

PART FOUR

Reception

15 Conductors and Bruckner

JOHN WILLIAMSON

Maestros, mystics, and monuments

In the Linz Bruckner Symposium of 1982, specifically devoted to interpretation, Daniel Barenboim gave a lecture whose title, 'Mystische Erfahrung', is symptomatic of the celebrity conductor's relationship to the cult of the mystic Bruckner.¹ In an extreme form it can be seen in the publicity for the appearance of Celibidache's Munich recordings of Bruckner in *Music Theory Online*. The writer took pains to link 'the last surviving great genius of conducting' to 'an entirely new and extremely moving Bruckner'. The reminiscences of a member of the Munich Philharmonic detailed the maestro's unusually protracted tempi, extreme demands on players, and the level of abuse that accompanied them. The interpretations, at which people wept openly, were 'more than mere music', and 'clothed the soul of the listener' like 'running water'. When not screaming abuse at violinists, Celibidache was a nice man who loved dogs.²

A strange Bruckner did indeed emerge, characterized by a breadth of tempo that at times verged on the eccentric. Such passages as the extraordinarily slow coda to the Fourth Symphony's Finale presented a vision that seemed to represent the maestro cult's rage at the lack of truly creative powers.³ Against this there were moments, and indeed whole movements, that illuminated Bruckner's ideas. Comparison of these eccentric performances with those from his earlier Stuttgart years suggested that extreme breadth came late to Celibidache's Bruckner; in this he played out another element of the maestro cult, the 'Olympian' wisdom that comes to conductors with age in the form of increasingly slower tempi. Such a version of the cult seems to hover perpetually around Bruckner performance.

This factor inevitably complicates any attempt to establish the performance style of Bruckner symphonies according to epoch. Karl Böhm's recordings of the Fourth Symphony illustrate the changes that can come over an interpretation with the passage of time, but leave open the extent to which these reflect the taste of the age. In the live performance of 1936 with the Sächsische Staatskapelle, he showed himself in the first movement at least already partly a literalist, adding little to the score apart from a few small expressive touches, some deriving from the Schalk score.⁴ In the *crescendo* beginning at bar 43, he is more inclined to inflect the 'Bruckner

rhythm' with the *marcato* slowing-down that does not appear in the score until a few bars later. In both exposition and recapitulation, he lingers on the unaccompanied line for cellos (bars 105–7 and 467–9), which on the second occasion becomes a transition to the mysterious little episode in bars 469–74, a fleeting shadow on an uncomplicated reading; as a result he is more or less forced to adopt Schalk's later recommendation of 'Belebend'. At bar 209, the dialogue of the flute and clarinet calls for a light delay, while the return to the recapitulation is shaped by a *ritenuto* from bar 356, reflecting the 'Immer ruhiger' in the Schalk score of 1888. Some of these and similar moments are so imperceptible as to be almost subliminal (e.g. the *accelerando* into the *fff* at bar 253).

Over a quarter of a century later, Böhm's recording with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra does not make many significant changes to his interpretation, which still sets a basic speed and then allows the music to unfold naturally.⁵ The basic tempo, however, is held back by an initially barely perceptible margin. The inflections which added interest to the earlier account tend to sink into the new broadening; what felt like subtle shadings in 1936 become less noticeable, and the pleasantly natural quality of the reading drifts imperceptibly towards the 'mystical'. Yet the change is not enough to confirm that the pre-war reading was part of a radically different performing style.

This comparison serves to impose some caution on some of the claims in *The Musical Quarterly* in 1996 on performance practice. Thus Korstvedt described a modern performance style characterized by monumentality and severity, while Botstein heard 'a sombre dour and frightening dimension' that served to turn a wider audience away.⁶ Botstein had little doubt that this had much to do with the maestro cult. His remedy, a 'Schubertian Bruckner, fleet in pacing, lyrical, flexible, and transparent in timbre', accords with phenomena analysed by Richard Taruskin: a recognizably modern preoccupation with lightweight performance, a call to resurrect a more 'authentic' past, and the debunking of the 'sublime'.⁷ Nonetheless Korstvedt reinforced Botstein's argument with greater moderation. For him the modern approach to Bruckner was at one with the 'mystic' construct, counselling a return to dramatic ebb and flow through subtleties of tempo change and refined shadings of dynamics, the approach in Jochum, Furtwängler, Knappertsbusch, Horenstein, and Schuricht.⁸

