shostakovich was born in St. Petersburg on September 25, 1906, and died in Moscow on August 9, 1975. He composed his iconic Fifth Symphony in 1937, and it was premiered by the Leningrad Philharmonic and conductor Vevgeny Mravinsky on November 21, 1937. The Pittsburgh Symphony first performed the work at the Syria Mosque with conductor Fritz Reiner in January 1941, and most recently performed it on subscription with Krzysztof Urbanski in October 2017. The score calls for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, E-flat clarinet, two B-flat clarinets, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, celesta, piano and strings.

Performance time: approximately 46 minutes

ANTON BRUCKNER

Symphony No. 9 in D minor

Anton Bruckner was born in Ansfelden, near Linz, Austria on September 4, 1824, and died in Vienna on October 11, 1896. He sketched his Ninth Symphony in 1887, and eventually completed it between 1891 and 1896. Ferdinand Löwe conducted the Orchestra of the Vienna Concert Society in the premiere on February 11, 1903. The Pittsburgh Symphony first premiered the symphony at Syria Mosque under the direction on William Steinberg in May 1967. Manfred Honeck led the most recent performances in February 2018, which were recorded and recently commercially released by Reference Recordings. The score calls for three flutes, three oboes, three clarinets, three bassoons, eight horns, four Wagner tubas, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani and strings.
Performance time: approximately 67 minutes

FULL NOTES

MASON BATES

Resurrexit (2018)

Mason Bates brings not only his own fresh talent to the concert hall but also the musical sensibilities of a new generation — he is equally at home composing "for Lincoln Center," according to his web site (www.masonbates.com), as being the "electronica artist Masonic® who moved to the San Francisco Bay Area from New York City, where he was a lounge DJ at such venues as The Frying Pan — the floating rave ship docked off the pier near West 22nd Street."

Bates was born in Philadelphia in 1977 and started studying piano with Hope Armstrong Erb at his childhood home in Richmond, Virginia. He earned degrees in both English literature and music composition in the joint program of Columbia University and the Juilliard School, where his composition teachers included John Corigliano, David Del Tredici and Samuel Adler; he received his doctorate in composition from the University of California, Berkeley in 2008 as a student of Edmund Campion and Jorge Lidermann. Bates was Resident Composer with the California Symphony from 2008 to 2011, Project San Francisco Artist-in-Residence with the San Francisco Symphony in 2011-2012, and Composer of the Year with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra in 2012-2013; he held a residency with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra from 2010 to 2015, and is the first-ever Composer-in-Residence at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. through the 2019-2020 season. He also teaches in the Technology and Applied Composition Program of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. In addition to being recognized as the most-performed American composer of his generation and named "2018 Composer of the Year" by *Musical America*, Bates has received a Charles Ives Scholarship and Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Guggenheim Fellowship, Jacob Druckman Memorial Prize from the Aspen Music Festival, ASCAP and BMI awards, a Fellowship from the Tanglewood Music Center, Rome Prize, Berlin Prize, a two-year Composer Residency with Young Concert Artists, and the 2012 Heinz Award in Arts and Humanities.

"To celebrate the sixtieth birthday of Manfred Honeck, who has taken us on a unique journey into the spirituality of music," wrote Mason Bates of *Resurrexit*, commissioned by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, "I turned to a biblical narrative full of mystery and the supernatural. While composers from Bach to Mahler have set the Resurrection in large-scale choral settings, the story has not been animated in the purely symphonic, kinetic form that attracted me. *Resurrexit* challenged me to consider a subject and soundworld I had never explored musically.

"The piece opens in biblical darkness, with the dusty mystery of the Middle East evoked by exotic modes and sonorities, as a throaty melody laments the death of Christ. The entrance of the beautiful Easter chant *Victimae*

Paschali Laudes [‘*Praise the Easter Victim*’] signals the first stirrings of life, conjured by trills, altar bells and the remarkable ‘Semantron’ (a large wooden plank hammered by huge mallets used by Byzantine monks as a call to prayer). [A fascinating video of the Semantron is on-line at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1viidJRx_w] Mystery turns into magic as the ‘re-animation’ is illustrated by quicksilver textures that whirl and flicker, building to an exhilarating finale that features a soaring reprise of the Easter chant.”

