

DIE QUARTE

THE FOURTH

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Encountering Hans Rott on the Organ

Absolutely subjective thoughts of a transcripator

An organist setting about to gain access to Hans Rott will find himself in an empty space as he would when trying to do the same with Anton Bruckner. Well, the latter, the "master", at least had a go at some little keyboard pieces which can also be played on the organ ("trying various counterpoints" is the task he titles his Fugue in c minor with), whereas the first, the "student", obviously had not even one note to spare for the organ. And this although both excelled as organists in a very special way. Both had been concentrating on the big symphony, the orchestral symphony, and they simply had no time to write pieces or even symphonies for the organ, too. And it is just that category we organists would like to request from Anton Bruckner as well as Hans Rott, the more so since they could play the organ in a way nobody else in their circle could compete with.

However, a today's organist with ears to listen and eyes to see cannot miss the roots of both symphonists when listening to the Bruckner-Rott sound and reading the scores: the organ. Large parts sound as if they had been conceived for the organ: so firm, so plastic, so organ-technically edited is their effect. For a long time, the Bruckner organ enthusiast had been nursing the false hope – and gallantly suffering mockery – that one of these days at long last he would dig up the longed-for Bruckner Symphony for Organ. No chance.

To obtain a Brucknerian organ sound, there was no other choice than doctoring the orchestral symphonies. The author confesses that he – pretending to have to prove the organ-style of Bruckner's symphonies – was the first to transcribe the complete Bruckner symphony movements for organ in the early 1970s.

As the years went by, more and more of his colleagues had been developing a taste for this, and nowadays symphony-addicted transcripators have caught up with all Bruckner symphonies – from No. 00 to No. 9. For a long time now, there are no traces of any scruples when it comes to transcribe any orchestral work – by hook or by crook. And thus Hans Rott, too, when entering the scene, fell into the transcripator's trap. Again it was the author who – the very moment he had listened to the Symphony in E major for the first time – felt the urge to transcribe that music for the organ. For you could not help noticing that that music had its roots in the organ and that it had to be taken back there.

But you can hear it all the same!

As to this work I – please permit me to write this in the first person singular for this is a personal matter – can even present a proof that the organ plays a part in Hans Rott's symphony. A renowned general music director paid me a visit, and I talked to him about this sensational music. As had been my intention, the friend became curious and readily agreed to listen to the legendary performance of the Rott Symphony at the end of the Würzburg Bruckner Festival 2002 (with the Münchner Rundfunkorchester – for many months doomed with liquidation – with Sebastian Weigle conducting). At once captured by the main theme, my friend followed its development and when it was rising, the experienced man of the orchestra cried: "Wonderful that effect of the organ!". Very much to my regret I had to tell him: "There is no organ here". He, however, although

he is no organist, insisted on the organ: "But you can hear it all the same!"

Yes, indeed, one can hear it although it is not there – steady, I must not get carried away: one believes to hear it. On that summer evening I took pleasure in "explaining" to my friend – stop! how absurd this is: an organist about to "explain" a score to a conductor – well, permit me (a man limited to his very own instrument) to noncommittally muse about how one can detect the organ while listening to the Rott Symphony.

I present my organ transcription of the first movement and – lo and behold! – the organist's style is revealed: In the right hand, chord figurations; below, in the left hand, the sacred, subdued theme, sustained by a solemn, striding bass basis in the pedal. In this and in no other way, an organist finds a theme on the organ he considers worth to begin an orchestra symphony he has in mind with! The moment the theme has reached the culmination of sound, it presents itself as a sumptuous (organ) choral which calls forth the greatest instrumental energy.¹

¹ Let us look into France: In 1886, half a decade after Hans Rott, César Franck wrote a symphony (in d minor). Here, too, one cannot miss to hear that this is the work of an organist! And vice versa: in the sonatas for organ by his colleague Alexandre Guilmant one is tempted to believe to hear an orchestra in the background.

