

# **FRITZ BRUN**

**1878-1959**



**A short biography  
and introductory notes to his orchestral works**

by Adriano

## CONTENTS

Fritz Brun: A short biography .....	3
Fritz Brun: The conductor and instrumentalist ...	4
 <i>Symphonies:</i>	
Symphony No. 1 .....	6
Symphony No. 2 .....	12
Symphony No. 3 .....	17
Symphony No. 4 .....	20
Symphony No. 5 .....	23
Symphony No. 6 .....	24
Symphony No. 7 .....	26
Symphony No. 8 .....	29
Symphony No. 9 .....	35
Symphony No. 10 .....	37
 <i>Other orchestral works:</i>	
From the Book of Job .....	38
Overture to a Jubilee Celebration .....	39
Symphonic Prologue .....	40
Rhapsody .....	42
 <i>Concertos and concertante works:</i>	
Concerto for piano and orchestra .....	43
Variations for string orchestra and piano .....	46
Divertimento for piano and strings .....	48
Concerto for violoncello and orchestra .....	49
 <i>Works with choir and vocal soloist:</i>	
Promise .....	52
Limitations of Humanity .....	54
Othmar Schoeck: Three songs (Orch. Brun) .....	55
 <i>Bonus tracks:</i>	
Fritz Brun: Five songs (Arr. Adriano) .....	56

*The following CD liner notes, written between 2003 and 2012, were revised and updated by the author in 2017.*

*Cover photo: The Fritz Brun Estate, Zentralbibliothek Zürich (Musikabteilung).*

*More information on Fritz Brun can be found on:*

*[www.fritzbrun.ch](http://www.fritzbrun.ch)  
[www.adrianomusic.com](http://www.adrianomusic.com)*

© 2017 Adriano Productions, Zürich

ISBN 3-85531-006-8

## Fritz Brun: A short biography

Fritz Brun was born in Luzern, Switzerland, on 18th August 1878. His father, a secondary school teacher, died when Fritz was eight years old. After early piano lessons, which enabled him to contribute to the family income with an engagement as a harmonium player at the Luzern penitentiary church, Fritz continued to study theory under the organist Joseph Breitenbach. His subsequent piano teachers were Peter Fassbänder and Willem Mengelberg, the latter at that time a young musical director of the Conservatory of Luzern. Thanks to Friedrich Hegar and Hans Huber, Fritz Brun was granted in 1897 a scholarship, allowing him to complete his musical studies at Köln's Conservatory. There he studied composition and conducting under Franz Wüllner (who had also been Mengelberg's teacher) and perfected his piano technique under Max van de Sandt. Brun's First String Quartet was composed in 1898. The complete version of his First Symphony (final Conservatory examination work of 1901) was performed in Arnhem in 1902 and was awarded the Paderewski Prize.

In 1901, after having declined a post as a piano teacher at the Zürich Conservatory, Brun settled in Berlin to work as a private „music maker“ of Prince George of Prussia (Hohenzollern). This uncle of Emperor Wilhelm II, who became a friend and mentor to the young Swiss musician, owned a sizeable library of widespread interest. After the Prince's death, Brun travelled to London where, during a period of a few months, he survived as a piano teacher, accompanist and arranger of music-hall songs. Afterwards he returned to Germany, to teach the piano and music theory at the Dortmund Conservatory but, with the bankruptcy of this institution, he lost his job. The Piano Quintet of 1902 was the last work written outside his native country.

In 1903 Brun returned to Switzerland and settled in Bern. For six years he was engaged as a piano teacher at the local Conservatory. In 1909 he was nominated chief conductor of the Berner Musikgesellschaft (Bern Music Society) and its ensemble, the Berner Stadtorchester (Bern Municipal Orchestra) – and at the same time leader of the two choral societies, the Cäcilienverein and Berner Liedertafel. During his „conducting“ Bernese years, his Symphonies Nos 2-7 were created and successfully performed.

In 1912 Brun married Hanna Rosenmund, and from this union three children were born. In June 1941, after a memorable performance of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* in the cathedral of Bern, Brun resigned from his post, but returned as an occasional guest conductor and as a chamber music player. He had retired to his beloved *Casa Indipendenza* in Morcote, on the shores of Lake Lugano, to concentrate on writing music, principally his Symphonies Nos 8-10. Fritz Brun died on 29th November 1959. His ashes were buried in Grindelwald, close to his beloved mountain triptych Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau, which had inspired him and which was among his favourite destinations.

Brun was a highly cultivated man who earned numerous honours and prizes. Among his friends were the composers Friedrich Hegar, Hans Huber, Hermann Suter, Othmar Schoeck (the dedicatee of his Symphony No. 2). Conductors Volkmar Andreae, Arthur Nikisch, Willem Mengelberg, Hermann Scherchen; contralto Ilona Durigo; sculptor Hermann Hubacher; the painters Cuno Amiet, Wilfried Buchmann, Ernst Morgenthaler and German poet Hermann Hesse also belonged to this circle.

He was said to be of a very earnest and rather gruff character, but his vehement outbursts of temper could suddenly give way to a benevolent, serene smile. This is just what we hear in his music. A writer with Freudian leanings would deduce that this may have arisen because the young Fritz had been sent to play in a penitentiary church, but it is more probable that his childhood experiences in general may have left some marks. It is easy to understand that a serious musician like Brun will have had many occasions to fight against ignorance, superficiality, amateurism and bureaucracy. These obstacles, which also abound in the world of music, are enough to make strong and energetic personalities either more demanding than they are

already, or simply frustrated. Listening to Brun's emotionally well-balanced symphonies, one feels that he could, at last, find his spiritual resting place. These ten large-scale and demanding works make an overwhelming impression when we study, perform and listen to them over and over again.

The present writer does not hesitate to compare Fritz Brun to Wilhelm Furtwängler (who was eight years Brun's senior). This not only because of his similar artistic activities and eclectic, German symphonic-oriented musical language, but also because both became conductors after they had to postpone their initial plans to make their living as composers. Both Furtwängler and Brun wrote strong, almost autobiographical, self-analytical, sometimes hermetic symphonies, which only appeal to audiences with a feeling for rather tormented, uneasy musical dimensions; they are definitely not of easy listening. For these features, and for the fact that his music often describes nature and other titanic forces, Brun is occasionally called a „Swiss Sibelius“. The listener has to open himself to dimensions that only music can reveal, more than any other form of art.

Brun's catalogue of orchestral works, apart from his 10 Symphonies covering a period from 1901 to 1953, includes works as the symphonic poem *Aus dem Buch Hiob* (1906), *Symphonischer Prolog* (1942), *Ouvertüre zu einer Jubiläumsfeier* (1950) and *Rhapsodie* (1957, his last composition). For piano and orchestra there is a Concerto in A major (1946); a set of *Variationen über ein eigenes Thema* and a *Divertimento* (1944, 1954) are both with string orchestra. He also composed a Concerto in D minor for Cello and Orchestra (1947). *Verheissung* (1915), for mixed choir, organ and orchestra and *Grenzen der Menschheit* (1932) for male choir and orchestra are both settings of poems by Goethe. Three songs by Othmar Schoeck (from his opp. 20 and 24) were orchestrated by Brun in 1917-19. Brun's chamber music output includes four String Quartets (1898, 1921, 1943 and 1949 – the latter inspired by themes from the intermission signals of Swiss Radio). A Piano Quintet (1902), two Sonatas for Violin and Piano (1920, 1951) and a Sonata for Cello and Piano (1952) also belong to his chamber music catalogue.

His vocal works include ten or so songs with piano accompaniment and an impressive collection of songs for unaccompanied or accompanied mixed, female or male choir, on poems by Goethe, Eichendorff, Uhland, Lenau, Mörike, Keller, some contemporary poets, or based on folk poetry. These were actually Brun's most frequently performed compositions and still appear on programs of choral societies today. Brun also collaborated expertly on various choral anthologies and collections of folk-songs from the Canton of Bern.

Swiss musicologist Willi Schuh has described Brun's musical style in a manner that has not been bettered: „To the listeners, his artistic world is not easily approachable. His works sound knotty and reserved at a first hearing, a struggle with the material and the form can be felt, and more than just perceptible sympathy and compassion: through a conscious build-up his individual and, with that, essential features of his musical language. Although it has traditional ties to the sound world of Brahms and Bruckner, it has something absolutely original to say, and in this case, also authentically Swiss.“ The sculptor Hermann Hubacher once wrote to Brun: „If one of your works is being played, I feel transposed to a world of your own, to a blossoming alpine meadow in between rumbling pieces of rock.“ And composer Peter Mieg took the view that „Brun's obstinate insistence on the form of the symphony and its way of treating musical thoughts does indeed appear as unique within Switzerland's musical life. This large-scale form is also a characteristic of his less numerous chamber music works.“

## **Fritz Brun: The conductor and instrumentalist**

By consulting biographies and documents on Hermann Suter and Hans Huber, we can already ascertain that Switzerland was enjoying indeed a glorious musical era in the first half of the twentieth century. During this period works by local composers were more frequently performed, and the country's concert-halls could be filled by having Swiss soloists and conductors

on the podium (contrary to today's trend of requiring foreign stars to act as musical magnets). The documents preserved among Fritz Brun's estate also make this more than evident. In addition, the Swiss Radio Orchestras (at that time more than one for each language region) were playing more adventurous programs, making it a point of duty and honour to play works by local composers. The subscription concert repertoire offered by excellent orchestras, led by great Swiss conductors such as Fritz Brun in Bern, Hermann Suter in Basel, Volkmar Andreae in Zürich, Ernest Ansermet in Geneva and Leopoldo Casella and Otmar Nussio in Lugano, were often surprisingly original and generous; and it was apparently rarer than it is today, for the first part of an evening to be attended by a reduced audience because a more modern work was on the schedule.

During his 32 years in Bern, besides conducting orchestral and choral works by Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Brahms, Schumann, Schubert, Wagner and Bruckner, Brun had introduced his audiences to Hector Berlioz, Max Reger, Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss, and frequently performed the works of his fellow-composers Othmar Schoeck, Hermann Suter, Willy Burkhard, Arthur Honegger, Frank Martin and others, in a similar way that Suter himself had done during his Basel era from 1903 to 1926. Other French composers like Bizet, Saint-Saëns, Franck, d'Indy, Debussy and Ravel also figured on Brun's programs. The fact that the Impressionists were sometimes less welcome in Bern at that time annoyed Brun particularly. With Honegger's *Le Roi David*, *Cris du Monde*, *Pacific 231* and *Chant de Joie*, too, Brun could count on negative reactions; he had in any case become notorious for his demanding programs and unusual combinations of works and composers.

As far as his conducting activities outside Switzerland are concerned, Brun had been invited in 1926 to perform Suter's oratorio *Le Laudi* at the Paris Trocadéro and, in 1933, he gave the Italian premiere of Bach's *Mass in B minor* at the Roma Augusteo. With the Wiener Konzertverein and Tonkünstler Orchestra, on the occasion of the Schweizer Musikfest in Wien in 1917, Brun had been engaged to perform works by Hans Huber, Hermann Suter and his own Symphony No. 2. In 1918, in a concert of the Swiss Music Festival in Leipzig, Brun conducted *Verheissung* und his three Schoeck orchestrations.

It seems that Brun was not a showmaster of the baton, but a so-called „Gesinnungsmusiker“, an untranslatable word floating between „musician of attitude“, „musician of character“ and „musician of persuasion“ (as, incidentally, were his three colleagues Suter, Andreae and Ansermet). According to Schoeck, Brun's long, waving arms appeared rather sluggish but, compared to others, he was able to achieve better results thanks to his strong personality, his power of persuasion, his serious musical approach and his thorough preparation. Suter, who in 1909 had been the first to recommend Brun to the Bern Orchestra, held the view that „if in Bern there was already a man of such striking musical features as Brun, there would be no need to search further.“ In 1934, on the occasion of Brun's 25th conducting anniversary, Gian Bundi described him as „one of those conductors who are not always comfortable for those who are under his direction. Such personalities are inspired by a sacred zeal, which can easily turn into a sacred anger if they meet with ignorance. And from the sacred zeal to the yeasty word there is but a little step.“

Brun's predecessor in Bern had been Carl Munzinger; after his departure, Luc Balmer was nominated for the subscription concerts and the new chorus leader was Kurt Rothenbühler, who was also to perform Brun's Symphonies Nos 2 and 4 on Swiss Radio in the early 1960s. Other conductors who took an interest in Brun's orchestral works, either in Bern, in other Swiss cities or on the Radio, were Hermann Scherchen, Carl Schuricht, Felix Weingartner, Volkmar Andreae, Othmar Schoeck and Robert F. Denzler. Of Brun's own interpretations, only a broadcast of his Symphony No. 8 has survived, together with a few choral pieces on shelves.

Brun was also a highly qualified, passionate chamber musician and song accompanist. The pieces he performed most frequently were Schubert's and Brahms's works for strings and piano. He also played and conducted some of Mozart's concertos from the keyboard, and once

even took on the solo parts in Schumann's Concerto in A minor and Brahms's First Concerto in D minor. Brahms was his favourite composer, and Brun also used to play sets of Brahms's solo piano pieces and songs in-between orchestral works.

Looking through the composer's own collection of concert programs and reviews, there are many reasons to be surprised – not only because of Brun's wide conducting repertoire, his impressive output as a composer and the success he enjoyed, but unfortunately also because Brun's reputation in the concert hall fell rapidly into oblivion after his death. One reason may be that his music is neither easy to perform nor to listen to, and that his Symphonies Nos 2, 3 and 4 are his only orchestral works to have found a publisher. The situation concerning 78s and LP recordings also looked desolate: In 1971, a commercial LP with a broadcast of the first movement (*Chaconne*) from his Symphony No. 5 was reissued on the renowned Swiss Composer's CTS series. Only after a shameful silence of over thirty years (in 1994 and 1995) two different live recordings of his Symphony No. 2 were issued on CD. A little earlier, his *Variations for string orchestra and piano* had been recorded by the Lucerne Festival Strings.

*(Edited by Ian Lace)*

## Symphony No. 1 in B minor

### A polemic preface?

We are so accustomed to the familiar musical patterns of the „great masters,” that we can sometimes become too reliant on their huge heritage when we hear a work by an „unknown” or „forgotten” composer for the first time. Malicious musicologists and critics – and even musicians – sometimes enjoy emphasizing established composers' influences too much, so much so that new music's merits are often overshadowed and overlooked. These same commentators also seem to have an innate incapability to admit that a non-repertoire piece can also have intrinsic merit. It is accepted that, for example, Beethoven would be rather unthinkable without Haydn, and Wagner without Meyerbeer – great masters remain impeccable. Music history is based on many injustices of this kind. In music encyclopaedias one can find countless statements on composer's „influences” – acknowledged mostly because superficial detractors could not find more interesting arguments, or serious reference material. How much, one wonders, has been written on works by lesser-known composers by people, who had not even listened to the music or read the scores – and have just regurgitated absurdities written by previous unenlightened authors?

Amongst those who know little or nothing of Fritz Brun's music, there are a few, who cannot refrain from reproachfully pointing out Brahmsian influences. But Brun's is a much more serious and complex case. His occasional and presumably deliberate echoes of, or homages to Brahms are minimal, respectful, intelligent and pardonable.

Let us consider Friedrich Gernsheim (1839-1916) if we want to take an example of a contemporary (and championing conductor) of Brahms. Gernsheim's Symphonies Nos 2, 3 and 4 were written almost deliberately in Brahms' style – one can barely continue to listen without the master's ghost becoming apparent. But it has to be conceded that Gernsheim's music is absolutely beautiful and valuable and not at all an irritating, plumpish Brahmsian imitation. Brun's „Brahms connection” may have originated from his own statement in which he may have unconsciously stigmatized himself, writing that he preferred to continue Brahms's symphonic tradition rather than be influenced by the Neudeutsche Schule, or by Wagner, or be tempted to emulate Richard Strauss's instrumental fireworks. This statement came, incidentally, from a 23 year-old Conservatory student, who had just started writing his first symphony! That he clearly affirmed the artistic path he intended to follow, commends him. But that statement was to create a dangerous misunderstanding. Today's music lovers will be able, for the first time, to hear Brun's complete orchestral works on CD and to judge the music more objectively and in

the context of the composer's whole output.

### **Köln years and a premiere In Arnhem**

Although the telephone had been invented around 1860-70, it was not until 1908 that the service was available over local networks and not until the 1920s before long distance calls could be made. Correspondence was the everyday medium of non-verbal communication. In 1896, young Fritz Brun had left his native town of Luzern (where his widowed mother and his older brother lived) for a five-year study at Köln's Conservatory of Music followed by three shorter stays in Berlin, London and Dortmund before settling in Bern in 1903. Brun's correspondence from those times, often quite problematical and sorrowful, are an important source of information on his life and thoughts, since he would passionately report home on all that was happening to and around him, and expressing his inner feelings, or asking for extra money, clothes and food.

Brun's Köln piano teacher was Max van de Sandt, a former pupil of Liszt. Composer Arno Kleffel taught him score reading and instrumentation. Franz Wüllner (1832-1902), the Conservatory's director, a renowned conductor of the local Gürzenich-Orchester and professor in composition, had also been, incidentally, the teacher of Brun's compatriot Volkmar Andreae. After gaining his composers degree in 1899, Andreae had left Köln for a short engagement as a piano coach at München's Hofoper and finally settled down in Zürich, to become, for more than 40 years, one of Switzerland's most famous conductors and, alongside with Hermann Scherchen, a champion of Brun's Symphonies. Willem Mengelberg (1881-1951) had also been an earlier pupil of Wüllner before being appointed Luzern's Generalmusikdirektor and, later in 1895, principal conductor of Amsterdam's Concertgebouworkest – a post he would hold for half a century.

In Brun's letters, Andreae (who had graduated in Köln with a Symphony in F) is referred to as frequently as his Dutch fellow student and friend Jan van Gilse (1881-1944), who, after Wüllner's death, would leave for Berlin to become a pupil of Engelbert Humperdinck. Brun's First (of ten) and van Gilse's First (of four completed) Symphonies, both graduation works, would be awarded, in 1902, the Paderewski Prize of Bonn's Beethoven-Haus, granting each a generous two years' scholarship. Van Gilse's Symphony in F was premiered in Arnhem on February 9th, 1902; Brun's premiere occurred in the same city two months later, on Easter Sunday March 30th, thanks to his friend's admiration and to van Gilse's father's support, who, at that time, was a chairman of the Arnhemse Orkest Vereeniging.

Arnhem reviews of Brun's Symphony were elaborate and positive. An early one reported that the audience had heard „a work which merits great consideration“, that it had „much individuality“ and that it reflected „independence and willpower“ – and even that „something extraordinary“, which „in any case promises much for the future.“ Another reviewer acknowledged the Symphony's „tragic“, „pessimistic“ and „masculine“ aspects, but at the same time criticized Brun's apparent inability to orchestrate „practically“(!). But, generally, his skilful musical form, melodic inventiveness, development technique, harmony and counterpoint were well recognized. Although it was seen, apparently, that his music was not exempt from the influences of the great masters, there was „something strong and of a noble personality“ about this „sincere“ work, making it „totally free from an obsessive search of the unusual“. After the performance, however, Brun himself got the impression that, although it was well-played and greatly applauded, the audience had not really understood it.

What was even more important on that occasion was that the Arnhem players had complimented his thorough rehearsing and conducting technique, thus confirming Brun's decision to embrace a conductor's career. Finally, more appreciative judgments came from professional musicians, not from students or teachers. Already in 1901, after having performed the Symphony's freshly completed first movement at the Conservatory, he had written „the whole orchestra and an audience of about 40 people broke out in applause, even Wüllner came towards me to congratulate with a radiant face. (...) What bliss to be standing there, conducting, and

being overflowed by such crashing polyphony! And, what mostly satisfies me is the fact that yesterday I have come to the firm conviction that I can conduct (...) and that I will be able to become a first-rank conductor”.

There are no records of further performances of Brun's First until six years later. As a scholarship work, the Paderewski Prize-winning piece had not been boosted by public performances. It was on June 1st, 1908, that Brun was asked to conduct his Symphony with Zürich's Verstärkte Tonhallekapelle at the festival concert of the Schweizerischer Tonkünstlerverein, featuring works by Othmar Schoeck, Carl Hess, Emmauel Moór, Friedrich Klose and Joseph Lauber. Schoeck and Lauber were also conducting their own works; the remaining pieces were in the hands of Volkmar Andreae. On that occasion, a local newspaper would carry a typical critic's response: „This work, although not denying Brahms's influence, is a real credit to the composer's capabilities and intentions. In spite of the Brahmsian quality, it's a beautiful work, commanding respect, and it accords its creator great honour”. The composer conducted his Symphony again in Bern on 9th and 10th February 1942 and Schoeck conducted it in a St. Gallen Konzertverein performance on 26th February of the same year.

A review of the Bern 1942 revival was absolutely enthusiastic and reported that Brun was considered as Switzerland's sole „true symphonist”.

#### **October 1900 - June 1901, a „diary”**

It is easy to calculate from the dates of his letters that Brun was working on his Symphony for about 9 months - and right from the opening movement's sketches, he became aware that it would not be „music for everybody”, nevertheless it contained all his „feeling, thinking, loving and perceiving”.

A first draft of the *Allegro moderato* was written in October 1900 and by the end of November, its orchestration was already completed. In response to his colleagues' suggestions, Brun categorically refused to change a single note to meet any anticipated criticism from his teacher. Wüllner, however, surprised him and his reaction to Brun's composition was very positive; his only objections were to some passages of the development section and of the ending. Once again, Brun would not agree to any alterations and launched himself with renewed energy into the second movement. In a letter of November 10th, 1900, he revealed that „my colleagues, knowing me as an inveterate Brahms admirer, would not think I was capable of orchestration; but I have showed them all right. (...) From all those Gentlemen (Brahms, Bach, Beethoven, Schumann) I chose the best, and I don't feel ashamed to admit to having borrowed Wagner's instrumental technique, but without stealing his shoes”.

One should not forget that at the beginning of the 20th century, Brahms (who had died only three years before) was already considered an „old-fashioned” or „conservative” composer in the circles of the Neudeutsche Schule - and this only because he dedicated himself exclusively to „absolute” symphonic music respecting old traditions. He did not find it necessary to extend its purposes to describe, for example, literary programs. Swiss composer Joachim Raff (1822-1882) belonged to this „modernistic” entourage of Franz Liszt; his eleven, pleasant “program” Symphonies, however, barely display a single passage that can compete with Brahms's presumed „old-fashioned” genius. More significant is the case of Hans Huber (1852-1921), who produced eight very interesting Symphonies and who can be considered as the „late Romantic link” between Raff and Brun within the development of the Swiss Symphony. Huber had already used the technique (and term) of thematic „Metamorphoses” in his *Böcklin-Symphonie* of 1900 - this some 40 years before Richard Strauss, Paul Hindemith and Martin Scherber. Hermann Suter (1870-1926), who produced only one, and Robert Hermann (1869-1912) and Volkmar Andreae (1879-1962), who produced two Symphonies each, also belong to that highly interesting and productive period in Switzerland's music history.

Of his second movement (*Adagio non troppo*), Brun writes in February and March 1901: „I have come to the conviction that it is extremely difficult to compose a beautiful, simple and satisfactory-sounding Adagio; it should become something easily understandable, but substantial. And how difficult, how incredibly difficult it is to create a simple and beautiful melody!

Beethoven's Sonatas' and Symphonies' melodies are all so beautiful and natural, as if they evolved easily and naturally, but once one tries to write one himself, he realises. (...) Now [after having agreed with Wüllner to reject three pages of the Adagio] I have realised once more what high expectations Wüllner has of me. Speaking of any of his other pupils he would have left these pages uncut, but he found that, since I was already having such a beautiful first theme, the second one and the material that follows should be equally as beautiful." And he commented in April: „Yesterday I completed my Symphony's second movement. This is an important milestone in my artistic development... The Adagio is great and solemn in character; it is about my memories of evenings spent in the mountains, (...) thoughts and visions of their wild magnificence. (...) Furthermore, for some time I have felt a strong desire, an overwhelming longing for great happiness, but what form that happiness should take, I don't know... but in my head I often hear great rumblings and I feel as if I should either smash everything around me to pieces or embrace the whole world. (...) It's a good thing that in my Symphony I can release my anger. My Symphony is my diary, my secret code and it is not always friendly!" In March 1902, shortly before its Arnhem premiere, Brun would enthuse about his *Adagio* again: „My beloved second movement! As I performed it in summer [1901, at the Conservatory], they just did not understand it – and they did not play it well either. A newspaper considered it to be ‚just phrases!'. If the man who wrote that knew about whom and what I was thinking of while I was composing the piece, he might have realised that never, never could this music be just phrases!"

The third movement, which Brun promised would be „the best one", was completed in June 1901, to be ready for the graduation concert of July 5th. As it turned out, however, of both Brun's and van Gilse's Symphonies incomplete versions were performed on that occasion. It had been a simple total playing time problem – not surprisingly, Brun erupted.

### **A youthful „Pathétique"**

Brun's B minor Symphony is in the „dark" key of Tchaikovsky's Sixth and *Manfred Symphony* and, incidentally, Schubert's *Unfinished*. If we compare it to van Gilse's F Major Symphony, completed less than a year earlier – obviously written under the guidance of the same teachers in composition and orchestration – a post-Romantic approach with an obvious desire to break away from the strict academic symphonic rules is discernible in both. There is nothing especially revolutionary about them, but they do represent important developments. What had happened earlier in France, thanks to Hector Berlioz and César Franck, had only just been taken up in Germany by Liszt in his two Symphonies of 1854 and 1856. They were considered unique then as far as the use of symphonic leitmotifs or cyclic form was concerned. It should also be stated that Brun did not really sympathize with the strict cyclic form of Franck's *Symphonie en ré mineur*, written 14 years earlier.

In his Symphony, Brun broke the rules more frequently than van Gilse, and, more than once, with certain impertinence as far as form and harmony were concerned. Interestingly, both works resemble each other in the build-up of their outer movements and in their soft endings and – what is more important – their thematic material is all built-up from an opening main motif. This challenging „crossed-motifs" system may be better termed „rhapsodic" – or „metamorphic variations"; it was to become Brun's favourite and characteristic procedure. In later Symphonies he would also occasionally return to Neo-Baroque forms such as the *Chaconne*, or the classical „theme and variation" pattern, but he certainly produced much daring theme metamorphoses that frequently led into puzzling „modern" dissonances.

Brun's Symphony is also more dramatic and sanguine in its outer movements; van Gilse's, although displaying some heroic or bombastic moments, is more expansively lyrical. In the author's opinion, the Dutchman may have been writing it to please his audiences. Brun's intention was never the same; his personality and his urge to communicate inner feelings were so strong that he almost never considered the tastes of his audiences. This uncompromising attitude was to become Brun's life-long characteristic. Yet, as a conductor he was a perfect (and

successful) communicator to his audiences. Most of his Symphonies are not easy to understand, but they are neither abstractly constructed nor self-satisfying displays of musical technique for audiences and critics. They can be considered as truly „self-sufficiently autobiographical“, reflecting a composer's unabashed character and inner feelings, continuously torn between moments of anger, disillusion, sadness, good humour and great happiness. Brun was not at all an unbalanced personality, but he was always tense and demanding – an ideal prerequisite for a conductor. No wonder then that he had to deal with harsh criticism – not only in published form, but also as insulting anonymous messages slid into his letter box. During the author's research and supervision of the original orchestral parts of Brun's Symphonies, players' occasional written comments came to light – some of them very much below the belt.

Brun opens his First Symphony with a main theme that is strongly asserted at the very beginning without detours, and from which all of the following material will be masterly developed. This main theme is in two parts: a first fiery ascending statement, sounding like a desperate outcry, is followed by a more extended descending sequel of a repeated cell's transpositions, sounding like an insistent begging for help. Immediately afterwards, the theme will be transposed up to F sharp minor, whereas this time, its second part gives way to an anxious and impatient development, involving more complicated figurations – and revealing the composer's strugglings. After this, Brun's theme starts metamorphosing into a lot of new, even contrasting material, all at the same time testifying those „great rumblings“, that „strange desire“, those feelings torn between anger and happiness which he mentioned in his letters. This is a dramatic, yet intimate „Program Symphony“. Two development sections lead to powerful climaxes (in the first, the theme appears for once in its major version); in both we get the impression that the composer was yearning for greater resilience and stronger weapons – but without success. In the last section, the theme's lyrical part seems to be allowed to develop itself more passionately for a while and to even overwhelm the music, but finally it is the stronger opening part of the theme that wins, so that it insistently repeats its hammering chords involving the whole orchestra. In this fatalistic ending, it is as if the composer would tell us: „You see now, that there is no chance for my happiness to return – despair has taken command of my soul.“

To analyse Brun's skills in harmony and counterpoint and the complex and masterful handling of his thematic material would be beyond the scope of a CD booklet – and require the pen of a musicologist. But what is important to note about this compactly constructed and exciting first movement, is that its overall beat of 6/4 allows the composer to alternate between pulses of 3x2 and 2x3, creating cleverly syncopated theme metamorphoses and variedly accented chord sequences in *tutti* sections, in order to emphasize the overall anxious atmosphere.

This „combat“ movement is followed by a wonderfully meditative *Adagio non troppo* in three sections – and in G major. A sensitive listener can easily identify with the composer, whilst admiring an alpine panorama, following sliding and darkening clouds, feeling wind tossing his hair and experiencing a vision of a transfigured sunset. Brun was a passionate mountain-climber and this inspiration of the high peaks would inform his succeeding Symphonies. The magnificence of high mountains would of course also influence many other Romantic and Late Romantic Swiss composers, painters and writers.

At first, a floating, Beethoven-like string melody (another clever metamorphosis of the Symphony's main theme) is expanded through various contemplations involving echo-like fragments and delicate woodwind and horn comments. A discreet atmosphere of longing is created in which an arabesque-like metamorphosis of the *Adagio* is heard, before it is transformed into a sequence of semitonal sighs, leading to a pulsating and more dramatic build-up (in B flat minor). The strings now push in a *marcato* and *fugato*-like development, but the music soon falls back again into a *pianissimo* return of the *Adagio* while, at the same time, introducing the movement's last and most effective section. A transparently orchestrated mini-Romance for violin solo and orchestra (back into G major) is heard: its theme sounding, at first, unexpectedly new, but it is nothing more than a variation of the *Adagio*, embellished by more

arabesques. Towards its end, the brass section alone echoes this theme in a suggestive, chorale-like seven-bar variation, before the re-emerging violin solo soars to ecstatic heights. In this movement (the composer pays tribute to the transfigured violin solo of the *Andante sostenuto* in Brahms's First Symphony) the sole (and seemingly simple) tempo indications needed to be revised, therefore slightly different tempi were used in the movement's different sections, including extra *accelerandi* and *allargandi*.

Van Gilse's first movement reveals the composers empathy with Bohemian music, particularly that of Dvořák. Van Gilse's second movement is very beautiful, and, at times, a Schumannesque *Adagio non troppo*. It is a bit shorter than Brun's, but listening to it, it seems much longer: its episodic build-up is not a sequence of episodes like Brun's, but appears to be more traditionally conceived and developed. It contains, however, an unexpected march in its first section (giving the movement an additional solemn character). This is worth mentioning because Brun also delivers an unexpected march in his third movement.

Whereas Brun's third movement (*Allegro energico*) may more than discreetly echo Brahms during a few bars, van Gilse's is an evident – but never depreciating scherzo à la Dvořák, whose *Slavonic Dances* (published in Germany in 1878 and 1887) had become extremely popular as four-hand piano duets. It shows a symmetrical build-up of *A-B-A-B-A*, whereas Brun's third movement (in D major) has a more unusual one of *A1-B-A2-C*. *A2* is not a restatement of *A1*, but a dramatically developed sequence in a new key (F sharp major), and *B* (a kind of a fugitive trio in an ambiguously floating D major) is made of a gracious 3/4 theme – a transformation of the *A1* signal-like opening, combined with the expanded part of the main theme. *C* opens as a slightly grotesque and rhythmically pointed march (in F sharp minor), starting softly, almost Mahler-like, and leading to a cataclysmic dissonant outburst (actually, the Symphony's extreme climax), changing into E flat minor. This, the main theme's opening cell, is clearly recognizable as it is loudly proclaimed by the horns. The climax fades out into fanfare fragments and, finally, into a mysterious postlude (D major, later changing to B minor), in which the composer's disturbed feelings apparently seem to have eased. In a sequence of celestial chords and ascending and dissolving string arabesques, we may guess his longing for the unreachable („but what happiness there should be, I don't know"). A scherzo's rules are thus ostensibly broken, not only because of its differing *A1* or *A2* sections, but also because its march and postlude lead us (with *attacca*) directly into the fourth movement. Brun's need to break with traditional German symphonic rules is confirmed also by this feature. Practically all of his Symphonies, and not only in his slow and scherzo-like movements, display surprises and unorthodox build-ups – and his scherzos could never really be termed as such anyway. Van Gilse limits himself to using this terminology only in his First Symphony – and Brun's forward-thinking „predecessors" Fritz Hermann and Hans Huber had ignored it completely (except as far as scherzos of serenades and concertos were concerned). Of course, a Symphony's third movement, connected to the fourth with *attacca* had had its origins in Beethoven's Fifth, and the specific scherzo titling had been favoured by Romantics like Schumann, Bruckner, Dvořák and Tchaikovsky – versus Brahms and Mendelssohn, for example, who had never needed to do so. Schubert uses the scherzo titling only in his late Symphonies.