Paradigm shifts in interpretation

Performance of Bruckner may have grown monumental but categorizing it remains a subjective business. It is worth recalling the sane remarks of Constantin Floros, who reviewed the history of Bruckner performance

in the same symposium that contained Barenboim's essay. He dismissed much of the conventional wisdom about the disciples' scores by maintaining that they 'do not sound more "Wagnerian" than the originals, but less "Brucknerian", i.e. more conventional'; nevertheless they had 'left behind deep tracks'.⁹ By comparing various approaches to the first movements of the Fifth and Seventh Symphonies, he suggested that the tempo inflections of the first published scores had been cleared away in the *Gesamtausgabe* but remained indispensable to conductors. In effect he answered Harry Halbreich's question, whether a unified tempo was needed in Bruckner, with a resounding negative and had no difficulty in finding corroboration in the composer's letters.¹⁰

The continuing influence of the disciples' suggestions can indeed be heard in the first movement of Böhm's remarkable live recording of the Seventh from 1948, where an initially broad tempo suggests the modern monumental school.¹¹ From the famous *Steigerung* to the third theme, however, a subjectively changing succession of tempi includes a deliberately dance-like four-in-the-bar for the third theme, a broadening for the brass fanfares, and different speeds for each change in the development. Here truly is a mercurial approach to Bruckner that sacrifices the 'absolute' to drama based on the first published edition of the score. That it comes from the 'classicalist' Böhm is all the more remarkable.

That this was not the only way to play the movement was certainly apparent a few years later in Hans Rosbaud's much more unified account. What is also striking is its similarity in general shape to a recent recording. Nikolaus Harnoncourt's reading of the Seventh Symphony is notably leaner and more dynamic than the accounts of a contemporary such as Rattle.¹² The approach adopted in the first two movements at least may stem from a conductor steeped in early music, but it could almost come from a fifties modernist such as Rosbaud. Nonetheless, behind the similarities in tempo between the two readings, Rosbaud is decidedly more interventionist in terms of accentuation and building of climaxes than the early music specialist with the Vienna Philharmonic; he represents a halfway house between Böhm and Harnoncourt. This matters particularly at the start of the Adagio, where Bruckner's thematic writing is so unusual. By constructing the opening section from 'a series of segments' of differing motivic provenance, Bruckner invited the kind of powerful intervention that Rosbaud brings to articulation, clearly climaxing in the *sforzando* markings in the brass.¹³ Harnoncourt seems to be less convinced that such weight of tone should be necessary. That the two approaches should coincide in tempo and be drifting towards a rapprochement in other matters, however, would not surprise a diligent reader of Taruskin. The growth of the monumental tradition with its unified tempi is thus not entirely a reflection of superstars such as Karajan and Giulini. The preference for restricting tempo fluctuations was

Table 15.1 *Symphony No. 5, I, selected markings*

Bar		Nowak	Schalk
31	<i>Steigerung</i>	Bewegter (im künftigen Allegro-Tempo)	Allmählich bewegter
51	1st subject	Allegro	Allegro (mässig)
101	2nd subject		Langsamer, 4/4
177	3rd subject + 16		Allmählich belebend
199	Unison motif		Tempo 1 (Allegro)
217	Textural change		Etwas langsamer
220			poco rall.
283	A minor		Etwas langsamer (4/4)
303	B♭ major		Noch breiter
325	Head motif, 2nd subject		sehr ruhig
377	Approach to . . .		beruhigend
381	2nd subject		Wieder langsamer
493	Stretta		Beschleunigtes Hauptzeitmaass

a reflection of trends of the fifties and in time came to a surprising accommodation with the early music movement.

Style and editions: the Fifth Symphony revisited

In his essay, Floros laid out the manner in which the 1896 score of the Fifth Symphony augmented the bald impression of the *Gesamtausgabe*. The passage of twenty years and the rush of new and reissued historical recordings have provided the opportunity to return to this and consider how modern taste has changed.