JAMES MACMILLAN

Larghetto for Orchestra (2009 for chorus, orchestrated 2017)

Scottish composer James MacMillan, born in Kilwinning, Ayshire on July 16, 1959, was educated at the University of Edinburgh (B.Mus., 1981) and Durham University (Ph.D., 1987), where his principal teacher was John Casken. After working as a lecturer at Manchester University from 1986 to 1988, MacMillan returned to Scotland, where he has since fulfilled many important commissions and taught at the University of Edinburgh and Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow. He has also served as Artistic Director of the Edinburgh Contemporary Arts Trust, Affiliate Composer of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Composer/Conductor with the BBC Philharmonic, Composer of the Year with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, and Visiting Composer of the Philharmonia Orchestra and Artistic Director of its contemporary music series, Music Today; he became Principal Guest Conductor of the Netherlands Radio Chamber Philharmonic in 2010. In 1993, MacMillan won both the Gramophone Contemporary Music Record of the Year Award and the Classic CD Award for Contemporary Music; he was made a CBE in 2004, given the 2008 British Composer Award for Liturgical Music, named an Honorary Patron of the London Chamber Orchestra in 2008, and awarded a Knighthood in the 2015 Queen's Birthday Honours. In October 2014, James MacMillan inaugurated the Cumnock Tryst, a festival of international scope that he organized in his boyhood home in southern Scotland.

Macmillan’s compositions, many of which incorporate traditional Scottish elements and bear some stamp of either his religion (Catholicism) or his politics (socialism), include two operas, a *St. John Passion*, concerted works for piano (*The Berserking*), percussion (*Veni, Veni, Emmanuel*), cello, clarinet, organ and trumpet, orchestral scores, chamber works, and pieces for solo voices and chorus. Of his creative personality, MacMillan wrote, “There are strong Scottish traits in my works, but also an aggressive and forthright tendency with a strong rhythmic physicality, showing the influence of Stravinsky, Messiaen and some minimalist composers.... My philosophy of composition looks beyond the introversion of the New Music ‘ghetto’ and seeks a wider communication while in no way promoting a compromising populism.... The ‘modernist’ zeal of the post-World War II generation of composers who attempted to eschew any continuation of tradition is anathema to me. I respect tradition in many forms, whether cultural, political or historical, and in keeping up a continuous, delicate scrutiny of old forms, ancient traditions, enduring beliefs and lasting values one is strengthened in one’s constant, restless search for new avenues of expression. The existence of the influence of the old alongside the experiments of the new should not appear incongruous. Therefore, in ideological terms, my works express the timeless truths of Roman Catholicism alongside a fierce social commitment. And musically one can hopefully sense the depths of times past integrating with attempts at innovation.”

Larghetto for Orchestra is MacMillan’s instrumental version of the *a cappella Miserere* he composed for the acclaimed London-based choral ensemble The Sixteen in 2009. The text for the choral work, the penitential Psalm 51 — *Miserere mei, Deus*: *Have mercy upon me, O God, after Thy great goodness. According to the multitude of Thy mercies, do away mine offences. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin.* [17] *For I acknowledge my faults …* — is taken from the Matins service of *Tenebrae* (“*darkness*”), which encompasses the most solemn moments of the Christian year. The term is applied to the combined Roman Catholic services of Matins and Lauds that bracket daybreak on Thursday, Friday and Saturday of Holy Week, during which fifteen candles signifying the ebbing life of Christ are extinguished one-by-one after the singing of the obligatory Psalms. The service closes “*in tenebris*.” MacMillan’s *Miserere* and its *Larghetto for Orchestra* analogue not only plumb the images and emotions of the individual verses, but also trace a slowly swelling optimism, from the recognition and repentance of the opening lines to hope of forgiveness at the close.

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Concerto No. 22 in E-flat major for Piano and Orchestra, K. 482 (1785)

Mozart's life was hectic during the winter of 1785-1786. He completed the E-flat Piano Concerto on December 16th, just four days after putting the finishing touches on the Violin Sonata, K. 481. He had recently received a commission from Emperor Joseph II for a musical diversion (*The Impresario*) to be given at the *orangerie* of the Schönbrunn Palace in February, and was making revisions and additions to *Idomeneo* for a revival of that opera in March. Work on numerous chamber and vocal pieces was also squeezed into his schedule, as was the tutelage of a sizable group of private students. His main concern at the time, however, was the composition of *The Marriage of Figaro,* which he was readying for production in the spring as soon as the theaters opened following the end of the Lenten prohibition of operatic performances. Mozart's father, Leopold, wrote that his son was "up to his ears" in work during those winter months.