Brun's fourth movement, returning to the Symphony's principal key, is an *Allegro con brio* (van Gilse's uses the term *Allegro con spirito*) and it opens with a hasty and optimistic Beethoven-like theme. This last movement is set in three parts. The first part begins with a short melancholic brass chorale (echoing the Symphony's opening theme) followed by a contrasting expansive, self-confident melody which soon asserts itself to become the movement's most important theme. Then the first theme has to affirm itself twice, at first in a hesitating *sotto voce*, then fortissimo, with strong rhythmical support. It then adventures into an energetic development, in which variations of various themes' separated fragments begin to appear, to be subsequently used as thematic material. But even after all this development; the lyrical theme cannot really establish itself: it is impeded by a menacing fluttering and by tremolos introducing a sequence of descending fanfare signals and a restatement of the brass chorale.

In the movement's second section, in F major (the upper notes of its diminished seventh being used in the theme to create an ambiguous melodic atmosphere), the strings attempt to build up a fugue on the movement's first theme, but they are overtaken by heavy strokes and syncopated chords from the whole orchestra. A dramatic G minor climax follows. A somewhat mocking variation, in the form of jumping and ascending triplets follows. It's their turn now to attempt to a fugue, but the lyrical theme, which at first seemed to accept being involved in the turmoil, changes the mood and tames the mocking triplets into a submissive murmuring. Some 30 mysterious bars follow, in which the lyrical theme's last bouncing interval, an augmented fifth, is hastily repeated 22 times, in octaves from the string's lowest to its highest ranges and accompanied by menacingly muffled horn and trumpet calls. One guesses that the composer's irresolute brooding mood needed to be relaxed again.

In the movement's third section, before all these themes are finally allowed to dramatically confront each other, a recapitulation of the first section is heard; its development is more elaborate and creates a sudden desperate outcry, definitely disposing of the increasing optimism which we were beginning to anticipate. Like furiously tearing down a huge curtain he had cautiously tried to open several times earlier – and even letting in a little light – the composer stands shattered at the edge of an abyss which he had long feared he would have to face. The Symphony's last climax can be interpreted as an angry nihilistic gesture, followed by incessant „no, no, no“ negations (the earlier mentioned mocking triplets now sob) and these negations are emphasized like fist-punches on a table or against a wall. But even more darkly, Brun adds an ambiguously sounding *ritardando e diminuendo* coda, in which the movement's lyrical theme is heard once again (not forgetting that it is strongly related to the Symphony's opening theme): this time it is not in its expanded form, but in its last three-note cell only, repeated over and over again and disappearing into oblivion without explanation.

The strange and bitter ending of his Symphony may not be surprising after one learns that, just at the time he was completing it, Brun had read Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra*.

The Symphony is scored for double wood-wind, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani and strings. It is Brun's first original orchestral work – and a very well-orchestra-ted one indeed. (In a letter of 1896, Brun mentions an orchestration of a Menuet by Schubert that uses a 60-piece orchestra.) It's a powerful and mature work, deserving serious consideration and an urgent contemporary concert-hall revival.

For this premier recording, Brun's original manuscript (dated 24th June, 2001) and a fair copy of the same, and of all orchestral parts, penned in January 1902 by Brun's friend Hermann Wilhelm Draber, were used. Draber (1878–1942) was a talented flutist, composer, musicologist and festival manager and, last but not least, a pupil and secretary of Ferruccio Busoni. He had made Brun's acquaintance in Berlin. In 1902, at the time he was living in London, he offered to put Brun up in his flat. In 1901, Draber had travelled to Dessau with Brun's Symphony under his arm, in order to show it to Hofkapellmeister and composer August Klughardt, who, apparently, reacted enthusiastically and promised a performance during the next year's winter season. Unfortunately Klughardt's death prevented this happening.

In the period between his First (1901) and Second Symphony (1911), a Piano Quintet, a couple of songs with piano and his tone poem *Aus dem Buch Hiob* (1906) were composed.

(Edited by Ian Lace)

## Symphony No. 2 in B flat major

### Fritz Brun and Othmar Schoeck

Of Switzerland's greatest and internationally most successful trio of composers of the 20th century – Arthur Honegger (1892–1955), Frank Martin (1890–1974) and Othmar Schoeck (1886–

1957) –, only Schoeck can be considered as „authentically“ Swiss. Honegger was born in France of Swiss parentage and lived for most of his life in Paris. Martin, born in Geneva, also to Swiss parents, had settled, by 1943, in the Netherlands. Schoeck, whose paternal grand-parents originated in Germany, was born in Brunnen (in the Canton of Schwyz). He studied at the Zürich Conservatory. From 1907 to 1908 he attended Max Reger’s Leipzig master classes in composition, but returned afterwards to Zürich, where he lived until his death. Fritz Brun had similar beginnings. After graduating from Köln’s Conservatory, and experiencing two consecutive brief stays in London and Dortmund, he returned to Switzerland. However, and sadly, unlike Schoeck’s music, Brun’s output would very seldomly be performed abroad. Brun’s innate modesty was mainly responsible for this omission. Early on, after his First Symphony’s premiere, he had realised that his music was not easily understood or accessible. But he was reluctant to make compromises for the sake of his audiences’ ease except once, as we will see, in his Second Symphony.

The three aforementioned composers wrote operas, vocal music (cantatas, oratorios, songs with piano or with orchestra), symphonic and chamber music – creating one masterwork after another. Switzerland should be really proud of this legacy (although, even today, one does not really get this impression). And one can easily guess the reasons for the preferences of Francophiles Honegger and Martin for living abroad – even during the difficult years of the 20th century. In comparison with his colleagues, who needed wider cultural horizons for their inspiration, Schoeck felt more comfortable among a Swiss German mentality and cultural circles, circles patronized at that time by composer-conductors Hermann Suter and Volkmar Andreae (and in French Switzerland by Ernest Ansermet – who was unable to do much for Brun’s music). On Schoeck it is written that, after having separated himself from Germany’s avant-garde, he had opted for a more „moderate“ musical style, closer to post-Romanticism and the *Neudeutsche Schule*. Compared to the „absolute music“ advocate and symphonist Brun, Schoeck is principally a vocal music-oriented composer. He wrote seven operas, various *Singspiele*, a dramatic cantata and other choral works (with orchestra, piano, or a cappella), five song cycles with large orchestra and four with chamber group, and, last but not least, nearly 300 songs with piano – championed, world-wide by the famous baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau.

Notable too, are Schoeck’s activities (from 1917 until 1944) as a conductor of the St. Gallen Konzertverein. In February 1942, with this orchestra, Schoeck had revived Fritz Brun’s First Symphony – just two weeks after the composer had done so in Bern. During his Bern years, Brun had conducted works by Schoeck (with or without singing voices) like the 1912 premieres of his Violin Concerto and *Dithyrambe* for double choir, organ and orchestra. Works by Schoeck premiered by Brun and his choirs between 1912 and 1914 were *Der Postillon*, *Frühling und Herbst* and *Wiegenlied*. In April 1934, the city of Bern had organized a „Schoeck Week“, during which his opera *Venus* was staged at the Stadttheater. It was on this occasion that a German reviewer hailed Schoeck as „a real German musician“ – at that time this was rather a double-edged compliment. During this festival, which, of course, also included chamber music concerts – with Brun as accompanist – Brun and his orchestra performed Schoeck’s vocal cycle *Lebendig begraben*; Schoeck his *Präludium op. 48* and his the dramatic cantata *Vom Fischer und syner Fru*. Initially, the city council had planned to celebrate Brun’s 25th conducting anniversary, but it was the humble Brun himself who insisted on an undiluted homage to Schoeck. Around 1915, Brun had also orchestrated three of Schoeck’s songs for alto and piano. He regularly performed as an accompanist of Schoeck’s lieder; this also outside of Switzerland, as, for example, at a 1917 Swiss Music Festival in Wien.

Brun and Schoeck had become close friends soon after Schoeck’s return from Leipzig. This friendship lasted 45 years. On March 12, 1957, two years before his own death, the 79 years old Brun attended Schoeck’s funeral. Although they were temperamentally very different characters (but both well-adjusted and good-humoured) with contrasting artistic tastes, Brun and Schoeck frequently inspired and consulted each other. Other than touching on private matters and artistic subjects, their correspondence covered Switzerland’s contemporary musical life.

Some postcards, signed by Brun as „Johannes Brun“ and by Schoeck as „Hugo Schoeck“, revealed Brahms and Wolf as their favourite composers. Both had sworn to resist dodecaphony and atonalism, although Schoeck (as, for example, in his magnificent opera *Penthesilea*), proved to be a revealing atonal composer, and Brun too, in his Symphonies, frequently experimented with modern dissonances. The two men simply could not associate dodecaphony and serial music with their own innate organic, lyric – and spontaneously felt – musical constructs.

In a letter to Brun of 1941, Schoeck wrote: „I am no poet, and, as you know, I reverentially concede, where possible, such concerns to those who are qualified. (...) I only want to tell you, that I treasure countless impressions of your rich creativity which I deeply cherish with much gratitude. In your case, all your music has greatness, and the power of your personality is irresistible. For me, your music is so vital and every time its warmth streams over me, I feel as if we were brothers.“

Brun (of whom Schoeck once said that with his long arms he tended to conduct more forcefully than his colleagues) would write to his friend after his performance of *Lebendig begraben* (set on poems by Gottfried Keller): „In the blossoming garden of Gottfried Keller’s fantasy, so beautifully evoked in the music of your ‚Lebendig begraben‘ I enjoyed wandering for hours like an entranced botanist. I realised that Keller was a remarkable painter in words. I realise that too, that this poem had impressed you most deeply and, in turn, your treatment, to my profound joy, touched, a most sensitive nerve within me.“ On the other hand Brun could sometimes think that Schoeck was an erratic conductor, but when he succeeded, he excelled. And Schoeck did excel himself when he conducted Brun’s Second Symphony, so much so that Brun felt elated and hardly recognized his work.

### **Symphony No. 2**

In 1910, Brun and Schoeck met a couple of times in Bern to discuss the pieces they were working on – Brun, his Second Symphony and Schoeck his *Concerto (quasi una fantasia) for violin and orchestra*. The use of B flat major may have been an intentional agreement. Between Christmas and New Year 1911, the two friends spent a holiday at Grindelwald, and it seems that it was there that they also decided to use the same four notes F-G-F-D at the beginning of the two works’ last movements.

Brun completed this work in January 1911 and dedicated it to Schoeck. However, Schoeck did not return the compliment by dedicating his Concerto to Brun; his mind was too occupied with Stefi Geyer, the work’s dedicatee. She was the alluring Hungarian violin virtuoso who earlier was Béla Bartók’s muse. Brun’s Symphony was introduced to Zürich audiences at the Schweizerisches Tonkünstlerfest on 13th and 14th February in that same year. Volkmar Andreae had decided to pre-rehearse it with his Tonhalle-Orchester, and that Brun would take over the baton during concerts. Andreae himself would conduct this work on 3rd and 4th November 1913 with his Zürich ensemble. On 1st April 1911, Brun performed his Symphony with his own Berner Stadtorchester, and the work’s presumably first „foreign“ performance (with the Konzertvereinsorchester conducted by the composer) took place at Wien’s Grosser Konzerthaus-Saal on 22nd October 1917. Schoeck was to revive the work in Bern on 22nd and 23rd January 1923, in a concert in which Brun returned the compliment by conducting Schoeck’s *Der Gott und die Bajadere* (as orchestrated by Karl Heinrich David) and accompanied at the piano five Lieder by Schoeck, sung by Ilona Durigo. In 1934 Schoeck conducted Brun’s Second Symphony again in Bern on the occasion of a homage concert to Brun by the Winterthurer Stadtorchester. The other works in this program were conducted by Hermann Scherchen. The last time in his life that Brun performed this work appears to have been in an „Extrakonzert“ by the Luzerner Allgemeine Musikgesellschaft on 23rd April 1953; this concert also included his Piano Concerto in A minor. Most probably the last time the composer would hear it was under the baton of Walter Kägi, in a concert by the Berner Stadtorchester in the church of Thun, on 15th September 1958 – the city in which, apparently, Brun had written the largest portion of his work and, 25 years before, Johannes Brahms had composed his Second Sonatas

for Violin and for Cello and his Third Piano Trio. The score and orchestral parts of Brun's Second Symphony were published in 1912 by Hug & Co. Musikverlage, Zürich. During the composer's lifetime, this work seems having been performed some 20 times; a 1911 review already considers it „one of the best Symphonies ever written in Switzerland.“

A review of the Zürich premiere suggests: „What could be considered a highlight in Brun's First Symphony, might be considered a flaw in this new one. The First appears to be more formal and more compact than the Second, whereas in the Second, the [musical] language is more sophisticated and artistically advanced.“ After pointing at the Brahmsian influences in both works, the reviewer continues: „To appreciate such a fine, serious and noble nature as Brun's is in itself a joy, and his Second Symphony confirmed my earlier impression that here is a composer who has not only a really masterful technique – which, in this case, is the most important thing – but who knows how to shape music symphonically.“ In a review of the 1923 Bern revival conducted by Schoeck we read: „Brun shows in this Symphony what we already know that he is a composer of deep musical sensitivity and strong impulse.“ And another review reads: „It's a familiar language, that we hear, but it is never just merely imitative of familiar models. This music is artistically and musically secure.“

In his letter to Hermann Scherchen of 1st October 1939, Brun wrote: „My Second Symphony belongs, together with my Violin Sonata, to the first Bernese period of my life, a period of reciprocated and unreciprocated youthful love, of love and love of nature, and for the beauty of my country.“ Compared to some rather pessimistic thoughts expressed in his First Symphony, the music of his Second feels full of joie de vivre and optimism, with outbursts of passionate yearning. The hungry years before 1903 were now gone. Since 1903 Brun had a regular, but modest income: first, as a piano teacher at the Conservatory, then (from 1909 onwards) as a principal conductor of Bern's orchestra and as a chorus leader of both Bern's Cäcilienverein and Liedertafel. Additionally there were frequent activities as a solo and chamber pianist. By 1912, Brun was a married man and, subsequently, a father of three children.

B flat major seemed to be Brun's favourite tonality, as we know from a description of his Symphony No. 10, set in the same key. Some of his favourite compositions are also in B flat major, for example: Beethoven's String Quartet op. 130, Brahms's Second Piano Concerto and Schubert's Piano Sonata D 960. Brun knew Schubert's Sonata very well after having performed it in concert in 1908. In 1911, after having played his Second Symphony at the piano to Andreae and rejoicing that the maestro would perform it, Brun wrote to him: „It felt as though a stone had been lifted from my heart because you quite liked the Symphony. I had had serious doubts about it while sending you the full score...“

In spite of the fact that some musicologist might shudder when reading some personal views on this work, in the author's opinion, Brun's Second does not appear as a „traditional“ Symphony in four separate characteristic movements, but rather as a one-movement Symphony in four „episodes“, its music flowing and developing from beginning to end; and it is based on closely related thematic material. It is quite miraculous how ingeniously the composer managed to create about 40 minutes of beautiful and eventful music by using such scarce thematic material. One could spend hours on a keyboard, discovering its principal motifs and its many clever and novel metamorphoses.

The lyrical melody, sung at the Symphony's opening *Allegro moderato*, contains a motif cell F–D–F–Bb–C–D that launches all the work's thematic material – in the form of variations, embellishments, song-like cadenzas, rhythmic completions, chromatic transformations, expansions or inversions – or simple accompaniment figurations. This could be a „musical portrait“ of Schoeck's lyrically-oriented, dreamier character. It is answered by a double „yearning call“ of Bb–Eb–D–C and Bb–D–C–Bb (the last note on a lower octave) from the oboes. They try to out-develop themselves, but are suddenly interrupted by an energetically bouncing theme, involving more winds and the brass section. Revealing itself as a variation of the opening cell, this bouncy theme could be associated with Brun's sanguine character. These related „character“ motifs will be the protagonists of the first movement alongside a secondary clarinet motif

of livelier, conciliatory-like disposition – and they resolve into a sequence of different episodes, „reflections” or „conversations” (including disputes), during which the aforementioned „yearning call” (Schoeck’s and Brun’s „friendship motto”?) occasionally intervenes reminiscent-like. This call will recur towards the end of the Symphony, but before that, it will be transformed into another „double yearning” call – to be heard after the opening climax of the third movement (G–F–G–F and Eb–Bb–G–F). In this form it could be associated with the „fiddler’s lament” mentioned in this movement’s accompanying poem. As far as the second movement is concerned, an inversion of the four notes of its opening fanfare-like statement is nothing less than one more version of the first „yearning-call”. And, a little later in the same movement, once the joyful music slows down, the „fiddler’s lament” of the third movement is anticipated. This is just one example of the treasure to be found by closely examining this score.

Even though Brun had worked on his material like a watchmaker, this music sounds so spontaneous and melodic with the composer investing his formal structures with an occasional ironic smile. Also the following movements of this Symphony appear as sequences of „episodes” rather than the outcome of a traditional formal construction. Of course, skilful but not always too complex development sections occur, but they always cease appropriately as if the composer is saying „No, I am going to resist the temptation to become too academic.” Brun’s Symphony can – and should – be felt and taken in a special way. For example, in order to sustain mood and continuity, conductors are advised not to pause too long between movements.

The second movement (*Allegro appassionato*) is optimistic, but not entitled *Scherzo* – a musical term which Brun always refused to use, in order to emphasize his more „modern” symphonic aims. After all, it is set in a (B flat) minor key and its two slower sections are much more elaborate than a traditional trio. Similarities to Brucknerian scherzi can be heard. This movement might be thought of as a joyful homage to the highlights of Brun’s and Schoeck’s friendship, such as a visit to Italy in the very hot summer of 1909. In Orvieto, the two composers had stood in awe in front of Luca Signorelli’s huge apocalyptic frescoes. One might imagine them needing to recover immediately afterwards from the sight of so many uncomfortably portrayed nude figures in a restaurant just opposite the cathedral – an experience shared by the author many years ago.

The third movement is the heart of this Symphony. It is written in the form of an extended and highly emotional *adagio sostenuto*, in the keys of E flat major and C minor. Brun refers its music to the last verses from Hermann Hesse’s poem *Eine Geige in den Gärten* (*A fiddle in the gardens*, 1919):

*You strange fiddler down there,  
Lamenting so softly and darkly,  
Where did you find that song  
Telling about all my longing?*

In the moonlight, the poet/composer, after listening to a blackbird singing, hears the distant sound of a fiddler playing which allows him some ease and relief from his heartbreak. Incidentally, Hesse and Brun (who was one year younger) were friends and almost neighbours in their Southern Switzerland homes in Montagnola and Morcote. They each enjoyed and were inspired by the beauty of their respective gardens and by the magnificent distant panoramic views those gardens presented. The author (who, in his youth, visited Hesse’s house on various occasions and, in 2011 and in 2014 would be a guest in Brun’s house) can vividly confirm this. Hesse shared a favourite motto with Brun – „Die freie Zeit gehört dem Garten” („Free time belongs to the garden”). Listening to this beautiful and sensitive music, one has the impression of wandering (or even floating) through a mysterious, yet at times fascinatingly menacing nocturnal landscape. Although Berlioz was one of Brun’s favourite composers, he had his own ideas about the Romantic conception of „program music” as evidenced here by his refraining from using the usual cliché of having a solo violin underline the sentimentality of Hesse’s verses.

Although Schoeck did not set *Eine Geige in den Gärten* to music, he did set about two dozen of Hesses other poems. In 1928, incidentally, Swiss composer Werner Wehrli (1892–1944) would do so. Wehrli, another less-known, very original Swiss composer who deserves more attention, was a pupil of Hans Huber and Hermann Suter. Schoeck regarded him highly.

The special interest of this movement's music is Brun's build-up that uses a sequence of song-like episodes, leading up to a desperate climax in its central section. This had already been anticipated in the movement's „bleeding wounds” opening (an ascending, rather chromatic scale, already anticipated in the previous moment's last bars), in which the orchestra bursts out before the earlier mentioned double „yearning call” return, which incidentally, sound like Brahmsian clarinet motifs on chords of thirds and fourths. But they will soon die away leaving three consecutive lyrical solos for flute, oboe and clarinets over rustling string's *pianissimi*. They sound like mini opera arias with embellishments or serenade-like fragments that restate the Symphony's initial „yearning answer”! These ariettas encourage full strings and full winds to develop an expansive and passionate descending motif, which, after abbreviated echoes by single woodwinds, experiment with short-lived operatic-like coloraturas of their own. The „bleeding wounds” outburst returns – now played by the full orchestra and emphasized by timpani rolls. This is the Symphony's climax. Brun's and Schoeck's private and artistic crises are evoked. But again, the returning echo-like „answers” attempt to ease the tension. The strings' new broad song, now embellished by more lyric cadenza-like arabesques, allows the remaining instruments a last self-pitying but not overly tragic hammering intervention – before the whole atmosphere finally pacifies itself.

The last movement (*Non troppo vivace*), which the author entitles „a portrait of Schoeck”, opens like an overture to a musical comedy. Brun establishes the mood by quoting Figaro's address to Cherubino *delle belle turbando il riposo* (*disturbing the rest of beautiful ladies*). He jokingly parodies Schoeck – who had quite a reputation as a womanizer. Brun was regularly updated on his friend's amorous conquests or failures, or even asked for advice. Spirited music flows through various colourful episodes, including a heavier one, sounding rather Slavonic in style, which is later sung out really forcefully. In this movement, already stated material turns up again in opposition and the whole treated contrapuntally. In the movement's final build-up, the „musical comedy” theme is transformed into a boisterously stamping march, motivating new action. In a short lyrical central episode, returning for a last time just before the movement's ending, a clarinet reminds us of its earlier prima donna aspirations by producing some more lovely coloraturas.

Within the development of Brun's symphonic language, his Second Symphony could be considered a lyrical „intermezzo” or a „transitional episode”. Between the completion of his Second Symphony and the creation of his Third (1919), even though he was not directly involved, Brun had been conscious of the horrors of World War I and, as a profoundly humanitarian person, he had experienced much disillusion and disappointment. As early as his student years' letters from Köln he had expressed his hatred towards German imperialism and militarism. What will happen in the Third Symphony's first movement is quite shocking, and a sensitive listener, so far acquainted with Brun's Second only, may guess that there must be something apocalyptic behind that poem about dangerously sliding moraines that he describes in his Third with such dark, wild and dissonant music. In any case, from the earlier mentioned musical „character descriptions”, Brun may have intentionally attributed his music to Schoeck's „lyrical” musical personality and style, by temporarily abandoning his more „serious” *modus operandi*. Yet, it is almost a pity that the Second Symphony was to become Brun's most popular work; its more straightforward and „Romantic” sounding music making it more accessible to wider audiences.

This more popular appeal may have been a reason for the Swiss Broadcast Company to record at least four different concert performances of the Symphony, of which the third and the fourth were issued 20 years ago on CD by *Gallo* and by *Musica Helvetica*:

- 1) Studio-Orchester Beromünster, conducted by Robert F. Denzler (1948)
- 2) Berner Symphonieorchester, conducted by Klaus Cornell (1973)
- 3) Luzerner Sinfonieorchester, conducted by Olaf Henzold (1994)
- 4) Berner Symphonieorchester, conducted by Dmitry Kitaenko (1995)

These excellent performances proved that Brun's Second stands or falls with a conductor's individual sense of timing and *rubato*. All the movements but one have initially indicated tempi (without metronome figures), with the exception of an additional *poco meno mosso* towards the end of the second movement and a *poco meno adagio* in the third. In other words, conductors are advised not to just follow the composer's laconic indications otherwise their performance could soon become quite boring. The three recorded versions differ markedly from each other: whilst Cornell delivers the slowest tempi with very little *rubato* in all movements, except in the third (Kitaenko's reading even reaches 11 minutes), Henzold's version conforms closest to Brun. Still, in all movements Kitaenko creates extreme and fascinating tempi changes – and in some unexpected places. The opening 17 bars of the first movement's *allegro moderato* becomes, for example, a real *adagio*; the second movement's *allegro appassionato* is a real *presto* every time its opening motif reappears giving it a scherzo-like character, certainly exceeding Brun's intentions. Kitaenko's imaginative version is the one the author prefers. Denzler's version is undoubtedly the craziest and richest in contrasts, with a second and a fourth movement (durations 4:10 and 6:41), in which various furious passages give the impression of the orchestra nearly falling apart. However, it has a touch of genius.

This instrumentally perfectly balanced work is in itself a *crescendo* as far as the instrumentation is concerned; each succeeding movement introducing further instruments. The work is scored for double woodwinds, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings. In the second, third and fourth movements, a double-bassoon is added, and in the third and fourth movements, 3 trombones. A tuba is required only in the fourth movement.

Besides the date of 2nd January 1911, there is written on the Symphony's last manuscript page: *Evviva la gioia! (Hurray to joy!)*.

*(Edited by Ian Lacey)*

## Symphony No. 3 in D minor

The first performance of Brun's Third Symphony took place at the Zürich Tonhalle on 15th December 1919, under the composer's baton. On 31st January 1920, Brun was invited to perform it with the Sinfonieorchester Basel which, in view of the work's technical difficulties, had been pre-rehearsed by Hermann Suter. The Bern premiere took place on 9th March 1920 and, on the occasion of the Schweizerisches Tonkünstlerfest, the Symphony was again performed in Zürich, on 30th May of the same year. All these performances were conducted by the composer. On 9th March 1924, Brun performed it with the Stadtorchester Winterthur, the ensemble with which Hermann Scherchen would revive the work 25 years later. Brun had also decided that the work's second movement could be played separately, something that he, and subsequently Scherchen, would do in Bern in 1925 and 1934.

On 22nd November, 1925, the Symphony was performed at Wien's Musikvereins-Saal by Felix Weingartner and the Philharmonic Orchestra, in a program also including Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and Carl Goldmark's Overture *Im Frühling*. The program booklet contained a detailed work analysis with 10 musical examples.

Reviews of all these performances range from the positive to the enthusiastic. One writer noticed that the strings must have had „hard nuts to crack“ in the first movement. Brun's conducting was judged as warm and expressive, even passionate, and his music as „something

thoroughly honest, coming from a grand and healthy soul". The audience of the 1920 Bern premiere was particularly generous, honouring the composer with bouquets and crowns of flowers. Critics at the second Zürich performance admitted that the audience, although at first perplexed, had realised that the piece was something grand and unusual. The highest level of criticism was reached by Adolf Fortner, who wrote that Brun's music „managed to break down the walls of consciousness, letting us look into the domains of the subconscious, of symbols, the reign of the emotional. It touches rarely played strings in our most inner world... awakening supernatural, almost metaphysical forebodings.“

A somewhat less metaphysical, but no less enthusiastic reaction came from Walter Schädelin (1873–1953), the Symphony's dedicatee. Professor Schädelin, a close friend of Brun and of Hermann Hesse, was a pioneer in Swiss forestry. On the concert program of Scherchen's 1949 performance, the following sonnet by Schädelin was reproduced, which he had apparently been inspired to write after hearing the Symphony's first movement:

*The Moraine*

*Time devoured the mountains. Its teeth  
Chewed slowly the rocks like rusk;  
Whose wild rubble of wholemeal  
The ice stream-dragon piles up, forming me into a moraine.  
While I yawn through millennia,  
Defying abysses and feverish ravings  
Of blazing heat, and winter's rigid death,  
And I feel myself cursed and alone in this world,  
It occurs, that my rocky flanks  
Are being breathed on by a soft glow  
Of green and bloom, awaken from here and there.  
Thank you, Herald of Heaven [= Alpine Forget-Me-Not]:  
You break the bounds of deadly wasteland:  
What you have given me is a breath; but it's Life.*

Walter Schädelin

*(Transl. Adriano; authorized by Walter Schädelin's heirs)*

In a letter to Hermann Scherchen, the composer reveals the inspiration for this grandiose work, written when he was 41: „The Third Symphony reflects impressions of alpine wanderings. There is a painting by Ferdinand Hodler of the Jungfrau, as seen from Mürren. Autumn, bad weather – the Alps in their most unfriendly, hostile aspect. This picture has inspired me – though secondarily. The first impression was the mountain itself, holding me in its tentacles.“

Brun's Third, in the same key as César Franck's *Symphonie en ré mineur* and Bruckner's Third and Ninth, is an ambitious and extended work, requiring patience and concentration. Its many qualities can be discovered only by repeated listening. Overall it is a lyrical piece, but the way its lyricism comes across and eventually becomes enjoyable, particularly in the first movement, makes us long for it, or even suffer beforehand. It's happiness and peace granted through crisis. At first hearing the music conveys a rather unwieldy message, revealing to us that our life is in danger and has to experience severe blows. Compared to his two previous Symphonies, which are definitely more easy-going and „Romantic“ in sound, we now have to deal with more problematic and unpredictable build-ups and mood changes, with a sombre sound, with dissonances, syncopated and polyrhythmic sections, and with intricate counterpoint. In this first movement we can really feel the clash of powerful and menacing natural elements, as Hodler brought to life perfectly in his visionary painting. These elements are suggested by Brun by almost atonal and very dramatic, harsh sounding sections, full of syncopated chords and shifting chains of „rustling“ or „gargling“ notes (subdivided into different groupings of short note values), proceeding either in unison, in octaves, or in parallel and irregular intervals. The latter feature, which became a trademark of the style of Bohuslav Martinů and much

later of quite a few avant-garde composers of aleatory music, may have suggested to Schädelin sliding masses of stone, as opposed to Brun's own vision of evolving structures of clouds. Nevertheless, the opening dotted and accentuated three-note motif, the spark igniting the thematic material of the whole movement, is like a gush of lava set in motion by an inexorable volcanic eruption. This musical germ becomes the movement's motto, either in its simple form, or harmonised into a series of highly dramatic *tutti* chords, or extended into a theme of leaping notes, suggesting adventurous mountain climbing. The opening drama leads to a yearning theme, enabling the storm to calm down for a while after this theme has been absorbed by all the sliding and gargling figurations. A contemplative, Brahmsian motif of ascending and descending intervals of thirds and fourths now asserts itself, suggesting the composer's own feelings, either as wanderer relaxing after a storm, or as a human being who has surmounted a personal crisis. In the following development section, this new theme and the „wandering“ motif have to struggle twice against the recurring, always insistent negative elementary forces but, eventually, the clouds disperse and nature can be contemplated in its peaceful and panoramic grandeur.

The following movement (starting and ending in D major) seems to have been conceived with the intention of estranging us from the world of struggles, even though its six ingenious variations are more than just an enjoyable relaxation. Its theme is the Epiphany carol *Noi siamo i tre Re (We are the Three Kings)*, a march-like folk song from Northern Italy, the most widely known version of which had found its way to Ticino, the Italian part of Switzerland. The composer may have learnt this song from his mother, who had Italian origins. Besides appearing in post-Brahmsian style in terms of form, structure and orchestral colouring, Brun's variations were explicitly intended to pay tribute to Hector Berlioz, particularly the sixth variation, the plaintive themes, melismatic figurations and delicate instrumentation of which remind us of Marguerite's music in *La Damnation de Faust*. In the remaining variations, too (except in the third), some Berliozian characteristics can be found. Variations Nos 1 and 2 are rather neo-baroque, echoing Brahms's *Haydn Variations*; the second is tempted to lose itself, after a short nervous outburst, in an extended, rhapsodic reverie. Variation No. 3 is an energetic march with something of the boisterousness of Brahms's *Academic Festival Overture*. Variation No. 4, sounding at first like a coda, appears to become a scherzo with choleric outbursts, a kind of „Walpurgis“ version of Berlioz's *Queen Mab*. Variation No. 5 could be a reminiscence or paraphrase of a plaintive aria in the style of Bach, paying tribute at the same time to Berlioz – all, of course, in a post-romantic disguise. Variation No. 6 starts and ends with a visionary, highly original duet for two solo cellos. In my opinion, these two breathtaking final variations (the first in the Symphony's main key of D minor, the second in D major) could almost be considered as the Symphony's two-part Adagio, because of their longer duration, exquisite lyricism and more elaborate developments.