"A Revolution in Music History"

An interview with conductor
Ryusuke Numajiri **p. 6**

日本初演

p. 7

Events

p. 8

And here, in the greatest display of splendour, Hans Rott seems to trumpet a secret forth, a secret that otherwise had to be kept strictly concealed: his love for Louise Löwy, the radiant young sister of his friends John Leo and Friedrich Löwy.² In the climax, the presentation of the main theme opens out into a descending triad theme, which Hans Rott had obviously adopted from Wagner's "Valkyrie". Towards the end of Act 1, Siegmund solemnly promises his forbidden love Sieglinde: "The name I take from thee!" (Ill. 2). One must not overdo the hunt for quotations, but in this case it would be an unlikely accidental identity had Hans Rott not deliberately adopted the Wagnerian motif (transposed from F major to E major, insignificantly altered in one single, the last but one note) as a quotation to disguise his secret message. It dominates the whole first movement and

maintains its prominent profile until the end of the symphony.³

Let us continue to leaf through the organ transcription of the first movement to have a look at the second theme. On first sight, the simple row of triads looks like a find from the harmonium school which I, when attending grammar school, used to search for easy movements (Ill. 3).

Putting it to the test

Putting what I have said to the test leaves no doubt: Played on a harmonium this theme sounds optimal, almost "original". The instrumentation with clarinets and flutes resp. oboes does also point into the direction of this sound character.

In the first place, it is the harmonium which I see when looking at the (transcribed) notes of the adagio

movement. The resting initial chord, to bind "legatissimo" the subtly flowing harmonies, the moderate dynamics (in the beginning not louder than forte), the cautious subsiding and swelling, and also the comfortable pedal steps – all these make up an ideal "harmony" music (Ill. 4).

Yes, I also see the pedal part integrated into the harmonium aura. I would give a great deal could I play that music on the pedal-harmonium I had at my disposal when staying at boarding-school⁴ a long time ago. Like an organ it had two manuals and a fully developed pedal, couplers, swells operated by kicks, a rank of stop knobs covering the whole width. I mention this because Anton Bruckner, too, owned a lavishly equipped pedal-harmonium⁵ which is now kept at the Monastery St. Florian and – confidential matter – can be

Bayreuth Festival in 1876 and attended the world premiere of the complete "Ring". Harten, p. 23 and p. 70.

⁴ The monastery seminary of the Augustinians (OSA) in Münnerstadt (Lower Franconia), 1952 - 1961.

⁵ An instrument by the firm B. Kohler & C^o Harmonium Manufacturers in Prague & Stuttgart, built in the late 19th century with the following equipment: 8 stops (cor anglais, Bourdon, Clairon, Basson, Flûte, Clarinette, Flageolet, Hautbois), two manuals (C-c¹), Pedal (C-d¹), 2 iron pneumatic pedals above the pedal, 2 forte pulls, manual and pedal couplers.

² As for the biography and acquaintances of Hans Rott (1858 - 1884) I recommend the following publication: Uwe Harten (editor), Hans Rott. Biographie, Briefe, Aufzeichnungen und Dokumente aus dem Nachlaß von Maja Loehr [Hans Rott. Biography, Letters, Notes and Documents from the Estate of Maja Loehr], Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna, 2000 (in the following abbreviated: Harten). The book contains an annotated index of persons, from which the following pieces of information are taken: Louise Löwy (1862 - 1938), in 1895 change of name to Löhr. Since the summer of 1879 she had been Hans Rott's girl-friend. Why

their relationship had to be kept secret remains unclear. Friedrich Löwy (1859 - 1924, as from 1887 Löhr) was Louise's brother and Hans Rott's closest friend. To his care Rott entrusted the score of the Symphony in E major when he was in the lunatic asylum (as from February 16, 1881). Gustav Mahler borrowed the Rott score from Friedrich Löwy and studied it with great benefit for his own oeuvre.

