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BRUCKNER SYMPHONY No. 5 IN B FLAT

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The Symphony No. 5 in B flat major (WAB 105) of Anton Bruckner was written in 1875-6, with a few minor changes over the next few years. It was first performed in public on two pianos by Joseph Schalk and Franz Zottmann on 20 April 1887 at the Bösendorfersaal in Vienna. The first orchestral performance was conducted by Franz Schalk in Graz on 8 April 1894 (Bruckner was sick and unable to attend; he never heard this symphony performed by an orchestra). It was dedicated to Karl von Stremayr, minister of education in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The symphony was written at a time of much trouble and disillusionment during the composer's life, a court suit (from which he was exonerated), a reduction in salary. It is not outwardly a work of storm and stress, but it is a piece of "working out", one of his most contrapuntally intricate works. The symphony is occasionally referred to as the "Tragic," "Church of Faith," or "Pizzicato" symphony.

All four movements begin with pizzicato strings, hence the nickname Pizzicato. The pizzicato figures are symmetrical, in the sense that the outer movements share one figure while the inner movements share a different figure. The work begins with a majestic slow introduction, which progresses into a main movement in sonata form whose opening theme in B-flat hints also at G-flat. Like much of Bruckner's music the exposition of this movement has three main key regions instead of the usual two.

The main material of the slow movement and scherzo are very similar, heard of course at different tempos and launching different developments. The finale opens in the same way as the first movement, but veers off soon to gradually introduce new material which becomes the source of the themes of the Allegro moderato, another sonata form which contains in its course fugal and chorale sections of elaborate counterpoint.

The symphony is the only one of Bruckner's nine that begins with a slow introduction. However, all the others except the Symphony No. 1 begin with sections that are like introductions "in-tempo", easing into the main material like the opening of Beethoven's Ninth.

*These notes and more can be found at Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphony_No._5_\(Bruckner\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphony_No._5_(Bruckner))
Full scores for the Symphony are available for free download at The International Music Score Library Project: <http://imslp.org>*

Restoration notes

Of the live wartime recordings of Furtwängler that I have thus far tackled, this recording of Bruckner's Fifth Symphony, which dates among the earlier performances to be preserved on the then-nascent tape technology developed in Germany before and during the Second World War, has proved to be one of the best-preserved as well as best-made. Whereas other recordings are prone to overload distortion, amongst other flaws, the Bruckner Fifth is remarkably clean throughout. The chief shortcoming was a rather variable and unpredictable degree of high treble hiss and shash, which has responded better to manual control on a phrase-by-phrase basis than by using blanket noise reduction or equalisation. By working in this way I've been able to preserve some very impressively-extended upper frequencies, particularly as heard in the brass in the symphony's finale.

As with the other recordings in this series, I've spent considerable time eliminating or reducing audience noise, as well as various clicks, bangs and scrapes which appear to have emanated from the players themselves. Fortunately the magic of this particular performance appears to have captivated the audience to an extent that they were able to maintain their attention well and not succumb to too much bronchial activity during the quieter sections of the work - as is all too often the case. **AR**

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM

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BRUCKNER SYMPHONY No 5 IN B FLAT

WILHELM
FURTWÄNGLER

CONDUCTING THE
BERLIN PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA

LIVE IN BERLIN

25-28 OCTOBER, 1942

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BRUCKNER SYMPHONY NO. 5 IN B FLAT
FURTWÄNGLER, BERLIN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Furtwängler conducts Bruckner

BRUCKNER Symphony No. 5 in B flat major, WAB105

1878 Version Ed. Robert Haas - No significant difference to Nowak [1935]

- 1 1st mvt. - Introduction (Adagio) — Allegro (19:23)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Adagio. Sehr langsam (15:47)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Scherzo. Molto vivace (12:12)
- 4 4th mvt. - Finale (Adagio) — Allegro moderato (22:11)

Recorded live at Alte Philharmonie, Berlin, 25-28 October, 1942

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
conducted by **Wilhelm Furtwängler**

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XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of **Willem Furtwängler**

Total duration: **69:33**

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