Many of the conductor's problems in the first movement reside in the fact that although the time signature is *alla breve*, the sensation of four beats to the bar can be established in the steady rhythm of the opening. A similar problem occurs whenever the introductory material returns, even before the retransition, where the restatement of a fragment of the introduction involves no notated change from the main Allegro. The Allegro itself poses the more general question of how to cope with different thematic types within an apparently unified structure. A main theme of restless character (justifying the *alla breve* marking) yields to a quasi-chorale in violins with *pizzicato* string accompaniment. The latter characteristically sprouts more elaborate continuations that counsel a slower pace. The subsequent woodwind melody (bar 161) is more forthright without necessarily encouraging a rapid pace, but this third group rises to a much more energetic dotted quaver figure. To judge by recorded performances, few conductors believe that a single tempo embraces all three types. The Schalk edition published in 1896 rationalizes this by markings that may well correspond to general perceptions as to how Bruckner's 'fantastic' structure should cohere. Floros lists these in a table that is adapted here (see Table 15.1).¹⁴

Table 15.2 *Symphony No. 5, I, selected timings*

Jochum, Concertgebouw Orchestra, 1964*	Philips 464 693–2	21.06
Furtwängler, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, 1942*	DG 427 774–2	18.56
Horenstein, BBC Symphony Orchestra, 1971*	BBCL 4033–2	19.20
Botstein, London Philharmonic Orchestra, 1998	Telarc CD-80509	16.24

* = live performance

Cumulatively these markings introduce an ebb and flow into the picture, confirming that the theme groups should be differentiated by tempo and metre. Elsewhere the suggestions underline changes of material and register. It is entirely natural that someone should have revived this version as a matter of historical curiosity. In choosing to record it, Leon Botstein followed his own call for a pre-monumental Bruckner cleansed of the performing styles that have grown up since the introduction of the first *Gesamtausgabe*. Comparison with conductors who have used either *Gesamtausgabe*, however, reveals a more complex picture that reflects their knowledge of the disciples' versions as well as their commitment to the 'originals'. Table 15.2 presents Botstein and a group of Bruckner 'specialists' of an older generation, all captured in live performances; although both Jascha Horenstein and Eugen Jochum were in the later stages of their career when these performances took place, there is reason for believing them characteristic of their approach in general.¹⁵

All are substantially slower than Botstein, who alone attempts a sense of *alla breve* in the introduction's Adagio with surprising success. The supposedly 'inspirational' Jochum reveals a preoccupation with continuity in that he employs an element of metrical modulation to hold together the climax of the introduction and the succeeding Allegro: the crotchet of the former virtually becomes the minim of the latter.¹⁶ In anticipation of this, he employs a suddenly faster pace at the *Steigerung* at bar 31 rather than the Schalks' *accelerando*, resembling Horenstein who does not come so close to metrical modulation but still sees the need to establish a relationship between bars 31 and 51. Thus far they present Bruckner very much in a modern spirit, with minimal deformation of continuity by expressive interjection.

Botstein's observance of the acceleration at bar 31 is rather chaste, avoiding any suggestion of hysterical over-excitement. In this he resembles Furtwängler, who speeds up moderately during the *Steigerung*, fails to return to the original tempo at the chorale-climax, and avoids the suggestion of a metrical relationship between Adagio and Allegro. Botstein and Furtwängler can hardly be said to resemble each other in any deeper sense. Furtwängler is unique among this group in a command of *rubato*

remarkable for one whose stick technique was often thought eccentric. Both in the introduction and in the acceleration of the coda (from bar 453), he cultivated a style that renders pulse uncertain and naturally results in accelerations of a subtle and initially imperceptible kind. In sustained paragraphs such as the second subject, a sense of rubato within the phrase is all-pervasive. He represents a dynamic style of conducting that is hard to find among modern Brucknerians, certainly not in the revisionist Botstein.