The third movement (again in the key of D major) gives the Symphony a pseudo-cyclic form since its themes are, more or less evidently, related to the themes of the first movement, even though these never reappear in their original form. After having surmounted nature's (or life's) adversities, the composer takes his time for contemplation and reflection, but still spends his time amid its marvels. A new lyrical, Brahmsian theme is related to the peaceful theme of the first movement, seen as a result of a mirror-like inversion; it's nature again, now shown from an optimistic and encouraging side. After a short outburst sounding like hearty laughter, cheerfulness is emphasized by another secondary (again, Brahmsian) theme in semiquavers, ending with syncopated chords and sustained by „wandering“ *pizzicati*, and immediately afterwards transformed into melismas of almost yodelling character. A new, lyrical and very sensual theme is now presented and developed, serving as an extended and very beautiful transition to another, well-prepared outburst of laughter, after which a metamorphosis of the first movement's „climbing“ theme appears. The two lyrical themes start to enjoy themselves and to amalgamate, sustained by rustling triplets, and ending in a short, vision-like pause in Wagnerian style. After this, the cheerful semiquaver motifs reappear to set the tone and to al-

low the sweeping theme to develop again and eventually to merge and „laugh“ with the more cheerful motifs, until all the thematic material of the movement is contrapuntally combined, to assert itself triumphantly; at the end we discover, after a short, contemplative, echo-like coda, that life is really beautiful, if enjoyed in the beauty of nature.

The headstrong characteristics of Brun's Third are also emphasized by the fact that its orchestration excludes trombones, tuba, harp and percussion (except timpani). Only two trumpets are required; on the other hand, a contrabassoon is added. This situation, which gives the group of four horns a prominent part, does anything but devalue the colour palette of the work: Brun's skill as an orchestrator and his feeling for excellent *tutti*, alternating with transparent, chamber music-like sections, complement its many formal qualities. The technical demands for all the performers are definitely above average, as in all the later symphonies by this composer.

(Edited by Andrew Barnett)

## Symphony No. 4 in E major

The year 1926 was an eventful one in Fritz Brun's career. On April 11th, in addition to his usual tight schedule of subscription and choral concerts, he travelled with his Bern orchestra and two choirs to France, to conduct a program with Hermann Suter's cantata *Le Laudi* (preceded by the „Variations“ movement of his own Third Symphony). This concert was given at the Paris Trocadéro, before an audience of 4000 people. Suter (who died just a couple of weeks later) was also present. This was the second of Brun's less than a dozen conducting engagements outside Switzerland throughout his whole career. Later, on 12th and 13th December 1926, Brun was to conduct memorable Bern performances of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*.

Brun's Fourth Symphony was completed on 16th September 1925. On 26th November 1921, the Philosophical Faculty of Bern's University had honoured the composer with the title of Doctor Honoris Causa, and that is why this Symphony is dedicated to this institution.

The work's premiere, however, took place in Zürich with the Tonhalle-Orchester on 1st February 1926, and the concert was repeated the following day. In this program, conducted by Volkmar Andreae, Brun appeared as a guest conductor of his Symphony. Performances in Bern took place on 1st and 2nd March, and in Basel on 15th March of the same year – also conducted by the composer – so, within just one and a half months, Brun's Fourth was performed five times in three different cities by three different orchestras, within an area of no more than 125 kilometres! One wonders if something like this would be possible in Switzerland today.

The Zürich program booklet contains a short introduction to the Symphony by an anonymous musician „who had witnessed the development of the work at close range“, writing, among other things: „As with all symphonic works by Brun, this one displays an extremely elaborate thematic structure, in which the composer's apparently spontaneous and often many-layered polyphonic counterpoint plays an important role.“

A Zürich reviewer, pointing out the Symphony's stylistic references to Brahms and to Bruckner, was so carried away by his suppositions that he added Stravinsky – and all this, apparently, not only in the second movement. Finally he admitted that this work contained „unusual thoughts“ and „a rich substance of stirrings of expression from the idyllic to the energy-bursting, all set in the highest musical value and beauty.“ Since Brun had written his work in his Morcote residence, his soul had, one might suppose, assimilated the „quickly changing moods of the people of Italian Switzerland(!)“ A Bern reviewer wrote: „When a man like Brun sits down to write a Symphony, he does not follow the usual four-movement pattern of movements following on from each other, thus: a fast movement, a slow one, a scherzo and a finale. He insists on expressing his own individuality rather than following existing precepts.“ A Basel reviewer found himself „paralyzed by feelings of confusion and heaviness, for which he could see no valid artistic reason“; another critic considered Brun a composer whose „every

new opus can be looked upon as a masterwork". The Basel press also recognized that the work had been written by „a personality, never sparing himself, nor us, with such sudden changes of mood – and then equally suddenly remaining silent or causing a racket, but always so full of joie de vivre”.

A broadcast revival of Brun's Fourth took place on 4th October 1961 by Kurt Rothenbühler and the Radio-Orchester Beromünster. Rothenbühler had found it necessary to revise the score, not only by applying various questionable cuts to its last movement, but also by applying instrumental retouches. His interpretation of the Symphony (which is preserved in Swiss sound archives) is certainly excellent, but had the composer been still alive, he would have never allowed such a revision. Rothenbühler had become Brun's successor as a leader of the Berner Oratorienchor in 1941.

And what did the composer himself think about this work? In an important self-revealing letter to conductor Hermann Scherchen of 1st October 1939 he said: „I have composed my Fourth Symphony in Morcote, in my beloved Canton of Ticino, my second home region. It is not my favourite amongst my Symphonies. I would have preferred the Swiss National Edition to publish another one instead. It was written at the time of the Locarno Treaties, a beautiful, peaceful time, when one could still believe in humanity and reason. That is why its first movement is so peaceful and pastoral-like. For the first time, I felt the music of Bruckner ‚distracting’ me, it overcame me and I found it hard to resist its influence. When I was composing later works, this influence was a temptation but it did not overpower me anymore and I was able to assert my own individuality and musical style.”

Like his Third Symphony (written in 1919), Brun's Fourth is in three movements, of which the second is quite individual and breaks with normal second movement conventions. Whilst in the earlier work a set of variations was presented; in the Fourth Symphony we hear an original and effective combination of scherzo and slow movement, and for that reason the title „Scherzo” is not used. The movements are just entitled „1st, 2nd and 3rd”.

After having described dangerously sliding moraines (unconsolidated glacial debris) and other eventful wanderings through the Alps, in his Third Symphony, set in a serious and otherworldly D minor, in his Fourth, the composer returns to similarly „landscape-inspired” music. But now we are transported to a more shining and optimistic E major. Already in the first movement, having the characteristic of a broad *Adagio* rather than that of a traditional *Allegro*, a sensitive listener easily perceives its principal motif as a joyful „wandering”, it is an almost Mahler-like motif. The second (and not secondary!) motif is of a yearning character. Shortly after its appearance, Brun wants it played *etwas drängend* (*slightly pushed*). But before these two motifs are stated, developed and combined together, the Symphony opens with a mysteriously beautiful introduction in two parts (of exactly 18 bars each), based on pedal points on E. From the opening, pastorally evocative ascending and descending chains of string quavers emerge. Eventually these are discreetly joined by some of the wind instruments. Then, in the second part, the strings produce an undulating accompaniment to an extended and haunting solo horn melody (extended over a range of more than one and a half octaves). This motif reveals itself as the source of the Symphony's whole thematic material. The horn (a solo part playing an important role in this Symphony) is heard again later a couple of times in the form of condensed, echo-like variations, as if it is modestly approving the material the orchestra has built-up after having been inspired by it. Those opening string quavers and the following undulations will return again during the movement's development, serving both as a single or a combined melodic accompaniment in various sections, bearing tempo indications *ruhig* or *tranquillo*. In the movement's postlude-like ending, they are heard again at some distance, sustaining cadenza-like flourishes by a flute and a clarinet, to which the solo horn (which has finally found a way to merge with the movement's second motif) adds one more echo of its initial melody, but not without heeding the woodwinds' bird-call-like portions of the „wandering” motif. The listener will have soon been aware that the composer's description of a „physical” wandering was also a revelation of his „inner” wanderings; that the mountain landscapes,

panoramas and sailing clouds had touched his soul. As far as any Bruckner influence is concerned, an easily recognizable „Brucknerian escalation“ can be recognized in the climatic central part of the movement. Needless to say, Brun deals with it in a much more „modern“ and concise way.

The second movement delivers typical symphonic outbursts à la Brun, in which we become acquainted with the composer's notoriously sanguine temper. It is built-up into an *A1-B1-A2-B2-C1-A3-C2-A4* scheme, the alike sections never being identically repeated, but individually slightly developed instead. *B1* and *B2* can be interpreted as two-part (and not separated) „trios“, both depending from their respective *A*'s. *A3* has no trio and *A4* is a 15-bar coda, distancing itself from the movement's initial key of A flat major – in order to lead (without a break) into the third movement, in which E major returns. *A*'s motif is harsh and sarcastic; the *B* sections are slower, dance-like episodes un peu à la Berlioz, but not losing the movement's overall impatient, character. *C1* and *C2* are extremely beautiful and passionate „slow movement“-like *Adagi sostenuti*, in which the solo horn enchants us with a lyrical variation of the earlier *A*-motif (revealing itself, incidentally, as another metamorphoses of the Symphony's „wandering“ motif). In *C1* it returns at first adapting itself to lyrical string figurations, and later in the form of a descending chromatic arabesque. In *C2*, the strings sustain a new variation, as if they would, almost resignedly, approve of the composer's regained inner calm. But this is not at all the case; the composer needs to add an after-thought with a final 17-bar outburst leading directly into the third movement, in the opening of which he confronts us with a real emotional crisis.

This third movement's introduction needs a more detailed explanation. It is a 33-bar *Andante (frei im Vortrag)*, meaning that, in spite of its fixed 4/4 time signature, it can be interpreted like a recitative. An indication *rabiato (rough, brutal)* for the strings emphasizes the dramatic character of this, one of Brun's most daring symphonic passages. It opens in a nightmarishly dissonant atmosphere, in which the „scherzo's“ *A* motif is mutilated. From its debris, the *C* motif is pre-announced through three mysterious bars of subdivided and unaccompanied violin soli, ending up into the movement's principal motifs opening „call“ cell. This is to show, that *C* will be used very soon again – in fact in just 6 bars later on, in a short phrase by the oboe doubled by the violins. A transfigured, Scriabinesque chord D-F#-Ab-C, from which a short, ascending horn solo rises, adding to this chord two more „strange“ notes B flat and E, is another surprise in this tormented music. Finally we become acquainted with the aforementioned „call cell“ and it's ascending and descending intervals of a sixth, which will be soon adapted to make up the movement's principal march motif. In the following finale's build-ups and developments, various key signature changes do not allow the music to settle in correspondingly definite „tonal“ keys; in fact the movement reveals itself to be extremely complicated chromatically, much more so than the two preceding movements. Back into the Symphony's E major, a brassy and buoyant (and slightly Wagnerian) March appears – using cells of the first movement's „wandering“ motif – showing that the composer's thoughts have regained optimism and good-humour, be it in his soul or during new mountain roamings. Secondary motifs are the already mentioned „call cell“ and a motif of six ascending string pizzicati (also containing two intervals of sixth); they make this March much more complicated than was initially expected. All the different development sections have been carefully prepared for the grand finale (its tempo indication *wuchtig* means *powerful*). Brun writes with impressive virtuosity here, delivering surprise after surprise, including that of a spirited, almost sarcastic-like fugue. Yet, in between these outbursts, the music returns to meditative or bittersweet moods, delighting us with pastoral episodes – it's as though we were viewing craggy mountains in-between serene passing clouds. As usual in Brun's Symphonies, earlier thematic material returns in the last movement, to be used or transformed dramatically or lyrically. The March motif allows itself to be transformed into a broad and lyrical variation, in sympathy with the Symphony's main horn melody and later inspiring the horn to play a new variation before launching itself into the rather bombastic and colourful closing section, emphasized at the very end by exuberant timpani beats.

It is interesting to note that in this Symphony, both outer movements have extended episode-like introductions, serving as thematic expositions, than simply shifting to another mood. Brun's Fourth is scored for a rather modest ensemble of double wood-winds with double bassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani and strings. In the first movement there are no trombones and only 2 trumpets.

Contrary to the composer's own opinion, quoted earlier, the author considers this work to be a very beautiful, rich and passionate work, with much original music. And it never loses any tension. But, as already mentioned in previous Brun liner notes, his Symphonies have complicated, precisely, cleverly thought-out constructions. Detailed thematic analyses would prove this, but it would go beyond the scope of a CD's liner note. Needless to say, there is certainly an urgent need for a detailed study of the work of this great Swiss composer.

*(Edited by Ian Lacey)*

## Symphony No. 5 in E flat major

Brun's Fifth Symphony was completed in Faulensee, a Swiss holiday spot on the shores of Lake of Thun, on 2nd October 1929. The work had to wait just a few months for its premiere, which occurred on 13th January 1930 in the Zürich Tonhalle, under the baton of Volkmar Andreae. On 29th January of that same year, it was performed by Hermann Scherchen with the Stadtorchester Winterthur and finally its Bern premiere occurred one month later under the composer's baton, on February 24th.

It is amazing to consider that a Symphony – and such a demanding one – by a contemporary composer would be performed in Switzerland by three different orchestras and conductors within a period of about six weeks. Such an event would be rather unthinkable today.

The musical press at the time appreciated the Symphony's seriousness and profound individuality. One Winterthur critic said that Switzerland should be proud of such a work of art, and just one enthusiastic Zürich reviewer remarked about the work's pessimism. The Winterthur newspaper welcomed Brun's use of the symphonic form to express his emotions.

We can also learn, from the composer's correspondence with Hermann Scherchen, that he realised that his Symphony was a „problematic“ one, since it not only required „intelligent Swiss audiences“ but also „an intelligent conductor and many rehearsals“. As far as his need to use atonality was concerned, he added: „I am faced with atonality like an enemy, should it end up as desolate paper music, but the knowledge that artists like Stravinsky and Schoeck are dealing with it captivates me greatly.“

„I felt the urge to consider chamber music-like writing. It was an elementary need. Intensive studies of Beethoven's late works lead me into it. At the same time I felt concerned with atonality.“ Writing about the finale of his Sixth Symphony of 1933, which is an untitled *Chaconne*, Brun specified: „This came by obeying my need to concentrate on the use of variation form of an eight-bar theme as never before. I endeavoured to create a unity from the amalgamation of single variations, which the listener should also feel as such.“

As in the slow *Variations* movement of Brun's Third, the large-scale *Chaconne* of his Fifth, a masterpiece in itself, has a strongly independent character, even though its material is called upon in the following movements. To those who might fight shy of a complete Brun Symphony, the movement alone could stand as a separate work, as an introduction to his music.

From the very beginning of the work, Brun builds up his dark and introspective theme, after it has been presented (both with and without harmonization), into 28 daringly contrasted variations ending with a chorale. These variations include different rhythms - such as 2/4, 6/8 and 5/8 - going beyond the rules of a traditional *Chaconne*. Brun's eight-bar theme, which uses all twelve notes of the chromatic scale, is a merging of two types of *Chaconne's* themes, one using seconds and the other intervals of fourths and fifths. All variations are of a tense and dramatic

character, leading to various dissonant climaxes and to a powerful coda. This movement is also a perfect example of Brun's masterful instrumental palette (including beautiful solos for both wind and strings) by using a modest „Brahmsian“ orchestral strength, with percussion reduced to timpani, and whose only additions are a double bassoon and a bass tuba.

The extremely short second movement is a nocturnal scherzo, with the tempo indication *gehetzt, phantastisch* (*rushed, fantastic*). Over a hasty, Berlioz-like ride for muted strings, hammerings by the wind section intervene (instead of a serenade or trio), as if they would try brutally to take back the dreaming protagonist to reality – but in vain. Its theme is, incidentally, that of *Chaconne's* 9th variation (also played by the strings), as if the Chaconne called for an out-of-the-world evasion, following solemn and dramatic, but still Baroque-like, developments.

In Paris, on 14th April 1926, Brun conducted Hermann Suter's *Le Laudi*, a work which can be considered, along with Honegger's *Le Roi David*, one of the greatest Swiss oratorios of the 20th century. This concert took place just two months before Suter's untimely death. Writing about Suter, that he was „a strongly profiled man; he loved animals, nature and solitude; he demanded much, but also gave much, in a reserved, chaste, manner“, the composer actually delivered an appropriate self-portrait. The third movement of Brun's Fifth Symphony, as the composer revealed to Scherchen, was intended as a funeral ode to Hermann Suter.

In this elaborate movement we are presented with a wonderfully elegiac theme (recognizable as a distant variation of *Chaconne's* theme), eventually contrasting with a pointed, funeral-march theme. The music appears to describe an agonizing man's struggles and his final succumbing. At his already mature, but youthful, age of 51, Brun was shocked that his friend (who was only five years older), had to die so early. It is as if he would try to learn to die by projecting on to himself all stages of a suffering, hopelessly sick, man. Through his music, Brun almost realistically suggests moments of pain, convulsions, anxiety, short relapses of recovery and hope, violent struggles and a dramatic final crisis. Wind instruments, and nervously flooding string figurations, suggest all kinds of physical troubles; tremolos and trills suggest feverish spasms. Towards the end, the funeral march reappears anew; to lead into a terrifying dissonant climax and coda, in which we are assured that, once all sufferings are over, a dying man's spirit has been liberated to find its deserved peace. Compared to Richard Strauss's Lisztian youthful tone poem *Tod und Verklärung*, Brun's music, also dealing with death and transfiguration, is less heroic, in a way more earth-bound, definitely more „realistic“.

Brun's musical farewell to Hermann Suter is followed by an angry orchestral outburst about the future of those composers who shared common artistic goals, yet who were continuously faced by ignorance and hostilities. „One should give me credit for expressing (in the last movement of my Fifth Symphony) pain and rage about the fact that in our beloved Switzerland, its own cultural patrimony is being sabotaged. Schoeck has set to music Gottfried Keller's *Gaselen* (song-cycle of 1923 for baritone and chamber group), both artists dealing with the same unpleasant problem; they do it in the same caustic tone, and how refreshing it is to see both men behaving so aggressively.“

The tempo indication for this fourth movement is *rasch und wütend* (*fast and furious*) and, as so often in his Symphonies, it lacks a precise metronome indication. A fugue builds into a section of new, powerful variations of the initial *Chaconne's* theme, as if the composer's personal message is directed to some of his contemporaries, perhaps saying: „As you see, we serious composers can build a large-scale Symphony using a single theme; we can work with Baroque forms; we can even use modern dissonances – all this without falling into cacophony with no concept or superficial craftsmanship“.

Brun's Fifth is probably his most cyclically-conceived, and – as with most of his other Symphonies – of both an autobiographical and psychological character. Whilst continuing to avoid program music as such, Brun aimed to write Symphonies as did Beethoven, Brahms, Bruckner and Mahler, expressing strong personal feelings and experiences and sublimating them into universal human messages. A constantly recurring theme in his Symphonies is Man's place

amidst Nature – his „musical landscapes“ are as broad and dramatic as those by Sibelius and Vaughan Williams.

(Edited by Ian Lacey)

## Symphony No. 6 in C major

As noted on the last page of the autographed score of Brun's Sixth Symphony, this work was completed on 9th August 1933 in Morcote, on the shores of the Lake of Lugano. After having retired from his over 30 years-long post as a chief conductor of the Bernische Musikgesellschaft in 1941, the composer's summer residence would become his definitive home until 1959, the year of his death.

On 29th October 1933, Hermann Scherchen had conducted this Symphony in a „study performance“ with his Stadtorchester Winterthur. Scherchen's „definite performance“ in the same city – and with the same orchestra – would take place one year later, on 28th November 1934, just one day after two other performances on two consecutive days in Bern. It must have been tremendously exciting that such a demanding contemporary piece was to be played on three consecutive days in two different cities (only one hour distant from each other by train). It was even more impressive considering its Zürich performance nine months before with a more renowned orchestra (Zürich is, of course, Switzerland's largest city.)

The Symphony's „official“ premiere took place in Zürich, on 20th March 1934, with Volkmar Andreae conducting the Tonhalle-Orchester. Andreae had already premiered Brun's Third in 1920 and his Fifth in 1930. Brun's Ninth would also be premiered by the same conductor in 1950. Brun's Sixth would be heard again in St. Gallen in 1934, in Schaffhausen in 1935 and, in 1937 in Basel, at the Schweizerisches Tonkünstlerfest.

A reviewer from Winterthur wrote: „Brun's new, superbly crafted Symphony is a masterpiece. Above all, the performance of this demanding and rhythmically supremely difficult Symphony in C major, demonstrates that it is a work of great ideas and vivid spirit“. Zürich reviews were also positive: the last movement was thought to be „masterful“. Later in 1939, Brun wrote to Scherchen: „The Sixth deals with similar chamber music challenges and opportunities as did the Fifth. I wrote a Chaconne, because I wanted to challenge myself to create an austere variation pattern of eight bars. This challenge was one of the most difficult but satisfying tasks that I had ever set myself. I endeavoured to form a whole out of merging its separate variations into one complete piece, a creation that could be appreciated by an impartial listener. It is an unruly piece. It signifies a casting-off of a strange and hostile personal influence in my life – so that, in the 3rd movement, I would find myself again and feel my troubles had been resolved. I believe the Sixth is my most personal work; it became a really first substantial success“.

Examining, for example, only the construction of each of Brun's Symphonies, a musicologist might with advantage explore in depth its rich musical material – and discover how all its components are related to each other – these components being mostly motifs, either after having been transformed using traditional „variation“, or „metamorphic“ techniques, or, even in a totally unsystematic way, experimenting with more advanced techniques of dodecaphony or serialism. Brun's music can still be classified, if necessary, as „late post-Romantic“ or „pre-modern.“ Baroque masters, too, unknowingly experimented with such advanced techniques, without knowing, of course that one day they would suddenly change music history – in a similar way Brun so cleverly plays with them.

Listening to the Symphony's first movement (entitled *Präludium*) one gets the impression that this is music from another world, which either has arrested the composer, or he has tried to create such an atmosphere and has invited his audiences to explore this other world with him. The ethereal, discreetly ornamented neo-Baroque-like chorale presented at the opening is

the Symphony's departing point and principal motif. It wanders, at first, through some rather chilling metamorphoses, to become a dirge on a pulsating bass, in which solo strings and winds produce elaborate and visionary arabesques. The theme almost becomes disintegrated, and then tries to reassemble itself into a more tonal and rhythmically coherent development. But the dirge's soli return, in a very sad mood at first, then tending towards transfiguration and, afterwards, to pessimistic disintegration. Yet a generally positive message prevails. The chorale finds its balance again, and the music dissolves into mysterious harmonies and into the Symphony's home key of C major. With this *Präludium*, the premise of psychological development in the following movements has now been set.

In the style of those autobiographically coloured, daemonic scherzos of Berlioz and Mahler, Brun now, in the second movement, seems to give us an idea of his anxieties in a nightmarish, rather brutal dance reminiscent of Mussorgsky's *Baba Yaga*. Its theme, incidentally, is a variation of the Symphony's opening chorale, and this theme will also be echoed in one of the fourth movement's Chaconne-like variations. The second movement is built up in an *A-B-A-B* scheme, with the addition of a short recall-coda of *A*. Both *A*'s (in fast tempo) and *B*'s (in slower tempo) are not repetitions, and the second *B* is a terrifying climactic outburst, compared to its milder first statement. The beat of the *A* sections constantly vary from 3 to 2 or to 4, *B* sections are mostly in 3/4 or 6/8. In both sections, a variation of the principal motif can be recognized, similarly broad as the *Präludium*'s dirge, and using similar mysterious, dissonant chords in the first statement. In the second one, however, the dirge appears inverted and suggests a descent into the underworld. But there are no more evasive solo arabesques surging; both sections' themes remain controlled within the rhythmic and melodic structure.

The opening theme of the third movement, an episodic, chamber music-like *Andante amabile quasi allegretto*, is mainly in the key of A flat major. We might think, at first, that calm has returned to the composer's soul but this is not really the case, even though he explicitly wrote so. Occasionally, the atmosphere becomes oppressive. A more dissonant episode in a faster tempo suddenly suggests nervous laughter, as if evil spirits are making themselves heard again, or the witches of *Baba Yaga* are ridiculing the composers past anxieties. The rather mellifluous melody that follows is, actually, a variation of the Symphony's chorale ornamented second part. A secondary theme, made of floating semiquavers, then tries to struggle against, and then befriend itself with this melody, but with no real success. The semiquavers' flitting revenges itself by producing more witches' laughter, leading to an ambiguously blurred atmosphere, before the *amabile* returns. This time the semiquavers figurations integrate more easily with the melody's final and calm development.

Brun explicitly (and oddly) did not mark the Symphony's finale „Chaconne“, but *Tema con variazioni*. He delivers here another masterpiece, similar to the *Chaconne* of his Fifth Symphony. But once again, Brun exceeds the limitations of Baroque rules. Whilst he strictly maintains the use of variations of eight bars length, he constantly falls out of its traditional 3-beat, using beats of 2, 4, 5 and 6 fourths, or 2, 5, 6 and 7 eights. This time the 32 variations proceed forward rather logically, at least during the first half; more brutally contrasting sections show up later. The music becomes generally more and more complicated and dissonant; more and more passages become real orchestral tour de forces (both structurally and technically). Brun's inventive, dramatic, contrapuntal and instrumental skills are quite sensational; gourmet avant-garde listeners will probably be gobsmacked. This is, perhaps, Brun's most daring, avant-gardistic symphonic movement in the Neo-Baroque style. The pointed theme of the Chaconne is dissonant, and embedded in the key of A flat major in a very clever way. It is an energetic, whipping chain of intervals, at first ascending narrow ones and then descending wide ones, and the indication of its exposition is *grimmig* (*grim*) – probably a psychological allusion to the *wütend* (*enraged*) of the finale of the Fifth Symphony. There are no real moments of relaxation; even the lyrical variations reveal tension. And one does not have to expect, at the very end, that Brun should flatter us with an obvious and triumphal statement of the Symphony's principal chorale motif; the Chaconne has its own life, in its variations we can still discover occa-

sional echoes of the motif's earlier metamorphoses (as, for example the 2nd movement's „witch's laughter"). The music ends with a rather hurried brass fanfare, surging from a „matter-of-fact" scale-like line-up of Chaconne's theme, and, to attentive ears, eventually revealing itself as a hidden metamorphosis of the Symphony's chorale motif.

We may never learn what „strange and hostile personal influence" inspired Brun's Sixth Symphony. The author likes to think that the composer's „inner calm" is not really to be found at the end of this music. He thinks it came only after its composition was finished; the final note written down. It is not post-analysis; its creation itself was the cathartic process.

(Edited by Ian Lacey)

## Symphony No. 7 in D major

In his book, *Swiss music of the present time*, musicologist Willi Schuh, wrote: „If, after hearing his Sixth Symphony, one could affirm that in today's music there are very few of such high spiritual value, this sentiment must apply even more significantly to this new work. This Seventh Symphony is a most happy inspiration and it definitely marks Brun's personal style."

This magnificent work was premiered on 10th November 1937 once more by Hermann Scherchen and his Stadtorchester Winterthur. Other performances followed in Zürich in 1938 and, in the following year, in Bern, Zürich and St. Gallen. Until this recording it had not been performed since 1978.

The manuscript is dated 13th July 1937 marking a four-year interval from the completion of the Sixth Symphony. During that time, Brun had put aside most creative work as a composer in favor of demanding work as a conductor of his Bern Orchestra, which included performances of musical monoliths such as Bach's *Magnificat*, Handel's *Messiah*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and *Missa solemnis*, Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* and, last but not least, Bruckner's Fifth Symphony (in its original version).

Othmar Schoeck's opera *Venus* (composed 1919–21 and first performed in Zürich in 1922), was produced in Bern on the occasion of a 1934 Schoeck-Woche, an event which also included chamber concerts and a symphony concert featuring Schoeck's vocal cycle *Lebendig begraben* and his dramatic cantata *Vom Fischer und syner Fru*, conducted by Fritz Brun.

Brun was not only fascinated by the music of *Venus*, he was also intrigued by its story, which is based on tales by Mérimée and Eichendorff – and inspired by the Pygmalion legend about man's eternal search for the unattainable female ideal.

Contemporarily to *Venus*, Schoeck had written *Consolation* and *Toccata*, two piano pieces, of which the first was based on two of his opera's themes, the main one being a leitmotif connected to *Venus*, its mysterious protagonist. He dedicated his op. 29 to his young girlfriend and muse, the Bavarian pianist Mary de Senger, who had, at that time, just decided to separate from him. It seems that Brun had already started sketching his Symphony during that Schoeck-Week of 1934, but why exactly the composer borrowed Schoeck's theme remains a mystery. Of course, he did not literally quote it, but transformed it by amplifying its opening interval from a second into a seventh – most probably in order to make it sound more passionate – and less consoling. In his correspondence, Brun laconically revealed that his Symphony's first movement, which he entitled *Nachklang*, and intimated that its inspiration had been „too purely personal matters" needing „no closer explanations." „Nachklang" can be translated as „echo", „resonance" or „reminiscence", a term that had first been used by Romantic poets like Eichendorff and composers like Schumann.

Amongst Schoeck's vocal works there are two *Nachklänge*, one was an early song with piano from his *Lieder op. 30* (1917), and the other came from his vocal cycle with chamber group *Elegie op. 36* (1921–23). Both deal with the nostalgic yearning of youth. The composer evidently associated those Eichendorff and Lenau settings with the crisis of his love for Mary de Senger. The

development of the German Nazi regime and the world's overall depression of the 1930s may have prompted rather pessimistic reflections in both Schoeck and Brun, as in many other artists of that time. The present writer may even associate some dark passages and some climaxes in Brun's Seventh as reflections of such anxieties – besides the usual, self-analytical „quotations“ of his sanguine outbursts as a frustrated artist and of his daily struggles with Swiss provincialism and bureaucracy. Even the reviewer of the Winterthur performance felt that, especially with this Symphony's „luminous“ and „masterfully shaped“ finale, the composer had found a more „approachable style“, compared to the „knotty and uptight“ atmosphere of one of his earlier works, and that it even missed the „musical quarrels in which Brun had too obviously been involved, in reaction to the occasional adversities of life“. The composer himself wrote to Scherchen that, although it was similarly constructed to the Sixth, the Seventh was „more relaxed“, of a „more fluent“ style and of a „freer“ expression.

Brun's Sixth and Seventh Symphonies show various similarities. Both come up with daemonic scherzos, with serenade- or divertimento-like third movements and are „pre- or postlude-like“, demonstrating neither dramatic nor struggling elements which conform to traditional symphonic rules and they proceed in line with Brun's usual „development“ or „variation“ movements. They follow the Symphony's main motif through not too daring metamorphic transformations and carefully prepare the listener for the struggles and outbursts to come. In both opening movements, string solos are introduced, building up to, or rising out of mysterious and slightly tormented episodes with tricky and eerie dissonances. Whilst the Sixth's main motif becomes a dirge, in the Seventh we hear Brun's version of the *Venus* motif played by a 12-part string group (completely alone during the 11 opening bars); it is interrupted later by bouncing Passacaglia-like episodes from the remaining orchestral forces. This may suggest a composer's encouragingly optimistic reaction to his reveries. At times, wind instrument solos take over to enjoy the sensuous *Venus* motif. Bright violin solo arabesques, concluding the last string group episode, encourage us to guess that the composer has now found a „reasonable“ way to leave his reveries, after the Passacaglia theme finds resolution, so that serenity prevails – at least for a while.

Whilst the „scherzo“ of Brun's Sixth appeared as a kind of „witches' Sabbath“, the „scherzo“ of the Seventh can be interpreted as a struggle against duties, or the sense of duty, or against some „insistently motoric“ forces (in the form of an impeding 6/8 beat) by an artist's typically free and lyrical spirit. This is suggested by the trumpet's impertinent opening call, revealing itself as a variation of the *Venus* theme, this time closer to Schoeck's chromatic original. The movement is mainly in D major, whilst this, the Symphony's key, was held during only 20 bars of the opening movement and will re-appear, of course, in the finale's last section. Brahms-reminiscent, lyrical contrasting episodes reveal the composer's benevolent backward glance towards Romanticism, but suddenly they become more complicated and scherzo-like and end up as various dissonant and syncopated climaxes, during which the full orchestra literally screams out. The composer shows us how he wants to evade the incessant 6/8 beat and retreat into reveries, but the trumpet signal returns over and over again, until the strings have no alternative but to take it over, as if to demonstrate that it could not scare them anymore. Brun's symphonic movements are ambiguous, or even reactionary to traditional symphonic language. In this case, the scherzo contains episodes typical of a slow movement.

Similar thoughts can be applied to the following *Intermezzo*, not a typical slow movement, but somehow a troubled rhapsodic divertissement. The corresponding movement of the Sixth Symphony revealed itself as a kind of serenade with grotesque interventions. Here, in the Seventh, we hear some slightly troubled, dance-like chamber music. Its main virtuoso theme is a tricky transformation of the initial *Venus* motif (using only its ascending intervals), introduced right at the beginning by a clarinet solo ending in arabesques. Its secondary theme, made of leaping intervals of fourths, is both siciliano- and waltz-like – and harmonically and rhythmically more simple. Both themes try to make reciprocal acquaintance and merge, but with no immediate success. Intervening new „ideas“ distract the whole ensemble and the overall good

spirits lead the orchestra at first into a contemplative, less chamber-like, slower episode (with the *siciliano*), and later to a *presto*, in which we feel that the players need to recover from the previous intricacies with a change of atmosphere. What follows afterwards calls again for virtuosic demands as the musical structure becomes even more complicated. Finally, a beautifully relaxed coda concludes the whole.