³ The answer to the question whether Hans Rott had known "The Valkyrie" is easy: He was one of those 30 chosen young members of the Viennese Academic Wagner Society who received a free ticket for the first

Ill. 1: Exposition of the main theme with the motif "The name I take from thee!" (Organ transcription by Erwin Horn)



Ill. 2: Quotation "The name I take from thee!" from "The Valkyrie"

tested there.⁶ It has, however, a frightfully loud and robust sound. Bruckner literature nowadays still has it that Bruckner had had an organ in his flat. This is, of course, a misunderstanding; he had just his pedal-harmonium, an instrument which – because of the pedal – had been praised as room "organ"⁷ in the 19th century. Bruckner certainly could not afford a pipe-organ.⁸

Bruckner had to hold his organ lessons at the k. k. Lehrer- und Lehrerinnen-bildungsanstalt [The Imperial and Royal Educational Institute for Male and Female Teachers] as from 1870 at a pedal-harmonium.⁹

On October 1, 1869 Bruckner was finally appointed professor for organ at the Conservatoire of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde but had still to wait for a

proper organ. In the old building of the Conservatoire (Unter den Tuchlauben), where Bruckner had already been teaching harmony and counterpoint for one year, there was no organ either.

The fruits of the lessons

Even after the Conservatoire had moved to the new building of the Musikverein¹⁰ (Bösendorferstraße) at the beginning (October 4) of the new term 1869/70, the Conservatoire could not furnish the newly appointed and very first organ teacher of the institute with an organ. Again, Bruckner and his students had to make do with a pedal-harmonium until an organ was put up in the Little Hall (today Brahms Hall) which was also used for concerts.

Unfortunately, it does not exist any more.¹¹

In these stylish surroundings, Bruckner taught his organ students whose number was fixed at the "normal number of students" of nine, according to the decree of employment.¹² Each of them Bruckner had to teach three hours a week "personally, punctually and conscientiously".

One of them, perhaps the most outstanding of all, entered the scene in the winter term of 1874: Hans Rott. Until the summer of 1877 he had been enrolled for organ lessons with Anton Bruckner, proved to be talented above average and became his favourite student. The fruits of the lessons become obvious in the programmes of the organ evening concerts of the Conservatoire. On February 16, 1876 Hans Rott plays a "Chant and Variations" by Johann Christian Rinck, on May 3, 1876 the "Adagio" from the Sonata in f minor by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy and the Fugue in C major by Joseph Vockner; on May 16, 1877 the "Fugue in G major" by Johann Sebastian Bach.¹³

Bruckner was very pleased with his student's performance and even tried to arrange for him the position as his (second) successor at the organ of the

⁶ Today, Bruckner's harmonium is kept in the so-called Vierer-Zimmer (above the Bruckner Stüberl). In this guest room, Bruckner used to stay when visiting the place in later years.

⁷ Anna von Gyurkovich: "He had an organ in his flat [19th district, Währinger Straße 41, 3rd floor]. At that time I was a girl of 13 and, with my brothers and sisters, often used to visit Mrs Römer, the widow of a major of the Medical Corps who lived in the 2nd floor of the aforementioned house. There we heard Bruckner play the most wonderful preludes on his organ." August Göllerich - Max Auer, Anton Bruckner. Ein Lebens- und Schaffensbild [Anton Bruckner. His Life and Work], Regensburg, 1936, reprinted 1974 (in the following abbreviated: G.-A.), vol. IV/1, p. 26.

⁸ At least Anton Bruckner's brother Ignaz (1833 - 1913) who was employed as organ blower at the Monastery St. Florian, could afford to have a "private organ". With his savings he bought that organ (by the firm Mauracher, 1901) which is still used today in the Lady Chapel (annex to the collegiate church).

⁹ One wonders how demanding organ music, especially "Bach", may have sounded on such an instrument. But a harmonium is yet more manoeuvrable than one would generally think. The "lame" grip of the to and fro swinging harmonium reeds did not prevent Bruckner from obliging with virtuous feats. "In the organ lesson [at St. Anna] Bruckner was delighted to grant the students' request and do his famous pedal trill." G.-A. IV/1, p. 134.

¹⁰ The Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde run their Conservatoire in Vienna first in the building "Zum roten Igel" (1st district, Unter den Tuchlauben no. 12). The subject organ was created only in 1868 when Anton Bruckner was appointed professor for organ (as well as harmony and counterpoint. at the same time along with the subject harp). In the term 1869/70 the Conservatoire moved to the new

Musikverein building (1st district, Bösendorferstraße no. 12). 439 students (the majority of them girls!) had enrolled that year. Ten years later there were 726, in 1895 almost 1,000 students; according to Dr Lynne Heller in: Zur Geschichte der Universität für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Wien [On the History of the University for Music and Performing Arts Vienna] (Internet). Lessons were already held prior to the inauguration of the building which took place on January 5 and 6, 1870 after a time of construction of just three years (architect Theophil Hansen).

