

Hans Knappertsbusch on Music & Arts

CD-1067(1) **Richard Wagner: Parsifal: Act III.** Broadcast Studio Production (Berlin, RRG, 31 March 1942) with Elsa Larcén (soprano) as Kundry, Karl Hartmann (tenor) as Parsifal, Hans Wocke (baritone) or Hans Reinmar (baritone) as Amfortas, and Ludwig Weber (basso) as Gurnemanz; Chor des Deutschen Opernhauses Berlin and Orchester des Deutschen Opernhauses Berlin, conducted by Hans Knappertsbusch. 76:35 (A co-production with Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv). UPC # 0-17685-10672-9.

CD-4897(2) **Knappertsbusch Conducts J.S. Bach:** Suite No. 3 in D & Violin Concerto in a, BWV 1041, VPO, Vienna, 6/1944 (live), Wolfgang Schneiderhan, violin; HANDEL: Concerto Grosso in D, Op. 6, No. 5, BPO, Berlin, 3/1944 (live), Erich Röhn & Ulrich Grehlinger, violins; Arthur Troester, cello; MOZART: Symph. No. 39 in E flat, K543, Berlin State Opera Orch., Berlin, 10/1929 (studio rec; Odeon 78s); MOZART: Symph. No. 40 in g, K550, Symph. No. 41 in C, K551, VPO, Vienna, 11/1941 (RRG broadcast rec.); HAYDN: Symph. No. 94 in G, "Surprise," BPO, Berlin, 7/1941 (Studio rec; Electrola 78s). UPC # 017685-48972-3.

CD-4257(1) **Knappertsbusch Conducts Bruckner's Third.** ANTON BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 3 in d*, Bavarian State Orchestra (from a public performance given in Munich on 11 Oct. 1954); RICHARD WAGNER: *Götterdämmerung: Siegfried's Rhine Journey & Funeral*, Berlin State Opera Orchestra (from a public performance given in Nov. 1959), cond. Hans Knappertsbusch. (AAD) Total time: 69:28. UPC # 017685-42572-1. Not available in Germany for copyright reasons.

CD-4009(13) **Knappertsbusch's 1956 Bayreuth Ring**—AT LAST, IN SUPERB FIDELITY! Wagner: *Der Ring Des Nibelungen*, Hans Hotter as Wotan, Wolfgang Windgassen as Siegmund and Siegfried, Josef Greindl as Hunding, Gré Brouwenstijn as Sieglinde, and Astrid Varnay as Brünnhilde. With the Bayreuth Festival Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Hans Knappertsbusch (1956). (ADD) UPC #0-17685-40092-6. Not available in Germany due to copyright reasons. SPECIAL: 13 CDs in slipcase (not available separately) priced as 6.

CD-1105 (1) AAD

©2002 Music & Arts Programs of America, Inc., P.O. Box 771, Berkeley, CA 94701 USA



Phone: 510/525-4583 • Fax: 510/524-2111

E-mail: info@musicandarts.com

Website: www.musicandarts.com

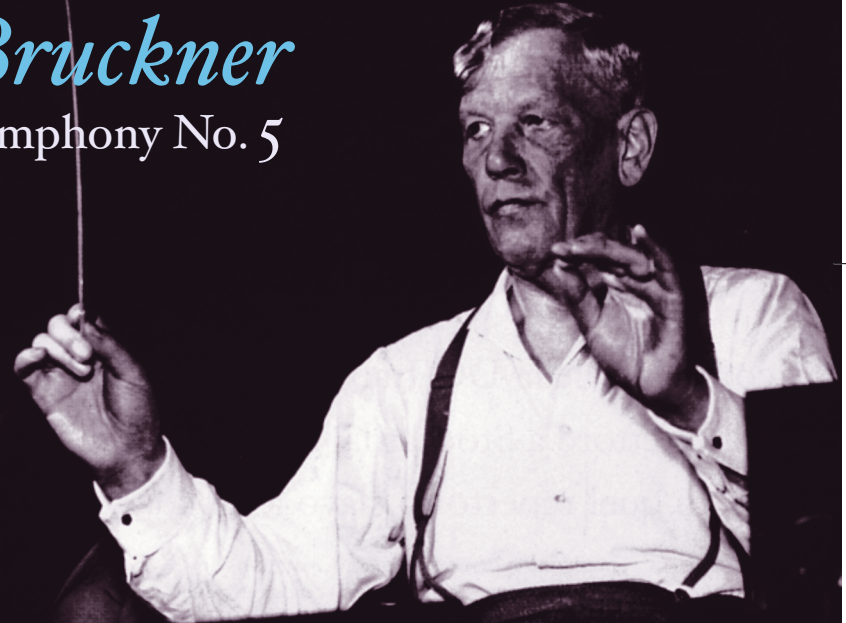
Ask for our free catalog!