The fourth movement, mostly in the key of D minor, reveals itself as a strong and exciting orchestral piece, in which Brun bursts out in great optimism. The composer even pays tribute to Bruckner in three impressive brassy climaxes, of which the final one, after the principal D major has returned, has its chorale-like motif ascending instead of descending. As usual in his finales, Brun likes to take up and merge most of the material of his previous movements (including many secondary themes), without forgetting his beloved *Venus* homage. This *Venus* motif becomes chromatic again, and it is heard at the very beginning (as it was at the very beginning of the Symphony), both as a variation – this time played by the bassoon – and, in a more floatingly chromatic sense, as that variations string accompaniment. A secondary theme of a more lyrical character does not appear as an independent contrast, but arises from incessantly urging material, from which the orchestra cannot save itself except as screaming climaxes, the less dissonant harmonies of which tend towards a necessary return to tonality. This secondary (slightly Elgarian) theme is a two-part affair, since its lyrical beginning ends up into joyfully bouncing figurations, infecting the movement's solemn atmosphere. Later on, solo instrument groups intervene with *concerto grosso*-like variations and there is even the build-up of a fugue that seems to have no end in sight and then, last but not least, come some more or less hidden reminiscences of the first movement's Passacaglia theme and the Intermezzo's *Presto* section, that is now used as a rhythmical pattern during the chorale climaxes. To untrained ears, these brassy climaxes may even sound strange and „not played together;“ this is because the rhythms sometimes become unpredictably syncopated.

I leave it to musicologists to eventually ascertain whether, in his Seventh Symphony, Brun had used more than just one theme from Schoeck's *Venus*.

As in his Sixth Symphony, Brun's wind section requires double wood-winds, one double bassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, strings and, as the only percussion instrument, timpani; and in the Sixth's finale, exceptionally, one single cymbal clash. The Seventh's first and third movements are exempt of trumpets. Whereas trombones are used in all movements of the Sixth; in the Seventh they are needed only in the fourth movement.

(Edited by Ian Lace)

## Symphony No. 8 in A major

*If you ask me about the style of my new Symphony and how it is constructed, I would reply that it follows the classical sonata form – I took great pains to fashion its thematic material with economy, severity and strict symphonic form. Accordingly it's absolute music.*

*Nevertheless, the work follows a secret programmatic main thread. The four movements embrace impressions of the four times of day. The first movement is immersed within the lively, busy activities of a city at midday. The second movement, in the evening, is based on the ancient Bernese folksong „Most beautiful Evening Star“. You will recognise it – it's a touching, yearning song. Imagine that I am sitting on a hill somewhere in the Emmental – maybe on the Moosegg – in the twilight, looking over to shining, golden cornfields and to peasants driving their hay carts back to their stables – and then over to the distant line of the Bernese Alps. I look towards the Entlebuch, where my grandmother's farm stood and where, as a small schoolboy, I used to spend my holidays and where I listened to the rustling of the fir trees – and where the soul of Central Switzerland's landscape and its inhabitants touched mine.*

*The third movement was inspired by a painting by Ernst Morgenthaler. It was given to me as a present. It shows the view from the front terrace of my house in Morcote, bathed in moonlight, just visible by lamplight; I am sitting under a tree in a corner, with my friends: Morgenthaler, Hubacher, Buch-*

*mann, Gamper and Bloesch. It's a warm night. We drink our wine but speak very little because the nocturnal silence speaks its own mysterious language! We are happy to be together. We listen to the sounds of a serenade coming from a boat on the lake, and from the street resounds the song of the old village cobbler, chronically enamoured with somebody. It is an ardent love song. It's getting late; the glimmer of the galaxies shines down over the Gate of Lombardy – the cooling night air signals that it is time to depart and go home and to bed.*

*The fourth movement takes us back to morning and with it peaceful domestic activity in house and garden – and in the musician's studio. The sun shines directly on to my window – my dear, kind Ticino sun. Its warmth sets me in a good mood which is reflected in the cheerful ending of the Symphony.*

Thus reads the composer's own introduction to his Eighth Symphony, as published in the program for its second and third performances in Bern on 13th and 14th December 1943. On these occasions he himself conducted the Orchester der Bernischen Musikgesellschaft. Previously, on 11th November 1942, the Symphony had been premiered in Winterthur by Hermann Scherchen and his Verstärktes Stadtorchester of the local Musikkollegium.

Eventually the work would be broadcast on Radio. On 4th October 1946, the composer recorded it with the Studio-Orchester Beromünster (issued in 2009 on *Guild GHCD 2351*), which appears, so far, to be the only orchestral recording with Brun as a conductor. Twenty years later, on 28th June 1966, the Swiss Radio re-recorded the Symphony with the Berner Symphonieorchester, conducted by a 34-year young Klaus Cornell, who at that time not only held a leading position in the Radio's music department, but was also the conductor of the Berner Radio-Oper, the Radio-Orchester and its Kammerensemble. It was the Golden Age of Swiss Radio: productions and concerts from those years were of a very impressive variety and of a high level musically. In the 1960s, the author regularly attended Sunday morning concerts of the Radio-Orchester Zürich. From these he learned a lot about music and its interpretation and he became personally acquainted with great Swiss and foreign performers. At that time, each Swiss language region maintained at least one Radio Orchestra; the German speaking region even three, located in Zürich, Bern and Basel. Additionally, from 1938 until 1970, there was a permanent studio ensemble, which, in 1945, was named Radio-Orchester Beromünster after Hermann Scherchen and Paul Burkhard took over its leadership on condition that in the future it should only be used for classical, not light music. It is difficult today to find detailed records of all the activities of the Beromünster Orchestra. So far, five more orchestral works by Brun with this ensemble are listed. They were recorded between 1956 and 1971 by other conductors. Of course, concerts with more orchestral works, played by the Basler, Luzerner and Berner Symphonieorchester and by the Berner Kammerorchester, were broadcast live. The total absence in Radio archives of spoken documentaries about Brun, such as interviews or rehearsal fragments, is regrettable and inexplicable. Brun's own recording of the Eighth Symphony is exciting and revealing; one can really feel his sanguine temper, great musicianship and perfect control of the orchestra. In Cornell's version, the first and fourth movements are less effulgent in many sections; his second and third movements are particularly detailed, beautiful and lyrical. With such magnificent examples at hand, the author's own conducting approach to this demanding work would be not to complicate it. An interpretation of his own was already forming in his mind years before he knew about the existence of these two broadcasts. An autograph copy of the Symphony had already been given to him by the composer's son in 2003, after he had recorded Brun's Third – this was even before a complete Brun recording project was ever discussed. For various reasons, a new recording of this Symphony would be scheduled for much later in the project's sequence.

The author's „new“ interpretation of Brun's Eighth Symphony will hopefully prove that he is of a similarly sanguine temperament as the composer and, for example, that he wanted to express the second movement differently, by making it some two minutes shorter through faster tempi – and adopting a more darkly passionate approach. Willi Schuh, in his review of the Symphony's premiere, mentions this movement's duration to be „over 22 minutes“, whereas the composer's and Cornell's recordings are both under nineteen minutes – and ap-

pear slow enough already. In the author's personal opinion, after the music's frequent evocative - and rather obsessive - "wanderings through the stars", only the final statement of the "moonlight music" (as the author interprets the movement's concluding mood) should be played in a contrastingly slower and relaxed tempo, in order to suggest that it was only there that the composer could find his inner peace. Occasionally, in the author's interpretation, faster and slower contrasting music in the first and fourth movements are more strongly emphasised than those by the composer.

A review of the Winterthur premiere by Franz Kienberger, published in Bern's daily *Der Bund*, was enthusiastic. Besides delivering a short analysis of the work, it observes: „Brun never cared about the judgements of his contemporaries. Over and over again he had tried, in his deep creative loneliness, to stretch that audacious four-part structure, called Symphony". With indefatigable self-criticism and the fire of all his strength, he increasingly succeeded, from one work to another, to accomplish a large four-movement construct of inner continuity.... Today, no other Swiss composer except Brun is able to stretch to such an extent the great, strong symphonic form, and his great merit is to cultivate it and develop it further - and pass it on to succeeding generations when it might be developed further."

Another short analysis can be found in a similarly enthusiastic review of the Thurgauer *Volkszeitung*, from which we also learn that „... there remains [Brun's] noble and clear line, his fine and wise sense of moderation, and the serious, authentic Swiss culture and mastery of composition. What previously had been tortuous groping and dark-coloured has been cleared away. The clearing up of colour, thought and orchestration has led to a melodic richness, which modernism had forsaken. Brun's Eighth Symphony transports us into a familiar accessible sound world. A healthy freshness, an animated youthfulness and individuality radiates from all corners and niches of this Symphony in A major. A tree has grown here, and it will continue to grow and flourish when large forests of so-called contemporary wood have since long withered... With healthy pride one can whole-heartedly rejoice to see that a Swiss has created such a work, a work with which Fritz Brun can proudly align himself with major and contemporary composers".

Brun officially disapproved of typical program music. Concert managers may have occasionally pressured him to „explain" his works, in order to assist musically less well educated listeners, or flatter those with a sceptical attitude towards „modern" or „difficult" music. In the present booklet notes, the author proceeds similarly - sometimes going further in his explanations of Brun's music, using more comprehensible language to state his viewpoint of the music which of course remains open to discussion. Also it is felt that Brun should not be idealised, not placed on a pedestal but presented as a totally earth-bound and realistic person, who wrote music primarily to justify his place in this world (his family, his friends and, last but not least, his beloved nature), letting the heights and depths of his inner life to be surmised by the more sensitive and knowledgeable listener.

If Brun's Symphony is to be placed in a music history context, it should be noted that it was written in the year between Shostakovich's heroic „*Leningrad Symphony* (No. 7)" of 1941 and his mourning Eighth Symphony of 1943. The author recommends that Brun's Eighth should be enjoyed in the first instance as a purely abstract piece, rather than as a domestic triviality. As such it became an easy target for Brun opponents. Domesticity however, can be a legitimate artistic inspiration source, as long as the narrative is sublimated into great music. Richard Strauss' *Sinfonia domestica* (1903) is a masterwork displaying a similar disproportion between a simplistic program and a grandiose implementation. In his Ninth Symphony, written eight years after his Eighth, Brun would return to a similar narrative again - except in its fifth movement, which deals with God, faith and nature. Which Swiss composer of that time would have had the same plausible reasons as Shostakovich to write Symphonies about World War II? Arthur Honegger, for example, had such reasons, but he was living in Paris. His Second Symphony is inspired by the oppressive atmosphere of the German occupation.

Brun's Eighth is scored for pairs of woodwinds including a bass clarinet and an extra double

bassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, timpani and strings.

### I. *Allegro vivace*

The lively, busy activities of a city at midday, described in this movement, must refer to metropolises like Berlin, Wien, London, Paris or Roma (all visited by Brun during his lifetime), because no Swiss city in the 1940's had the busy atmosphere suggested by the music. Swiss cities' narrow streets could not compare with the sophistication of Paris's wide boulevards.

In the opening movement of Ralph Vaughan Williams' *A London Symphony* (first published in 1920), the noise and scurry of street traffic is most vivaciously evoked. The term *Nocturne* occurs in the title of its third movement; it evokes distant sounds and street music – and one wonders whether Brun was acquainted with this work? On the other hand, nocturnal music scenes describing similar effects have been written by many other composers.

How more or less consequently – or how elaborately – Brun forced his Symphony into the straightjacket of the classical sonata form is best analysed in detail by specialists. Considering, for example, that instead of a scherzo, the work contains a second slow movement, which might be thought of an isolated lyrical trio, or an intermezzo-serenade – reinforces the view that this is not a symphony in the accepted classical sense. Instead it shows much originality and this is already evident in its opening movement.

Musicologist Willi Schuh, in his review of the Winterthur premiere, did not describe the first movement's „formal“ aspect, but wrote that the agogics of its „aggressive“ *Allegro vivace* were not „easy to grasp“, and that its harmonic development is „unusual, but informal and exempt of speculative gesture“. And he found that its cantabile sections „partial endings“ reminded him more of Schoeck than of Bruckner. Curiously, neither Schuh nor other reviewers would refer to an evident Berliozian relationship of the first movement's fanfare motif. No pejoratives are intended on making this remark – anyway besides Brahms, Berlioz was one of Brun's favourite composers, and surely Brun would have smiled at being reminded of this.

Apart from the fact that the Symphony's *Allegro vivace* can be considered to be a real „triplet feast“, its introductory (triplet) fanfare à la Berlioz has a more important function than a Symphony's *idée fixe* – it's the movement's main protagonist. It consists of an insistently repeated note and various half-tone steps up- and downwards (with additional octave jumps in both directions), harmonised in chords of thirds and fourths, with interventions of dissonant minor seconds – and interrupted by dramatic chords by the whole orchestra. This fanfare will reappear in the Symphony's triumphant coda – suggesting, perhaps, that Brun is being persuaded to leave his *Indipendenza* (his Ticino house), to travel again to a city. Short cells of this fanfare motif will be discreetly quoted in the Symphony's second and third movements – meaning that the composer is reminded of the city even during his moments of repose – or that his home is not far away from a big city. Do these blaring triplets suggest a chaos of car horns and tramway bells – if so, why not? Against these – and during the whole *Allegro vivace* – the remaining thematic material constantly meets opposition in affirming and developing itself. The movement's passionate principal theme (heard after the opening fanfare in the lower strings) is already a variation of this fanfare – and rhythmically sustained by its triplets. At the end of the exposition's first part, a dramatic and admonishing outcry, in the form of a descending and ascending new fanfare-like outburst by the whole orchestra (without triplets), causes a general stop. A new energetic and marching theme (also without triplets) – suggesting perhaps the composer as a pedestrian, or just pedestrians making their way through city bustle – is now presented and confronted with the new signal's development.

The movement goes on through various similarly „struggling episodes“ and developments involving fanfares, signals and themes. Its principal theme has, actually, only reduced its chances to really enjoy itself: the car and tramways and hurrying pedestrians' motifs always return. Only twice, before the start of the movement's reprise, two brief transparent interludes do occur: in the first we hear the triplet fanfare (violins and violas in octaves) softly accompanying a combined variation of the first lyrical theme and the admonishing motif (also in paral-

lel octaves by a flute, a bassoon and two cellos) – or, in the second, at the end of the reprise, when our, by now, familiar triplets (in the form of a slower and *pianissimo* seven-part string chant) are straining over a transition of seventh chords from B flat major to D minor. It is as if the city is suddenly regretting its traffic chaos and is longing for peace and quiet.

The movement's coda is in the form of a second transition. It opens with a brassy recapitulation of the Symphony's introduction (insisting on F sharp minor's and A major's common passage notes A and Bb) – actually the Berliozian fanfare's own characteristic. Finally, one gets the impression that traffic horns, tramway bells and hurrying pedestrians are more coordinated than in previous re-expositions and developments. The admonishment motif is also re-exposed solemnly, as if it finally approves of the fanfare's urgent need to bring the movement back to its principal A major. Brun's masterfully economic handling of his thematic material is very evident, and not only in this movement.

## II. *Andante* (after an old Bernese song: „Most Beautiful Evening Star“)

As in his later *Ouvertüre zu einer Jubiläumsfeier*, Brun used an old Swiss folksong from the collection *Im Röseligarte*. He chose *Schönster Abestärn* (*Most Beautiful Evening Star*) – which appears to be slightly related to Wolfram's *Evening Star* from *Tannhäuser*. Brun, however, uses only the notes of *Abestärn*'s first two verses and transforms its march-like 2/4-beat into a 6/8 Siciliano. In the original Swiss German song's text, a lovesick young man declares his feelings to the planet Venus. In the following strophes his worship is further addressed to a red rose and to a tulip; and we learn that they too symbolize his girlfriend, who is crying, and with whom – in the „midst of the night“ and „within half an hour“ – he has, apparently, consummated a „marital union“.

Not counting the seven-part *Variations* movement of his Third Symphony, this appears to be Brun's longest slow symphonic movement. In the author's personal opinion, the composer's reminiscences (listed in his introductory notes) appear to be, perhaps, a bit too simplistic when one thinks about the music's almost obsessive intensity and the more universal impression it communicates. The observation „almost obsessive“ could also be justified by the fact that never before had Brun intended to ornament a musical theme of a symphonic movement in such manifold and meticulous ways – and to leave its melody still excluded from typical formal variations. In his article, the reviewer of the Thurgauer Zeitung mentions that, after the Symphony's performance, a lady from the audience moaned: „what a terribly long Evening Star“ and the reviewer imagined that the poet Gottfried Keller would have answered her, „Such a thing could only be said by a mooncalf.“ Willi Schuh's impression – written in his *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* review after the Winterthur premiere, was that „Everything develops itself so beautifully and irresistibly that Brun seems unable to detach himself from this music, and that he delays its definite swan song over and over again with new modulations“.

This movement, principally in C sharp minor, appears as a sequence of „rapturous paraphrases on a Swiss folk-song“. A short introduction, various episodes and a calm postlude can be recognized. All sections, except two of them and the postlude, have the *Abestärn* song quoted at their beginning. Either before it ends or immediately afterwards, this theme will be paraphrased or developed, and various resulting secondary themes (or theme cells) appear. One of these, for example, is an extended sequence of descending half-tones, thirds and sixths, involving all twelve notes of the chromatic scale, as it occurred in the first movement's lyrical theme – but sounding here even more lyrical by the way the composer arranges and harmonizes it. In a few instances, shorter versions of this theme appear in the play-outs imitating sighing. In the movement's final bars there are even slight echoes of the first movement's secondary theme. If we further explore the *Andante*'s complex structure, a hidden form of the Symphony's opening triplet fanfare can also be found, as, for example, in the movement's final accompanying chords. Fragments of the same are also used as rhythmic accompaniment cells in the movement's two climactic sections. Some of *Abestärn*'s episodes have longer developments, others shorter ones, while some have longer or shorter codas. In the two dramatic climaxes, occurring

in the movement's first half and towards its end, one even gets the impression of hearing desperate sobbing. Two particularly elaborate episodes (in E/C major and G major) do not begin with original *Abestärn* quotes, but directly in neo-Baroque-like decorated versions, in which the violins, and, later, the upper woodwinds, have to deal with trills, appoggiaturas and elaborate figurations – sometimes involving over twenty notes within a single bar. They may, on the other hand, suggest Swiss folk music *Ländler*s, as played improvisatory-like and paraphrased by a virtuoso clarinet and accordion. In these cases, Brun's (vertical) juxtaposition of different and complicated rhythmical figurations – making some of these passages sound like aleatoric music – is brought to an extreme almost. The movement's postlude does not return to C sharp minor, but into an eccentric D flat major, intended to subtly prepare the following movement's angst-like D minor.

### III. Notturmo

In Morgenthaler's painting *Moon over Lake Ceresio* of 1942, mentioned by the composer in his introductory notes, the portrayed men are recognizable. One is about to pour out a glass of wine for a cigar-smoking Brun, who wears his usual *béret basque*. The picture comes alive because of the contrast between two light sources: the reddish shade of a little lamp placed on a round table in the picture's left corner and the full-moon reflected in the lake. The men's faces get none of the lamp's reflection (instead the reflection is seen on the table's surface). The faces remain moon-lit pale.

Through his own musical interpretation of this movement, the author realises that nocturnal silence, speaking its mysterious language, can only be reached by emphasising the music's narcotic character – describing a feeling of tipsiness that follows a few glasses of wine. Brun's choice of the bass clarinet as a *concertante* instrument is spot on. Its theme and its following „idyllic paraphrases“ neither directly evoke a distant cobbler's husky amorous singing nor an even a more distant serenade, but function as an overall atmospheric and psychological element.

In a way, this *Notturmo* can be considered to be an intoxicated piece à la Berlioz, a reverie – without, of course, the need of visions of scaffolds or witches' Sabbaths. It is, as if Brun and his five artist friends sitting around that red-lit table, had decided to let themselves go after an intellectual conversation, and to associate themselves with the mysteries of the night. *Notturmo's* theme is, no doubt, a lovely one, but it does sound rather frivolous and superficial. More interesting is the fact that it gives the impression of becoming more earthbound in those sequences in which the bass clarinet tries to escape – through risky, cadenza-like, and, occasionally, almost grotesque figurations – echoed by the strings that discovered how to fool around too. Later on, the bass clarinet quotes her melody again, by moving it on to a lower register after being slowed down by a flute's more agile virtuosity, as if to say „All right, flute, but let me remind you that you cannot go down as far as I can!“ At *Notturmo's* beginning, after the bass clarinet's opening statement (in F minor, over an ambiguous D minor accompaniment), the movement's song- or dance-like theme is continued by beautifully singing strings in octaves (now in a pseudo-gypsy D minor, with an additional lead tone to the dominant), but their reliability too diminishes increasingly for they simply cannot resist descending into drowsy rustlings, arpeggios and, finally, to ethereal solos. This nocturnal conversation piece between bass clarinet and strings seems occasionally to be hurried forward by delicate mini fanfares, heard at first in the opening bars (trumpets and horns) and, for example, towards its central section (horns alone, now muted). Are they describing the cobbler's singing? Why then would it be taken over repeatedly – and with increasing sympathy – by the serenading (?) strings and not by the bass clarinet – which just mentions it once, as if by accident? In these fanfare echoes, we may recognise pocket versions of the Symphony's triplet fanfare, suggesting distant city sounds, as transported over on a nocturnal breeze. In a stretched and much slower form, this motif will also be quoted by two muted trumpets during *Notturmo's* visionary ending – suggesting that the moon has finally taken over control of the scenery (as also seemed

to be the case in the second movement's ending). The composer and his friends will eventually fall asleep even before reaching their beds.

In the author's opinion, this highly original impressionistic *Notturmo* is a masterpiece of its kind, musically and in its orchestration. The bass clarinet (confused by the reviewer of the Thurgauer Zeitung with a „bass saxophone“) is only asked to play in this movement – in which only one clarinet is used – meaning that the second clarinet player should be ready to take up the rather demanding *concertante* part if necessary.

Similar autobiographically inspired nocturnal scenes can be found in the second and fourth movements of Brun's Ninth Symphony of 1950. But this time they take place in Zürich. In its second movement, a group of young people serenade a lady in a park, and the fourth describes a group of merry artist friends, merrily celebrating around a restaurant table. They will be there until closing time.

#### IV. Allegro non troppo

In the music-room of Brun's home in Morcote, another group portrait hangs next to the aforementioned nocturnal oil painting by Morgenthaler. Wilfried Buchmann's picture shows *The Brun family in the garden of the Indipendenza* – in 1932, in bright daylight. But the people's faces are left unfinished, undetailed. The composer can be recognized by his tall stature. He is the only person standing, the only one placed in the pictures foreground and the only one looking out towards the viewer. He lights a cigar or his pipe – or so one may guess from the position of his arms. These protagonists seem to become impersonal elements of a Cézanne-like montage of light and colours. No little red lamp is needed anymore, but a big red-and-yellow parasol, producing reddish shadows over a larger square table, around which the family is gathered (the lady in a red dress is, presumably, Brun's daughter Regula). They all seem to be more concerned with themselves than with each other. As in Morgenthaler's painting, the Lake of Lugano can be seen in the background. Buchmann's impressionistic vision strongly contradicts Brun's rather turbulent musical description. Its occasional stronger outbursts may even suggest the composer shouting down from his studio window into the busy garden, asking for peace and quiet. Shorter fanfare bursts might be interpreted as toy trumpets blaring.

The movement opens with a rather plaintive and extended melody in A minor (with a certain dissonance). Its first half is chromatic, while the second is made up of descending intervals of thirds. This is the main theme which is immediately developed and transformed into a more chromatic, whirlwind-like yet more feminine triplet version, to be, shortly afterwards taken over, without complications, by all the orchestral forces, producing an energetic new variation, constructed upon straight notes and thicker chords. Although maintaining the movement's 3/4 beat, it sounds march-like and masculine. At times it will even try to fake a march's 2/4, by forcing the 3/4 into syncopations. Before this theme has the opportunity to take on more wayward turns, an *etwas beruhigend* (a bit calming) tempo change occurs, in which a solo clarinet produces a lengthy lyrical statement – one more of the Symphony's twelve-note themes. This is actually a distant variation of the movement's main theme. It leads to a fresher restatement of the original tempo (now cautiously described by the adjective *tranquillo*) and to a secondary theme (in F major, again with a leading dissonance), in which one could hear a loosely breaking up of the *Abestärn* song. The latter is built up into four bars of large ascending and descending intervals, followed by two bars of chromatic semiquavers, and ending up with leaping figurations. Within a short time it needs to affirm itself against the returning masculine theme that has embellished itself by taking some triplet ornamentations from the movement's main theme. Another peaceful moment ensues – the oboe is allowed to produce its own lyrical, extended twelve-note distant variation just before the masculine variation intervenes again, producing stronger brassy sounds. This climax leads to a longer transitory episode, in which the main theme is calmly sung-out by the strings.

All this is a description of only a first of the movement's various confrontation sections, in which already stated themes and motifs are more or less in passionate dispute – and not al-

ways orderly – or even in a contrasting lyrically soliloquising mode, all this material wanders through various keys and with somewhat dissonant and rather complicated accompaniments. But some listeners may recognise reasonably easily which combating element occasionally takes the upper hand – i.e. the first feminine theme or its secondary masculine form, or the various metamorphic variations or signal-like compressions. Curiously enough, the German *ruhig* and the Italian *tranquillo* indications are both used within slower sections separated by only about ten bars. After the last *tranquillo*, in which one hears the contrasting themes quoted separately in an apparently conciliatory mood, the 3/4 beat changes into 2/4 and the marching theme, now more optimistic returns shortly to the A major, prompting the return of the Symphony's fanfare à la Berlioz and to a build-up to a final development (using nearby keys instead, and some earlier thematic material), to end in a boisterous finale, the music having found its way back again into the Symphony's principal key.

According to the autograph's final date entry, Brun finished composing his Eighth Symphony on 12th June 1942. Already mentioned in earlier CDs' liner notes, there is much more to be discovered in this music than the author has tried to uncover – but this is a musicologist's task.

Last but not least it should be mentioned that the encounter with Brun's music was a highlight in the author's older years' artistic career and studying and recording this magnificent work an unforgettable experience. Yet, whilst not renouncing his great love for Honegger's Second and Third Symphonies, he considers Brun's Eighth to be the most brilliant and emotional Symphony of Swiss 20th century music.

(Edited by Ian Lace)

## Symphony No. 9 in F major

„Conducting is a beautiful activity, yet I suffer under my own inadequacy, but also under those by the orchestra and the choirs – one is never able to realise everything as desired, much of it remains an unfilled wish“ wrote the composer in 1941, after he had retired from his Bern directorship. The further quotation „And I also want to praise old age; its absorbed relation with the wonders of nature and with the secrets of life“ can be considered as the motto of Brun's Ninth of nine years later. Now in his seventies, the composer could look back to a very productive and successful artistic life and finally enjoy the autumn of life in Southern Switzerland, in a more than inspiring and soothing landscape full of sunshine and colours.

This Symphony, completed on 28th July 1950, was premiered at the Zürich Tonhalle under the baton of Volkmar Andreae, on 12th December of the same year. It was generally well received, although a reviewer did not seem to be satisfied with its calm and unpretentious ending. Brun had intended to show that the feelings he had come to express in the last movement did not need a finale-like closing – as if he realised that what could not be told with words, for once could not even be told with music. Unfortunately the reviewer did not realise that, more importantly, the Symphony is a thoroughly melodic work; he just described it as „klangfreudig“ („sound-joyful“).

Brun's Ninth is indeed full of sunshine and happiness, but the composer's intentions reveal more introvert, autobiographical intentions. On this occasion he had even decided to refrain from traditional symphonic rules and to create a work closer to a symphonic suite. In fact, he himself called it his „first programmatic work, a diary“.

Brun's Symphony can be considered a three-way conversation piece: an intimate one with a beloved woman (3rd mvnt.), an extravert one with a group of friends (4th mvnt.) and an introvert one with himself (5th mvnt.). These three passionate episodes are preceded by two „divertimenti musicali“, one as an introduction to the whole (1st mvnt.) and another to its two central conversation pieces (2nd mvnt.). In fact, both the *Prelude* and the *Serenade* contain motifs reappearing later in more or less metamorphosed form, and also differently treated. Apart from having entitled each movement specifically, the composer had delivered to Andreae a detailed pro-

gram, which may sound perhaps a bit too descriptive (or too earth-bound as far as some movements are concerned) in the ear of a demanding music lover re-reading it, after having listened to the demanding music described. This note also figured on the back of the program leaflet of the Bern performance of the Symphony two years later (also conducted by Andreae):

*The introduction (first movement) thematically refers to the principal motif of the third movement. It is the busy and turbulent preparation of the Serenade. The Serenade and the Love Scene (second and third movement) belong together.*

*A group of young people play music in the nocturnal silence of a park. In front of the balcony of a house, behind its shutters, a lady closely observes both the arrangements and the playing. As the music dies away, the shutters open; the lady curtseys and the musicians take off. Only one stays – and shortly afterwards the beauty is with him. – Both walk back and forth in the darkness of the trees. The girl listens with a trembling heart to the young man's wooing courtship.*

*Fourth movement: A group of befriended musicians, painters and sculptors gather together one evening in a restaurant of Zürich's old town. The reception is joyful and everyone has something to tell. As long as the conversation is about family matters, events of the day and politics, it remains normal and calm. But it becomes heated as soon as artistic problems are discussed. Some participants react rebelliously and some other bang the table. An orderly discussion would easily help to solve the conflict. But, as long as all talk confusedly, this is difficult.*

*One of the friends, an admired, mild and conciliatory nature, starts faintly to sing – a soft melody from the Opera „Martha“. It sounds a bit out of tune, but makes it possible that in no time the joyful atmosphere is being restored. The singer is being cheered, more drinks are ordered and everybody is happy about the reconfirmed friendship.*

*Closing time: one has to leave. On the street, the freezing men stand around for a while and promise each other to meet again soon. And they scatter in all directions on the last streetcars.*

*Fifth Movement:*

*„I see the great magnificence  
and can't behold enough of it...*

*Then, under the firmament,  
my heart tells me in my breast:  
there is something better in the world  
than all its pain and pleasure“.*

This latter quote is from *Die Sternseherin Lise (Lise the Star-Seer)* by the German Romantic poet Matthias Claudius (1740-1815). The extended movement itself is a passionate symphonic poem about belief, hope and love for life. Compared to the third movement (in which a young couple reveals occasionally to be quarrelling), it has more than just one climactic moment, and its hymn-like motif is a variation of the secondary motif of the introduction – just to mention one of the various thematic connections, justifying the title of „Symphony“ against that of „Suite“. Both the „main“ (third and fifth) movements display exciting melodic and contrapuntal craftsmanship, besides Brun's fabulous flair for orchestral transparency and colour, without the need of extravert effects. We should not forget some magnificent solo parts in the *Serenade*, a movement scored for a reduced ensemble. Once more, string players must be faced with hair-raising technical difficulties; practically all symphonic works by this composer appear to be rather challenging to conductors and orchestras who are unwilling to rehearse an out-of-the-repertoire work more than usually.

Brun's Ninth is scored for a normal symphony orchestra of 3 flutes, pairs each of oboes, clarinets and bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones and timpani.

The more one reads or listens to this work, the more one can discover treasures and sophisticated thematic connections. That Brun's Symphonies require repeated listening before one really starts to fully appreciate them, lets us guess that they may have been written to allow us to go through a kind of „musical catharsis“. In any case, the Ninth Symphony's 3rd and 5th movement are both very demanding, if the listener wants to go beyond the purely enjoyment of its overall melodic and logically progressing character. One must not forget that at that time

already, composers of serial, aleatoric and electronic music were imposing themselves against less reactionary composers like Stravinsky, Britten, Martinů, Henze and Zimmermann, who were already more „modern“ than Brun. Brun's renowned Swiss contemporaries Honegger, Martin and Sutermeister had broken with German symphonic tradition, but all this, fortunately, does not mean that he was not a child of his time and that his music should be forgotten. Our hearts keep their need to sing and love in music, no matter if other artist's brains cry out loudly (and often chaotically), mainly under pretexts of artistic progress or originality.

Finally, if we want to compare Brun's Ninth with Strauss's *Sinfonia domestica*, a similarly symphonic „personal diary“, there is not only the case to discover how immensely spiritualized can be the music of a 72 years old composer against that of a man of 39, who, in 1903, had produced an idyllic family picture through monumental orchestral forces. Brun's work has its idyllic and bourgeois moments too, but it needs a smaller formation and less instrumental effects. It sets the listener of thinking, making him turn away from just enjoying a musical photo album.