What stands out from the three older conductors' performances is the degree to which they are implicitly aware of the tempo fluctuations that Schalk made literal. They retain these, however, within their own individual approach. Thus the slowing down at the second subject is observed by all three, but Horenstein almost maintains the illusion that the pulse is *alla breve*, whereas Furtwängler has an altogether more expressive agenda. If Botstein resembles anyone here, it is Horenstein. The acceleration within the third group is also to be observed in most cases (the exception is Horenstein). With Jochum and Botstein, it is delayed from bar 177 until bar 190 or 193 and neither conductor truly achieves a Tempo 1 at bar 199. Nor does Botstein underscore the proposed easing at bar 217 to any marked degree, which is more noticeable in Jochum. The familiar impulsive Jochum seems to be more recognizable once the traps of the introduction are past. Furtwängler stands out again by beginning the acceleration before bar 177 and comes closer than the others to achieving the sense of *alla breve* at 199. If Horenstein is a founder of the modern school of Bruckner conducting, Furtwängler is the protagonist of an older style. For all his use of the Schalk score and deliberate avoidance of severity, Botstein tends at times towards the inflexible.

Metrical modulation becomes a concern again during the alternation of Allegro and Adagio at the start of the development, where Botstein establishes a relationship between the tempo in which he ended the exposition and the returning introduction. This explains why no such procedure was possible earlier in the movement; the faster speed of the first subject theme requires a sudden plunge forward at bars 243 and 261. The slowing-down advocated by the Schalk score at bar 283 is observed by Jochum, Horenstein (less noticeably), and Botstein, who better suggests a pulse in four. None is particularly willing to observe the further easing at bar 303, not even for the sake of cleaner brass double-tonguing. The change of texture and material at bar 325 is an altogether different matter. Jochum makes a lot of this, almost suggesting the original tempo of the second subject, and in this he is followed by Botstein, who also allows a substantial *Luftpause* before the horns begin their chorale-phrase. He then takes the suggestion in the Schalk score of an acceleration and *rallentando* in bars 333–6 very literally.

Table 15.3 *Symphony No. 5, I, selected timings (cont.)*

Haitink, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, 1988	Philips 422 342–2	21.10
Dohnányi, Cleveland Orchestra, 1993	Decca 433 318–2	19.41
Abbado, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, 1993*	DG 445 879–2	19.33
Wand, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, 1996*	RCA 09026 68503 2	21.30

* = live performance(s)

Furtwängler shows a more subtly modulated approach to this that seems to grow naturally out of his conducting style. The effect that Botstein pursues is a slightly exaggerated version of something that was second nature to Furtwängler. This perception persists until the end, where lack of technique leads Botstein not to the gradual accelerando of the final *stretta* but to a sudden gear-change. Both Jochum and Horenstein resist acceleration at this point, having already made their push forward from the slower tempo of the second and third themes at the start of the coda (bar 453).

If a ‘non-monumental’ approach to Bruckner is required, then it seems more obvious in Furtwängler. This particular performance in wartime is by no means the only way in which he conducted Bruckner, but it does represent a manner that has since yielded to literalism, which is a component of the monumental style if not the whole story. This can be confirmed by considering four performances later than Floros’ comparison, some studio, others ‘live’, though compiled in at least one case over several concerts (see Table 15.3).

Dohnányi manages to combine metrical modulation with tempo fluctuations that suggest familiarity with the Schalk version; thus he slows, if not quite to four-in-the-bar, at the second subject, accelerates in four-bar units from bar 177, and begins his speeding-up in the coda at bar 453, with slightly unsettling effect on the Cleveland Orchestra’s ensemble. At bar 325, his use of a *Luftpause* points to a tendency found in other modern conductors to slow for the horns’ legato presentation of the chorale-phrase but not for the staccato version in woodwind a few bars later, which remains in time to the extent of rejecting Schalk’s suggested acceleration and slowing-down. Dohnányi’s performance is similar in timing and general characteristics to that of Abbado; but the latter seems less carefully planned in the introduction, failing to arrive at the ‘original’ tempo at the chorale climax (like Furtwängler), and slowing more markedly at the second subject.

A more truly monumental approach comes with Haitink and Wand, whose longer timings reflect an initial Allegro that hovers on the edge of four rather than alla breve as marked. As a result, the easing of tempo for the second subject leads to a clear quadruple pulse. Wand was in advanced

old age when he made this in many ways impressive recording and his style of rubato, like that of many another ageing maestro, was towards *rallentando*. The broadenings suggested by Schalk in the development become imperceptible parts of a more general slowing-down that reaches a climax in the brutal unisons of bars 319–24. This is not combined with the suggested rubato in bars 333–6, however, and the feeling is not of fluctuation of tempo but of a certain emphatic grandeur. In this he resembles Haitink, who is more aware of metrical modulation to link sections and combines this with a literal approach to the markings of the *Gesamtausgabe*. Although they take much the same time over this movement as Jochum, they seem to resemble less his approach than the more generalized breadth represented in Bruckner performance by Karajan.