Despite the commissions, the grand plans and the facility with which he worked, Mozart was troubled. Always something of a spendthrift, he was sinking into a difficult debt-ridden financial situation from which he would never be able to extricate himself. The first of what became a steady stream of letters to friends begging for money was sent to Hoffmeister, his publisher, on November 20, 1785. Mozart's health, like his finances, was also showing signs of deterioration. Though not yet thirty, he was often seriously ill, and he started to be plagued by thoughts of his own death. A few months after his letter to Hoffmeister he wrote, "I never lie down at night without reflecting that — young as I am — I may not live to see another day." Many of the works of 1785 reflect his growing seriousness of mind: D minor Concerto (K. 466), last two of the "Haydn" Quartets (K. 464 and K. 465), C minor Piano Fantasia (K. 475), G minor Quintet (K. 478), and *Masonic Funeral Music* (K. 477). It was just such music that bemused the fickle Viennese public. These probing compositions were not the simple ditties and pretty musical bonbons they demanded, but something that puzzled them, and perhaps touched an emotional chord that they felt was as well left undisturbed on a pleasant evening after a tasty supper. The audience Mozart had built during his first five years in Vienna began to slip away, and this E-flat Concerto, more *gallant* in style and closer to the popular taste than most of its neighbors (though with a surprisingly Romantic slow movement), was perhaps an attempt to win back the support of his patrons.

The Concerto's orchestral introduction opens with a broad rhythmic gesture immediately answered by a brief response in the burnished sonorities of bassoons and horns. Further melodic ideas tumble one after another until the soloist's entry, which acts as a bridge to the second exposition and the pianist's elaboration of the earlier thematic materials. Following the main theme group, the music turns briefly to a darkly shaded minor tonality rather than beginning the second theme area in the dominant key, casting a certain Romantic spirit over these measures. The expected key arrives with a rising scalar melody for soloist, after which the exposition concludes with rippling pianistic flourishes supported by a buoyant orchestral accompaniment. The central section, less a true development than a free fantasia, is dominated by the soloist, with the orchestra serving as the subdued background for the display of tasteful virtuosity. The recapitulation recalls themes from both the introduction and the exposition while providing the obligatory cadenza opportunity for the pianist.

The second movement is a hybrid form, with elements of rondo, variations and ternary (A–B–A) constructions. Its unusual structure, however, is precisely suited to its mood, which is introspective and almost solemn in its rich harmonic coloring. Alfred Einstein, in his seminal study of the Mozart's music, said that this is "expression unadorned, almost an exhibition of sadness, false consolation, despair and resignation."

The finale, one of Mozart's jauntiest rondos, returns to the *gallant* world of the first movement. Its effortless theme is announced by the violins and then the full orchestra before the soloist responds with an answering strain. Following the second return of the rondo theme, there is an episode in the manner of a tender *Romanza,* initiated by clarinets and bassoons, after which the galloping good cheer of the rondo resumes — with a brief pause for a cadenza — to close what has been termed "The Queen of Mozart's concertos."

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini for Piano and Orchestra, Opus 43 (1934)

The legend of Nicolò Paganini has haunted musicians for nearly two centuries. Gaunt, his emaciated figure cloaked in priestly black, Paganini performed feats of wizardry on the violin that were simply unimagined until he burst upon the European concert scene in 1805. Not only were his virtuoso pyrotechnics unsurpassed, but his performance of simple melodies was of such purity and sweetness that it moved his audiences to tears. So far was he beyond the competition that he seemed almost, well, superhuman. Perhaps, the rumor spread, he had special

powers, powers not of this earth. Perhaps, Faust-like, he had exchanged his soul for the mastery of his art. The legend (propagated and fostered, it is now known, by Paganini himself) had begun.

Paganini, like most virtuoso instrumentalists of the 19th century, composed much of his own music. Notable among his creative output are the breathtaking Caprices for Unaccompanied Violin, works so difficult that even today they are accessible only to the most highly accomplished performers. The last of the Caprices, No. 24 in A minor, served as the basis for compositions by Schumann, Liszt and Brahms, and was also the inspiration for Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*. Rachmaninoff's work is a series of variations on this theme, which is characterized as much by its recurrent rhythm (five short notes followed by a longer one) as by its melody. Taking his cue from the Paganini legend, Rachmaninoff combined another melody with that of the demonic violinist — the *Dies Irae* ("*Day of Wrath*") from the Requiem Mass for the Dead. This ancient chant tune had long been connected not only with the Roman Catholic Church service, but also with musical works containing some diabolical element. Berlioz associated it with the witches' sabbath in his *Symphonie Fantastique*, Liszt used it in his *Totentanz* ("*Dance of Death*"), Saint-Saëns in his *Danse macabre*, and Rachmaninoff himself in his earlier *Isle of the Dead*.