¹¹ According to an information kindly given by Dr Otto Biba, archivist of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde Wien.

¹² Completely stated in G.-A. IV/1, p. 28 - 30, dated October 1, 1869.

¹³ According to Harten, p. 23 f. The degree of difficulty of the pieces mentioned (perhaps with the exception of the Bach fugue) is not really staggering and would probably be below the standard requirements for the entrance examination of a today's Conservatoire.



Ill. 3: Exposition of the second theme



III. 4: The beginning of the second movement Adagio

Monastery St. Florian: "He [Hans Rott] is a musician of genius, extremely amiable and modest, very respectable, he plays Bach excellently and (being so young a man of 18) improvises astonishingly. You will not find a better young man. He has been my best student so far."¹⁴

How different Hans Rott's ranking would be today had he been successful in gaining the position of an organist at the Monastery St. Florian! Alas, Bruckner's recommendation was not accepted, and Hans Rott remained unemployed. The musician of genius could not gain a foothold, neither as organist nor as choirmaster, hard as he had tried during the three years before insanity broke out. When Hans Rott died four years later (June 25, 1884) in the lunatic asylum, it was only his closest friends who mourned him in Vienna. Anton Bruckner was devastated: "Already an hour before the funeral began, Bruckner stood at the coffin, lost in dreams, looking down into the pale face of his dear student, and could not tear himself away. When the coffin

was put into the hearse, tear upon tear fell from the master's eyes."¹⁵

A reverential bow

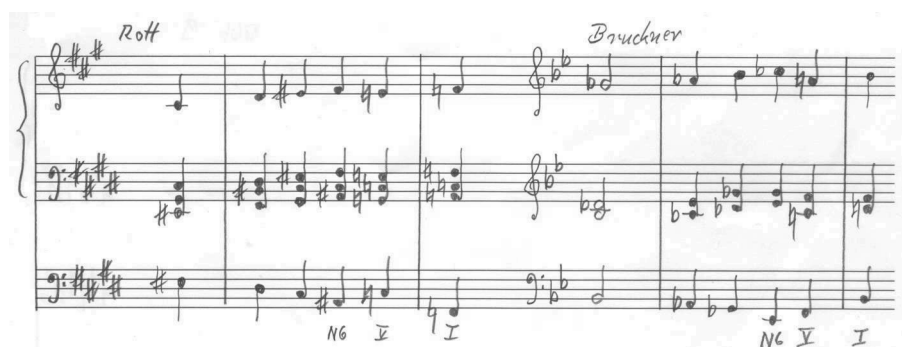
No doubt, the very good relationship between Anton Bruckner and Hans Rott had a beneficial effect on the musical and personal development of the student, although evidence is scarce. But this can be taken for granted: Hans Rott belonged to the "inner circle" of Bruckner disciples. The extreme closeness with the master was linked with a strict condition: Presence at Bruckner's "inn appointments" in the evening was obligatory.¹⁶ The master's capacity of being an example for his subordinate and devoted students, was, however, not limited to holding one's liquor; it was essentially grounded upon his musical authority and human qualities.

At all times, Bruckner had been informing his students about his compositions in progress, gave them acoustic samples on the piano (and

probably the organ as well), and they acted as a noisy unit when his symphonies were performed. Hans Rott certainly was one of them when Bruckner himself conducted his second (February 20, 1876) and his third symphony (December 16, 1877) in the Golden Hall of the Musikverein. As is generally known, the world premiere of his "Wagner Symphony" inflicted the most devastating fiasco upon Bruckner: After the final chord, only the small group of his students were still present in the hall, applauding vehemently. The laurel wreath which they put round the neck of the decried was no comfort to him.

Hans Rott did for his teacher what he could: Together with his fellow students Gustav Mahler and Rudolf Krzyzanowski he wrote a piano score of the flopped third symphony – a time-consuming task endangering the urgent preparations for the eminent examination at the Conservatoire! As with the third symphony, Hans Rott also would have gained a detailed knowledge of the fifth symphony, then in progress: Bruckner wrote it in those years (1875 - 1878) during which he taught Hans Rott the organ. The final choral theme which (I am sure) Bruckner had conceived at the organ and played to his students, is promptly echoed in the first movement (bars 188 - 190) of Hans Rott's Symphony in E major (III. 5).