The impact of the first versions

The rivalry between ‘Haas’ and ‘Nowak’ that dogged Bruckner performance in the sixties and seventies eventually gave way to the realization that in the case of three symphonies early versions were available that rendered Bruckner interpretation more complicated. Although conductors have been relatively slow to take up these versions, enough performances now exist on record to make comparisons possible. Table 15.4 provides a selection of recordings of the Eighth that overlaps with that of Korstvedt, whose goal is to assess fluctuations within a single stretch of music; this table attempts a brief ‘global’ assessment reflected in the crude medium of performance timings.¹⁷ It also reflects the dominance of Haas versions among conductors of the last two decades. The resurgence of the 1890 version may possibly be seen in the recent recordings by Harnoncourt and Chailly.

That the monumental approach should be represented at its most extreme by Tintner is characteristic of his cycle (whose critical acceptance would seem to reflect the style’s triumph). His unified tempi are sufficiently slow, however, as to suggest that a non-interventionist approach is more truly to be observed in the uncontroversial Inbal. What is altogether more striking is that Giulini, conducting a score considerably shorter in terms of bars, should take longer over the slow movement than everyone except Tintner. In the Finale, Karajan is noticeably slow, but his 1958 recording is a landmark in the evolution of the monumental approach to which even he never aspired in subsequent recordings. Few performances of the ‘originals’ approach in concentrated fire and intensity Knappertsbusch’s reading with the 1892 score.

If there is a consensus for a *via media* (and these timings do not reflect the many fascinating differences in details), it seems to lie in the area inhabited

Table 15.4 *Symphony No. 8, selected timings*

Version	Conductor	Recording	I	II	III	IV
1887	Inbal	Teldec, 8.44293 243 791-2	14.01	13.25	26.46	21.08
	Tintner	Naxos, 8.554215-16	17.41	15.14	31.10	25.10
1890	Jochum	EMI, 7243 5 73827 2 4	13.55	14.00	27.24	20.46
	Giulini	DG, 445 529-2	17.07	16.25	29.24	24.36
	Harnoncourt	Teldec, 8573-81037-2	16.25	14.19	27.22	24.32
	Chailly	Decca, 466 653-2	16.05	14.59	25.29	22.06
1892	Knappertsbusch	Orfeo, C577 021 B	12.31	13.01	21.59	22.08
Composite Haas	Schuricht	IMG, 7243 5 75130 2 9	15.40	14.08	21.46	19.46
	Furtwängler	Testament, SBT 1143	15.58	14.23	25.27	22.58
	Karajan	EMI, 7243 5 66109 2 7	17.05	16.01	27.38	26.12
	Horenstein	BBC, BBCL 4017-2	15.45	15.03	25.52	25.22
	Wand	EMI (deutsche Harmonia Mundi), CDS 7 47749 8	15.48	15.04	26.10	24.24
	Dohnányi	Decca, 443 753-2	16.16	13.53	29.02	22.59
	Haitink	Philips, 446 659-2	16.48	15.04	27.26	23.47
	Boulez	DG, 459 678-2	15.08	13.39	24.52	22.19
Wand	RCA, 74321 82866 2	17.03	16.07	27.36	26.21	

by Schuricht, Furtwängler, Horenstein, and the younger Wand. There are fluctuations in individual movements and at times they are approached by others, but they form an interesting group combining some of Korstvedt's chosen models in 1996 and a leading exponent of the 'sombre'. The two conductors who have chosen the 1887 score seem to represent approaches that lie apart from the consensus, but in opposite directions. The noticeably faster approach to the first movement by Inbal may well reflect a perception that the loud ending in the major favours less portentous dwelling on the great highpoints of the score, while the lack of a truly melodic paragraph in the 1887 Trio may account for changed emphases there. Yet Inbal is not distinctive enough to represent a 'Schubertian' rethinking (which is difficult to imagine for this of all Bruckner's symphonies), while Tintner suggests that a generalized preoccupation with breadth and solemnity has the capacity to overwhelm the relative novelty of the version.