*(Edited by Ian Lacey)*

## Symphony No. 10 in B flat major

Brun's last Symphony was completed on 13th December 1953 and was first performed by the Verstärktes Berner Stadtorchester and its conductor Luc Balmer on 7th and 8th November 1955. In November 1958, the year of the composer's 80th birthday, and just one year before his death, it was played again by the same musicians.

A reviewer of the premiere commented: „Brun is the only composer in our country to whom the description of a real symphonist can be applied and who is able to cultivate this musical form consequently into old age.“

Brun himself revealed that: „I had composed my Second Symphony in 1909. It is in the key of B flat major, as is the present new Symphony [No 10]. B flat major is my favourite key. I cannot give any reason for this – or do threads spin, just because of this tonality, from the new work back to the output of my youthful years? Are those two pieces related to one another? Does youth still greet me over the decades? ‚Old, unnameable days‘, as Mörike says.“

The last strophe of Mörike's allegorical poem *Im Frühling (In Springtime)* can be taken indeed as the motto of this work:

*...I reflect upon this and reflect upon that,  
I yearn for something and don't really know for what.  
Half of it is desire, half of it is complaint.  
Tell me, O my heart,  
What kind of remembrances do you weave  
In the dusk of golden, green twigs?  
Old unnameable days.*

Mörike's poem had been set to music by Hugo Wolf in 1888. Both Wolf and Schoeck were by then experiencing springtime as young men. In the case of Brun (75 in 1953) we are faced with, as it were, an old man's „Spring Symphony“ – anything but lacking a youthful Sturm und Drang. In other words, there is little melancholy or aggression. In his Ninth Symphony, Brun had reflected upon old age and (almost autobiographically) upon his happily fulfilled life; now, his music would become definitely more „universal“, as Brun's own full and active life had been.

From the vineyards of his Morcote residence (where he lived as a pensioner since 1941), Brun could enjoy the magnificent panorama over Lake Lugano, the ideal inspiration for such open-hearted music as we hear in his Tenth Symphony.

The Symphony's three faster movements sound optimistic, with a recurring tendency to become boisterous. The *Adagio's* beautifully meditative string theme turns at first into a unique transfigured yearning, before its constant recurring tendency to metamorphose into arabesques or lyrical variations. *Concerto grosso*-like wind groups occasionally intervene to enrich the song-like strings and to turn the music into a sequence of short-lived, rhythmical climaxes which relapse once more. These constant changes may suggest moody April weather in an open landscape.

The second movement (*Mosso*) begins as a nervous scherzo but suddenly turns into an elaborately-developed symphonic movement with characteristics of variation form. Its leaping theme anticipates the fugue of the last movement. It seems that the composer wanted to recreate the orchestral palettes of Schumann's and Mendelssohn's scherzos, at the same time as using modern harmonies and stronger syncopations. Schumann's *Spring Symphony* is, incidentally, in the same key of B flat major.

Such characteristics, as it were, in a different landscape – eventually, perhaps, stormier autumn weather – can also be felt in the first movement of the Symphony, in which examples of Brun's homage to Schumann are even more apparent. Its theme, darkly introduced at the beginning, turns suddenly into a seductive romantic contemplation. A sequel of contrasting moods and passionate outbursts appears shortly afterwards, always sinking back into nostalgic contemplation, featuring folksong-like secondary themes, as it were sung by the woodwind. These contrasts intensify during an elaborate development in order that the principal theme can affirm itself at the end into a joyful, almost defiant, brass-led statement.

The Finale (*Vivace*) opens as a joyfully leaping fugue in 6/8, with a tendency to syncopation by increasingly moving into a three-four pulse. During the development, the fugue has to fight against two broad lyrical themes, which are eventually integrated through contrapuntal harmony leading to an energetic conclusion. Since the music of this movement is more tempestuous than the first, we may suppose it reflects impressions from another, climatically more extreme, landscape than that of Southern Switzerland.

As in all of Brun's Symphonies, the string section many difficult passages to play, one reason perhaps as to why the composer's music does not feature prominently in Switzerland's concert repertoire. The orchestration of this work is even more modest than that of the Fifth Symphony. Besides excluding double bassoon and tuba, it has only two trumpets, and trombones play only in the third and fourth movements.

(Edited by Ian Lace)

## Aus dem Buch Hiob (From the Book of Job)

This very interesting tone poem for large orchestra was written in 1906, between the First and the Second Symphony, after the 28 years old composer had definitely returned to Switzerland. It was the year in which he successfully performed (in Bern) Brahms's First Piano Concerto. In the years immediately preceding and following the performance of this arduous work, Brun had given various recitals with solo and chamber pieces by Brahms. Consulting concert programs, we can see that Brun had dared and succeeded to promote Brahms in Bern at that time. Incidentally, Brun's first appearance of 1909, as a newly appointed conductor of the Bernische Musikgesellschaft, included Brahms's Violin Concerto with Carl Flesch as a soloist.

Brun himself conducted the premier performance of *Aus dem Buch Hiob* at the Swiss Music Festival of Neuchâtel, on 26th May 1906. Carl Munzinger (Brun's chief conductor predecessor) would revive it in Bern, on 28th February 1907. A Bern reviewer wrote that it was a „deep work, deserving greater diffusion, which it certainly will get“. However, as with many other youthful works by forgotten composers, this piece fell into oblivion, presumably for the usual cliché reservations that it reflected influences by other composers. Of course, nobody frowns in front of similarly influenced works written by world's musical giants, and Brun's occasional

references to his model composer Brahms is more than simple plagiarism.

The work is based on a fascinating book of the Ancient Testament, dealing with the justice of God and the recognition that human sufferings enable mankind to regain its happiness; that a sinner's sufferings have educational values and the Godless have no chance. Brun, having just surmounted his youthful years of deceptions and struggles, may have identified himself with Job, who after having had to defend his own firmness intrepidly, was to find out that God is just, either by punishing the righteous, or by leaving the culprits unpunished; this being a truth eluding from human conceptions about justice and morality.

This symphonic poem in G minor is a sequel of episodes, in which a calm ascending, „fate“-like motif of quavers of gipsy inflection (suggesting Hebrew modals) and its echo-like derivative of more chromatic semiquavers are used, either as developing material, or to create section's themes, avoiding traditional variations patterns. After a short introduction, the first lyrical section depicts Job's happiness and wealth, until a first confrontation with crisis, followed by a passionate outburst. Job's life becomes peaceful again, through a beautiful section with a clarinet solo, developed into a transparent development from the strings. Full orchestral forces come back in the following dramatic episode in B flat minor, dealing with Job's crucial confrontation with Satan, his despair and outcry for justice and, finally, his purifying self-recognition. A further lyrical development in G major with calm resolution describes Job's enlightening. In the recapitulation-like ending, the re-embellished restatement of the initial thematic material suggests Job's (and the composer's) positive approach to life. This happens both in an expansive singing out by the strings against a moderate march-like support by the winds and the timpani, raising to an affirmative climax dying away into a transfigured pianissimo.

*Aus dem Buch Hiob* requires orchestral forces similar to the Ninth Symphony with the addition of double bassoon, tuba, and a very sparingly scores harp. It remains unpublished, as are most of the other orchestral works by Brun.

(Edited by Ian Lace)

## Overture to a Jubilee Celebration

Brun's sole overture, written in May 1950 and premiered at Bern's concert-hall „Kasino“ on Sunday the 8th October of the same year, was commissioned by Radio Bern, to celebrate its 25th anniversary coinciding with the inauguration of a new studio building. Luc Balmer conducted the Berner Stadtorchester, with the composer sitting in the audience. Two more performances with Balmer would take place on 12th and 13th March 1951, during the orchestra's subscription concerts.

At first, it seemed puzzling that the 16th century church melody, *In God's Name I will rise*, was used by Brun as thematic material for this piece which he wrote for a celebration that had no religious connection. Almost certainly, Brun's source had been the Swiss folksong collection *Im Röseligarte* (published by Otto von Greyerz from 1908 till 1925), in whose 5th volume this hymn is entitled *In Gottes Namen heb ich's an* – contrarily to the original *heb ich an*. Apparently, the original verses had been completely revised and adapted to suit Bernese circumstances – and they went beyond the scope of official church rules. In this new version, God is being addressed in quite a humorous and profane way to praise Bern's powerful, noble and generous big bear, the city's heraldic animal. Beware those who provoke him or speak ill of him! The song's text's amusing nine strophes may have appealed to Brun, adding to the music's atmosphere of good-humour after its introductory solemnity. It may also have prompted Brun to treat its thematic material in a rhapsodic and particularly colourful way. Incidentally, Hans Huber had harmonised the same hymn into an introductory *Gebet (Prayer)* in his *Jugendalbum (Album for the Youth, for piano)* some 30 years before.

Brun in this context retraced his compositional steps away from his rather modern and un-

compromised style to a more conventional, accessible one, since he considered his work an occasional piece. He had experienced enough trouble of having to acknowledge that his Symphonies met so little approval from conservative Bernese concert-goers. But Swiss Radio and the city of Berne should be proud of having been honoured with such a powerful and appealing concert overture!

Instead of analysing this *Jubilee Overture*, the author - just for a change and for readers' entertainment - quotes three different reviews, not exempting some almost untranslatable or extravagant German. They were published after the 1950 premiere and two later performances, a first that occurred at the 1960 Lucerne Music Festival (conducted by Max Sturzenegger), and a second, in 1964, in Bern (conducted again by Luc Balmer).

„As it was to be expected, Brun masterfully fulfilled his task in writing a well-sounding, single-movement work for large orchestra. He chose the free form of the fantasy, basing himself on the melody of the old Bernese song (...), using it as a nucleus-theme. The rather archaic seriousness of this song not only characterizes its introduction, but makes of it an imposing first section in the form of an adagio, which is followed by a second main section in the form of a rejoicing allegro. Not only this build-up, but also the adagio's general mood stirs up a probable intentional association to Beethoven's *Leonore Overture*. In the richly shaped second part, whose pushing stream is interrupted two times by a short shape of a dance of peculiar Slavonic colouring, the composer rises up into the spheres of Wagner's joyful Festwiesen, grandiosely ending up into a chorale, in which the serious song's melody triumphs in a cantus firmus-like restatement from the brass section. This hymn leads to the work's organically tied together, beautifully shaped curve - in spite of its free form - back into the noble, not to say general religious mood of the beginning. As Brun has always felt himself connected to Classicism, he has succeeded with this glowing piece of music to make a particularly inspired creed to its spirit”.

„[The Overture] is well symphonic, not really festively cheerful, and strongly connected to Brahms. A characteristic is the swaying between the major and minor key. In spite of certain harshness, the sound is blooming, the structure is very melodic. Only at the end, in a pathetic wind's hymn, Brun reaches to pure C major”.

„As all of Brun's works, this Overture also has its roots on Classic-Romantic grounds and takes up only as many harmonic expansions as the composer's unshakeable character allows itself. The thematic basis of this beautiful piece (...) is a church hymn, whose archaic melodic pattern is inventively connected to Romanticism. The introductory Largo displays broad, comprehensive singing, whereas in the animated middle section a rich sequel of variations on the thematic material is displayed, leading to a greatly constructed, impressive finale, whose full, brassy and timpani-dominated orchestral sound is meaningfully contrasted to the velvety string chorus of the beginning”.

Knowing that the composer was at that time already living in Switzerland's Italian-speaking area, a particular imaginative reviewer of the 1951 revival felt that the Overture „radiated Southern warmth and brightness”.

Original instrumental parts could not be found anymore. The author has edited a new full score with material, based on the composer's unpublished autograph. The *Overture* is written for double wood-winds (including a double-bassoon), four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, timpani and strings. A single cymbal's clash occurs towards the end, and can be produced by the timpanist during a 5-bar's pause.

Two optional cuts of 36 and 34 bars have, of course, been ignored on this recording.

(Edited by Ian Lace)

## Symphonic Prologue

This impressive symphonic movement (dated 3rd December 1944) is a very demanding work for both listeners and performers. It was commissioned by the Bernische Musikgesellschaft.

The present author considers it to be a masterpiece. It is placed after the Eighth Symphony of 1942, the Third String Quartet of 1943 and *Variations for String Orchestra and piano* of 1944. In 1946 it would be followed by the Piano Concerto in A major.

Max Reger's gigantic (and fabulous) *Symphonischer Prolog zu einer Tragödie op. 86* (1909) is similar to this Brun work only in as much as they share similar titles; there are no other direct stylistic similarities. Of course, both are solemn, tragic and passionate. Brun's piece is about 2/3 the length of Reger's. Considering Brun's wide conducting repertoire, the author appreciates him as a champion of Reger – unlike other Swiss conductors. Reger's most important orchestral works, including his Piano and Violin Concertos, *Hiller-*, *Mozart-* and *Beethoven-Variationen*, *Lustspiel-Ouvertüre*, *Böcklin-Suite* and *Serenade für Orchester* had been performed in Bern under Brun's baton between 1916 and 1938. In a concert of 1922, Bruckner's Ninth Symphony, his *Te Deum* and Reger's *Die Weihe der Nacht* (1911), for alto, male choir and orchestra were performed. This other work by Reger is magnificent and almost forgotten; its chromaticisms may have inspired Brun's *Verheissung* (1915, for mixed choir and large orchestra) and *Grenzen der Menschheit* (1932, for male choir and reduced orchestra). No information is presently available about Bern performances of Reger's *Symphonischer Prolog* but Brun must have surely known and loved this piece.

After its Bern premiere (conducted by Luc Balmer on 20th March 1945), four more performances of *Symphonischer Prolog* took place during the composer's lifetime: in Basel, on 15th May 1946 (conductor: Hans Munch); in Luzern on 31st August 1946 (conductor: Robert F. Denzler); in a Zürich broadcast of 1st August 1948 (with Denzler again) and, for a second time in Basel on 6th January 1959 – and a second time with Munch. In the former concert's program leaflet, Franz Kienberger delivered a most appropriate definition of Prologue: „As it was heard for the first time in March 1945, it felt as if it were a triumphal arch dedicated to the near-dawning Peace, as conceived in the heart of a Swiss musician.”

The work's principal motif (stated by the opening strings) is strikingly similar to that of Brun's Second Symphony, but this time showing a more chromatic second part. It is followed by a chant-like motif on the horns (a reminiscence of Brun's Eighth), subsequently taken over and developed by complicatedly subdivided string soli. Clarinet and oboe join in to produce arabesque variations. Little by little, the whole orchestra seems to become infected by this almost improvisatory-like rustling, bouncing and chirping; enjoying this for a while, but eventually calming down, to make the listener aware that all this was but an introduction – a sort of „Prologue within a prologue“. Contesting some opinions (see below), the author does not see this work as a „hidden Symphony“, but rather as a large symphonic movement cast in various „emotional“ episodes, displaying Brun's usual rhapsodic and metamorphic method of developing themes. These themes wander through various solemn, highly dramatic, mournful or contemplative moods. The work ends with a restatement of the opening material, in which the „chant“ chords are not given the opportunity to expand themselves, because a solemn *Allegro* takes over to conclude the work with brilliant fanfares (in the work's principal key of E flat major). In particularly dramatic episodes involving subdivided strings, Brun uses exciting, sometimes harsh dissonances and often likes to juxtapose dotted notes, triplets, or more complicated tuplets against straight rhythmic patterns. *Symphonic Prologue's* intermediate, more transparently orchestrated lyrical episodes reveal clever counterpoint as do the remaining sections, but appear, perhaps, to be just short enough to gain breath for subsequent tempered outbursts or solemn *tutti*. This tense work also shows an incredible wealth of ideas and its instrumentation sounds splendid.

Instead of going into a detailed thematic analysis, the author prefers to acquaint the music lover with quotes from a handful of both interesting – and entertaining – contemporary newspapers clippings, found in the composers papers.

At the work's 1945 Bern premiere, renowned Swiss musicologist Willi Schuh reacted with a somewhat tortuous appraisal: „[It's] not a real Symphony, but rather a Sinfonia in nuce, which, in its condensed formal build-up and the plain relationship between its sections, shows many

advances over Brun's multi-movement Symphonies. Among its merits should be mentioned the plasticism of its three main themes and a symphonic treatment that progresses into a complete relaxation of its musical expression. In this 'Prologue', everything is clearly seen and shaped, and even through its darkest density, a simple and easily comprehensible linear flow is recognizable on a first hearing. The [Prologue's] conceptual clarification is not only technically and stylistically secure; but it derives from a truly positive and spiritual attitude that Brun had hardly expressed before. The shadows of [the World] War still weigh on the work's central section, but in the final development, confidence and faith in a brighter and more joyful world break through and make way for music where pensive and swollen harmonies and secret lyricisms are transformed into nobly blossoming and luminous material."

About the same premiere, another reviewer – besides delivering a „Bonsai“ thematic analysis – saw in this work, like Schuh, „a hidden Symphony, just lacking thematic and ideological contrasts.“ In his opinion, „Brun has previously shown a tendency to evade an uncontrolled, sumptuous enjoyment of sound. We have to admit to preferring the ‚edged‘ [side of] Brun. This applies mainly to the final section of ‚Prologue‘, which, in a purest key of E flat major, drives itself to the limits and never seems to come to an ending. Of course, the work's instrumentation sounds splendid.“

A reviewer of Luzern's 1946 revival heard in Brun's *Prologue* „a life's stream of blossoming music, which one feels had been matured in Southern Switzerland.“ He promises the listener will be „regaled with an unproblematic Swiss orchestral piece, conceived in the best traditionally-minded attitude.“

Another Luzern review of 1946 reads: „The ground from which Brun's work grows is particularly marked by the name of Brahms. As an evolutionary artist, Brun transmits with his own substance what he has inherited from his predecessors. The piece contains strong musical tensions and sounds excellent. This ‚blossoming‘ sound, resulting from a masterful technique, as well as from a great knowledge and experience in orchestration, evens out a good deal of dryness in its melodic fabrication.“

Although *Symphonischer Prolog* is subtitled *for large orchestra*, it requires just the characteristic „Brahms“ orchestral forces required for Brun's Symphonies, which in this case, and for most of them, is the augmentation of a third trumpet, bass clarinet, double-bassoon and bass-tuba. Only two of his youthful works were written for a really large ensemble: his tone poem *Aus dem Buch Hiob* (1906) and *Verheissung* (1915, a highly demanding piece with mixed choir, using Brun „orchestral exotics“ like harp, celesta, piano, organ and tam-tam).

(Edited by Ian Lacey)

## Rhapsody

At last, on 21st December 1958, his native town of Luzern finally honoured Brun with a so-called Kunstpreis. Yet, even on this occasion, only a small budget could be found to invest in a boy's chorus and a contralto to perform six of Brun's songs – with the composer at the piano. An artist of Brun's calibre did not seem important enough either, because the event coincided with a tribute to a 41 years old Bern-born (and Luzern-residing) painter Hans Schärer, whose reputation was based on his satirical, grotesque and erotic aquarelle creations. Invitations to the Brun event were sent out, incidentally, in the form of home-made typewritten leaflets! Thankfully, a more substantial tribute to Brun had been made earlier in 1954 with the much sought-after Prize of the Schweizerischer Tonkünstlerverein.

The autograph score of *Rhapsodie für Orchester* bears the date of 20th June 1957, confirming that it is Brun's last orchestral work and (in the author's personal opinion) perhaps one of his least attractive. The author learnt from Dr. Hans Brun that at that time his father was, occasionally, complaining about mental fatigue and that he had been running out of ideas. His

Tenth (and last) Symphony and *Divertimento* for piano and string orchestra had been produced some four years earlier and, just before *Rhapsodie*, there came only a few choral and no chamber works.

In March 1957 the almost octogenarian Brun had travelled to Zürich from Morcote, in order to attend the funeral of his fellow composer Othmar Schoeck. They had known each other for about 45 years and were close friends. During his 30 year plus conducting career in Bern, Brun had performed and premiered quite a number of Schoeck's works. The two composers were almost provocatively proud of not belonging to that group of „fashionable“ atonal and dodecaphonic composers that music publishers preferred to promote at that time. Alluding to Schoeck's vocal cycle *Lebendig begraben*, they considered themselves „buried alive“ in Switzerland's music scene. „You are the only one, who really arouses me and says something special to me with your music!“, or „everything musical that you create has a special greatness“ were sentences used by Schoeck in his letters to Brun. Alongside with Frank Martin and Arthur Honegger, Brun and Schoeck can be considered as Switzerland's greatest composers of the first half of the 20th century. It is sad that Brun never reached (and apparently never cared to reach) international renown.

A premier performance of *Rhapsodie* occurred on 12th August 1958, by the Radio-Orchester Beromünster conducted by Alfred Ellenberger. A recorded tape of this broadcast has survived. On 26th September of the following year, Ellenberger would perform the work in concert in Thun, with the local Orchesterverein. Two months later, Brun would die after a short illness.

*Rhapsodie* presents itself as a 10-minute sequence of episodes of lyrical, scherzo-like and dramatic character - all in Brun's later, contrasting and extremely elaborated „metamorphic“ variations style. The principal motif is of a dance-like character. It is introduced by two gypsy-like clarinet flourishes and subsequently built-up into a lyrical introduction - its chamber-like music with subdivided upper string registers reminding us of Sibelius' later Symphonies. The rhythmic structure of the theme is a three-beat, starting in 6/8 and ending into 3/4, both becoming syncopated in various accompaniments. This may be the piece's most interesting feature. Brun often gives the impression of presenting it at first almost casually but, on close examination, one notices how skilfully its invention is especially its counterpoint. The introductory episode is anything but straightforward: syncopations, triplets, dotted figures are not orthodoxly given to all voices in a parallel way - instead, occasionally a rather „confused“ sound is produced which may give the impression that it has been sloppily played. It is just possible that the piece may have been a little overloaded in harmony and rhythm. Once again the composer seems to be continuously torn between chromaticism and diatonicism and between atonality and tonality - rather like a painter, who, instead of choosing one colour after another, puts his brush into various colours of his palette first, mixing them at random - trying in vain to create more discernible figures. In the episode following the introduction, however, the impetuous rhythmic structure (mostly in 2/4 and 4/4) becomes a bit more straightforward, then it alternates with a shorter, less dissonant lyrical section, in which another uneven 3/4 prevails. A more realistic conflict between even and uneven beats can be heard in the piece's final affirmative *mosso* in E major, in which the dancing theme is confronted with all previous secondary or derivative motifs in a contrapuntal tour de force. *Rhapsodie* concludes with a virtuoso display of instrumental sections playing 6/8 against others in 3/4, a device for which the principal theme seemed to be constantly craving. Considering the wealth of its build-up, the work's ending comes abruptly and sounds almost shockingly prosaic.

The work is scored for a similar ensemble as the Fourth Symphony, except that there are only 2 trumpets, no double-bassoon and no trombones.

(Edited by Ian Lace)

## Concerto for piano and orchestra in A major

Brun's Piano Concerto, completed on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1946, is strongly associated with pianist Franz Josef Hirt (1899-1985). However, the world premiere would be performed by Rosmarie Stucki – with the composer conducting – in a broadcast concert of the Studio-Orchester Beromünster of 16th March 1947. The broadcast also included the 3rd movement of Brun's Eight Symphony, which he had recorded with the same orchestra on 4th October 1946. This recording is still available in Swiss Radio's archive; unfortunately not the one of the Concerto.

The work sank into oblivion after the composer's death in 1959 even though Hirt lived on for 26 years or so. Other soloists may have been deterred from it because of the first and third movement's technical difficulties. But the main reason for its neglect was that no printed version of the two-piano reduction existed. There was, though, a far from being easily legible reduction prepared by Brun himself. Perhaps Hirt did learn the concerto's part by heart (even though one reviewer noticed that he played it from a manuscript). Before the present soloist, Tomáš Nemeč, had agreed to record this work, other pianists had been deterred feeling it would mean too big an investment in time to study it. In the author's new edition of this reduction (transcribed with computer software), mistakes and uncertainties have been cleared away as far as possible. At the same time, the orchestral reduction of the second piano part has been completed with additional material – in passages where it was found necessary – in order to emphasize complicated harmonies, or to prepare difficult soloist's cues. In other words, Brun's Piano Concerto is now finally available for study, practising and performing.

Hirt and Brun were both born in Luzern. Hirt's mother had been a pupil of Clara Schumann. After studies in his native town and at the Basel Conservatory (with Hans Huber and Ernst Lévy), he refined his technique and style with Egon Petri and Alfred Cortot. In 1930, after engagements in Bern as a piano coach at the Stadttheater, and later on as a teacher at the Conservatory, he became this Institute's director of solo and concert classes. Upon invitation by Cortot, he was also nominated a professeur délégué of the École Normale de Musique in Paris. Hirt had earned an international reputation, not only as an interpreter of Debussy and Ravel, but also of works by more „modern“ composers like Hindemith and Albert Moeschinger. We can hear him on a 1953 recording of Arthur Honegger's *Concertino pour piano et orchestre* and, as a chamber player (and leader of the Hirt-Trio), on some Mozart and Brahms shellacs. He is also the author of two books on the history of piano design and build.

Although he definitely liked it, Hirt could not restrain himself, once after a performance, from mentioning to Brun that his Concerto had caused him to have „bleeding fingers“.

Brun's four works for solo instrument and orchestra – the three on this CD and a Cello Concerto – are all late pieces, written between 1944 and 1954, at a time when the composer was enjoying his retirement in Southern Switzerland after a 31-year conducting career in Bern. During these years he produced his Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Symphonies besides chamber music.

Being „absolute“ music, the Piano Concerto, *Variations* and *Divertimento* all appeal to larger audiences and thus are overdue for more frequent concert-hall revivals. They contrast with Brun's less immediately accessible „autobiographic“ Symphonies, with their more original, unusual construction and more „modern“ musical language.

Hirt's three public performances of the work took place in Zürich, on 13th January 1948 (Volkmar Andreae conducting the Tonhalle-Orchester); in Basel, on 10th January 1950 (Hans Rosbaud conducting the local Allgemeine Musikgesellschaft) and in Luzern, on 23rd April 1953 (the composer conducting the local Allgemeine Musikgesellschaft).

A review of the Zürich premiere praises Brun, for not only composing an excellent work amidst an apparently disappointing choice of contemporary piano concertos of distinction, but also for having succeeded in integrating its solo part with the orchestra so as to satisfy both solo and symphonic demands. Besides applauding the performers, he adds that the orchestral accompaniment was played with exemplary discretion. Finally, he quotes a humorous person-

al notice in the evening's program leaflet, in which the composer himself had declared:

*By writing this work, it was neither my intention to produce a noisy octave-sounding virtuoso piece nor a symphony with obbligato piano. Instead, I took care to give the piano a leading solo part, but I also wanted to ensure that its importance was balanced by that of the orchestral material to maintain and enhance the symphonic character of the piece. The first movement is maintained in sonata form, with a normal orchestration: strings, winds, two horns, two trumpets and timpani. In the second, slow movement, the violins and the winds en masse take a break – except for one clarinet. Instead violas, cellos and basses are, for most of the time, divided into solo parts. I regard Mozart's piano concertos as the most accomplished synthesis of the symphonic-soloistic style. They are miracles, and miracles are unique. But the leopard doesn't change his spots. All my life, I've been impressed with the symphonic style. And therefore I was determined to put the piano, an instrument with which I feel so strongly attached, at the service of this symphonic style.*

A Bern review of the same performance praised the work's "contrasting burlesque ideas, gallant bows and colourful, interesting twilight sections." Of the slow movement, we can read: „Someone, who is capable today of withdrawing into such serenity to create such a beautiful sound world, should be really envied."

A piano concerto in the key of A major is found infrequently in the catalogues of Romantic and post-Romantic concertos. Apart from Franz Listz's Second Concerto, we usually find it in the fascinating repertoire of forgotten virtuoso concertos, written by composers such as Theodor Döhler, Henri Herz, Sir Donald Francis Tovey, Wilhelm Taubert and Jose Vianna da Motta – to list just a few.

As far as Switzerland is concerned, Brun's Romantic predecessors Joachim Raff and Hans Huber had also avoided A major in their beautiful and interesting concertos of 1873 and 1878–1911. The author dares to suggest that Brun's, together with *Premier* and *Second Concerto* by Frank Martin (1934, 1969), are the most beautiful Swiss piano concertos of the 20th century – whilst Raff gets the 19th century's Palmaris. Huber's four concertos are more ambitious than Raff's. They are quite important because they are written in a more „modern" and „symphonic" style, using the 4-movement form and they introduce, for example, the *Passacaglia*. We should not forget Swiss composer Albert Moeschinger (1897–1985), in whose huge catalogue are figured five interesting piano concertos, written between 1911 and 1970.

The explanation of the „Mozart homage" of Brun's concerto is due to the fact that Brun uses A major as Mozart did in his KV 488, an important work from the later „symphonic" concerto group, called „Clarinet" piano concertos. After an earlier Concerto in A major KV 414 and the KV 488, Mozart wrote his Clarinet Concerto KV 622 and Clarinet Quintet KV 581 both in A major. And this is, perhaps, why Brun introduces a solo clarinet in his second movement. Although it is not as untypical as Mozart's *Adagio* in KV 488 and also not a *Siciliano*-like lament; Brun's *Andante sostenuto* is of a similarly transfigured and melancholy atmosphere, with a wonderfully transparent orchestration. The metronome of our recording is, incidentally, closer to *Adagio* than to *Andante*.

This extremely beautiful *Andante sostenuto* is a highly original seven-minute episode in F major (Mozart's *Adagio* is in F sharp minor!), in which pairs of (solo) violas, cellos and basses open with a longer, chorale-like introduction. The piano joins in with rhapsodic comments either alone, or sustained by simple string chords, or in harmony with the string's development – eventually accompanied by the solo clarinet. As an example of Brun's clever thematic construct, we may just quote the movement's first entrance by the piano, containing a mirror image of the concerto's (ascending) principal motif transposed down a semitone. Towards the end, it leads into a reappearance of the concerto's secondary motif. An absolutely beautiful passage can be heard half-way through the movement, where the piano produces colourful arabesques and scales over a sustained chord of a diminished seventh on D sharp.

The first movement is built up sonata-like, but in a more complicated way than Mozart's. It opens with the piano's extended principal motif (unaccompanied, in the shape of a Baroque-

like sequence, with the composer's indication *semplice*), followed by a short rhythmical development with beautiful ornamentations. After having echoed the melody of the piano's last bar, the orchestra solemnly re-opens the concerto with this principal motif, but in a more vigorous and definitely more academic style. The mentioned echo-like motif will become, as the music progresses, the concerto's secondary motif. This also gives the piano enough material to join in again with an exuberant (and technically tremendous) 24-bar solo, proving that it well „understood“ what had been presented to it. Although surrendering, for a while, to the piano's newly found lyricism, the orchestra becomes more determined and strongly rhythmical once again. At this juncture, the piano becomes increasingly angry. It is as though it „understands“ (but with some reservation) that the orchestra had really needed this outburst, so that it could find its own way to relapse into lyricism. But not for some time; for, after a laconic and bittersweet quotation of the secondary motif, the orchestra erupts into an extended development, full of accentuated and syncopated notes – including, even, an attempt at fugue. By the time the conflict between the two forces appears to have calmed down, a new and more muscular development section follows, in which the contrasting parties – suddenly and angrily – shout their differences against each other. This dramatic, rather chaotic section (at 11:06 on this recording) is dominated by a leaping variation of the principal motif. It sounds as if the pianist could be playing wrong bars or getting out of tempo; but the simultaneous orchestral material (comprising different melodies and rhythms) suggests that it is suffering internal conflicts of its own. Yet all has been written intentionally for effect. After all this tension, the development provides a few more, but less dramatic contrasting statements and debates, in which the orchestra relents, compromises and displays various metamorphoses of the principal and secondary motifs. Eventually, these are approved, commented on, or even mocked by the piano, which, in the movement's conclusion, seems as though it is imagining itself to have finally asserted a more prominent role.

The third movement is a spirited – and untitled – *Rondo*, leading in from the second movement without a break. The piano's concluding triplet chords, bringing the *Andante* back into the work's principal key, suddenly transform themselves into loudly hammering triplets and become the rondo's principal motif, in which also a „simplified“ metamorphosis of the concerto's principal motif can be recognised. Later, in the movement's central section, these triplets will reappear in the form of a horn call (an augmented triad, taken from the concerto's principal motif), bringing the listener into an unexpectedly „serious“ atmosphere with slightly dissonant arpeggios floating over sustained strings, the latter opening on beating semiquavers. This strange, almost warning transition occurs twice and it stills the movement's general „forward“ atmosphere for a while.

Brun's *Rondo* allows us to recognise a traditional *A-B-A-C-A-B-A* sonata build-up, but its recurring sections, containing metamorphoses of earlier thematic material, are not typical „refrains“ or „couplets“; they constantly contain differently elaborated material and different variations or developments. The piano now takes a starring role: enjoying command of, and accompanying and commenting on the orchestra's utterances – and even forms unaccompanied developments of its own. These may be joyful dances, *Intermezzo*- or *Prelude*-like effusions – or just motif embellishments, made from luscious arabesques or virtuous scales. The orchestra always maintains a rather „academic“ role in its statements and re-statements – as it did in the first movement – as if to escape a too light-hearted rondo scheme. There are no cadenzas in this movement; instead, its solo passages contain more serious, more substantial music to further symphonic development. Whilst being akin to Mozart (in the composer's opinion), this concerto may be associated with those of more recent predecessors like Brahms, through its predominantly „Romantic“ and definitely more complicated polyphonic and pianistic language. But the music shows, too, that Brun was also fascinated by Baroque forms as well as to the composers of the classic Viennese School.