To me this short, more casual quotation seems to be like a reverential bow of a grateful student to his outstanding master. Hans Rott took good care not to adopt further motifs from Bruckner. It is the "steady breath" which he has in common with his idol, which contains the width of the themes, their organistic firmness, the monumental rise. Hans Rott lets his first symphony movement culminate in a sumptuous hymn – exactly like Bruckner crowned the finale of his fifth symphony with a choral (III. 6).



III. 5: Quotation from Bruckner's fifth symphony

¹⁴ Letter to Regens chori Inez Traumihler, quoted from: Andrea Harrandt and Otto Schneider (editors), Anton Bruckner. Briefe, Anton Bruckner Gesamtausgabe [Anton Bruckner. Letters, Anton Bruckner Complete Edition] XXIV/1, vol. 1, p. 174.

¹⁵ G.-A. IV/1, p. 447.

¹⁶ Bruckner could punish absenteeism by dropping in on the offender. On July 20, 1878 Hans Rott wrote to his friend Heinrich Krzyzanowski: "I have just been interrupted by a visit of Prof. Bruckner who severely blamed me because of my infrequent visits to the Riedhof inn; so I will go there today.", Harten, p. 65.



III. 6: The first line of the hymn at the end of the first movement (bars 131 - 137)

With such a note image there is no reasonable argument against the thesis: This is the work of an organist. This movement's coda (like the exposition) has a definitely organistic structure. What other result is to be expected when an organist sets about to write a symphony? Sound visions of this scale could be created because the necessary preconditions fell into place: Hans Rott himself was a prize-winning organist¹⁷, the greatest organ improviser was his teacher, and in the Golden Hall of the school building a magnificent organ stood at his disposal as from 1872, the sound of which impressed every gifted musician.

The "neo-German" seed

When Bruckner demonstrated that organ, his imagination might have elevated him to mighty, hymnic tonal constructions. On November 15, 1872 he presented the new Ladegast organ with its 52 stops by improvising for half an hour in the Golden Hall, however without being able to particularly impress his expert opponent Brahms and "other honest musicians". "One could have expected more from such a famous master than the exact acquaintance with certain neo-German musical innovations", was the reaction.¹⁸ From the negative reaction of the conservatives we may learn the good news of a harmonically high-explosive improvisation: Bruckner turned and twisted in chromatic non-harmonical inventions, authorized by the exponents of the new German compositional tradition Liszt and Wagner, and that was the new kind of music which kindled the enthusiasm of Bruckner's students, too. In Hans Rott's Symphony in E major the "neo-German" seed came up with a most beautiful fruit, although a conservative like Brahms did not like

the "new tones" and – considering his own concept – what could he do but reject young Rott's score. In addition, the exponent of the New Music had the reputation of coming from Bruckner.

When I am talking about the symphonic Rott score as if there was an organ in it and – as a consequence – having transcribed the first both movements for organ, it does not necessarily mean: Look, this is an "organ symphony" in disguise! With Rott it is almost like with Bruckner: When composing both put aside the organ almost completely, but in the symphonic score they cannot deny their origin: the organ. However, when it comes to being dramatic, especially in the development, both leave the organ behind and compose "strictly symphonic". Motifs are twisting, crossing, overlapping and make the organist (if he insists in doing it) almost despair, because his ten fingers and two feet above and below are not enough, because the registrar (female, my wife) cannot catch up with moving the stops to and fro, because the music keeps constantly changing in volume and colour. Especially when it comes to dynamics our two organist-composers have not cared one bit about how we, their clumsy successors, could cope and realize their sound visions on the organ. I am the one to blame, spare your sympathy. The organist just cannot keep his fingers from what is not written for the organ. And I should better not meddle with the third and fourth movement. What stormy Hans Rott had written down there, the organist should better leave to an orchestra...

Erwin Horn

¹⁷ In the annual examinations of 1875, 1876 and 1877 Hans Rott was awarded honorary prizes and medals for his performance as student of Bruckner's organ class.