Korstvedt is quite clear that there is a distinct group of conductors who remain influenced by the 1892 score in matters of tempo and expression, and that both Furtwängler and Schuricht fall into it. His test sample is the *Steigerung* between bars 583 and 646 in the Finale, and its crux is whether the climactic entrance of the first movement's main theme is taken on the 'crest of a wave' at full speed (after the 1892 model) or at a steady tempo in line with current expectations, possibly even with a broadening. The Wand performance that he considers is fourteen years older than the 1979 recording that I have listed. Then he tended towards the excitable though with only marginal fluctuations, in confirmation that his reading later underwent considerable change. Horenstein, on the other hand, is typical of the modern approach, possibly one of its founders. Among more recent exponents

whom Korstvedt does not consider, Boulez and Chailly are firm modernists (though both still convey a sense of mounting excitement by articulation and control of dynamics). The disappointment is that Harnoncourt proves the pedant, following the letter of the Nowak score with a marked slowing down for the whole section, a dogged insistence on the 'nicht gebunden' quality to the playing, and a sudden leap forward at Tempo I in accordance with the Nowak score at bar 623 (the 1892 score's 'a tempo' is surely correct in spirit here). The style of performance favoured in varying degrees by Schuricht, Furtwängler, and Knappertsbusch is truly dead in recent readings.

Of the devotees of the 1887 score, Inbal begins swiftly and preserves momentum at the climax. But the 1887 score differs in a striking detail, the *diminuendo* in bar 672 (1890: bar 622). This makes the slowing-down marked at this point in all scores (including the 'zurückhaltend' of 1892) more understandable. Tintner, whose slow general pace seems less obtrusive here than in the Adagio, also takes a reasonably literal approach that is more monumental than Inbal but accurately catches the combination of *diminuendo* and easing that is so striking a feature of the version. That the 'langsam' of this bar makes sense in relation to 1887, while the 'zurückhaltend' of 1892 is really what is applicable in all other versions is a not unreasonable conclusion. To this extent, knowledge of the 1887 scores brings a degree of insight into performance of other versions.

Early version, early music

Although conductors from the early music movement have tackled Bruckner with traditional orchestras as in the case of Harnoncourt, there have been relatively few attempts to perform his symphonies with period instruments. A notable exception is Roger Norrington, whose recording of the Third Symphony with his London Classical Players followed his performances of Wagner and Brahms with period instruments and balance of forces. The documentation that accompanied the recording is lacking in details of what kinds of instruments were employed by comparison with the information that was supplied in the crusading days of 'authentic' instruments (but that sort of precise registration of maker and year has never been a characteristic of Norrington's approach). Perhaps such precision is unnecessary, particularly in the strings, where Norrington concedes that 'gut upper strings' constitute the 'only difference'. Woodwind and brass are more interesting, and while the sleeve note rests content with noting the lack of 'supercharged' qualities familiar from the present, this presumably means the same kind of instruments that Norrington describes in his account of 'Performing Brahms', with the Viennese oboe, the 'more delicate' valve horn

Table 15.5 *Symphony No. 3, I (1873), selected timings*

Inbal, RSOF, 1983	Teldec 8.42922 ZK	24.00
Norrington, LCP, 1996	EMI 5 56167 2	18.48
Tintner, RSNO, 1998	Naxos 8.553454	30.34

in F, the darker trumpet in F, and trombones without the pronounced bell flaring and larger bore of the late twentieth century. The number and balance of the strings, the layout with violins on either side of the conductor, and the style, which banishes vibrato to the distant 1920s, are all cited as goals in creating the hypothetical sound of the Third Symphony in 1873, when it was written but not performed; Norrington, uncomfortable with the ‘gigantic abstraction’ of the monumental Bruckner and also with the ‘mystic’ Bruckner, chose the relatively little-known earliest version, presumably because traditional and modern performance styles did not mark it so heavily.¹⁸

Nonetheless, the 1873 version has begun to accumulate some recordings since Teldec first released Inbal’s account in 1983. Table 15.5 gives details of three accounts including Norrington, with the timings for the first movement. A strange picture they present, reminiscent in some details of the case of the slow movement of the Eighth Symphony. That Norrington would be the fastest of the three is predictable; that there would be a twelve-minute discrepancy with Tintner seems faintly incredible. On the relatively virgin territory of the 1873 score, battle would seem to be truly joined between mystics and the new modernizers.