The *Rhapsody*, a brilliant showpiece for virtuoso pianist, is a set of 24 variations. The work begins with a brief, eight-measure introduction followed, before the theme itself is heard, by the first variation, a skeletal outline of the melody reminiscent of the pizzicato opening of the variation-finale of Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony. The theme, 24 measures in length, is stated by the unison violins. The following variations fall into three groups, corresponding to the fast–slow–fast sequence of the traditional three-movement concerto. The most familiar section of the *Rhapsody*, and one of the great melodies in the orchestral literature, is the climax of the middle section. This variation, No. 18, actually an inversion of Paganini's theme, has a broad sweep and nobility of sentiment unsurpassed anywhere in Rachmaninoff's works.

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Opus 47 (1937)

"COMPOSER REGAINS HIS PLACE IN SOVIET," read a headline of *The New York Times* on November 22, 1937. "Dmitri Shostakovich, who fell from grace two years ago, on the way to rehabilitation. His new symphony hailed. Audience cheers as Leningrad Philharmonic presents work."

The background of Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony is well known. His career began before he was twenty with the cheeky First Symphony; he was immediately acclaimed the brightest star in the Soviet musical firmament. In the years that followed, he produced music with amazing celerity, and even managed to catch Stalin's attention, especially with his film scores. (Stalin was convinced that film was one of the most powerful weapons in his propaganda arsenal.) The mid-1930s, however, the years during which Stalin tightened his iron grasp on Russia, saw a repression of the artistic freedom of Shostakovich's early years, and some of his newer works were assailed with the damning criticism of "formalism." The storm broke in an article in *Pravda* on January 28, 1936 entitled "Muddle Instead of Music." The "muddle" was the opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mzensk District*, a lurid tale of adultery and murder in the provinces which is one of Shostakovich's most powerful creations. The denunciation, though it urged Shostakovich to reform his compositional ways, also encouraged him to continue his work, but in a manner consistent with Soviet goals. As "A Soviet composer's reply to just criticism" — a phrase attributed to Shostakovich by the press, though it does not appear in the score — the Fifth Symphony was created, and presented to an enthusiastic public. Shostakovich had apparently returned to the Soviet fold, and in such manner that in 1940 he was awarded the Stalin Prize, the highest achievement then possible for a Russian composer.

Since the appearance in 1979 of the purported memoirs of Shostakovich (*Testimony*), however, the above tale needs some reconsideration. The prevailing interpretation of the Fifth Symphony had been that generally it represented triumph through struggle, à la Beethoven's Fifth and Ninth Symphonies, and specifically the composer's renunciation of his backslidden ideological ways. But in *Testimony*, Shostakovich, bitter, ill, disillusioned, said, "I think it is clear to everyone what happens in the [finale of the] Fifth Symphony. The rejoicing is forced, created under threat, as in *Boris Godunov*. It's as if someone were beating you with a stick and saying, 'Your business is rejoicing, your business is rejoicing,' and you rise, shaky, and go marching off muttering, 'Our business is rejoicing, our business is rejoicing.' What kind of apotheosis is that? You have to be a complete oaf not to hear that. People who came to the premiere in the best of moods wept." Shostakovich's thoughts about the Fifth Symphony bear directly on the listener's perception of the work. The key to the work's meaning, its finale, can no longer be seen as a transcendence or negation of the tragic forces invoked in the earlier movements, especially the third, but rather as

an affirmation of them. The boisterous trumpets and drums are not those of a festival or a peasant dance, but of a forced death march — Stalin's "exterminations" outnumbered those of Hitler. The Fifth Symphony arose not from Shostakovich's glorification of his nation. It arose from his pity.