¹⁸ According to G.-A. IV/1, p. 225f.

World Premiere of Piano Works

It was only afterwards that the IHRG learned about a very interesting concert which had taken place in Italy on September 15, 2004. Besides works by Bruckner, Schönberg, Schumann, Wagner, Wolf and Zemlinsky, Italian pianist Gregorio Nardi played the following compositions by Hans Rott:

Minuet in D-flat major for piano
(Nowak no. 50/1 / Banks no. 61)

Minuet in E-flat major
(Nowak no. 63 / Banks no. 63)

Composition in E major
(Nowak no. 14 / Banks no. 64)

Andantino in F major for piano
Nowak no. 48 / Banks no. 66)

Idyll in D major for piano
(Nowak no. 49 / Banks no. 67)

Fuga in C major
(Nowak no. 74 / Banks no. 72)

Double counterpoint of the octave in C major
(Nowak no. 58 / Banks no. 73)

Movement study (Nowak) / Piano piece (Banks)
(Nowak no. 64 / Banks no. 75)

Movement study (Nowak) / Piano piece (Banks) in D major
(Nowak no. 75/1 / Banks no. 76)

Movement study (Nowak) / Piano piece (Banks) in B-flat major
(Nowak no. 75/2 / Banks no. 77)

Scherzo in c minor
(Nowak no. 65 / Banks no. 78)

Theme by Prf. Bknr.
(Professor Bruckner)
(Nowak no. 78 / Banks no. 80)

A Scene from Schiller's "Die Glocke" ("The Bell") in C major
(Nowak no. 66 / Banks no. 83)

Read a detailed account of these world premieres and the pianist in one of the next issues of **DIE QUARTE**.

Prominent New Member

The International Hans Rott Society bids Professor Henry-Louis de La Grange a cordial welcome as subscribing member.

A Revolution in Music History

A talk with with conductor Ryusuke Numajiri on the eve of the first Japanese performance of the Symphony No. 1 in E major

Mr Numajiri, you were one of the very first to conduct Rott. When was your first encounter with Rott and what brought about your performance of the Symphony in E major with the Düsseldorf Symphoniker in April 2002?

I had been in Germany and was invited to Düsseldorf by Mrs von Hazebrück¹. She loves Rott very much and had asked several conductors whether they would like to perform Rott, but all of them refused. At that time, I had not heard anything about Rott. Following the proposal of Mrs von Hazebrück, I decided to do the Symphony in E major, which was very brave for a young conductor like me.

Have you performed any other work by Rott after Düsseldorf?

No. This first Japanese and also first Asian performance here in Tokyo is my second encounter with Hans Rott.

What were your impressions when studying his work?

Hans Rott stands for youth, he had written the Symphony in E major between his 19th and 22nd year. His fate has moved and impressed me very much. In conservative Vienna, Brahms, Wagner and Bruckner had been respected composer personalities. Hans Rott, too, stood in awe of them, and you can hear them in his symphony. But for himself he had to create something new. Respect and historic past are one thing, novelty is another one. In young Hans Rott struggles were going on.

There is a great Bruckner and Mahler tradition in Japan. How, do you think, will your compatriots react to the music of Bruckner's student and Mahler's fellow student?

Hans Rott is the bridge between Bruckner and Mahler, so to speak. Without him, Gustav Mahler perhaps might have composed in a different way. Actually, Mahler's music is Rott's music no longer a toddler. I think Rott's Symphony in E major revolutionized music history. Gustav Mahler is accomplished, perfect. But many of the new ideas came from Hans Rott. I hope that the work will be received well. The orchestra's administration wants to sell many tickets, of course. For the artistic committee the artistic aspect is clearly important besides the financial one. That's why the orchestra has decided in favour of Hans Rott.

How do you rate Rott's musical importance and that of his single completed symphony?

He broke with the musical tradition and showed Gustav Mahler the way. He had an incredible host of ideas which, however, had not yet reached full maturity. Mahler said so, too.

