

London **Philharmonic** Orchestra

BRUCKNER
SYMPHONY NO.6

CHRISTOPH ESCHENBACH *conductor*
LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA



BRUCKNER SYMPHONY NO.6

In September 1879, when he began his Sixth Symphony, Bruckner was living frugally in Vienna. The former organist of Linz Cathedral had moved there in 1868 to teach at the Conservatory and play for services in the Court Chapel. He was now also teaching at Vienna University but his various duties were poorly paid. The first performance of his Third Symphony in December 1877 had been a catastrophe, and the Fourth and Fifth remained unheard. The urge to compose, however, was too strong to be stifled, and Bruckner confidently set to work on the Sixth Symphony. He finished it in September 1881 and, unusually for him, felt no need to revise it. Nor did it suffer the editorial attention of friends that so bedevilled some of the other symphonies.

Bruckner heard only one complete performance, a try-out rehearsal by the Vienna Philharmonic under Wilhelm Jahn. The second and third movements were publicly performed under Jahn on 11 February 1883, but the full symphony was not heard in public until three years after Bruckner's death, when Mahler conducted a heavily cut performance in Vienna. The first uncut performance took place in Stuttgart on 14 March 1901.

Some of Bruckner's most tender and intimate music and some of his loveliest melodies are found in this symphony, yet it does not lack big climaxes, which he could produce with an orchestra of relatively modest size. This is one of his most closely-knit symphonies; the music flows from one section to the next more smoothly than is sometimes the case with Bruckner, and the movements disclose links with one another.

A rhythmic pattern, which pervades much of the opening movement, is heard on the violins at the outset, and against this the lower strings intone the first main theme, which the full orchestra exultantly takes up. The theme's second part has a dotted-note rhythm, a recurrent feature throughout the symphony. The strings introduce the lyrical second subject, based on cross rhythms, and a massive third subject led by trombones follows later. A gentle codetta of woodwind and string arpeggios leads without pause into the development section, which ranges into distant harmonic territory. An ingenious modulation restores the home key for a big climax, which proves to be the first subject forcefully opening the recapitulation. The other themes are reviewed, and in the coda the first theme is considered in various keys



before the return of A major and the initial rhythm brings a bold, succinct conclusion.

The *Adagio*, marked 'very solemn', opens with a string theme, which is counterpointed by a poignant oboe melody in dotted rhythm and climaxes in a descending scale. The movement is in Bruckner's three-subject sonata form. The second subject is a flowing string melody, and the third suggests a funeral march. In the recapitulation, which reaches a passionate climax, the horns take over the lamenting counter-melody from the oboe. The composer gave no clue to his thoughts, preferring as

usual to let the music speak for itself.

Next comes a scherzo of fantastical character. Moving between major and minor tonality but predominantly in A minor, it has a main theme that develops from a steady, tramping bass to an outburst of wild fanfares. The secondary section trips rather than tramps. In the central trio section a phrase in dotted rhythm on *pizzicato* strings and a horn fanfare usher in a woodwind theme that is nothing less than the main subject of the Fifth Symphony. Elgar used to say that all the themes in a work of his came from the same oven. Similarly one

could say all Bruckner's symphonies came from one oven; he could transfer a theme from one work to another without incongruity.

Strings and woodwind set the *Finale* in flowing motion over a treading bass. The principal theme, derived from the opening of the *Adagio*, develops a marching stride and rises to a fanfare climax. The tender second subject is dwelt upon at some length before the third, a unison variant of the first, appears. The oboe melody from the *Adagio* significantly reappears on the strings, its sorrowful character now transformed by the faster tempo. The concise development begins with an inversion of the main theme on cellos and includes a new violin theme. At first the mood is meditative, but the brass assumes progressive dominance. The first and second subjects are recapitulated, followed by the transformed oboe lament, and there is an abruptly terminated climax. So far the prevailing key has been A minor, but Bruckner is striving to recover the symphony's initial exultant mood. The marching principal theme at last moves into resplendent A major, and at the final great climax it is combined with the symphony's opening theme.

