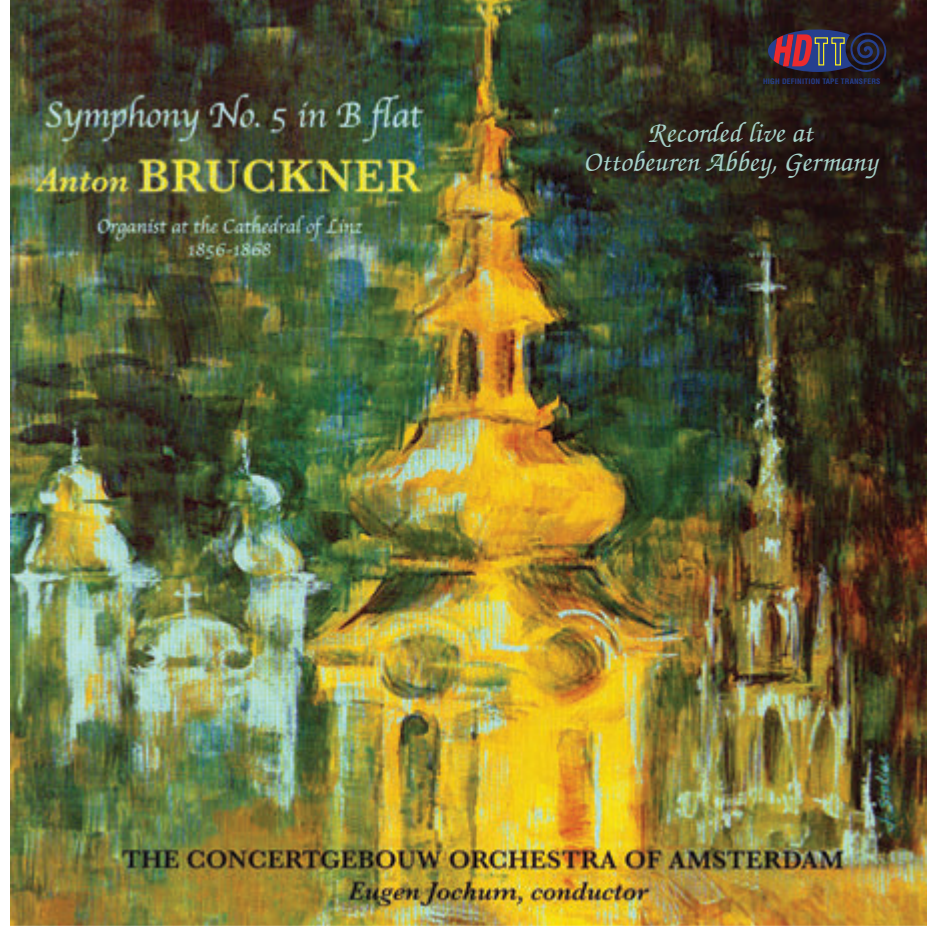


The Finale, ushered in once more by the introduction of the first movement, is an astonishing structure even for Bruckner. The composer follows the precedent of the last movement of Beethoven's Ninth in "suggesting" and "rejecting" the themes of the earlier movements. He then proceeds to a largescale fugal exposition of the Finale's main theme. Strangely enough, this motif, characterized by octave leaps and semitone steps, resembles the main theme of the Adagio of Bruckner's Ninth Symphony to the extent of being an almost literal inversion of it; but whereas the mood there is one of intense spiritual anguish, here it is all athletic vigor. After a contrapuntal second group, the brass instruments introduce the third theme, the most majestic of all Bruckner's chorales. All manner of thematic developments and combinations follow. At least twice in the course of the movement, the listener coming fresh to the work may feel that Bruckner must have thrown in his climax too soon, that he cannot possibly have anything in reserve for the final culmination. But he does: The coda, combining the chorale theme and the principal subjects of both first movement and Finale, is apocalyptic in its splendor.



ANTON BRUCKNER was born on September 4, 1824, in the small town of Ansfelden. He was educated first at the village of St. Florian and in 1840 went to the teachers' training college of Linz. After spending periods as a student-teacher in various more or less uncongenial places, he was appointed assistant teacher at St. Florian in 1845. But the conflict between music and his teaching duties was becoming harder to support. In 1848, when he was appointed organist of the Augustinian foundation of St. Florian, he decided to devote himself to music full-time. He supplemented his earnings by working as a legal clerk from time to time. During his subsequent 12-year spell as organist of Linz Cathedral, he continued his musical studies with Simon Sechter, a leading contrapuntist, and other Viennese teachers. In 1868 he was appointed professor of theory and organ at the Conservatory of Vienna and he spent the rest of his life in that city. When he resigned his Conservatory post in 1891, the University of Vienna made him an honorary doctor of philosophy. He died on October 11, 1896.

The Fifth Symphony is among the most expansive and imposing of all Bruckner's works. It is the only one of his symphonies to begin with a slow introduction: This solemn exordium is referred to again at the end of the exposition. Characteristically, the

material of the movement is presented not as a series of individual ideas but as three distinct groups of themes and, as is customary with Bruckner, the processes of development and recapitulation are inextricably interwoven. In this respect his methods may owe something to those of Haydn, and the character of the movement's principal theme is somewhat reminiscent of Schubert; but the blend of sonorous affirmation and easy-going lyricism is Bruckner's own, as is the simple but effective juxtaposition of enormous paragraphs.

The second movement, like all Bruckner's Adagios, presents a sustained principal theme alternating with a secondary idea in ABABA form, and each recurrence of the two subjects brings subtle changes of texture and instrumentation. The principal theme of this movement is a particularly striking inspiration: The mournful oboe theme, in quarter- and eighth-notes in 4/4 time, makes constant crossrhythms with the triplet quarter-notes of the pizzicato string background. The falling sevenths of the oboe tune play an important part in the movement's later progress.

Similarly, the Scherzo combines strongly individual material with Bruckner's customary formal methods. The main section is a sonata movement with three thematic groups, and it is repeated after a Trio section in the same tempo but in 2/4 rhythm.

Bruckner Symphony No. 5

Eugen Jochum / Concertgebouw Orchestra

Recorded live at Ottobeuren Abbey, Germany, 30 and 31 May 1964

1 Adagio - Allegro 21:06

2 Adagio: Sehr Langsam 18:58

3 Scherzo: Molto Vivace, Schnell 12:45

4 Finale: Adagio - Allegro Moderato 23:09

This recording of Bruckner's Fifth Symphony was made at an actual performance given as part of a festival concert in the Benedictine abbey of Ottobeuren, Bavaria, to mark the 1200th anniversary of the abbey's foundation.



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