The sonata form of the Symphony's first movement begins with a stabbing theme in close imitation. A group of complementary ideas is presented before the tempo freshens for the second theme, an expansive melody of large intervals. The sinister sound of unison horns in their lowest register marks the start of the development. The intensity of this section builds quickly to a powerful, almost demonic march. The recapitulation rockets forth from a series of fierce brass chords leading to a huge, sustained climax after which the music's energy subsides to allow the second theme to be heard in a gentle setting for flute and horn. Quiet intensity pervades until the movement ends with ethereal scales in the celesta. The scherzo has much of the sardonic humor that Shostakovich displayed in such movements throughout his life. The Symphony's greatest pathos is reserved for the *Largo*. This movement is best heard not in a specific formal context but as an extended soliloquy embracing the most deeply felt emotions. For much of its length, the expression is subdued, but twice the music gathers enough strength to give forth a mighty, despairing cry. The finale is in three large sections, determined as much by moods as by themes. The outer sections are boisterous and extroverted, the central one, dark-hued and premonitory. Whether the mood of rough vigor of this framing music or the tragedy of the central section stays longer in the mind is a matter listeners must determine for themselves. The delicate formal balance Shostakovich achieved here could be tipped in either direction depending on the experience the individual brings to it. Only great masterworks can simultaneously be both so personal and so universal.

ANTON BRUCKNER

Symphony No. 9 in D minor (1887, 1891-1896)

"Often, I found him on his knees in profound prayer. As it was strictly forbidden to interrupt him under these circumstances, I stood by and overheard his naive, pathetic interpolations in the traditional texts. At times he would suddenly exclaim, 'Dear God, let me get well soon; you see I need my health to finish the Ninth.'" This touching report of Anton Bruckner during his last months came from one Dr. Richard Heller, a physician who attended the ailing composer while he was in a fierce race against death to complete his D minor Symphony.

Bruckner began sketching his Ninth Symphony in 1887, as soon as he had completed the Symphony No. 8. He collected many ideas for the new work, but decided to set the piece aside so that he could revise several of his earlier symphonies, notably the First and the just-completed Eighth. These painstaking revisions caused Bruckner great difficulties, dragging on for four years and sapping much of his strength and spirit. By 1889, when he turned 65, Bruckner began to suffer from dropsy, the accumulation of fluids in the body tissues, the painful disease that had afflicted Beethoven. In the spring of the following year, he was stricken with a chronic catarrh, or inflammation, of the larynx, and began to show signs of an abnormal nervous condition. In the fall, he was relieved of his duties as organ professor at the Vienna Conservatory; he retired as professor emeritus in January 1891.

Despite his deteriorating health, Bruckner returned to the D minor Symphony in April, telling the conductor Herman Levy, "I have already written down most of the themes." The first movement was done by October 1892, the same year that he left his position as organist at the Court Chapel, but work on the Symphony became more difficult with each passing month. A severe attack of dropsy in the fall of 1893, worsened by an attendant heart condition, prevented the completion of the *Scherzo* and *Adagio* until 1894.

During the remaining two years of his life, after he had given his last lecture at the University of Vienna and largely withdrawn from the world, Bruckner worked solely on the gigantic finale he planned to crown his Symphony. He realized that this would be his last composition (one theme in the *Adagio* is labeled "Farewell to Life"), and he prayed daily (and often invited his visitors to join him) that God would grant him the time to complete the score: "I have done my duty on earth. I have accomplished what I could, and my only wish is to be allowed to complete my Ninth Symphony.... There remains only the finale. I trust Death will not deprive me of my pen.... If He refuses, then He must take the responsibility for its incompleteness." Finished or not, the deeply religious Bruckner told Dr. Heller of his plans for the dedication of the new work: "I have made dedications to two earthly majesties: poor King Ludwig [of Bavaria], as a patron of the arts, and to our illustrious dear Emperor Franz Joseph, as the highest earthly majesty that I know. Now I dedicate to the Lord of lords, to my dear God, my last work, and hope that He will grant me enough time to finish it and will generously accept my gift."

Bruckner tried mightily to bring the Symphony to a conclusion. He worked on the finale whenever he felt able, sometimes even arising in the middle of the night to scratch down some thought or other. His housekeeper, Kathi Kachelmeyer (Bruckner never married), remonstrated with him for being out of bed when his health was so poor, but he responded by telling her, "One must compose when the right idea comes." And ideas there were in abundance for the closing movement. The six extant variants of the finale, among whose shaky pen-strokes are scattered phrases from *The Lord's Prayer*, stretch to some 400 measures, but none of the versions includes an ending, the necessary coda that would round out Bruckner's overall vision of the work. It seems likely that the composer, who also suffered mental lapses in his last year, could not conceive the finish of the Symphony — could not bring about the overwhelming catharsis demanded by the earlier movements. (The sketches indicate that this finale would have been of a larger dimension than even those for the Fifth and Eighth Symphonies. An attempt by the American musicologist William Carragan in 1984 to make a performing edition from the available material was generally judged as unsuccessful.) In the event that death prevented the completion of the score, Bruckner suggested that the choral *Te Deum* of 1885 should be used as the finale. This request had more to do with his sense of classical formal balance, which demanded a symphony of four movements, than it did with musical suitability, however, and his stop-gap measure is seldom used. Despite his fervent prayers and hopeful determination, the Ninth Symphony was left incomplete. He worked on the manuscript on the morning he died — October 11, 1896.

