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BRUCKNER SYMPHONY No. 8 IN C MINOR

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Anton Bruckner's Symphony No. 8 in C minor is the last Symphony the composer completed. It exists in two major versions of 1887 and 1890. It was premiered under conductor Hans Richter in 1892 in Vienna. It is dedicated to the Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria. This symphony is sometimes nicknamed The Apocalyptic, but - as with the nicknames The Tragic (for the Fifth Symphony), The Philosophic (for the Sixth), and The Lyric (for the Seventh) - this was not a name Bruckner gave to the work himself.

In an 1891 letter to conductor Felix Weingartner, Bruckner gave extramusical associations to several parts of the symphony:

In the first movement, the trumpet and horn passage based on the rhythm of the [main] theme in the Todesverkündigung [the announcement of death], which gradually grows stronger, and finally emerges very strongly. At the end: surrender.

Scherzo: Main theme -- named deutscher Michel. In the second part, the fellow wants to sleep, and in his dreamy state cannot find his tune: finally, he plaintively turns back.

Finale: At the time our Emperor received the visit of the Czars at Olmütz; thus, strings: the Cossacks; brass: military music; trumpets: fanfares, as the Majesties meet. In closing, all themes ... thus as deutscher Michel arrives home from his journey, everything is already gloriously brilliant. In the Finale there is also the death march and then (brass) transfiguration.

These notes and more: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphony_No._8_\(Bruckner\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphony_No._8_(Bruckner))

Full scores for this work are available for free download at The International Music Score Library Project: <http://imslp.org>

Recording and restoration notes

This 1944 recording would appear to be a live concert performance, broadcast from the Großer Saal at the Musikverein in Vienna and recorded onto tape. I say "would appear to be" not because I doubt the frequently repeated assertions of these facts, but merely because there is no evidence whatsoever of the presence of an audience, something which is also usually noted. I can only assume, therefore, that the orchestra was playing to an empty hall.

Whatever the precise details of its provenance, this hardly detracts from what many consider to be this work's finest recorded rendition - though some prefer his 1949 BPO Berlin accounts, many find his wartime reading has a little something extra about it which elevates it even higher than his later magnificent readings. Whichever way you lean, however, there's no doubt that this is one of the best ever Bruckner Eighths, and I've worked hard to bring out its full glory in this XR remastering.

The original recording was somewhat uneven - it appears that some of the tape reels were either better recorded in the first place or have survived the test of time better. Hiss levels vary considerably, and the first reel suffers some high-end distortion, heard in loud high brass and string tuttis, which is not present later in the recording - I've tried to control this as much as possible, but one may detect its presence at about 5 minutes into the first movement, and its absence at about ten and a half minutes into the second, where the brass is crisper and cleaner. There was also some minor pitch variation between reels, which I've attempted to even out.

Overall, however, the sonic transformation of the rather cramped 1944 original in this remastering is quite remarkable and dramatic, and gives a much better idea of what the performance must have actually sounded than ever before.

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

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BRUCKNER SYMPHONY No 8 IN C MINOR

WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER

CONDUCTING THE
VIENNA PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA

LIVE RECORDING
VIENNA, 1944

Furtwängler conducts Bruckner

BRUCKNER Symphony No. 8 in C minor, WAB108

Edition prepared by Furtwängler based on Haas and earlier editions

- 1 1st mvt. - *Allegro moderato* (15:28)
- 2 2nd mvt. - *Scherzo: Allegro moderato - Trio: Langsam* (14:25)
- 3 3rd mvt. - *Adagio: Feierlich langsam; doch nicht schleppend* (25:45)
- 4 4th mvt. - *Finale: Feierlich, nicht schnell* (23:05)

Recorded live at Großer Saal, Musikverein, Vienna, 17th October, 1944

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra
conducted by **Wilhelm Furtwängler**

XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

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

Total duration: **78:43**

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