I consider Brahms a composer who just could not come to terms with that kind of music, with that wealth of new ideas. I think he was jealous of Hans Rott. Other composers, too, like Dvorak, could not realize all the ideas they had. Brahms could take a single theme and develop a whole symphony

from it; for him a single theme was enough to create something great. I think he was a composer who simply could not let those many new ideas of his younger colleagues get near him.

Hans Rott was always trying to create a new world. He turned his back to the past and created something new which Gustav Mahler then accomplished. And Rott had shown him the way.

Some orchestras have voiced their annoyance with the high technical challenge of the symphony. How was it with the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra?

You are right, the technical challenge of the Symphony in E major is very great, the position of the high and low registers is extremely shifted resp. altered.

In other classical works the violas, for instance, are played lower, with Rott they all have to be played higher. This causes a sound gap in the middle filled in by the horns. This kind of instrumentation did not exist before Rott. As it was his first symphony, he had no experience as to instrumentation, of course. On paper Rott could not judge the high register of the sounds properly; to the composer this section had a full ring.

I must try to arrange this sound gap differently. One has to use a piccolo flute and more brass. We, too, will play with five trumpets and eight horns to meet the high technical challenge. Other orchestras have done that, for instance the WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln with Neeme Järvi in October 2004.

Have you made alterations to the score to make the work easier to play for the orchestra?

I have not made any alterations or so-called "improvements" to the work, to make it easier to play. Our performance is based upon the original score and the original version and the possibilities Rott himself suggested, for instance to play lower by one octave.

Are you going to perform the Symphony in E major or other works by Rott in Japan or anywhere else?

I would like to. It is difficult enough to perform this work in Tokyo, because it is not very well known. One must



Ryusuke Numajiri is regarded as one of the young leading Japanese conductors. He is Chief Conductor of the Nagoya Philharmonic Orchestra and Principal Conductor of the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra. His international performances with leading orchestras including London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano and Düsseldorf Symphoniker have gained the attention of audiences and critics.

The Japanese conductor developed a special interest in contemporary music: He conducted the Japanese first performances of works by Ligeti, Lutoslawski, Gorecki, Berio and Dutilleux. Ryusuke Numajiri has collaborated with artists like Anne-Sophie Mutter, Zoltan Kocsis, Frank Peter Zimmermann and Cyprien Katsaris. His CD catalogue includes recordings of works by Gubaidulina, Takemitsu and Messiaen for EMI, Denon and Exton. Ryusuke Numajiri currently bases his activities in both Tokyo and Berlin.

be able to "sell" a concert. Unlike in Germany, we in Japan do not have radio orchestras which can include such works into their programmes. We have to compile commercial concert programmes that sell. Over here it is very difficult to add new pieces to a programme because the orchestra runs the complete financial risk. If both concerts are a success, I shall perform more of Rott's works.

Have there been special reactions to both concerts in Tokyo?

Yes, with JPO's internet chat the audience had been more active and more interested than usual. With other concerts there have been less interest and less mails. The fact that it is the first performance in Japan accounts for that. The ticket sale has been better than usual, too.

Are there any plans for a CD?

If everything goes well and the concerts succeed we would like to bring out a CD.

Mr Numajiri, we would like to thank you very much for this talk and for the first Japanese performance in Tokyo.

Klaus-Dieter Schramm talked to Ryusuke Numajiri

¹ Vera van Hazebrouck, Director of the Düsseldorf Symphoniker

ハンス・ロット(Hans Rott) in Tokyo

The first Japanese Performance of the Symphony No. 1 in E Major by the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra with Ryusuke Numajiri conducting (part 2)

The season concerts 565 and 566 drew large crowds and more than 80 % of the 2,200 Suntory Hall seats were taken – official quarters had it that this was an outstanding attendance in the huge Tokyo concert hall which had been built on the suggestion of Herbert von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic.

Maestro Numajiri and the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra (JPO) had come up with an idea or two to introduce the concert goers to this first Japanese performance. Before rehearsals had even begun, a press and information campaign fanned the audience's curiosity in Hans Rott and his oeuvre. Supplements and the programme booklet issued long before the concerts took place aroused an interest in the First Symphony of Bruckner's student and Mahler's fellow-student. On JPO's internet page one could even chat about Hans Rott, which people were uncommonly keen to do. In the evening of November 9, Maestro Numajiri answered all the questions of the press in the Tokyo International Forum, a huge event centre in the heart of the city, and promoted the two concerts on November 11 and 12, 2004.