In 1896, the poor state of Bruckner's health was more widely known than was his progress on the Ninth Symphony, and it was assumed that he left the work in an unperformable state. Great was the public surprise, then, when the Bruckner disciple Ferdinand Löwe announced, six years after the composer died, that he had completed the score of the first three movements from the manuscript, added the *Te Deum* as the finale, and would perform the Symphony with the Vienna Concert Society on February 11, 1903. The composer's biographer Josef V. Wöss reported that the audience was "spellbound" by the performance. However, some questions about the fidelity of Löwe's edition to Bruckner's true thoughts were raised. In the periodical *Zeitschrift für Musik*, Max Auer asked, "Where are those abrupt, Bruckneresque transitions between the passages? Why do the various phrases end in gentle expirations? In short, whence comes this odd finesse, this smooth polish, into the work of a composer universally noted for his rugged individuality?" The questions remained unanswered until the Bruckner Society sponsored a private concert in Munich on April 4, 1932 at which were performed both the Löwe edition and a new one by Robert Haas and Alfred Orel, which resurrected Bruckner's original version. It was found that Löwe had made radical changes in the score, altering the dynamic scheme, many of the tempo indications, much of the orchestration, and even parts of the harmonic structure. That concert in Munich was perhaps the most important stimulus toward the modern view of Bruckner, which holds that he knew exactly what he was doing, and that the revisions of his symphonies he and others undertook only clouded the brilliance of the originals in concept and in detail. The Ninth Symphony is almost always performed today in the original three-movement version, without finale.

The majestic scale of the work is established with the grandiose sonata form of the opening movement. The main theme group comprises three thematic motives. The first motive, reminiscent of the Kyrie from Bruckner's youthful *Missa Solemnis* of 1854, is intoned by the horns above a premonitory quivering in the strings. The second motive, a woodwind phrase based on a melodic figure turning around a single note, builds directly into the stentorian unison statement of the third, octave-leap motive by the full orchestra. Following a pause ("When I have something important to say, I must take a deep breath first," Bruckner once explained), a quiet transition with pizzicato strings bridges to the second theme, a long melody of tender warmth played by the strings. The closing theme, an arch-shaped strain based on open chordal intervals, is initiated by the winds in imitation. The development section elaborates the moods and themes established in earlier pages. The recapitulation rolls in on an overwhelming wave of sound enfolding the third (octave-leap) motive, which is considerably extended before giving way to the tender second theme, presented here in a richer and darker setting. The movement ends with a mighty but hollow-sounding blast for massed instruments based on the octave-leap motive.

"When they hear that, they won't know what to make of it; but by that time, I'll be in my grave," predicted Bruckner of the spectral *Scherzo*. He referred specifically to the harmonic vocabulary of the movement, perhaps the most modern and daring in any of his symphonies, and to the music's haunted mood and violent outbursts, which reflect characteristics of the comparable movement in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The contrasting trio is a nimble essay, which, like the *Scherzo*, attains by itself virtually the proportions of a full sonata movement.

Bruckner called this *Adagio* the most beautiful of all his slow movements. Though he considered the Symphony unfinished, it is hard to imagine what music could follow this sublime statement of the composer's intense, mystical faith. Josef Wöss detected several quotations from Bruckner's earlier compositions in the movement, and surmised that it was intended as a valedictory summing-up of his works. The composer himself may have regarded it as such, since he marked one passage, "Farewell to Life." He included in the scoring one of his most treasured tonal

resources — a choir of four Wagner tubas, the velvet-voiced hybrid of baritone horn and standard French horn, as his final homage to his revered master, Richard Wagner. (He prayed at Wagner's grave every day during his last visit to Bayreuth, in August 1892.) It was, appropriately, with this sound that Bruckner ended his last completed movement.

Two lines from a poem that Moritz von Mayfeld dedicated to Bruckner summarize not only the mood of this rapturous *Adagio*, but also the philosophy by which its creator lived his life: "Art had its beginning with God — And so it must lead back to God."

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