Brun's Piano Concerto, as with most of his orchestral works, has no metronome indications throughout. It's a conductor's fascinating task to explore – and to discover – how the compos-

er's laconic Italian tempo indications contribute to overall logical, organic tempi build-ups and dispositions in order that, once the work's correct main tempo has been determined, everything plays with perfect coherence. Only in his Symphonies, when it comes to „autobiographical“ sections provoking the composer's sanguine temper to erupt, does Brun switch occasionally from Italian to German expressions like *wütend* (*furious*), *grimmig* (*fierce*), *gehetzt* (*hunted, harassed*).

It will be noticed that all Brun's wind instruments for this work are represented in pairs. It is also interesting to note that the shortest part in this concerto is the trumpets' – which only have to play some 35 bars each in the 1st and 3rd movements. In contrast, the strings are very busy. And, as in his Symphonies, Brun has succeeded in writing exciting and well-orchestrated music, using only modest symphonic forces.

This recording restores 7 bars in the first movement and 24 in the third (indicated as cuts in the concerto's autograph, reduction and parts scores), which, to the present performers, appeared to be a complete picture of the work.

*(Edited by Ian Lacey)*

## Variations on an original theme for string orchestra and piano

This is a work consisting of an introduction (Theme) and a set of eight eventful variations, following each other without breaks, except in the case of short pauses that occur after Variations No. 4 and 6.

A program leaflet of Paul Sacher's Basler Kammerorchester, dated 13th October 1944, proves that the premiere's soloist of *Variations* was Max Egger. Adrian Aeschbacher and Sacher's Collegium Musicum Zürich would perform it again at the Zürich Tonhalle on 25th January 1946. Both performances were conducted, of course, by Paul Sacher.

Three notable performances of this work have been acoustically preserved:

1946 – Adrian Aeschbacher, piano; Collegium Musicum Zürich, conducted by Paul Sacher; a pre-live or post-premiere, private 78 rpm recording, reissued in 2009 on CD Guild GHCD 2351.

1954 – Rudolf am Bach (Aeschbacher's brother), piano; Berner Kammerorchester, conducted by Hermann Müller; an audio file in the Swiss Radio Archives, live recording).

1993 – Patrizio Mazzola, piano; Festival Strings Lucerne, conducted by Rudolf Baumgartner (CD VDE Gallo 727).

*Variationen*, completed on 2nd June 1944, is one of many works by numerous composers, commissioned by, and consequently, dedicated to Swiss conductor and music-benefactor Paul Sacher. Consulting the list of his commissions, many of which were later internationally promoted by music publishers, we might presume to deduct that Sacher probably was not enthusiastic about helping to publish works by Swiss composers – compared to such foreign figures of the calibre of Bartók, Martinů, Stravinsky and Henze. Yet Sacher had commissioned and performed dozens of Swiss works, including five by Frank Martin and four by Albert Moeschinger, just to quote the „Swiss winners.“ Arthur Honegger, who would easily find French publishers for his own four Sacher commissions, was actually considered to be more a French than Swiss composer. The autograph of Brun's sole commission from Sacher lies in the vaults of the Paul Sacher Foundation in Basel. Due to different circumstances, all remaining Brun autographs were later deposited there.

Of the Bern performance, with Rudolf am Bach, a reviewer noted: „Together with the piano, climaxes are occasionally reached that reveal a distinctly symphonic character. The relation

between the piano and the orchestra is also symphonic. High technical demands are made of the soloist (...), but brilliant passages are always a part of a tightly organised development of motifs."

In its title, the word *Streichorchester* precedes *Klavier*, meaning that this is a *concertante* work, not a work employing a principal piano. This does not mean, however, that the soloist's part in *Variationen* is secondary, but that Neo-Baroque sympathies are emphasized. These are duly respected by the artists of the present recording. The author is particularly fond of the Mazzola/Festival Strings recording, but, compared to the two other „historical“ ones, one might question whether the Festival Strings – an ensemble generally involving about 16 players only – are adhering strictly to, perhaps, the composer's intended makeup of the *Streichorchester*. Even Sacher had used 25 players (6-6-5-5-3), in order to emphasize contrasts between *tutti* and *sol*. After some ensemble trials and sound tests, we decided to use 31 players (10-8-6-4-3) for our Bratislava ensemble.

*The variation form, usually not very popular among audiences, has found great incentive among musicians. A botanist, collecting mountain flowers cannot find greater joy than a musician, busy remodeling a theme. Who would want to miss Brahms's and Reger's variations? The greatest masters of all times have cultivated this form, and with what magnificence did Beethoven develop it in the finale of his Eroica, or in the last movement of his 9th Symphony, or in the Agnus Dei of his Missa Solemnis! In the present piece, the piano has its concertante, mainly solo role but often, the string orchestra takes over the lead, and then it walks arm in arm with the piano again. Thematic dependence and commitment are guaranteed, although it includes some liberties; „Tantôt libre, tantôt recherché“ writes Beethoven on the title sheet of his Grosse Fuge in B flat major... With all respect to (thematic) commitment; but without some elbow-room, one cannot just completely manage life. – These comments come from the composer's own introductory text to the Zürich performance.*

Brun had proved to be a master of variation forms, including (Neo-)Baroque ones, in the *Chaconne* of his Fifth Symphony and the finale of his *Sixth*. The chorale-like (*Sostenuto*) Variation No. 5 in the central movement of his Third Symphony can be considered his earliest homage to the Neo-Baroque style. He always preferred sequences of (often violently) contrasting Variations to slowly progressing, or cyclic developments. In *Variationen*, *Divertimento* and in the *Andante* of his Piano Concerto – we can also find such a slow, deeply felt (Neo-Baroque) chorale section, developed eventually into a kind of *Air* with embellishments.

Each section of *Variationen* shows elaborate development sections and virtuoso passages. In the most important, slow movement – and *Air*-like Variation No. 7 – strings end up into transfigured *sol*. All others (in keys evading modulations to D minor and A major, but always returning to the principal D major) appear in contrastingly different musical styles, using not only old forms like *recitativo*, *toccata*, *fantasia* and *preludio* (of course, without titling them as such), but also more modern forms. The opening themes presentation is a masterwork of filigreed string quintet writing, from which the piano gently emerges with Variation No. 1, in the form of a sensual, rhapsodic solo. No. 2 appears as a sudden shock: its wildly syncopated piano interventions pitched over a quiet (and unrelated) string accompaniment, sounding as if the pianist would suddenly lurch off-beat. The last and longest Variation No. 8 is a complicated fugue, from which the piano tries to take over the lead, but finally yields to the strings again, which are carefully preparing the way to a solemn finale.

The orchestral material of *Variationen* could be found neither in Sacher's archives nor from those of the ensembles of the other two recordings. Therefore, the author prepared a set of new string parts, and, before that, a new and critical full score plus a reduction for two pianos. Similarly to his Piano Concerto, Brun had prepared a handwritten reduction of *Variationen*. Rudolf am Bach's own copy became an important complement to this edition: the pianist's own addenda and notes helped to clear quite a few doubts. And, as in his reduction of the concerto, we were able to find the composers indication of dynamics which do not figure in the original orchestral autograph – or vice versa.

(Edited by Ian Lace)

## Divertimento for piano and strings

Listening to *Variationen* and *Divertimento*, one can guess that Brun, himself an experienced chamber music player, adored the combination of piano with strings. One would have expected him to approach this combination as a chamber music composer. Unfortunately, only an isolated Piano Quintet movement in B flat major from 1902 figures in his catalogue of works. All of Brun's remaining chamber works are sonatas and string quartets.

Completed on 16th November 1954 (one year after his Symphony No. 10 and 3 years before *Rhapsodie*, his last orchestral work), *Divertimento* was premiered in Bern, on 23rd April 1956. Again, the soloist was Franz Josef Hirt; the Studio-Orchester (of Radio Beromünster) was conducted by Hermann Müller. According to a surviving production sheet, this all-Swiss concert, including works by Hans Studer and Franz Tischhauser, was broadcast on 8th May and 13th September that same year. No program leaflet for this 45-minute program has yet been found; that is why the author suspects that it may have been only a studio broadcast, although the production sheets title is „Konzert des Studio-Orchesters“.

Using the Baroque title *Divertimento*, Brun referred to Haydn's *Divertimenti* (from Hob. XIV), for piano or harpsichord and strings, rather than to Lully's and Mozart's extended dance suites. In this piece the piano has a similarly *concertante* function as in *Variationen*, although the work's title resets the piano in the premier position.

*Allegro – Andante – Mosso – Lento – Mosso* are the tempi of the five sections, all bound together not only because there aren't any pauses between them, but also because they reveal themselves to be a set of rhapsodic – and metamorphic – variations on a rather nervous but enterprising theme. Harmonically it is rather ambiguous since during the presentation of its first bar (in the work's principal E flat major) it immediately borrows an odd F# (Gb) note from its neighbourly A flat major key, but, in its second bar, it suddenly reinstates F and G naturals. Section by section, more key changes occur. The music may sound „tonal“ but since so many foreign keys continue to break in, slightly dissonant passages are caused leading to more and more adventurous, odd-sounding changes or chromatic exploits. But our ears are, at various times reminded of the principal E flat major. Particularly in the work's last section, Brun inserted „strange“, or „dissonant“ notes, which our soloist and players often considered „wrong“ or „out-of-tune.“ In all these „doubtful“ places, both the autograph and the original instrumental parts were revealed to be unmistakably identical. And no previous conductor's corrections could be found either. Rhythmically, the piece is also quite moody and more enterprising than *Variationen* – but, as usual, showing Brun's secure craftsmanship.

The most beautiful episode is, of course, the extended *Lento*, of which similarities with the *Largo* of *Variationen* have been covered earlier.

*Divertimento* is a charming, sometimes ambiguously sounding piece. It must be heard at least twice before our ears can enjoy it with relaxation – and even with a certain sense of humour.

(Edited by Ian Lace)

## Concerto for violoncello and orchestra in D minor

In his *Double Concerto for Violin and Cello* (in A minor, op. 102), written in Thun in the summer of 1887, Johannes Brahms paid tribute to Giovanni Battista Viotti by using a passage of a sequence of three intervals in-between the notes E, G and A from the introduction of Viotti's Violin Concerto No. 22 (1792, also in A minor). Sixty years later, Fritz Brun paid tribute to

Brahms's Double Concerto in a similar way for in the soloist's solemn first entrance, made up of the notes F-C#-Eb-D. Brun uses three of Brahms's four notes D-E-F and D# - and after stating these he follows them up by a similarly mounting arpeggio of thirds and fourths. Brun may have read about the Brahms-Viotti correlation in Max Kalbeck's monumental biography of Brahms, published by the Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft between 1903 and 1915. Following the Brahms example, Brun's solo cello starts playing on the C string - a rare feature that does not occur in any of the about a dozen „official“ repertoire concertos for this instrument.

In his analysis of Brahms's *Double Concerto*, Kalbeck presumes its majestic opening theme had been inspired by the panorama of the Bernese Alps - a vista that had also been particularly dear to Brun. Actually, the same impression is gained on listening to Brun's own majestic introduction, in spite of the fact that his concerto was composed on the shores of Lake Lugano, where he was offered an alternative panorama that extended in front of his home. If this alternative view was not as dramatically majestic, it was nevertheless very inspiring. The autograph's last page mentions that the work was completed in Morcote on 20th November 1947. The autograph's second page mentions „Duration of the Concerto: 34 minutes“ but considering the fact that the present recording (with a total timing of about 28 minutes) uses slower tempi in the work's outer movements - and a decidedly faster tempo in the *Andante sostenuto* - one wonders what tempi were used at the first performance? Unlike many of his other orchestral works, Brun suggests metronome markings for each movement: MM 100 (6/4), 52 (4/4) and 96 (2/4); but there are so many places in which faster tempi would also be problematic for the orchestral accompaniment, not for technical reasons, but rather because particularly elaborate instrumental passages might risk clarity. Of course, the score has occasional indications like *ritardando*, *ruhig* (*calmly*), or *colla parte* (*with the part*), suggesting to interpreters - after a closer analysis - that the music is more demanding than might first appear. All such indications are meant to emphasize the Concerto's prevailing lyrical and expansive aspects. It should not be forgotten that it is a work in the „symphonic“ style à la Brahms, meaning not only that the orchestra does not merely function as an accompaniment, but as a substantially - and sophisticated - „symphonically active“ element, with closely interdependent themes.

Brun's fellow composer and friend Othmar Schoeck wrote his own *Concerto for Cello and string orchestra* (op. 61) in the same year as Brun. This was premiered on 10th February 1948 by Pierre Fournier and the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich under the baton of Volkmar Andreae. It is in four movements (the 4th being in two parts linked together), and lasts about 12 minutes longer. In the author's personal opinion, the 18 minutes of the first movement require quite some patience; they would perhaps be better working as a separate rhapsody or a symphonic poem. The remaining movements are very beautiful and original - and typically Schoeck. The whole Concerto is a thoroughly lyrical affair. With great skill the composer had succeeded in surmounting the balance problems of a string soloist playing against a body of strings larger than a Baroque ensemble. Compared to Brun's, Schoeck's Concerto has repute; it is available in printed form and it has been recorded already four times. For Brun's Concerto, neither a piano reduction nor an orchestral score was printed. A new piano reduction and a new separate Cello part had therefore to be prepared for this recording, allowing various mistakes to be corrected and some doubtful passages clarified.

Cellist Richard Sturzenegger (1905-1976), a pupil of Pablo Casals and Nadia Boulanger, was a colleague and friend of Brun. From 1935 until 1949 he was principal cellist of the Bernische Musikgesellschaft (Brun's orchestra) and cellist of the Bernisches Streichquartett. He was a teacher at the Bern Conservatory - of which he would later become a director. Sturzenegger was also a composer and musicologist: his editions of cello concertos by Vivaldi (in A minor) and by Boccherini (in B flat major) were published in 1948. According to a letter to Brun of 6th January 1947, he was just completing the last of his four own cello concertos (with an unusual accompaniment of harp and strings) for eventual performances in Bern and in Paris. In the same letter, Sturzenegger expresses his wish to look at Brun's Concerto. Later in 1952, Brun would compose a beautiful 22-minute Sonata for Cello and Piano (in F minor), of which a pri-

vate recording with Sturzenegger – made in 1953 – has survived.

The premiere of Brun's Concerto took place in Bern's "Kasino" on 12th October 1948 – with Sturzenegger as soloist. (His name does not actually figure as a dedicatee on the autograph.) The Bernische Musik-Gesellschaft was conducted by the great Carl Schuricht. In a program note, Brun describes his work as follows:

*Formally, the [my] Concerto for Cello keeps rather strictly to classical sonata form. There are composers who, writing for the cello, prefer using the A string; there are cellists who only really feel comfortable while scrambling on the fingerboard from the tenor key upwards! With regards to Haydn's [Second] Concerto, a work with a very high playing range, one does not know yet with certainty whether it was written for a gamba or for a violoncello! My piece dedicates itself to all four strings. I was always really taken with the instrument's lower strings. No doubt, performers will find it difficult to affirm themselves against the accompanying orchestra. To take account of these circumstances is a conductor's responsibility.*

Swiss newspapers reviewed the work as follows:

„Brun appears to have been graced with inspiration as never before, not even in the works of his combative and defiant youth... His strength of temperament, and his superior mastery of form remains undimmed and the end of the work reveals an unconquerable creative personality, an impression that should remain with us for a long time.“

„To this day, Brun has never been easy to understand because, although his music is in symphonic form, he is a lyricist – not a dynamist. We dare to describe his Cello Concerto in D minor as a lyric symphony with an obligated cello voice, closely interwoven with an orchestra voicing many tongues. Rather than assuming independence, the cello, with its characteristic voice, blends into the orchestra's murmuring, laughing, singing and rejoicing. Little seems to have been derived from the examples of the four traditional Cello Concertos. This is music of a rich and noble inspiration, which needs repeated listening to appreciate the depths of its soul. As one of Brun's most beautiful works, this work also proves that something novel can still be said about, and enlarged upon in respect of ‚classical‘ harmonies.“

„Brun's Concerto also shares the characteristics of a Symphony. It has noble aspirations but there are also the usual ‚silent problematics‘ attached to a symphonic cello concerto. In spite of this work's riches, particularly in its two outer movements, there are impediments associated with the usual restrictive characteristics and nuances of the instrument (e.g. melancholy attributes) Yet, in spite of such limitations, a welcome releasing step is felt towards a principally different [musical] form.“

The last performance of Brun's Concerto during the composer's lifetime took place on 9th February 1954 at the Zürich Tonhalle. The soloist was Walter Haefeli, the conductor Hans Rosbaud. After the concert, the composer had to admit that the soloist obviously met with too many difficulties in affirming himself against the orchestra, and that the struggle between the two protagonists had ended in a draw.

The key of D minor is also rather unusual in the cello concerto repertoire. The author can only remember three other Romantic works in the same key – by Édouard Lalo (1876), William Stanford (1880) and Camille Saint-Saëns (his 2nd, 1902).

The first movement opens with the orchestra and a pedal point on D (held by a few woodwinds and viola tremolos), over which the orchestra's cello section delivers an energetic stuttering statement on the C string – being of a recitativo-like sequence of the 12 notes of the chromatic scale although stated at random. Of this the full orchestra „sorts out“ and vigorously states the work's „motto“ E-D-Eb-D. Still without involving the soloist, this *tutti* sequence immediately experiences a passionate development with syncopated chords over faster and slower ascending chromatic scales, leading to a chorale-like unison fortissimo in which the „motto“ is now presented in a more extended version (D-D-E-D-A-D-Eb-D), but this time unharmonised. Yet another passionate development has to follow, as if the orchestra wanted to stamp its authority in revealing what is the „meat“ of this work. There are then even more demonstrative passages from winds and strings possibly to warn the soloist that they are play-

ing important material. Eventually, the „motto” returns in a reassured strings-only version, offering, at last, the opportunity for the soloist’s dashing entrance. A similarly full orchestral statement returns much later in the recapitulation. The coda consists of the soloist’s calm re-statement of the motto, followed by its „stuttering statement” extension – stated on the C string as before at the beginning. In this section, the motto will also be restated by two pianissimo statements from the orchestra, ending up with two fortissimo final chords.

The soloist’s role in this movement appears to be something of an unpredictable journey, demonstrating all the instrument’s possible (and almost impossible) technicalities. He does not always consider the accompaniment’s generosity or prompts but takes up some of the offered material developing it or fashioning variations according to his own caprices. The music is rather moody with repeated moments of action and tension. Its occasional wild passages never get out of control: on the contrary, they always find clever routes back to lyricism. In some passages, the soloist briefly remembers his cello colleague’s „stuttering introduction”, but in such a way as though he cannot totally sympathise with it, since his comments on it are more lyrical and fluent. As usual in most of Brun’s orchestral works, themes are related to each other. This is the case, for example, of a „laughing” (semiquaver’s *staccati*) secondary theme performed by the orchestra. The cello seems to have no particular liking for it – perhaps because it reminds him of the accompanying „stuttering.” Contrary-wise, the cello prefers to play staccato semiquavers using a more lyrical and sunny version of the motto, or enjoying singing out the more expanded „chromatic scale’s” theme heard at the beginning. There is, fortunately, an eventual slower variation of the concerto’s motto, which the soloist enjoys taking up from time to time, anticipating some variations, on which he will work in the two succeeding movements.

The following movement, a highly lyrical and inspired *Andante sostenuto* (same tempo indication as for the 2nd movement of Saint-Saëns’s D minor Concerto) is a Romance in B flat minor, with a short central episode in D major. In this, the orchestra takes up the cello’s peaceful melody and then tries to tear it apart; we hear this in some nervously sobbing chords, reminding us of a similar passage in the second movement of Brun’s Eighth Symphony. Both B flat sections have rhapsodically-like varied thematic material. The soloist’s first melody crossing D–F–C–C#–D–G etc. could be interpreted as an extension of the Concerto’s E–D–Eb–D motto – on this occasion fashioning this motif to end into a D major chord. After this, a variation of the cello melody’s initial low accompaniment figurations starts acting like a new contrasting theme (now up to a normal string range, with quavers becoming triplets and later returning to more accentuated quavers again), giving the soloist various opportunities to demonstrate his skill through increasingly virtuoso effusions, eventually ranging from the lowest to the highest instrumental pitch – be it in the form of chromatic arabesques or riskily wide intervals played legato. After the aforementioned D major episode, the cello tries to restate its initial melody, but, since it now has an accompaniment that is a calmer version of the earlier „sobbing”, it feels it must comment on this new mood while retaining the overall lyrical atmosphere. In the coda, opening with the orchestra’s transfigured, slightly ornamented restatement of the initial melody, the only double stops for the cello in this movement occur – they already anticipate similar double stopping figurations of the third movement. The last one of these is a reminder of the Concerto’s „motto” in a version doubled by parallel sixths – to be played down on the C string again.

Of the *Andante sostenuto* a Bern reviewer wrote: „Here we have a vision of vastness, of endless heavenly space, of a spring mood; with the colours of the accompanying orchestra softly reminding us of Parsifal’s flowery meadows. It’s not the dusky shining of glaciers of a musician approaching his eighties, but a new, mystical beginning, as if a second epoch of his work was just opening.”

The Concerto’s third movement can be defined as „spirited” in every meaning of the word. It is a rather elaborated *Rondo* (back into the principal D minor key), its theme related to the work’s opening orchestral cello „stuttering.” Its second part, including the notes Bb–A–G#–Bb, reminds us of the preceding *Andante sostenuto* – as if it had been given an additional task to

„symphonically launch” the Concerto’s final movement. After having been stated by the soloist, the Rondo’s theme is not only confirmed, but developed by the orchestra, eventually inviting the soloist to display a sequence of more lyrical „developing variations” in D major. Once the Cello feels almost too much at ease by delivering virtuoso passages of ascending and descending semiquavers, the orchestra adapts to this new mood. But these passages become increasingly angry and even rather brutal, when they reach an ill-tempered variation of the cellist group’s syncopated „stuttering statement.” After this conflict, soloist and orchestra agree to a more moderate and reasonable dialogue. We are now in the key of A minor and, for a while, the cello sings out again pleasantly and produces lovely arabesques; but the orchestra pushes forward with its intention to re-use the Rondo’s theme. The succeeding section for orchestra alone lasting 33 bars – with the weight on horns and trumpets – sings and dances through F major until it judges that the moment is right for the soloist to re-join with his earlier D major theme (now back in D minor). In a following new section the orchestra takes over again producing another extended development, in which the cello’s main and secondary (lyrical) themes are confronted and syncopated more dramatically with the „stuttering statement” – until the soloist returns with a calm version of the Rondo theme, now tending towards E major. But enough is enough: the orchestra intervenes for a last time, letting us guess that there could be endless possibilities to enjoy all the energetic and lyrical material used – and transformed so many more times. The soloist too, before being aware of the higher risks of carrying on discussions and new developments, breaks out into a nervous coda of rather angry, fast tremolos and accentuated reminders of the Concerto’s „stuttering” motto and of the soloist’s own Rondo theme – all this over the orchestra’s calm and pedal-point like reminder of the same motto.

The Concerto is scored for double woodwinds, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings. In the second movement (without trumpets) only 2 horns are required.

(Edited by Ian Lace)

## Verheissung (Promise)

Between the Second and Third Symphony (1911 and 1919), Brun wrote no other orchestral or chamber works, but instead wrote a few pieces for chorus a cappella, and *Verheissung*.

Goethe’s emblematic poem *Symbolum (The Mason’s ways are a type of Existence)* was written around 1815 for the Weimar Freemasonic Lodge. A century later, when Brun set it to music (the autograph is dated 30th September 1915), he eliminated two strophes, the first of which is Masonic propaganda. Brun was a non-denominational spirit; his own ideas about God were beyond traditionally authoritative religious schemes.

Other 20th century composers like Gottfried von Einem, Hans-Jürgen von Bose, Walter Thomas Heyn and the Walther Geiser (a Swiss; he scored it for male choir and an instrumental group) would also be attracted by this poem; but, most probably, Brun’s version is the earliest.

For the premiere in Bern’s „Kasino” on 24th March 1917 (with a next day’s reprise), Brun had changed the poem’s original title into *Die Hoffnung (Hope)*. For the following two performances in Basel and Leipzig it would be re-named, *Verheissung (Promise)*.

In the program of the 1917 concert of the Berner Stadtorchester, with choruses of the Berner Liedertafel and the Cäcilienverein conducted by Brun, Schubert’s *Gesang der Geister über den Wassern* and Brahms’s *Rinaldo* also figured. In-between these two works for male choir and orchestra (the second of which featured a tenor solo), leader Alphonse Brun performed Beethoven’s Violin Concerto. Alphonse Brun (whose name should be pronounced in French) was not related to Fritz Brun. A reviewer – who found this program to be „too richly overloaded” – wrote that *Die Hoffnung* made a tremendous, breath-taking impression, but considered it a „poor choice”. He criticized the „insurmountable gap between the music and that Goethe’s peaceful, mature and erudite verses” had been crushed by the music’s „cyclopid vehemence”.

In spite of the fact that this „vehemence“ is not without quiet lyrical episodes, the present writer perceives in *Verheissung* a more than justified outcry to war; Brun wrote it at a time when World War I was already nine months old.

A second performance of *Verheissung* (also conducted by Brun) took place in a packed Basel Cathedral on 11th June 1917, on the occasion of the Eighth Convention of the Schweizerischer Tonkünstlerverein. This concert also featured works by Paul Benner, Pierre Maurice, Otto Barblan, Friedrich Klose and Robert F. Denzler – performed by Basel’s Gesangsverein and Liedertafel, supported by local school choirs.

The third performance of *Verheissung* took place in Leipzig, on 20th September 1918, on the occasion of the Schweizerisches Musikfest. This great event consisted of two symphony concerts, a chamber concert, a lieder recital and an operatic production; all were sold-out long before the Festival’s opening – in spite of the still ravaging War and the Spanish flu. Composers Fritz Brun, Othmar Schoeck and Hermann Suter were personally invited to perform, with the Hungarian alto Ilona Durigo. The concert of 20th September also featured works by Otto Barblan, Hermann Suter, Friedrich Klose, Schoeck’s *Three Songs for alto* (orchestrated and conducted by Brun) and Schoeck’s *Dithyrambe* for double choir, large orchestra and organ. The musical forces were the Gewandhausorchester and the Leipziger Bach-Verein. Schoeck and Durigo would be the stars of another day’s highly praised all-Schoeck piano song recital.

Reviews of the Leipzig performance of *Verheissung* were positive. From one of the others, we learn that Brun’s music is too deep tending to show „a harsh way of handling musical themes to prepare enhancements and atmospheres and to weave them together through strong contrasts and heated struggles into a picture of great purity, even chastity, in their presentation“. But, like his Bern colleague of 1917, it was complained that the chorus parts made insurmountable demands on the human voice and that the parts should be revised; the composer subsequently did so, especially for the female voice’s upper range. But, as the listener will realise, it still remains a very difficult piece.

On the Leipzig Festival in general, an enthusiastic reviewer asserted that „Switzerland should be proud of ‚all these sons of hers‘. Indeed, there is barely another country that is so small in surface area and in population, capable – even approximately – of such achievements. This opinion was shared by artists, audiences and the press“. A loud „hear, hear!“ for this sentiment is addressed by the present writer to today’s Swiss concert managers and conductors.

*Verheissung* is an exception in Brun’s output: it requires exceptionally, for him, large orchestral forces. Besides 3 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, double bassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones and bass-tuba, timpani, tam-tam, harp, celesta, pianoforte, organ and strings figure on the list. Let’s call it one of Brun’s earliest „experimental“ works; and, in a way, one of his „wildest“ pieces – considering all that happens within barely 10 minutes of music! After his easy-going and „Romantic“ sounding Second Symphony of 1911, *Verheissung* shocks like an invading avalanche. Its complex polyphony and chromaticism – and, last but not least its monumentality – may even surpass the „modernity“ of those grandiose chorus-and-orchestra works by Max Reger, which more than once figured on Brun’s concert programs.

*Verheissung*’s principal key is B minor. It can be subdivided into five sections:

1) A doleful determination of destiny, leading mankind forward through sorrow and gladness. A descending arpeggio-like figuration by the woodwinds is followed by five chromatically ascending chorale-chords by the brass group, modulating back from B major to B minor. In these five opening bars the work’s two principal motifs are introduced; the chorus’ following, canon-like plaintive statements – and their accompaniment – are already metamorphic variations of these two motifs. Towards the end of this section, transposed and extended versions of the descending „minor“ arpeggio reappear in the woodwinds, now emphasizing Goethe’s uncertain vision of the future, in which „gladness and sorrow“ remain hidden to mankind.

2) Mankind fearlessly marches on. In this first dramatic section involving full orchestral forces, a new, upwards bouncing „combat“ motif challenges itself against the chorus’ desper-

ate C sharp minor restatements of the „arpeggio” motif, leading to nine bars for orchestra alone (in which the „chorale” motif becomes syncopated), followed by a general stop.

3) The „combat” motif suddenly becomes precautious. It invites the „chorale” motif to a fifteen-bar highly chromatic sotto voce meditation for strings (subdivided into nine parts). The voices echo with two resigned, chorale-like pianissimo statements („and solemn before us veiled the dark portal”), eventually leading to a mysterious, „oriental” sounding transition, floating from F major/minor into D major, and describing dormant stars and graves, wrapped reverently by a veil-like „shell”. Brun’s orchestra suggests ethereal tinkling and yearning calls over a dissonant organ point – involving fifteen-part strings, reduced woodwinds, horns, celesta, piano, harp and tam-tam. This mysterious episode (unfortunately much too short), reminds us of some of Busoni’s „exotic sounding” orchestral passages.

4) In this longest and principal section of *Verheissung* the chorus returns to reality again, inspired by „spirit’s and master’s voices from over there” – reminding mankind not to neglect to use „forces of the good”. Finally, in eternity’s stillness, only the „good” and „active ones” will be rewarded. After a short energetic a cappella statement by the chorus (in which the two principal motifs are reunited), the full orchestra joins in impetuously, as if it could not wait any longer to grasp happiness. The chorus is enthused and joins in with almost chaotic, rather dissonant jubilation, full of ascending and descending triplets. At the end, the orchestra alone affirms itself through fourteen climactic brassy bars, in which the work’s motifs re-appear in ulteriorly metamorphed versions.

5) The final section concentrates on Goethe’s last verse „we invite you to hope”. The chorus’ new dramatic fortissimo a cappella exhortations in E major alternate with the orchestra’s restatement of the bouncing „joy” motif and with a final build-up towards an orgiastic hymn – now supported by the organ – in which all thematic materials re-appear, ending up in a triumphant B major.

(Edited by Ian Lacey)

## Grenzen der Menschheit (Limitations of Humanity)

Brun dedicated his original a cappella male choir setting of *Grenzen der Menschheit* to the Basler Liedertafel. One might have presumed that it had been premiered by this ensemble. Unfortunately, relevant dates could not be found either in Basel or in other archives. A score and a set of separate parts were published in 1927 by Hug & Co., Leipzig. Later in 1932, Brun wrapped his piece into a darkly coloured „lower range” orchestral accompaniment (adding four opening bars for orchestra alone), consisting of an oboe, two clarinets, a bass clarinet, two bassoons, a double bassoon, four horns and three trombones – and a smaller string ensemble of a single violin group, violas, celli and double basses (in the present recording, 8-6-4-3 players were used). This accompaniment rarely just doubles singing voices; in some places it rhythmically differs and it harmonically enriches them to create a deeper, almost tragic atmosphere. The *a cappella* version of *Grenzen der Menschheit* sounds less extortive – but both versions are in perfect harmony with Goethe’s rather pessimistic vision of mankind.

In this second of only two works for choir and orchestra Brun returned to Goethe, whose humanity-appealing *Grenzen der Menschheit* (written in 1813) had also inspired Ferdinand Hiller, Franz Schubert and Hugo Wolf. Swiss composer Ernst Hess (1912-1968) scored his 1966 version of *Grenzen der Menschheit* for mixed choir and orchestra.

The harmonic cell of *Grenzen der Menschheit* is a C minor triad modulating to its augmented major version. This reappears on various occasions – giving the four singing parts diverse chances to dissolve again immediately afterwards into rather chromatic, dissonant passages, also involving risky three- and two-part rhythmic patterns set one above the other. In some particularly important passages of Goethe’s text, the voices opt for uniform rhythms, sounding chorale-and-declamatory-like. Only in a few places, single voice parts are subdivided into two.