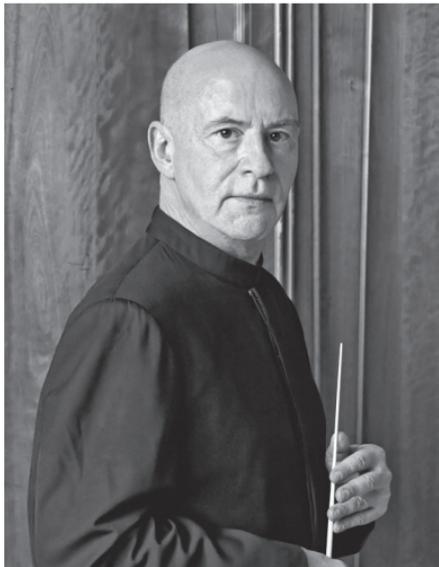
CHRISTOPH ESCHENBACH *conductor*

In demand as a distinguished guest conductor with the finest orchestras and opera houses throughout the world, Christoph Eschenbach served as Music Director of the NDR Symphony Orchestra (1998-2004), the Orchestre de Paris (2000-2010) and the Philadelphia Orchestra (2003-2008). Currently Music Director of both the National Symphony Orchestra and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C, he is also Principal Conductor of the SHMF International Orchestral Academy.

Recent and upcoming highlights include concerts and tours with the Vienna Philharmonic, London Philharmonic Orchestra and Staatskapelle Dresden; an engagement at the Paris Opera conducting Hindemith's *Mathis der Mahler*; and appearances with the Munich Philharmonic and the Leipzig Gewandhaus.

A prolific recording artist over five decades, he has an impressive and wide-ranging discography as both a conductor and a pianist on a number of prominent labels. His recordings include works ranging from J.S. Bach to music of our time and reflect his commitment to not just canonical works but the music of the late-20th and early-21st-century as well.

Mentored by George Szell and Herbert von Karajan, Christoph Eschenbach held the posts of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Tonhalle Orchestra from 1982 to 1986; Music Director of the Houston Symphony from 1988 to 1999; Music Director of the Ravinia Festival from 1994 to 2003; and Artistic Director of the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival from 1999 to 2002.



LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The London Philharmonic Orchestra is known as one of the world's great orchestras with a reputation secured by its performances in the concert hall and opera house, its many award-winning recordings, its trail-blazing international tours and its pioneering education work. Distinguished conductors who have held positions with the Orchestra since its foundation in 1932 by Sir Thomas Beecham include Sir Adrian Boult, Sir John Pritchard, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti, Klaus Tennstedt, Franz Welser-Möst and Kurt Masur. Vladimir Jurowski was appointed the Orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor in March 2003 and became Principal Conductor in September 2007, succeeding Kurt Masur. The London Philharmonic Orchestra has been resident symphony orchestra at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall since 1992 and there it presents its main series of concerts between

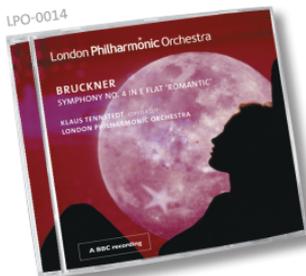
September and May each year. In summer, the Orchestra moves to Sussex where it has been Resident at Glyndebourne Festival Opera for over 40 years. The Orchestra also performs at venues around the UK and has made numerous tours to America, Europe and Japan, and visited India, Hong Kong, China, South Korea, Australia, South Africa and Abu Dhabi.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra made its first recordings on 10 October 1932, just three days after its first public performance. It has recorded and broadcast regularly ever since, and in 2005 established its own record label. These recordings are taken mainly from live concerts given by conductors including LPO Principal Conductors from Beecham and Boult, through Haitink, Solti and Tennstedt, to Masur and Jurowski. www.lpo.org.uk



Highlights from the London Philharmonic Orchestra's label
For more information or to purchase CDs telephone +44 (0)20 7840 4242
or visit www.lpo.org.uk

LPO-0014



Bruckner Symphony No.4

LPO-0030



Bruckner Symphony No.7

LPO-0032



Bruckner Symphony No.8

LPO-0003



Orchestral Excerpts from
Wagner Operas

LPO-0043



Brahms Symphonies Nos.1 & 2

LPO-0044



Mahler Symphony No.2

ANTON BRUCKNER (1824–1896)

59:59 Symphony No.6 in A major

01	16:13	Maestoso
02	20:08	Adagio: Sehr feierlich
03	08:11	Scherzo: Nicht schnell
04	15:27	Finale: Bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell

CHRISTOPH ESCHENBACH *conductor*
LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
Carmine Lauri *guest leader*

Recorded live at Southbank Centre's **ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL, London**