Hans Knappertsbusch

C O N D U C T S

Bruckner

Symphony No. 5



Munich P.O., 19 March 1959 (*Live*)

Hans Knappertsbusch

Hans Knappertsbusch (1888-1965) is rightly viewed as one of the grand old masters among Bruckner conductors. Born in Elberfeld, his early career was spent in provincial German opera houses (Mulheim, Bochum, Elberfeld, and Dessau). His early interest in Wagner manifested itself in a dissertation on the role of Kundry in *Parsifal*; this was not however accepted toward a degree. In 1911-12, he assisted at Bayreuth and met the venerable Hans Richter. Knappertsbusch's first major post came in 1922, succeeding Bruno Walter as Generalmusikdirektor in Munich. In 1925 he began his recording career with Haydn's *Oxford Symphony*, an acoustic recording with the Berlin Staatskapelle for the German Grammophon Company.

Knappertsbusch's career appeared to be blossoming; he began to appear frequently in Berlin and Vienna in addition to his Munich engagements. However, he had not counted upon the animosity of Adolf Hitler. On January 1, 1936, Kna was summarily pensioned off and forbidden to work anywhere in Bavaria. Hitler installed his hand-picked successor, Clemens Krauss, in Munich. Knappertsbusch then moved to the Vienna State Opera, where he was temporarily able to put the Munich unpleasantness behind him. After the Anschluss in 1938 he remarked, "Now they've reconquered me."¹ The Vienna Philharmonic players committee managed to obtain permission for Knappertsbusch to again perform in Germany, but the Munich ban remained. Kna also became a regular guest with the Berlin Philharmonic, where Wilhelm Furtwängler had resigned as music director following his own clash with the Nazis.

Michael Kater attempted to portray Knappertsbusch as one who "no doubt wanted to be a good National Socialist, if only the rat pack would let him." Typical of Kater's "evidence" is Knappertsbusch's outrage over some intemperate remarks by Thomas Mann concerning Wagner. It seems not to have crossed Kater's mind that Kna might have disagreed with Mann on musical, rather than political, grounds. Kater does admit that Knappertsbusch never joined the Party, but explains his blacklisting from work in Munich by citing the less than compelling reasons of administrative neglect and acceptance of outside engagements.²

Once the Nazi regime collapsed, Kna made his belated return to the Munich podium on August 17, 1945, opening the concert with Mendelssohn's *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*.

move to EMI. The orchestra's discomfiture over these events was aggravated by lackluster technical work and a lack of engagement from the podium. Passages such as the crushing octave leaps at bars 329-30 (opening movement) or the buildup to the first movement coda fall flat from want of conductorial thrust. Indicative of the occasional malaise was the horn passage at the *a tempo* in bar 403 of the first movement. This simply disappeared, not from a Schalk excision, but from a missed entrance that no one bothered to fix.

Three years later in Munich, things were different. The concert reading scores over the Decca in greater tempo contrasts and livelier accenting, as well as more assertive timpani and brass. The second movement is broader, yet more flexible. The Scherzo is massive but emphatic, contrasting with the rustic humor of the Trio. The Munich Finale, similar in duration to Vienna, builds far more cumulative power (despite some overload on the amateur tape), culminating in an overwhelming rendition of the augmented chorale.

© 1998 MARK W. KLUGE

¹ Otto Strasser, "Hans Knappertsbusch and the Vienna Philharmonic," annotations to Deutsche Grammophon CD 435 328-2.

² Michael Kater, *The Twisted Muse*, Oxford University Press (1997), pp. 40-45.

³ Benjamin Marcus Korstvedt, "Anton Bruckner in the Third Reich and After: An Essay on Ideology and Musical Reception," *The Musical Quarterly* 80 (1996), p. 149.

⁴ Quoted in annotations to Music & Arts CD-219, the previous release of Knappertsbusch's 1950 Bruckner Ninth with the Berlin Philharmonic.

⁵ Alfred Orel, *Bruckner-Brevier: Briefe-Dokumente-Berichte*, Verlag Paul Kaltschmid, Wien (1953), pp. 286-305.

⁶ H. C. Robbins Landon, "The Baffling Case of Anton Bruckner," *High Fidelity*, February 1963, pp. 46-7.

⁷ See the Preface to the 1990 reprinting of Nowak's edition of the Fifth, Eulenburg No. 463.

case, it may have been this concert that planted the idea of revision in Bruckner's mind. Other projects intervened, however.