In this difficult piece, passages in which single voices can rely on each other or on the accompaniment are rather rare; singers with excellent hearing are therefore required. The central dramatic exhortation trends towards F sharp minor, but the music becomes excited and dissonant again and the singing text difficult to articulate, due to Brun's use of triplets of rapid quavers and semiquavers.

(Edited by Ian Lacey)

## OTHMAR SCHOECK: Three Songs for alto (Orch. Fritz Brun)

Of Schoeck's 300 plus songs with piano accompaniment, the three orchestrated by Fritz Brun in 1916, were published in 1917 by Breitkopf & Härtel. Written in 1914, they were included in three different collections: opp. 20, 24a and 24b.

*Jugendgedenken* is based on a poem by Gottfried Keller (1819–90), a Zürich-born Romantic novelist and poet, who was also a gifted painter and a very active politician. His educational novel *Der grüne Heinrich* (*Green Henry*) is a landmark in Swiss literature. *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe* (a short novel from his collection *Die Leute von Seldwyla*) would become, in 1899, the libretto of Frederick Delius's opera *A Village Romeo and Juliet*. *Jugendgedenken* has poetry of deeper intellectual and psychological meaning than in so many clichéd Romantic poems. It has a text that could be seen as a most appropriate analysis of Schoeck's own inner world. This song, in fact, is considered as one of the most original – and longest – from his earlier creative period.

*Die drei Zigeuner* was already well-known in Franz Liszt's more gypsy-like sounding realizations for piano (1860), violin and piano (1864) and for orchestra (1871 which also includes a solo violin). Shortly afterwards, Anton Rubinstein too would set Lenau's poem to music – just to mention one composer who is not totally forgotten.

In 1894, *Auf meines Kindes Tod* would be set to music by Felix Draeseke. In 1846, *Jugendgedenken* had been set by Swiss composer Wilhelm Baumgartner (a friend of Keller and Wagner) and, in 1944, by German composer Hermann Reutter, who, in the 1970s, also accompanied Fischer-Dieskau as a Schoeck interpreter. *Jugendgedenken* can be heard on an unforgettable all-Schoeck LP by Fischer-Dieskau (with Margrit Weber as an accompanist), recorded by Deutsche Grammophon in 1958, just one year after Schoeck's death.

The original piano versions of these three songs were premiered separately in 1915 and 1916, with Schoeck accompanying Max Krauss, Ilona Durigo and Maria Philippi. The latter singer would also be the soloist in a concert which took place in Bern on 21st November 1916 under Fritz Brun's baton. The concert program also included Hugo Wolf's symphonic poem *Penthesilea*, Schubert's „Great“ *Symphony in C* and two arias by Handel.

The reviewer of the Schweizerische Musikzeitung praised the interpretation of *Penthesilea*, but did not really like Brun as a Schubert conductor. Furthermore he found his Schoeck orchestrations „a doubtlessly interesting experiment“, and those of *Jugendgedenken* as too heavy. Still, in the remaining songs, a „subtle sense for colours“ was recognized. Contralto Philippi (a pupil of Pauline Viardot-Garcia, a renowned Bach and Mozart interpreter who, in 1924, would figure in the quartet of soloists at the world premiere of Hermann Suter's cantata *Le Laudi*) seemed not to satisfy the reviewer either; her voice was found to be unsuited to such a song style. Only her Handel would make the audience applaud with enthusiasm.

On 20th September 1918, in a Leipzig Gewandhaus concert of the Schweizerisches Musikfest, Brun conducted Schoeck's *Drei Gesänge* again, this time interpreted by Ilona Durigo – a fascinating Hungarian alto, who, from 1921 to 1937, was a singing teacher at the Zürich Conservatory and later, until her death in 1943, at the Budapest Conservatory.

Durigo had already performed the songs in 1917: on 27th November in Zürich (with the Tonhalle-Orchester, conducted by Volkmar Andreae) and on 1st December in Basel (with the orchestra of the Allgemeine Musikgesellschaft, conducted by Hermann Suter).

Leipzig reviews were positive: *Auf meines Kindes Tod* was considered „a classic example of how to solve the difficult problem of preserving the songs feeling of intimacy in transferring it to a larger scale orchestral setting”. Brun had, apparently, „succeeded in reaching the soul of Schoeck’s song, by putting his entire heart into its orchestral sound”. Durigo’s voice seemed to appear „more delicate” in the large Gewandhaus concert-hall than in the smaller one, where, on 18th September, she and Schoeck had given an all-Schoeck recital. On that occasion she was highly praised.

This wartime concert took place under the patronage of Prince George of Saxony, who had studied philosophy and theology. After the Armistice he would abdicate and become a priest. In the early 1930’s he had acquired a reputation of being a resolute anti-Nazi.

As far as Brun’s filigree orchestration is concerned, one notices that it not only honours Schoeck’s own orchestral palette, but also those of Viennese fin de siècle composers like Franz Schreker and Alexander Zemlinsky. These songs would make an ideal coupling, for example, to Schreker’s *Fünf Gesänge* for low voice and orchestra (1909/1923).

*Die drei Zigeuner*, although sounding heavier, is not scored for a larger ensemble: it just has two instead of four horns, but an additional double bassoon. Whereas the first song needs only one bassoon, one oboe and an English horn, *Zigeuner* needs two oboes, and *Jugendgedenken* two oboes again but with an extra English horn. A harp is required in Nos 2 and 3, the latter also including a short celesta and a discreet timpani part in its last section. *Jugendgedenken* also exists in an orchestration by Carl Heinrich David (1884–1951); Durigo would perform it (together with two more songs, orchestrated by David) with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande conducted by Schoeck in Lausanne on 8th March 1920.

Detailed musical analyses of these three songs is definitely a matter for a Schoeck expert, such as musicologist Chris Walton, whose comprehensive book *Othmar Schoeck, Life and Works* (University of Rochester Press, 2009) is highly recommended.

(Edited by Ian Lacey)

## Five songs for alto and piano (arr. Adriano for string sextet)

Compared to Fritz Brun’s minimal output of lieder, Othmar Schoeck’s catalogue of nearly 300 items constitutes more of a „cultural shock”. Schoeck (1886–1957) had started writing lieder around 1900, at a time when Brun was still studying in Köln. His earliest collection (op. 3) was first published in 1907; but before that, he had already written some 30 songs without opus numbers. Brun and Schoeck became acquainted in 1908; their friendship lasting until the latter’s death. *Wanderlied der Pragerstudenten* (1907), the first Schoeck song Brun became influentially aware of, caused „quite a stir” for him, apparently.

Besides the collection on this recording, five more autographs of lieder (written between 1901 and 1913) are preserved in Brun’s estate. There is a 1909 setting of Hermann Hesse’s *Ravenna*, a poem which would inspire Schoeck four years later (his op. 24b, no. 7). Brun’s *Sommernacht* (1902, on a poem by a certain „M. Madeleine”) has no connection with Schoeck’s *Intermezzo* for strings (op. 58) of the same title, inspired by a poem of Gottfried Keller. Incidentally, Keller’s poem *Unter Sternen* was to become, in 1942, a Brun piece for unaccompanied male choir – this was composed at the same time as Schoeck was working on 25 Keller songs with piano (op. 55, 1941–43), using this particular song title for the whole cycle.

The remaining songs by Brun are *Requiem*, *Sehnsucht* (both of 1901) and *Aus banger Brust* (1902) – on texts by Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, Walter Weibel and Richard Dehmel (which had also inspired Sibelius in his op. 50, no. 4).

In a letter from Berlin of 29th November 1901 to his mother, we learn that Brun had „intended to write many songs”. Two weeks later we read: „I am in an intensively busy period of composing; songs [on poems] by K[onrad] F[erdinand] Meyer” – of which, apparently, only

the above mentioned *Requiem* was completed. Unfortunately Brun never kept his promise. In his later career he would write „many songs” for choral groups only.

The *Fünf Lieder für eine Altstimme mit Klavierbegleitung* were composed between 1913 and 1916 – and printed in 1920 by Musikhaus Hüni, They are dedicated to the singers Hanna Brenner (Nos 1 and 2) and Elisabeth Gund-Lauterburg (Nos 3-5).

Reviews and a program leaflet of a complete premiere performance of *ünf Lieder* could not be found. In the Schweizerische Musikzeitung a concert of the Lehrergesangsverein Bern of 21st January 1917 is reviewed, in which chorus master August Oetiker not only led choral pieces by Othmar Schoeck, Friedrich Hegar, Hans Huber and Ernest Graf, but also accompanied lieder by Fritz Niggli and Gustave Doret – besides Brun’s *Die Entschlafenen* and *Lebensgenuss*. Klara Wirz-Wyss was the soloist. This soprano (who in her earlier career also used to perform as a concert pianist), had been a pupil of Émile Jaques-Dalcroze; in 1929, in Leipzig, she would premiere Franz Schreker’s *Vom ewigen Leben* under Hermann Scherchen’s baton. In a reviewer’s opinion, Brun’s songs were „deeply felt, grave and more of a philosophical kind” – but that they were reminiscent of Brahms and that they were performed with „barely sufficient power”.

On 29th October 1917, at the occasion of a Swiss Music Week at the Wiener Konzerthaus, the complete set of Brun’s *Fünf Lieder* was performed by the composer at the piano, accompanying Viennese alto Elisabeth Gund-Lauterburg. In this recital, in which Othmar Schoeck collaborated, songs by Schoeck and Volkmar Andreae were also performed. Brun would also engage Gund-Lauterburg for some of his Bern concerts of Beethoven’s *Missa solennis* (in 1911) Liszt’s *Christus* (in 1918) and Bach’s *Christmas Oratorio* (in 1926).

Two songs from this collection are on texts by Friedrich Hölderlin, a poet whom Brahms had not used in his lieder, but did so in his magnificent *Schicksalslied op. 54*, for chorus and orchestra. Clemens Brentano became famous through Brahms’s six-part chorus a cappella rendering of *Abendständchen* and through his and Achim von Arnim’s editing of the folk-poetry collection *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, two items from which were used in Brahms’s *Lieder op. 62* for mixed chorus. Brun too seems to have been particularly attracted to Brentano’s *Abendständchen*. Its appeal (it describes the transparency between human soul and nature) manifested itself later in some of Brun’s Symphonies’ „nocturnal” slow movements – in which the effect of serenades heard from a distance was produced. More than a dozen other vocal renderings of *Abendständchen* would be written by composers ranging from Louis Ferdinand (Prince of Prussia) to Paul Hindemith; not to mention many more versions translated into foreign languages.

Hölderlin’s *Lebensgenuss* had been set in 1851 for male vocal quartet by Swiss composer Wilhelm Baumgartner and would inspire Josef Matthias Hauer to compose a song for voice and piano in 1924. In this rather „philosophical” text, the fascination of springtime justifies the poet to take a rather melancholic passing through life.

*Die Entschlafenen* – like in ancient Greek elegies – is a reminder that departed ones are always present in the souls of those left behind. Brun’s music is accordingly doleful and solemn.

In Schlegel’s *Es wehet kühl und leise* – another poem very much akin to Brun’s great sensitivity for nature – rustling thickets become transmitters of secret messages of the universe. Brun did not use its original title *Die Gebüsche (The bushes)*. In her highly recommendable book *Schubert’s Lieder and the Philosophy of Early German Romanticism* (Ashgate Publishing, 2014) Dr. Lisa Feurzeig delivers an extended analysis of this poem, which Franz Schubert had set with sparkling music in 1819.

The last song of Brun’s collection, *Der Wunsch*, is an intentionally „moralistic” miniature by Friedrich von Hagedorn, a poet from the Anacreontic period of late Baroque. Brun’s setting is saraband-like, with a slightly ironic touch: occasional trills heard in the accompaniment also emphasize the poem’s gallant verses.

The present arrangement for string sextet is a manifold homage to Brahms. It certainly sympathizes with Brahms’s own love for this kind of ensemble, but the arranger’s choice was also based on the fact that Brun’s songs contain homages to Brahms. The use of just a string quartet

would have been insufficient to assume the song's rather dense harmonies.

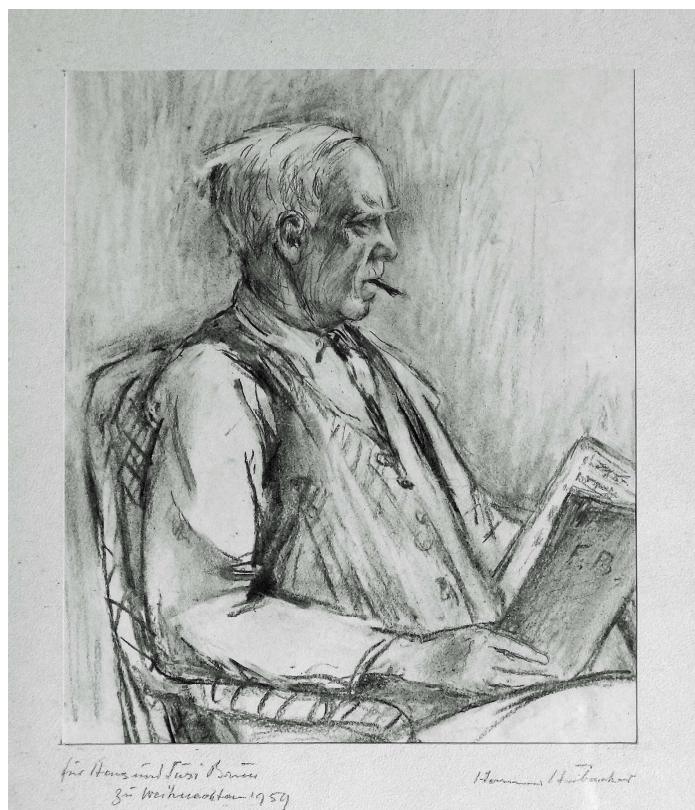
Last but not least, the arranger, too, honours his beloved Brahms once more, 13 years after his own sextet arrangement of *Vier ernste Gesänge*. This arranged version of *Fünf Lieder* is dedicated to Suzanne and Hans Brun: without their support, a recording project of Fritz Brun's orchestral works (on 10 CDs, started in 2003 and completed in 2015 with the present recording) would never have become possible.

(Edited by Ian Lacey)

## Afterword

The author of these rather spontaneous and varying CD liner notes is no musicologist. Therefore, these introductions would not withstand professional criticism. To musicologists, an „expert“ analysis of Fritz Brun's music still remains an uncharted territory. In Willi Schuh's collection of essays and reviews *Schweizer Musik der Gegenwart* (*Swiss music of present days*, 1948), six works of Brun are being introduced on ten small-format pages. Peter Mieg's contribution in *40 Schweizer Komponisten der Gegenwart* (*40 Swiss composer of present times*, 1959) runs to two and a half pages in length. However, Peter Palmer's five-page essay of 1996, *Fritz Brun, Swiss Symphonist* (*Tempo*, No. 195, January 1996) is the most insightful and qualified „composer's portrait“ of Brun published so far. Valuable biographical information can be found in Regula Koch's and Willy Tautenhahn's privately published studies of 1978.

*Adriano, in the summer of 2017*



Hermann Hubacher: Fritz Brun – a portrait drawing, 1959  
(The Fritz Brun Estate)

**THE FRITZ BRUN CD PROJECT**  
***DAS FRITZ-BRUN CD-PROJEKT***

Artist's Biographies  
*Künstlerbiographien*



Photo: Hans-Toni Aschwanden

## Tomáš Nemeč

Tomáš Nemeč belongs to the top of the young generation of Slovakian pianists.

After brilliant studies at the Košice Conservatory between 1985-1991 in the classes of Drozdek and Kojanová, Nemeč continued his studies in 1991-1996 at the University of Performing Arts in Bratislava with Prof. Marian Lapšanský. He graduated from interpretation courses led by Lazar Berman, Eugen Indjic, Marian Lapšanský, Halina Czerny-Stefanská and Peter Toperczer. Tomáš Nemeč is the laureate of numerous Slovak and international competitions. During this period he received numerous awards in several international competitions: Competition of the Slovak Conservatories in Žilina (1998), Competition of Young Performers in Ettlingen (Germany, 1989), 1st degree Honourable Mention at the Bedřich Smetana Competition (Czech Republic, 1990), 3rd prize in Fryderik Chopin Competition (Czech Republic, 1991), 2nd prize at the International Johann Nepomuk Hummel Competition (Slovakia, 1993), 2nd prize at the Johannes Brahms Competition (Austria, 1994), Honourable Mention at the Ferenc Liszt Competition (Hungary, 1996). He also became a finalist of TIJI-UNESCO International Tribune of Young Performers in Lisbon (1996).

Tomáš Nemeč has appeared in recitals and with orchestras in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, Norway, Portugal and Poland. He has played with the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, the Slovak State Philharmonic Košice, the Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra, the Portuguese Symphony Orchestra, the Pest County Symphony Orchestra, the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra and more. As a soloist he has collaborated with renowned conductors such as Ondrej Lenárd, Robert Stankovský, Kirk Trevor, Kypros Markou, Peter Feranec, Peter Breiner, Noseda Tibor, Martin Leginus and Blanka Juhaňáková. He has performed in different festivals such as the Central European Festival of Concert Art in Žilina, the Cultural Summer in Bratislava, the Music Summer in Trenčianske Teplice, the Bratislava Musical Festival (BHS), the Fryderyk Chopin Days in Warsaw.

His teaching of chamber music at the University of Performing Arts in Bratislava is an important part of his musical activities. Since 2009 he has been the correpetiteur of the Slovak Philharmonic Choir, with whom he performed in many choral concerts in Hungary, Austria and Slovakia.

With conductor Adriano, he has recorded concert works by Mario Pilati and Adriano's own *Concertino for Celesta and Strings*.

Tomáš Nemeč gehört zur Spitze der jüngeren Generation von slowakischen Pianisten.

Nach mit Auszeichnung absolvierten Studien am Konservatorium Košice von 1985-1991 in den Klassen von Drozdek und Kojanová setzte Nemeč seine Studien bei Prof. Marian Lapsanský an der Hochschule für Musische Künste Bratislava fort. Er absolvierte Kurse in Interpretation, geleitet von Lazar Berman, Eugen Indjic, Marian Lapsanský, Halina Czerny-Stefanská and Peter Toperczer. Tomáš Nemeč ist Preisträger von zahlreichen slowakischen und internationalen Wettbewerben. Während seinen Studienjahren in Bratislava wurde er bei folgenden internationalen Wettbewerben ausgezeichnet: Wettbewerb der Slowakischen Konservatorien in Žilina (1998), Wettbewerb „Jugend musiziert“ in Ettlingen (Deutschland, 1989), 1. ehrenhafte Nominierung am Bedřich-Smetana-Wettbewerb (Tschechien, 1990), 3. Preis, Internationaler Chopin-Wettbewerb (Tschechien, 1991), 2. Preis, Internationaler Johann-Nepomuk-Hummel-Wettbewerb (Slowakei, 1993), 2. Preis, Johannes-Brahms-Wettbewerb (Österreich, 1994), ehrenhafte Erwähnung, Franz-Liszt-Wettbewerb (Ungarn, 1996). Er war ausserdem Finalist beim TIJI-UNESCO International Tribune of Young Performers in Lissabon (1996).

Nemeč ist in Tschechien, Ungarn, Deutschland, Norwegen, Portugal und Polen in Recitals und mit Orchestern aufgetreten. Er ist mit der Slowakischen Philharmonie, der Staatlichen Slowakischen Philharmonie Košice, dem Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra, dem Portugese Symphony Orchestra, dem Pest County Symphony

Orchestra, dem Slowakischen Radio-Sinfonieorchester und anderen aufgetreten. Als Solist hat er mit namhaften Dirigenten wie Ondrej Lenárd, Robert Stankovský, Kirk Trevor, Kypros Markou, Peter Feranec, Peter Breiner, Nosedá Tibor, Martin Leginus und Blanka Juhaňáková zusammengearbeitet. Er ist bei verschiedenen Festivals aufgetreten: Central European Festival of Concert Art in Žilina, Cultural Summer in Bratislava, Music Summer in Trenčianske Teplice, Bratislava Musical Festival und Fryderyk Chopin-Tage in Warschau.

Die Lehrtätigkeit für Kammermusik an der Hochschule für Musische Künste Bratislava nimmt in seinen musikalischen Aktivitäten einen wichtigen Platz ein. Seit 2009 ist er Korrepetitor des Slowakischen Philharmonischen Chors, mit dem er bei mehreren Chorkonzerten in Ungarn, Österreich und in der Slowakei aufgetreten ist.

Mit dem Dirigenten Adriano hat er Konzertwerke von Mario Pilati und Adrianos eigenes *Concertino für Celesta und Streicher* aufgenommen.



Photo: Adriano

## Claudius Herrmann

Claudius Herrmann received his musical education at the Conservatory of Lübeck, as a pupil of David Geringas. Since 1992 he has been a solo cello player of the Orchestra of the Zürich Opera, where he has worked with conductors like Nikolaus Harnoncourt, John Eliot Gardiner, Christoph von Dohnányi, Riccardo Chailly, Bernhard Haitink and Franz Welser-Möst. In 2013 he also performed as a solo player at the Bayreuth Festival. As a chamber music player (for 15 years he was a member of the Amati Quartet Zürich and since 2011 of the Gringolts Quartet), he performed at such prestigious venues as New York's Carnegie Hall, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and London's Wigmore Hall, Paris' Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Vienna's Musikverein, Salzburg's Festival and in Berlin's Philharmonie.

He has made over 20 chamber music recordings. Herrmann can be heard on various CDs with sonatas by Brahms, Reinecke und Herzogenberg. Some of his recordings were awarded the "Prix Choc du Monde de la Musique" and the "Echo Klassik" Award. He plays an instrument built by Giovanni Paolo Maggini (ca. 1600), which is being lent to him by the Maggini Foundation, Langenthal (Switzerland).

Claudius Herrmann erhielt seine musikalische Ausbildung an der Musikhochschule Lübeck bei David Geringas. Seit 1992 ist er Solocellist im Orchester der Oper Zürich und arbeitete dort mit Dirigenten wie Nikolaus Harnoncourt, John Eliot Gardiner, Christoph von Dohnányi, Riccardo Chailly, Bernhard Haitink und Franz Welser-Möst. 2013 spielte er als Solocellist bei den Bayreuther Festspielen. Als Kammermusiker (15 Jahre im Amati Quartett Zürich und seit 2011 als Cellist des Gringolts-Quartetts) trat er u.a. auch in der Carnegie Hall New York, dem Concertge-

bouw Amsterdam, der Wigmore Hall London, dem Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, dem Wiener Musikverein, den Salzburger Festspielen und in der Berliner Philharmonie auf.

Nebst über 20 Kammermusik-Aufnahmen hat er auch mehrere CDs mit Sonaten von Brahms, Reinecke und Herzogenberg veröffentlicht. Einige seiner Einspielungen erhielten internationale Schallplattenpreise wie den „Prix Choc du Monde de la Musique“ und den „Echo Klassik“-Preis. Er spielt ein Instrument von Giovanni Paolo Maggini (um 1600), das ihm von der Maggini Stiftung Langenthal zur Verfügung gestellt wird.



*Photo: Peter Németh*

## **Bernadett Fodor**

The Hungarian mezzosoprano, whose operatic repertoire includes nearly twenty roles, made her opera debut in the role of Suzuki at the National Centre for the Performing Arts, Mumbai (India), in 2008. She studied under Veronika Dobi-Kiss and Prof. Gabriele Lechner; her current teacher is Sylvia Sass.

In 2010 she was awarded, in Vienna, the „Birgit-Nilsson-Gedächtnispreis zur Förderung junger Opernsängerinnen.“ In 2012 she was invited to take part in the world premiere of the “Colón-Ring” in Buenos Aires. She has sung several Wagner heroines to date. Her *Rheingold* Erda was awarded the “Österreichischer Musiktheaterpreis 2015 – Goldener Schikaneder”, in the category of best female supporting role in Vienna. She is a returning guest of the Oper Frankfurt, where she sang Ulrica, her first Verdi role, with considerable success. Between 2013 and 2015 she was a

member of the Neues Musiktheater Linz, where among other roles, she sang Erda, Waltraute and *Carmen*.

Her Hungarian opera debut was as Erda (*in Rheingold and Siegfried*) on the stage of the Palace of Arts Budapest, at the “Wagner in Budapest” Festival of 2015.

Die ungarische Mezzosopranistin, deren Repertoire annähernd zwanzig Rollen umfasst, debütierte 2008 als Suzuki am National Centre for the Performing Arts in Mumbai (Indien). Ihre Gesangslehrerinnen waren Veronika Dobi-Kiss und Prof. Gabriele Lechner; ihre gegenwärtige Lehrerin ist Sylvia Sass.

2010 wurde sie in Wien mit dem „Birgit-Nilsson-Gedächtnispreis zur Förderung junger Opernsängerinnen“ ausgezeichnet. 2012 wurde sie zur Teilnahme an der Weltpremiere des „Colón-Rings“ in Buenos Aires eingeladen. Soweit hat sie mehrere Partien von Wagner-Heroinnen gesungen. Für ihre *Rheingold*-Erda wurde sie in Wien mit dem „Österreichischen Musiktheaterpreis 2015 – Goldener Schikaneder“ in der Kategorie „beste weibliche Nebenrolle“ ausgezeichnet. Sie ist immer wiederkehrender Gast der Oper Frankfurt, wo sie Ulrica, ihre erste Verdi-Rolle, mit ausserordentlichem Erfolg sang. Zwischen 2013 und 2015 war sie Mitglied des Neuen Musiktheaters Linz, an dem sie unter anderem die Rollen von Erda, Waltraute und *Carmen* sang.

Ihr ungarisches Opern-Debüt gab sie als Erda (*Rheingold und Siegfried*) auf der Bühne des Palastes der Künste in Budapest anlässlich des Festivals „Wagner in Budapest“ von 2015.

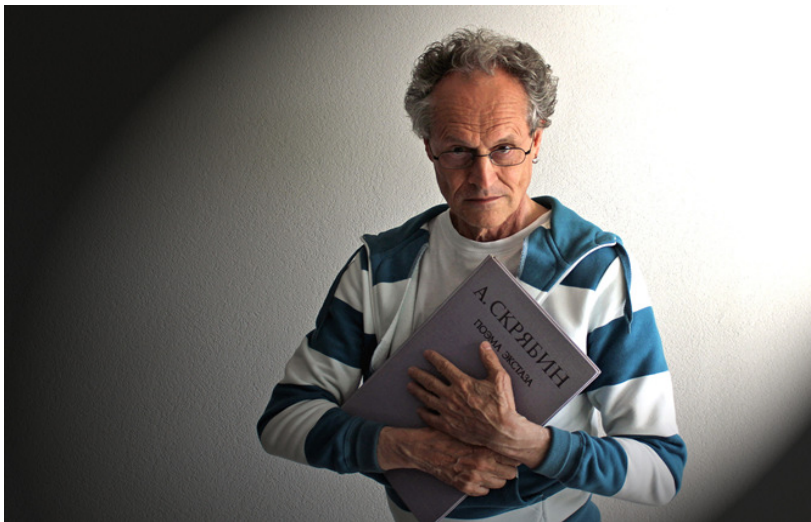


Photo: Dan Oria

## Adriano

Swiss-born conductor-composer Adriano lives in Zürich. As a musician he is mostly self-taught. In the late 1970s he established himself as a specialist on Ottorino Respighi and he has conducted many other CDs of obscure or neglected symphonic repertoire. He has also initiated and recorded a series of 15 CDs with film music by European and American film composers, and has created and directed a series of classical music videos. All of his recording projects (49 CDs, 21 of which featuring music by Swiss composers) have found wide recognition and his commitment is totally dedicated and uncompromising.

Adriano's compositions include *Concertinos* for piano, for celesta, for harpsichord and for Ondes Martenot and an *Obscure Saraband* for organ, tubular bells, timpani and strings. His quintet for clarinet and strings is entitled *Thoughts and Associations*.

His many instrumental adaptations include songs by Modest Mussorgsky (four cycles), Ottorino Respighi (five cycles), Johannes Brahms (*Vier ernste Gesänge*), Hugo Wolf, Othmar Schoeck, Fritz Brun, Jacques Ibert, Louis Gruenberg and Johann Strauss II. Ravel's *Tzigane* (premiered in Halle's

Händel-Haus in 2013) also belongs to this list, as well as two different short chamber versions of Antonín Dvořák's opera *Rusalka*, one of which ran for 53 performances in Krefeld's and Mönchengladbach's Theatres.

Adriano's successful arrangement of Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* for flute, clarinet, harp and string quartet (2008) has been performed in Switzerland, Germany, Italy and England by renowned artists.

Der gebürtige Schweizer Dirigent und Komponist Adriano lebt in Zürich. Als Musiker ist er hauptsächlich Autodidakt. Nebst Werken Respighis dirigierte er zahlreiche weitere CDs mit Werken des unbekannteren oder vernachlässigten sinfonischen Repertoires. Er hat eine Reihe von 15 CDs mit Musik von vornehmlich europäischen Filmkomponisten initiiert und aufgenommen. Ausserdem produzierte und leitete er eine weitere Reihe von klassischen Musikvideos. Alle seine Aufnahmeprojekte (insgesamt 49 CDs) haben breite Anerkennung gefunden, nicht zuletzt aufgrund seines entschiedenen und kompromisslosen Engagements.

Adrianos Kompositionen umfassen *Concertini* (mit Streichorchester) für *Celesta*, für *Cembalo* und für *Ondes Martenot*; ein *Concertino* für *Klavier*, *Streicher* und *Schlagzeug*, *Obscure Saraband* für *Orgel*, *Glocken*, *Pauken* und *Streicher* und ein mit *Gedanken und Assoziationen* betitelt Klarinettenquintett.

Seine zahlreichen Orchesterbearbeitungen beinhalten Lieder von Modest Mussorgski (vier Zyklen), Ottorino Respighi (fünf Zyklen), Johannes Brahms (*Vier ernste Gesänge*), Hugo Wolf, Othmar Schoeck, Fritz Brun, Jacques Ibert, Louis Gruenberg und Johann Strauss II. Zu dieser Liste zählen auch Ravels *Tzigane* (2013 uraufgeführt im Händel-Haus in Halle) und zwei verschiedene Kammerensemble-Kurzfassungen von Antonín Dvořáks Oper *Rusalka*. Letztere erlebte an den Theatern in Krefeld und Mönchengladbach insgesamt 53 Aufführungen.

Adrianos erfolgreiche Kammermusik-Bearbeitung von Debussys *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* für Flöte, Klarinette, Harfe und Streichquartett (2008) wurde in der Schweiz, in Deutschland, Italien und England von namhaften Interpreten eingespielt.

## Moscow Symphony Orchestra

The Moscow Symphony Orchestra – the first independent orchestra in Russia and an active participant of Moscow's musical life – was founded in 1989.

During more than two decades of its existence it performed under famous Russian and foreign conductors among them Jorma Panula, Arnold Katz, Sergei Stadler, Igor Golovchin, and with many outstanding soloists such as Yuri Bashmet, Victor Tretiakov, Vadim Repin, Vladimir Viardo, Alexander Knyazev, Alexander Rudin and others. The first chief conductor to lead the MSO was a famous French maestro, Antonio de Almeida. From 1996 to 2010 the music director and chief conductor of the orchestra was maestro Vladimir Ziva. Maestro Arthur Arnold (Netherlands) was appointed chief conductor in 2012.

The MSO has widened its reputation in the United States, Japan, South Korea, Argentina and in most of Western Europe. During a recent tour in Japan in May 2012, produced by Japan Arts, the orchestra performed with the winners of the XIV International Tchaikovsky Competition.

The orchestra has been recognized for its outstanding recordings. The Symphonies by Italian composer Francesco Malipiero were crowned "Disk of the month" by "CD review" (USA) and became the winner of the "Diapason d'Or". The Film Soundtrack discs *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* and *Five Fingers* got into the top ten recordings of 2001 by "The Economist".

The MSO traditionally participates in various charity projects. It Supports the Ronald McDonalds foundation for disabled children, presents charity concerts for the Russian Medical Doctors Association, provides a special concert commemorating the Memorial Day of the Genocide of the Armenian People and Supports many other projects. Furthermore the orchestra produced a series of open air concerts in Support of the restoration of a historical Archangelsoye palace.

Through the Moscow Symphony-Orchestra's educational programs the orchestra musicians

provide masterclasses and concerts in public schools, orphanages and hospitals. In regular open dress rehearsals and educational Seminars the MSO educates the next generation of musicians.

With conductor Adriano the MSO has realized, between 1994 and 2014, a total of 22 CDs on 5 different labels.

Dieses Orchester, das erste unabhängige Ensemble Russlands und ein aktiver Mitgestalter des Moskauer Musiklebens, wurde 1989 gegründet. Seit über 20 Jahren spielt es unter der Leitung berühmter russischer und ausländischer Dirigenten wie Jorma Panula, Arnold Katz, Sergei Stadler und Igor Golovchin und mit vielen hervorragenden Solisten wie Yuri Bashmet, Victor Tretiakov, Vadim Repin, Vladimir Viardo, Alexander Knyazev und Alexander Rudin. Erster Chefdirigent war der berühmte französische Maestro Antonio de Almeida. Vladimir Ziva war künstlerischer Leiter und Chefdirigent von 1996 bis 2010. Maestro Arthur Arnold (Niederlande) wurde 2012 sein Nachfolger.