Ryusuke Numajiri – a Rott conductor of the first generation, just think of the three in a row performances of the First Symphony in Düsseldorf in 2002 – gave a 30 minutes' introduction prior to both concerts which met with a vivid interest of the majority of the audience. He gave an account of Hans Rott's life, his oeuvre and his position in musical Vienna at the time he wrote his symphony, about his relationship to Wagner, Brahms, Bruckner and Mahler, and he spoke in detail about the conflict with Johannes Brahms. Maestro Numajiri first played on the piano excerpts of the Symphony beginning with the introduction motif of the first movement. He explained how this motif runs through the entire symphony up to the final movement. He then compared Rott and Mahler by playing samples and had a closer look into the relationship of both fellow-students. He talked about Rott and Brahms, presented Brahmsian reminiscences in Rott's Symphony and finally dealt with the connection between Bruckner and the two young composers Rott and Mahler. He concluded his very informative talk by presenting the conductor's score published by Ries & Erler, holding it up several times,

and was rewarded by the audience's enthusiastic applause – by now, just a few minutes before the concert began, the hall was packed.



Ryusuke Numajiri

The wise choice of the programme, too, contributed to the concerts' success: Beethoven's Piano Concert No. 5 in E-flat major, op. 73 with the in Japan famous and highly appreciated blind piano soloist Kakehashi Takeshi created the perfect mood for Hans Rott. With the Japanese first performance of his Symphony on November 11, 2004 the JPO and Maestro Numajiri did a magnificent job. They were playing fluently and firmly, although the horns sometimes missed the advised unison that evening; which they did not in the second concert. Countless shouts of bravo on both evenings – a truly well-deserved recognition of the hard work and an appreciation of the perfect performance – made the composed and reserved performers marvel at the euphoric mood of the normally likewise composed and reserved audience.

With these two very successful performances – in my opinion, orchestra and conductor were taken by surprise by this reception – Hans Rott had arrived in the Land of the Rising Sun, and his First Symphony in E major, the link between the romantic period and the new symphony, was welcomed enthusiastically by the Japanese audience.

Klaus-Dieter Schramm

Events 2005:

Huaröds Kammarorkester

Mats Rondin

Hans Rott: Symphony in A-flat major for String Orchestra – Swedish first performance – and

Ernest Chausson: Concerto in D for piano, violin and string quartet

Peter Tschaikowski: Serenade

April 6, 2005, 7.00 p.m.	Svalöv/Sweden, Church
April 7, 2005, 7.00 p.m.	Norra Vram/Sweden, Church
April 8, 2005, 7.00 p.m.	Markaryd/Sweden, Arts centre
April 9, 2005, 5.00 p.m.	Bäckaskog/Sweden, Castle
April 10, 2005, 4.00 p.m.	Kabusa/Sweden, Art hall

Philharmonisches Orchester Hagen

Antony Hermus

Hans Rott: Suite in E major for Orchestra – World premiere – and

Joseph Haydn: Symphony No. 22 in E flat major Hob. I:22 ("The Philosopher")

Gustav Mahler: Symphony No. 1 in D major ("Titan")

April 12, 2005, 8.00 p.m. Hagen/Germany, Stadthalle

NDR Sinfonieorchester

Alan Gilbert

Hans Rott: Symphony No. 1 in E major and

Gustav Mahler: Des Knaben Wunderhorn – Lieder for baritone and orchestra (selection)

April 22, 2005, 8.00 p.m.	Hamburg/Germany, Laeiszhalle
April 23, 2005, 8.00 p.m.	Kiel/Germany, Castle
April 25, 2005, 7.30 p.m.	Lübeck/Germany, Musik- und Kongresshalle

Philharmonisches Orchester des Staatstheaters Mainz

Catherine Rückwardt

Hans Rott: Symphony in A-flat major for String Orchestra

May 3, 2005 Mainz/Germany, Town hall

Erwin Horn

"The Madman and his Symphony" (Lecture)

October 27, 2005 St. Moritz/Switzerland, Hotel Laudinella

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