Franz Schalk apparently carried out his own revision in 1892-3, in anticipation of performing the work in Graz. Despite his efforts, the work's monumental difficulty required a postponement of the première to permit another six months of rehearsals. By the time of the first performance on April 9, 1894, Bruckner was too ill to attend. Several elements of Schalk's revision undoubtedly reflect the exigencies of prospective performance with his provincial theatre band. Despite the trials, reports of the première's success gratified the ailing composer, who wrote to Schalk on April 12:

I should like to express my deep admiration for your extraordinary artistry and my everlasting gratitude for all you have done for me. You will undoubtedly go on to win the fame you so richly deserve. May God bless you, noble artist and man of genius that you are. Please convey my sincere thanks and profound admiration to the highly esteemed management and all the excellent performers. Words fail to describe my disappointment at being unable to attend.

With these words of praise ringing in his ears, it is hardly surprising that Schalk elected to use his revision as basis for the published edition. Schalk later stated that he received Bruckner's specific permission for the augmented brass in the final chorale. This addition is a masterful arrangement, using the (by then fatigued) orchestral brass to mark the rhythm, while a fresh section of 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, and tuba carries the chorale tune.

Other retouchings Schalk made in the revision arose from a different motivation— his attempt to expand the tonal palette of Bruckner's woodcut-like scoring. We therefore hear such oddities as string material handed over to the clarinets (bars 156-9 in the opening movement), or the piccolo piercing through the orchestral fabric (bars 199 and 482, same movement). Thematic reconfigurings such as the complete inversion of the string figures at letter G in the opening movement are merely inexplicable. The substantial cut in the Scherzo reprise also tends to upset the balance between movements. In the absence of documented evidence to the contrary, we must assume that Bruckner never saw these changes until the score was published shortly before his death.

Knappertsbusch recorded this score with the Vienna Philharmonic for Decca/London in May 1956. For several reasons, this was the conductor's least successful Bruckner recording. Decca changed their recording site from the familiar Musikvereinsaal to the Sofiensaal and installed a new recording team there, just as producer Victor Olof resigned from the firm to

However, like Furtwängler, Knappertsbusch was then forbidden from conducting for two years until cleared of allegations of collaboration. Following his reappearance in 1947, Knappertsbusch again became an essential part of the Austrian and German musical scene, eventually conducting the Vienna Philharmonic over 200 times and the Berlin Philharmonic more than 180. Knappertsbusch also conducted many of the newly formed German radio orchestras, such as the NDR Orchestra in Hamburg, the WDR Orchestra in Cologne, and the Hessian Radio Orchestra in Frankfurt. In addition to renewing his relationship with Munich's opera and concert life (including the State Opera, Bavarian State Orchestra, and Munich Philharmonic), Kna became a regular at the Bayreuth and Salzburg Festivals. His freelance status also promoted the occasional outing with groups such as the Bremer Philharmonic and Dresden Staatskapelle.

Knappertsbusch recorded for the British Decca Company following the war, first with the Suisse Romande Orchestra, later with the Vienna Philharmonic. After Decca dropped him in favor of the up-and-coming Georg Solti, Knappertsbusch made several records in Munich for the US Westminster firm (1961-3). His final recording was a massive reading of Anton Bruckner's Eighth Symphony, made with the Munich Philharmonic in January 1963. He bade farewell to Munich with *Fidelio* on July 6, 1964, and aptly led *Parsifal* in his final appearance, given at Bayreuth on August 13. Knappertsbusch died in Munich on October 25, 1965.

Knappertsbusch and Bruckner

Knappertsbusch has always aroused controversy over his performance of the works of Anton Bruckner, both for his often-broad tempi and his allegiance to the first published editions. Certainly in terms of tempi, Karajan, Giulini, and Celibidache have long since surpassed any perceived excesses in Kna's Bruckner performances. Those named, along with Günter Wand, exemplify what musicologist Benjamin Korstvedt describes as the "dominant modern approach to Bruckner interpretation [which] emphasizes monumental sonorities, sets steady, generally slow tempi, and presents Bruckner's forms with architectural severity rather than dynamic sweep." Listeners only superficially familiar with Knappertsbusch's conducting might be tempted to include him in the same category. However, Kna truly represents the earlier generation of Bruckner interpreters, who according to Korstvedt, "exemplify a quite different approach to the music, one much more concerned with shaping

Bruckner's music gesturally and dynamically, and with conveying not the massive coherence of Bruckner's music but its mercurial drama." This tradition of Bruckner performances dates to his earliest advocates, Artur Nikisch, Hermann Levi, and Hans Richter (Knappertsbusch assisted Richter's final appearances at Bayreuth in 1911-12). Other examples of this Bruckner performance tradition include Wilhelm Furtwängler (1886-1954), Eugen Jochum (1904-1987), Georg Ludwig Jochum (1909-1970), Lovro von Matačić (1899-1984), Carl Schuricht (1880-1967), and Jascha Horenstein (1898-1973).³