Das MSO hat seine Tätigkeit in die USA, Japan, Südkorea, Argentinien und in die meisten Länder Westeuropas erweitert. Im Mai 2012, während einer Japan-Tournee von Japan Arts, begleitete es die Gewinner des XIV. Internationalen Tschairowsky-Wettbewerbs.

Anerkennung erhielt das MSO ebenfalls durch hervorragende CD-Aufnahmen. Die Einspielung der Sinfonien des italienischen Komponisten Francesco Malipiero wurde in den USA zur „CD des Monats“ (CD Review) gekürt und ausserdem mit dem „Diapason d’Or“ ausgezeichnet. Die Filmmusikaufnahmen von *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* und *Five Fingers* wurden in die 10 besten Aufnahmen von 2001 (*The Economist*) eingereiht.

Die Beteiligung des MSO bei verschiedenen Wohltätigkeitsanlässen ist zur Tradition geworden. Es unterstützt die Ronald McDonald Kinderstiftung, veranstaltet Konzerte der russischen Ärztevereinigung und zur Gedenkfeier des armenischen Genozids und realisierte weitere ähnliche Projekte wie zum Beispiel Openair-Benefizkonzerte zu Gunsten der Renovation des Archangelosoye-Palastes.

Das Weiterbildungs-Engagement des MSO beinhaltet auch Meisterkurse und Konzerte in Schulen, Waisenhäusern und Spitälern. Durch die Teilnahme an öffentlichen Generalproben und Seminaren wird die kommende Musikergeneration zusätzlich gefördert.

Zwischen 1994 und 2014 hat das MSO unter der Leitung von Adriano 22 CDs auf 5 verschiedenen Labels eingespielt.



*Photo: Michaela Birosova*

Ondrej Šaray (\*1965) studied orchestral conducting with Zdeněk Bílek at the Conservatory in Bratislava and with Ladislav Slovák at the Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Bratislava. From 1983 to 2007 he worked as the conductor of the Bratislava Children's Choir. In 1987 he established the Echo Youth Choir and in 1992 the Amadeus Choir of Bratislava. With these, he has won many significant domestic and international awards. As conductor, he has performed throughout Europe, Canada, Africa and the USA. He and his choirs cooperated in vocal-instrumental performances with many famous orchestras. In 2008 he became the conductor of the Nitria Choir in Nitra (Slovakia). Furthermore, he is conductor and choirmaster of the Bratislava Symphony Choir. With this choir he has made a variety of recordings for foreign companies.

Since 1992 he has been teaching at the Faculty of Music and Dance of the Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Bratislava, where he also completed his doctoral studies in choral conducting. In 2005 he graduated at the faculty and became associate professor.

Ondrej Šaray (\*1965) studierte bei Zdeněk Bílek am Konservatorium in Bratislava und, ebenfalls in Bratislava, bei Ladislav Slovák an der Akademie für Musik und darstellende Künste Orchesterdirigieren. Von 1983 bis 2007 war er als Dirigent des Kinderchors Bratislava tätig. 1987 gründete er den Echo Youth Choir und 1992 den Amadeus-Chor von Bratislava. Für seine Arbeit mit diesen Chören hat er mehrere bedeutende heimische und internationale Auszeichnungen gewonnen. Als Dirigent ist er in Europa, Kanada, Afrika und den USA aufgetreten. Er und seine Chöre haben bei vokal-instrumentalen Aufführungen mit zahlreichen berühmten Orchestern zusammengearbeitet. 2008 wurde er Dirigent des Nitria-Chors in Nitra (Slowakei). Ausserdem ist er Dirigent und Chorleiter des Bratislava Symphony Choir, mit dem er verschiedene Aufnahmen für ausländische Plattenfirmen tätigte.

Seit 1992 ist er Lehrer an der Fakultät für Musik und Tanz der Akademie für Musik und darstellende Künste in Bratislava, wo er auch zum Chordirigenten promovierte. 2005 graduierte er an dieser Fakultät und wurde zum ausserordentlichen Professor ernannt.

### **Bratislava Symphony Choir**

The Bratislava Symphony Choir, led by Ondrej Šaray, is one of the most important vocal ensembles of Slovakia. Its repertoire covers all style epochs from Renaissance to contemporary music. It regularly performs on Slovak and foreign stages, so far including 12 performances in various European countries. The Choir is also a regular guest in various sound Studios, as, for example, to record vocal-instrumental works for recording Companies and film soundtracks, mostly in collaboration with conductor David Hernando Rico and his Bratislava Symphony Orchestra.

Der Bratislava Symphony Choir gehört zu den bedeutendsten Chören in der Slowakei. Er wird von Ondrej Šaray geleitet. Sein Repertoire umfasst sämtliche Stilepochen von der Renaissance bis zur Gegenwart. Der Chor tritt regelmässig auf heimischen und internationalen Bühnen auf. Er gab bereits 12 Auftritte in verschiedenen europäischen Ländern und ist regelmässiger Gast in zahlreichen Studios, wo er in der Zusammenarbeit mit dem Dirigenten David Hernando Rico und dem Bratislava Symphony Orchestra Aufnahmen vokal-instrumentaler Werke für weltberühmte Aufnahme- und Filmgesellschaften tätig.

### **Bratislava Symphony Orchestra**

The Bratislava Symphony Orchestra (BSO) was created in 2000 by the Spanish conductor David Hernando Rico. Among its ranks are some of the city's finest musicians. Bratislava Symphony Orchestra musicians are also members of other orchestras of international renown such as the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, The Orchestra of the National Radio or The Orchestra of Bratislava Opera. Since its creation, the BSO's focus has been on concerts as well as recordings. Up to the present, more than 500 recordings have been produced for various recording labels, film producers and video game companies from all over the world. Among these have been Sony Music, Warner Music, Electronic Arts, Ubisoft and many others.

Recordings by the Bratislava Symphony Orchestra have won many prizes over the years; among these have been the Bafta prize, and the Goya prize from the Spanish Academy of Film. The orchestra has also worked with famous composers such as Hans Zimmer, Roque Baños, Lorne Balfe, Joan Valent, Brian Tyler and Michel Legrand among many others. In the context of concerts

it is worth mentioning the Orchestra's participation in the International Festival of Music, Theatre and Dance at Las Palmas de Gran Canaria in July of 2011.

With Adriano, the Bratislava Symphony Orchestra has recorded 5 CDs.

Das Bratislava Symphony Orchestra (BSO) wurde im Jahr 2000 vom spanischen Dirigenten David Hernando Rico gegründet. Unter seinen Mitgliedern befinden sich einige der besten Musiker von Bratislava. Die Musiker des Orchesters sind gleichzeitig Mitglied von anderen international angesehenen Orchestern wie etwa der Slowakischen Philharmonie, dem Nationalen Radio-Orchester und dem Orchester der Oper von Bratislava. Seit der Gründung des BSO stehen sowohl Konzerte als auch Aufnahmen im Zentrum seines Wirkens. Weltweit sind bis heute über 500 Aufnahmen für verschiedene Plattenfirmen, Filmproduzenten und Firmen von Videospiele wie Sony Music, Warner Music, Electronic Arts und Ubisoft entstanden.

Die Aufnahmen des Bratislava Symphony Orchestra wurden mit etlichen Preisen ausgezeichnet, darunter mit dem BAFTA-Preis und dem Goya-Preis der Spanischen Filmakademie. Das Orchester hat mit berühmten Komponisten wie Hans Zimmer, Roque Baños, Lorne Balfe, Joan Valent, Brian Tyler, Michel Legrand und vielen anderen zusammengearbeitet. Von der Konzerttätigkeit des BSO ist die Teilnahme am International Festival of Music, Theatre and Dance in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria im Juli 2011 zu erwähnen.

Das Bratislava Symphony Orchestra hat mit Adriano 5 CDs eingespielt.



*Bratislava, Slovak Radio, August 23, 2015 (Photo: Michaela Birosova):  
Rehearsing Fritz Brun's "Verheissung" with the Bratislava Symphony Choir  
Proben von Fritz Bruns "Verheissung" mit dem Bratislava Symphony Choir*



Bern, Elfenau, 1936:  
Fritz Brun in his music-room.



Bern, Kasino, 1930s:  
Fritz Brun with the orchestra of the  
Bernische Musikgesellschaft  
(Photo: Franz Henn, Bern).



Leipzig, September 1918:  
Schweizerisches Musikfest – Fritz Brun, Alphonse Brun (violinist),  
Ilona Durigo (mezzo-soprano), Hermann Suter and Othmar Schoeck (composers).



July 1909:  
Fritz Brun and Othmar Schoeck en route to Italy (a caricature by Schoeck).



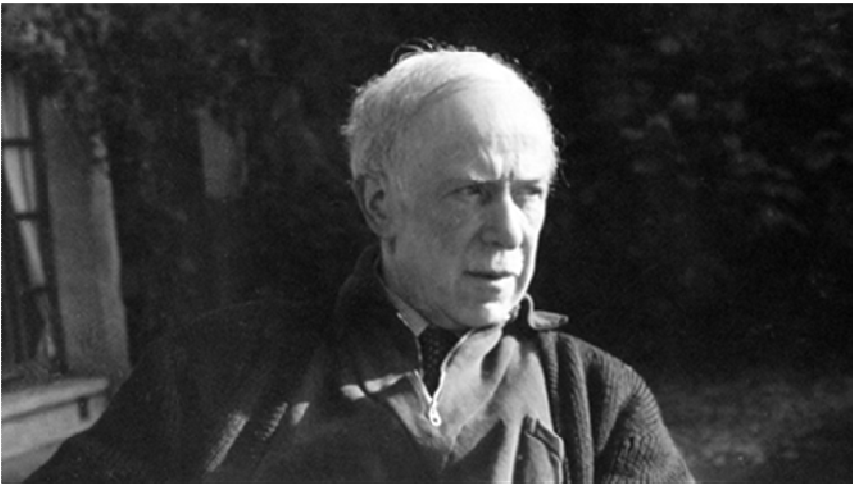
Spring 1911:  
Fritz Brun and Hermann Hesse during a second Italy trip.



A caricature by Ernst Morgenthaler of Fritz Brun transporting his (heavy) Symphony No. 3 to Zürich, for the 1919 premier performance.



Bremsgarten, August 1937:  
The composer with sculptor Herrmann Hubacher (l.) and violist Walter Kägi (r.).



Morcote, 1950s:  
A photo portrait of Brun by Martin Hesse.



Morcote, May 2011:  
The *Indipendenza*, Fritz Brun's residence from 1941 to 1959 (Photo: Adriano).



Morcote, May 2011:

The music-room of the *Indipendenza*

(Photo: Hans-Toni Aschwanden, a still from Adriano's Fritz Brun video documentary).



Ernst Morgenthaler (1887-1962):

*Mond am Ceresio (Moon over the Lake of Lugano, 1942)*. The composer with his friends in the garden of the *Indipendenza* – the painting (in Brun's Morcote music room) which inspired the *Notturmo* of Symphony No. 8.



Wilfried Buchmann (1878-1933):

*Die Familie Brun im Garten der Independenza (The Brun family in the garden of the Independenza, 1932)* – another painting from Brun's music-room.



Zürich, November 2003:  
Dr. Hans Brun (1922-2007), the composer's son, with Adriano.



Moscow, Mosfilm Studios, August 2003:  
With Edvard Shakhnazarian, producer of Symphonies Nos 3 and 10.



Moscow, Mosfilm Studios, November 2005:  
Rehearsing Symphony No. 9.



Moscow, Mosfilm Studios, March 2007:  
With Maria Soboleva, producer of the CDs with Symphonies Nos 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10.



Moscow, Mosfilm Studios, March 2007:  
Symphony No. 10 – with leader Natalya Voinova.



Moscow, Mosfilm Studios, March 2007:  
Symphony No. 10's *Adagio* on the producer's mixing console.



Moscow, Mosfilm Studios, May 2008:  
With the brass section of the Moscow Symphony Orchestra.



Moscow, Mosfilm Studios, May 2008:  
Recording *Rhapsodie für Orchester*.



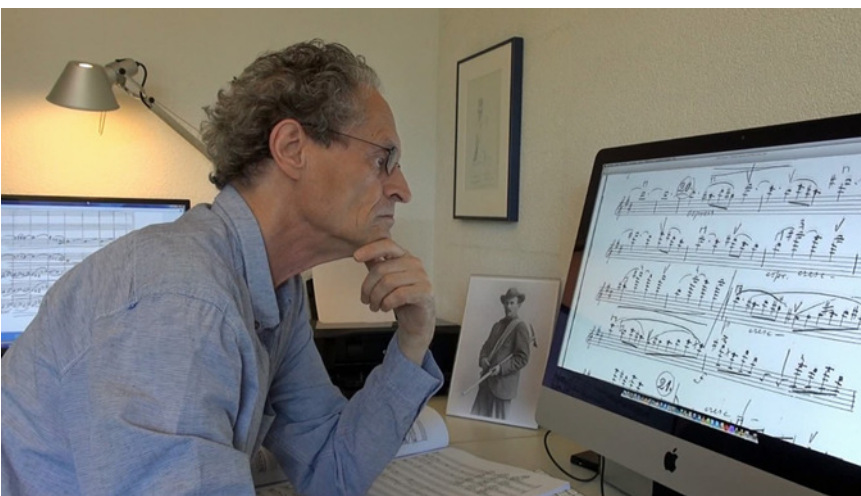
Moscow, Mosfilm Studios, November 2012:  
With leader Alexander Ashurkov before starting rehearsals of *Symphony No. 1*.



Moscow, Mosfilm Studios, November 2010:  
The woodwinds of Symphony No. 7.



Moscow, Mosfilm Studios, November 2010:  
The double-basses of Symphony No. 7.



Zürich, August 2012:  
Checking the original instrumental parts of  
Symphony No. 1.



Moscow, Mosfilm Studios, November 2012:  
Rehearsing Symphony No. 1.



Moscow, Mosfilm Studios, November 2012:  
Trumpet and trombone players of Symphony No. 1.



Moscow, Mosfilm Studios, November 2012:  
Selecting takes from Symphony No. 1. In the control room.



Mosfilm Studios, November 2012:  
With MSO's manageress Marina Levine (l.)  
and producer Maria Soboleva (r.).



Moscow, Mosfilm Studios, May 2013:  
Rehearsing start of Symphony No. 4.



Moscow, Mosfilm Studios, May 2013:  
With horn soloist Maxim Semenov (Symphony No. 4).



Moscow, Mosfilm Studios, May 2013:  
Rehearsing Symphony No. 4.



Moscow, Mosfilm Studios, May 2013:  
Talking Brun with a permanent studio guest.



Bratislava, Radio Studio, August 2013:  
Recording Brun's Piano Concerto.



Bratislava, Radio Studio, August 2013:  
Tomaš Nemeč, soloist.



Bratislava, Radio Studio, August 2013:  
Cross-checking doubtful passages in the score of Piano Concerto'.



Bratislava, Radio Studio, August 2013:  
Štefan Filas, leader.



Bratislava, Radio Studio, August 2013:  
Jozef Eliáš, solo clarinetist in the 2nd  
movement of Piano Concerto.



Bratislava, Radio Studio, August 2013:  
Recording the Piano Concerto.



Bratislava, Radio Studio, August 2013:  
Martin Roller, balance engineer of Piano Concerto.



Bratislava, Radio Studio, August 2013:  
With producer David Hernando Rico and balance engineer Martin Roller, during a break of Piano Concerto's recording sessions.



Grosshöchstetten, September 2013:  
With Suzanne Brun, Fritz Brun's daughter-in-law.



Grosshöchstetten, September 2013:  
Suzanne Brun in an interview sequence of Adriano's video documentary on Fritz Brun.



Moscow, Mosfilm Studios, March 2014:  
Recording Symphony No. 2 and the *Symphonischer Prolog* with producer/engineer Maria Soboleva.



Bratislava, Radio Studio, January 2015:  
Rehearsing Symphony No. 8.



Bratislava, Radio Studio, January 2015:  
Recording Symphony No. 8.



Bratislava, Radio Studio, January 2015:  
The hornists of Symphony No. 8.



Bratislava, Radio Studio, January 2015:  
Flute and clarinets of Symphony No. 8.



Bratislava, Radio Studio, January 2015:  
Recording Symphony No. 8.



Bratislava, Radio Studio, January 2015:  
With balance engineer Martin Roller and producer David Hernando Rico, in-between recording sessions of  
Symphony No. 8.



Zürich, March 2015:  
Editing a documentary on Brun's Piano Concerto.



Bratislava, Radio Studio, August 2015:  
With mezzo-soprano Bernadett Fodor and the Bratislava Symphony String Sextet, after recording an arrangement of Brun's Five songs for alto and piano.



Bratislava, Radio Studio, August 2015:  
With Martin Roller, Bernadett Fodor and David Hernando Rico.



Bratislava, Radio Studio, August 2015:  
With chorus leader Ondrej Šaray, during recording sessions of *Verheissung*.



Bratislava, Radio Studio, August 2015:  
Ondrej Šaray's Bratislava Symphony Choir rehearsing *Verheissung*.



Bratislava, Radio Studio, August 2015:  
Rehearsing *Verheissung*.



Bratislava, Radio Studio, August 2015:  
The trumpets and trombones of *Verheissung*.



**OTHMAR SCOECK: Drei Lieder** (1914) Orch. Fritz Brun (1916)**1. Auf meines Kindes Tod***(Josef von Eichendorff, 1838)*

Von fern die Uhren schlagen,  
 Es ist schon tiefe Nacht,  
 Die Lampe brennt so düster,  
 Dein Bettlein ist gemacht.

Die Winde nur noch gehen  
 Wehklagend um das Haus,  
 Wir sitzen einsam drinnen  
 Und lauschen oft hinaus.

Es ist, als müsstest leise  
 Du klopfen an die Tür,  
 Du hättest dich nur verirret,  
 Und kämst nun müd zurück.

Wir armen, armen Toren!  
 Wir irren ja im Graus  
 Des Dunkels noch verloren –  
 Du fandst dich längst nach Haus.

***On the Death of my Child***

*From the distance clocks strike,  
 the night is already far gone;  
 the lamp flickers drearily,  
 and your bed is made.*

*Only the winds can still be heard,  
 moaning about the house;  
 we sit within, alone,  
 and often we listen.*

*It seems as if you were surely  
 about to knock gently at the door,  
 as if you had lost your way,  
 and were coming home weary.*

*Poor, poor fools that we are!  
 We are the ones who stray,  
 still lost in terrible darkness –  
 you found your way home long ago.*

## 2. Die drei Zigeuner

(Nikolaus Lenau, 1838)

Drei Zigeuner fand ich einmal  
Liegen an einer Weide,  
Als mein Fuhrwerk mit müder Qual  
Schlich durch die sandige Heide.

Hielt der eine für sich allein  
In den Händen die Fiedel,  
Spielte, umglüht vom Abendschein,  
Sich ein feuriges Liedel.

Hielt der zweite die Pfeif im Mund,  
Blickte nach seinem Rauche,  
Froh, als ob er vom Erdenrund  
Nichts zum Glücke mehr brauche.

Und der dritte behaglich schlief,  
Und sein' Harfe am Baume hing,  
Über die Saiten ein Windhauch lief,  
Über sein Herze ein Traum ging.

An den Kleidern trugen die drei  
Löcher und bunte Flicker,  
Aber sie boten trotzig und frei  
Spott den Erdengeschicken.

Dreifach haben sie mir gezeigt,  
Wenn uns das Leben umnachtet,  
Wie man's verraucht, verschläft und vergeigt  
Und wie man es dreimal verachtet.

Nach den Zigeunern lange noch schau'n  
Musst' ich im Weiterfahren,  
Nach den Gesichtern dunkelbraun,  
Nach den schwarzlockigen Haaren.

### *The Three Gipsies*

*I once saw three gipsies  
lying in a field,  
as my wagon crawled in weary  
torment over the sandy heath.*

*One took his fiddle,  
Bathed in evening light,  
he struck up a fiery tune  
meant for his ears alone.*

*The second puffed at his pipe,  
he gazed up at its smoke  
happily, as if he needed nothing  
more on earth to make him glad.*

*And the third slept peacefully,  
his cimbalom hung on a tree;  
a breath of wind passed over the strings,  
a dream passed over his heart.*

*The garments of all three were  
torn and brightly patched,  
and still, defiant and free, they mocked  
earthly destiny.*

*They showed me three times  
over that when life's night falls about us  
we can puff it, sleep it, play it away,*

*condemn it three times over.*

*I could not help but look long back  
at the gipsies in my onward journey,  
at their dark, tanned faces,  
their black and twisted locks.*

### **3. Jugendgedenken**

*(Gottfried Keller, 1846)*

Ich will spiegeln mich in jenen Tagen,  
Die wie Lindenwipfelwehn entflohn,  
Wo die Silbersaite, angeschlagen,  
Klar, doch bebend gab den ersten Ton,  
    Der mein Leben lang,  
    Erst heut noch, widerklang,  
ob die Saite längst zerrissen schon;

Wo ich ohne Tugend, ohne Sünde,  
Blank wie Schnee vor dieser Sonne lag,  
Wo dem Kindesauge noch die Binde  
Lind verbarg den blendend hellen Tag:  
    Du entschwundne Welt  
    Klingst über Wald und Feld  
Hinter mir wie ferner Wachtelschlag.

Wie so fabelhaft ist hingegangen  
Jener Zeit bescheidne Frühlingspracht,  
Wo von Mutterliebe noch umfangen  
Schon die Jugendliebe leis erwacht,  
    Wie, vom Sonnenschein  
    Durchspielt, ein Edelstein,  
Den ein Glücklicher ans Licht gebracht.

Wenn ich scheidend einst muss überspringen  
Jene Kluft, die keine Brücke trägt,  
Wird mir nicht ein Lied entgegenklingen,  
Das bekannt und ahnend mich erregt?  
    O die Welt ist weit!  
    Ob nicht die Jugendzeit  
Irgendwo noch an das Herz mir schlägt?

Träumerei! was sollten jene hoffen,  
Die nie sahn der Jugend Lieblichkeit,  
Die ein unnatürlich Los getroffen,  
Frucht zu bringen ohne Blütezeit?  
    Ach, was man nicht kennt,  
    Danach das Herz nicht brennt  
Und bleibt kalt dafür in Ewigkeit!

In den Waldeskronen meines Lebens  
Atme fort, du kühles Morgenwehn!  
Heiter leuchte, Frühstern guten Strebens,  
Lass mich treu in deinem Scheine gehn!  
    Rankend Immergrün  
    Soll meinen Stab umblühn,  
Nur noch Ein Mal will ich rückwärts sehn!

### **Thoughts of Youth**

*I would behold my image in those days  
which flew like winds stirring the lime-tree crests,  
when the silver string, once touched,  
clear yet trembling, gave forth the first tone  
that my whole life long,  
even today, reechoed,  
though the strings were broken long ago.*

*When I without virtue, without sin,  
lay bright as the snow beneath this sun,  
when a tender blindfold still shut out  
the dazzling bright day from a child's eye:  
you, o vanished world,  
sound across field and forest  
behind me like a quail's far-off call.*

*Like a miracle those days  
of modest spring glory are departed,  
when, still enfolded in a mother's love,  
young love already wakened softly,  
like a precious stone,  
in which sunlight flickers,  
brought to daylight by some fortunate soul.*

*When one day I must leap across  
the abyss which no bridge spans,  
will a song not echo toward me,  
familiar yet prophetic, rousing me?  
O, how vast this world is!  
Might not my days of youth  
yet beat somewhere at my heart?*

*Mere daydreams! What can they hope for  
who never saw how dear youth was,  
who, struck by an unnatural fate,  
brought forth fruit without blossom-time?  
Ah, the heart does not burn  
for what it never knew  
and so is cold for all eternity.*

*Breathe on, you cool morning breeze  
in the forest treetops of my life!  
Shine serene, daystar of honest toil.  
let me stride on faithful in your light!  
Entwining evergreen  
will blossom round my staff,  
and once more only will I look behind me!*

English translations: © Antony Hasler

**FRITZ BRUN****Fünf Lieder für eine Altstimme (1920)****1. Lebensgenuss***(Friedrich Hölderlin, 1794)*

Noch kehrt in mich der süsse Frühling wieder,  
 noch altert nicht mein kindisch fröhlich Herz,  
 noch rinnt vom Auge mir der Tau der Liebe nieder,  
 noch lebt in mir der Hoffnung Lust und Schmerz.

Noch tröstet mich mit süssem Augenweide  
 der blaue Himmel und die grüne Flur,  
 mir reicht die Göttliche den Taumelkelch der Freude,  
 die jugendliche, freundliche Natur.

Getrost! Es ist der Schmerzen wert, dies Leben,  
 solange uns Armen Gottes Sonne scheint  
 und Bilder besserer Zeit um unsre Seele schweben  
 und, ach, mit uns ein freundlich Auge weint.

***Life's enjoyment***

*Sweet spring still returns to me,  
 My childish, cheerful heart doesn't grow old yet,  
 Dew of love still runs down my eye,  
 Hope's desire and pain still live within me.*

*With a sweet feast for the eyes  
 Blue heaven and green meadows comfort me;  
 Divine youthful and cheerful nature  
 Still offer me joy's rapturous cup.*

*Fear not! This life is worth its pains  
 As long as God's sun shines on we poor fellows  
 And pictures of better times float around our souls,  
 And, alas, a friendly eye cries with us.*

**2. Die Entschlafenen***(Friedrich Hölderlin, 1800)*

Einen vergänglichen Tag lebt ich und wuchs mit den Meinen,  
 Eins ums andere schon schläft mir und fliehet dahin.  
 Doch ihr Schlafenden wacht am Herzen mir, in verwandter  
 Seele ruhet von euch mir das entfliehende Bild.  
 Und lebendiger lebt ihr dort, wo des göttlichen Geistes  
 Freude die Alternden all, alle die Toten verjüngt.

***The sleeping ones***

*I lived a passing day and grew up with my kindred,  
 Already, one after another, they sleep and flee away from me.  
 But you sleeping ones keep watch over my heart.  
 As a kindred soul I feel your fleeing images resting.  
 And you live more lively where the divine Spirit's joy  
 Rejuvenates all who grow old and all who have died.*

### 3. Abendständchen

*(Clemens Brentano, 1802)*

Hör', es klagt die Flöte wieder,  
Und die kühlen Brunnen rauschen.  
Golden weh'n die Töne nieder,  
Stille, stille, lass uns lauschen!

Holdes Bitten, mild Verlangen,  
Wie es süß zum Herzen spricht!  
Durch die Nacht, die mich umfängen,  
Blickt zu mir der Töne Licht!

#### *Evening serenade*

*Hear, the flute laments again,  
And cool fountains murmur.  
Golden sounds drift down,  
Be quiet, be quiet, let's listen!*

*Lovely begging, gentle desire,  
How sweetly it speaks to the heart!  
Through the night, that embraces me  
The light of these sounds beholds me!*

### 4. Es wehet kühl und leise (Die Gebüsch)

*(Friedrich von Schlegel, 1819)*

Es wehet kühl und leise  
Die Luft durch dunkle Auen,  
Und nur der Himmel lächelt  
Aus tausend hellen Augen.

Es regt nur eine Seele  
Sich in des Meeres Brausen,  
Und in den leisen Worten,  
Die durch die Blätter rauschen.

So tönt in Welle Welle,  
Wo Geister heimlich trauern;  
So folgen Worte Worten,  
Wo Geister Leben hauchen.

Durch alle Töne tönst  
Im bunten Erdentraume  
Ein leiser Ton gezogen,  
Für den, der heimlich lauschet.

#### *A cool wafting (The bushes)*

*Cool and softly,  
Air wafts through dark meadows,  
And heaven alone smiles  
From a thousand bright eyes.*

*Only a soul stirs  
In the roaring of the sea,  
And in the soft words  
Rustling through leaves.*

*Thus sounds a wave in a wave  
Where spirits secretly mourn;  
Thus words follow words  
Where spirits breathe life.*

*Through all sounds,*

*In a colorful earth's dream  
A soft sound moves,  
For he who secretly listens.*

### **5. Der Wunsch**

*(Friedrich von Hagedorn, 1775)*

Du holder Gott der süß'sten Lust auf Erden,  
Der schönsten Göttin schönster Sohn!  
Komm, lehre mich die Kunst, geliebt zu werden;  
Die leichte Kunst, zu lieben, weiß ich schon.

Komm ebenfalls und bilde Phillis' Lachen,  
Cythere, gib ihr Unterricht!  
Denn Phillis weiß die Kunst, verliebt zu machen,  
Die leichte Kunst, zu lieben, weiß sie nicht.

### **FRITZ BRUN**

#### **Verheissung (1915)**

*(Johann Wolfgang Goethe, "Symbolum", 1815)*

Die Zukunft decket  
Schmerzen und Glücke  
Schrittweis dem Blicke;  
Doch ungeschreckt  
Dringen wir vorwärts

Und schwer und ferne  
Hängt eine Hülle,  
Mit Ehrfurcht, stille  
Ruhn oben die Sterne  
Und unten die Gräber.

Doch rufen von drüben  
Die Stimmen der Geister,  
Die Stimmen der Meister:  
Versäumt nicht zu üben,  
Die Kräfte des Guten!

Hier winden sich Kronen  
In ewiger Stille,  
Die sollen mit Fülle  
Die Tätigen lohnen!  
Wir heißen euch hoffen.

#### ***The Wish***

*You lovely god of earth's sweetest pleasure,  
Most beautiful son of the most beautiful goddess!  
Come; teach me the art of being loved;  
I know already the easy art of loving.*

*Come also, and shape Phillis' laughter,  
Instruct her, Cythera!  
Since Phillis knows the art of making one fall in love,  
But she doesn't know the easy art of loving.*

*English translations: © 2014 Adriano*

**Promise**

*(Original translation's title: "Mason-Lodge")*

*The future hides in it  
Gladness and sorrow;  
We press still thorow,  
Nought that abides in it  
Daunting us onward.*

*And solemn before us  
Veiled the dark portal,  
Goal of all mortal;  
Stars silent rest o'er us  
Graves under us silent.*

*But heard are the voices,  
Heard are the sages,  
The worlds and the ages;  
Choose well; your choice is  
Brief and yet endless.*

*Here eyes do regard you,  
In eternity's stillness;  
Here is all fullness,  
Ye, brave to reward you;  
Work and despair not.*

*English translation: Thomas Carlyle (1842)*

**FRITZ BRUN****Grenzen der Menschheit (1932)**

*(Johann Wolfgang Goethe, 1813)*

Wenn der uralte,  
Heilige Vater  
Mit gelassener Hand  
Aus rollenden Wolken  
Segnende Blitze  
Über die Erde sät,  
Küss' ich den letzten  
Saum seines Kleides,  
Kindlicher Schauer  
Treu in der Brust.

Denn mit Göttern  
Soll sich nicht messen  
Irgendein Mensch.  
Hebt er sich aufwärts  
Und berührt  
Mit dem Scheitel die Sterne,  
Nirgends haften dann  
Die unsichern Sohlen,  
Und mit ihm spielen  
Wolken und Winde.

Steht er mit festen,  
Markigen Knochen  
Auf der wohlgegründeten  
Dauernden Erde:  
Reicht er nicht auf,  
Nur mit der Eiche  
Oder der Rebe  
Sich zu vergleichen.

Was unterscheidet

Götter von Menschen?  
 Dass viele Wellen  
 Vor jenen wandeln,  
 Ein ewiger Strom:  
 Uns hebt die Welle,  
 Verschlingt die Welle,  
 Und wir versinken.

Ein kleiner Ring  
 Begrenzt unser Leben,  
 Und viele Geschlechter  
 Reihen sich dauernd  
 An ihres Daseins  
 Unendliche Kette.

### ***Limitations of Humanity***

*When the primeval  
 All-holy Father  
 Sows with a tranquil hand  
 From clouds, as they roll,  
 Bliss-spreading lightnings  
 Over the earth,  
 Then do I kiss the last  
 Hem of his garment,  
 While by a childlike awe  
 Fill'd is my breast.*

*For with immortals  
 Ne'er may a mortal  
 Measure himself.  
 If he soar upwards  
 And if he touch  
 With his forehead the stars,  
 Nowhere will rest then  
 His insecure feet,  
 And with him sport  
 Tempest and cloud.*

*Though with firm sinewy  
 Limbs he may stand  
 On the enduring  
 Well-grounded earth,  
 All he is ever  
 Able to do,  
 Is to resemble  
 The oak or the vine.*

*Wherein do gods  
 Differ from mortals?  
 In that the former  
 See endless billows  
 Heaving before them;  
 Us doth the billow  
 Lift up and swallow,  
 So that we perish.*

*Small is the ring  
 Enclosing our life,  
 And whole generations  
 Link themselves firmly  
 On to existence's  
 Chain never-ending*

*English translation: Edgar A. Bowring (1853)*