A notable feature of all three performances is the care taken in the opening paragraph to give full value to the silent beats and bars; the kind of clipping characteristic of the various readings of the Fifth’s opening movement is largely absent, in recognition that there is a qualitative difference between pauses that scroll off different types of material and those that constitute natural breaks within melodic paragraphs. Conspicuously all three conductors practise restraint in handling the many expressive hairpins that characterize the two-bar units of the second subject; the kind of rubato characteristic of Furtwängler is notably absent; indeed when Bruckner asks for rubato at bar 705, both Norrington and Tintner assume that it is a substitute for *rallentando*.

Nonetheless there is a drastically different approach to pulse between Norrington and Tintner. This becomes particularly apparent in the development, where Norrington’s tendency to leap forward at M and N (more a matter of urgency of articulation than tempo) builds an impressive climax at O. None of this is present in Tintner, who throughout exhibits that trait also noted above in the later Wand. The natural tendency of his rubato is

to relax, leading to a sense of lethargy in handling an already slow tempo as well as a tendency to anticipate Bruckner's marked slowing downs (as before bar 76). This is different from planned slowing down, in which all three indulge from time to time, most notably at the hushed end of the development, and at the visionary 'Wagnerian' episodes. Inbal is particularly striking at such moments, because they run counter to his policy of playing the music straight at a uniform tempo. When he points the change from the *Tristan* reference to the Second Symphony at bar 469, the effect is particularly striking and prepares the further slight pulling back at the 'Magic Sleep' reference at bar 479.

There are occasional interpretative moments in Norrington which confirm the discomfort with the sublime implied in his sleeve note. The chorale phrase at 235 leaps forward eagerly as though reluctant to sink into solemnity at a moment that can probably bear it. This is of a piece with his urgent treatment of the trumpet fanfares in the previous section, which are more lightly tongued than in Tintner. The brass playing is in general a distinctive aspect of Norrington, and quite consistent with his comments on the qualities of less 'supercharged' instruments. There are many moments in both Inbal and Tintner where detail in the brass section is slightly cloudy. One passage that shows the virtues of Norrington's instruments is the elaborate trombone passage in bars 410–19. These decorations of otherwise simple brass block sonorities were probably never a convincing idea, and Bruckner dropped them in 1877. In Inbal's account, they are rather absorbed in the whole brass sonority, and it may be that the recording is partially responsible for this, since it has an intermittent cloudiness, preventing the opening viola figure from fully registering. The trombone figures are clearer in Tintner, partly because his slower speed gives them more time to register, but they are even clearer in Norrington, where the non-melodic trumpets blare less than their modern equivalents, a feature that is also noticeable at the trombone rodomontade at bar 641 (also cut in 1877). Occasionally Norrington's brass lacks the weight of the others when Bruckner demands *fff* as at Q, but on the whole the narrow-bore instruments emerge quite well from comparison.

The encounter of Bruckner with period instruments does not tell us very much that could not have been deduced from other conductors operating with traditional orchestras. There is a leaner-sounding Bruckner performance tradition that includes conductors such as Knappertsbusch who remained faithful to the disciples' scores, modernists such as Rosbaud and Boulez, and figures schooled in early music performance. Neither period instruments nor the pre-Haas editions seem to be intrinsically part of the tradition, however, which represents a gathering of features and a reconfirmation of the directness seen intermittently in the thirties recordings

of figures such as Karl Böhm. The truly lost tradition would seem to be Furtwängler's unique style of rubato that almost convinces that there really is a technical dimension to conducting beyond time-beating, that the conductor is ultimately a performer rather than a vehicle of the mystic vision. Neither there nor in the generalized plainness characteristic of a great deal of contemporary Bruckner do I find much evidence of a glossy 'Wagnerized' style that embraces even the 'original versions'. It may even be truer to say that the distinction is not merely to be made between a monumental present and a former tradition of dramatic, 'mercurial' Bruckner. Within the style that has evolved since the fifties, there is both a mystic-monumental approach and a swifter alternative, but both have been increasingly caught up in the search for unified tempi that may never have been Bruckner's intention.