Tempo flexibility, dynamic contouring, and rhetorical gesture are part and parcel of Bruckner's music as promulgated in the first published editions used by Knappertsbusch until the end of his life. John Rockwell wrote that "Knappertsbusch's way with Brucknerian rubato - varying the pulse of the music without undermining Bruckner's stolid grandeur - seems to capture the essence of the music time after time, mixing serenity with thrilling urgency."⁴ Granted, Kna did not always follow the letter of the first printings in his realizations. His predilection for dramatic underlining however reflects the same tradition that infuses the old scores with various refinements of tempi, phrasing, and dynamics.

Knappertsbusch was neither the only nor the last conductor to use the first published Bruckner editions after the critical scores appeared. F. Charles Adler recorded the First, Third, and Ninth Symphonies in the first editions in 1952-55. Volkmar Andreae performed the first editions of the Fourth, Seventh, and Eighth in Vienna after the war. Heinz Bongartz conducted the 1896 first edition of the Fifth in Leipzig in 1946, finding it more effective than the Haas edition. Postwar concert recordings exist of Wilhelm Furtwängler performing the Fourth and Eighth first editions with the Vienna Philharmonic (1951 and 1954). Josef Krips conducted the first editions of the Third, Fourth, and Eighth with the New York Philharmonic in 1961-4. Carl Schuricht recorded the first editions of the Seventh and Third Symphonies in 1964-66. As recently as 1992, Jerzy Semków conducted the 1889 Gutmann edition of the Fourth in Detroit and Pittsburgh. Leon Botstein has performed the 1896 Doblinger score of the Fifth Symphony with the American Symphony, and recorded that version in London. The current Bruckner publisher, Musikwissenschaftlicher Verlag, is reportedly about to undertake a new printing of the first editions, in order to address a rekindling of scholarly interest in the traditions and heritage that produced these scores.

Before 1990 one could scarcely find scholarly writing that discusses the old editions in other than anecdotal terms. Many critics attributed the rise in Bruckner's popularity to the publication of the critical editions. H. C. Robbins Landon claimed this was the case even in Austria, the composer's homeland. However, it was actually the early editions that estab-

lished Bruckner's reputation. Alfred Orel tabulated an amazing total of 67 Bruckner performances by the Vienna Philharmonic between 1920 and 1931 (the year of Franz Schalk's death). From 1942 to 1953, when all of the Symphonies were available in critical editions, the Philharmonic played Bruckner 54 times. Astonishingly, only 15 of these later performances actually used the critical edition instead of an earlier publication.⁵ Landon stated, "I have never felt a more charged atmosphere in any concert hall than I did in the Musikverein after Furtwängler's performance with the Philharmonic, shortly before his death, of the Bruckner Eighth."⁶ He apparently was unaware that on this occasion Furtwängler performed the 1892 edition, as documented on a tape of the performance maintained in the VPO archive.

A common practice of Knappertsbusch's contemporaries Furtwängler and Schuricht, among others, was the incorporation of certain details from the first editions into performances of the later critical scores. Kna and his contemporaries were also not above adding their own emendations to the published scores, as we shall see.

Symphony No. 5

For this March 19, 1959 performance of the Fifth Symphony, Knappertsbusch used the 1896 Doblinger edition prepared by Franz Schalk. Bruckner's involvement with this publication has long been doubtful. Leopold Nowak discovered that Bruckner himself changed the end of the slow movement in a copyist's score.⁷ In the revision, the final phrase ends on the dominant rather than the tonic. The same score includes several other pencil notations that indicate the composer was contemplating a revision of the work. Haas did incorporate the composer's notation of a potential cut in the Finale from bars 270-373, marked by "Vi-de" in his edition (and in Nowak's). The Doblinger score left much of this developmental material intact, removing instead a passage from bars 325-353. The most controversial excision in this edition is the bulk of the recapitulation, bars 374-459. It is this radical shortening that, as Prof. William Carragan has pointed out, turns the 1896 Finale into the form of a vast prelude and fugue, followed by the chorale section and coda.

The composer heard the Fifth performed only once, on April 20, 1887, in a two-piano concert arranged by Josef Schalk. This occasion typified Bruckner's often-stubborn character. He threatened to cancel the concert unless Schalk and the other pianist, Franz Zottmann, held additional rehearsals under his direction. Even with the extra rehearsals, a scandal nearly ensued when Bruckner hesitated before acknowledging the applause. In any