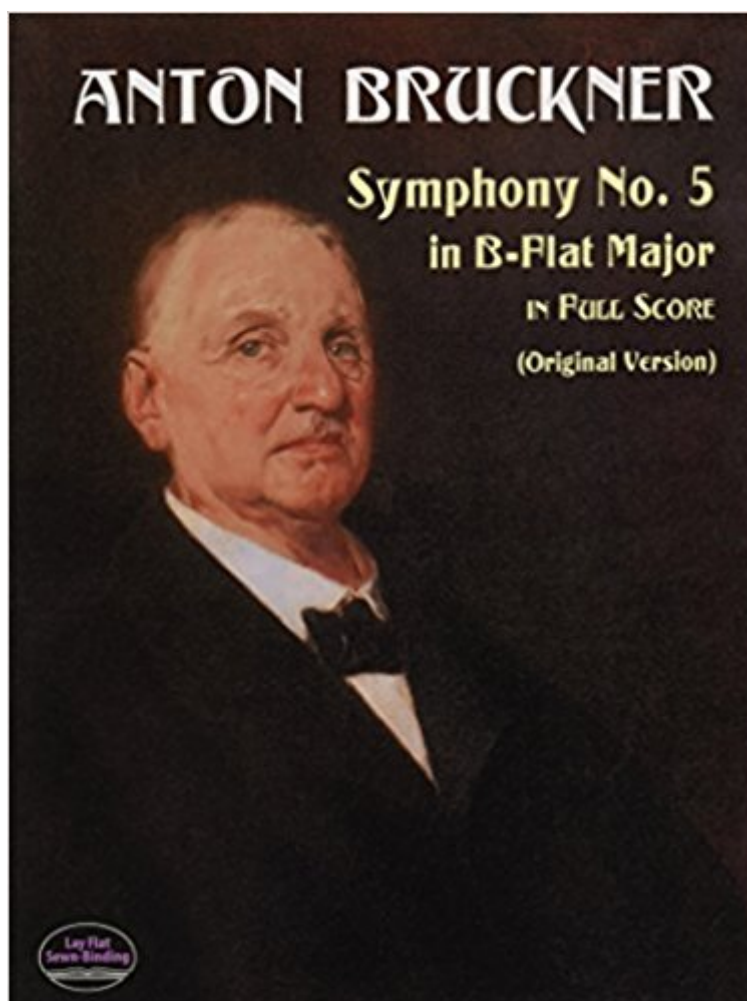


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Symphony No. 5 In B-flat Major In Full Score (Dover Music Scores)



Synopsis

The nine symphonies composed by Anton Bruckner (1824–1896) constitute landmarks of the Austro-Germanic symphonic tradition. These staples of the orchestral literature possess a grandeur, nobility of vision, and originality that have survived despite extensive revision and unauthorized editing by other musicians. Moreover, the original versions of these works reveal a logical organization far greater than originally realized. Symphony No. 5, one of Bruckner's finest orchestral works, was written in the late 1870s but not performed until 1894. Like the best of his earlier works, it features strikingly original harmonies, an extended structure and tonal range, and a gripping, monumental sonority. Based on the authoritative autograph score, this complete restoration of the composer's original design offers musicians and music lovers the chance to study the music as originally conceived.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A good Bruckner score is hard to find. Many of Bruckner's symphonies were so revised and edited and butchered and re-edited and re-revised that it's sometimes difficult to know where the "real" Bruckner is without a map. Fortunately, that's not the case with the Fifth, written from 1875-1878, which the composer called his "contrapuntal masterpiece." Editorial questions about the Fifth are practically nonexistent, perhaps because Bruckner never pushed for a performance of it, didn't need to revise it extensively, and because he was too ill to hear the only orchestral concert it received in

his lifetime, a savage display of ineptitude perpetuated by Franz Schalk in 1894. Aside from Schalk's mangling of the score -- he re-orchestrated the entire symphony to make it sound more "Wagnerian," added an off-stage brass band, and cut 122 bars out of the Finale -- there is only the 1876 draft (still unpublished as far as I know) and the 1878 version presented here (described as "original" to distinguish it from Schalk's hack job) in its 1935 edition by Robert Haas, the musicologist hired by the International Bruckner Society to prepare Bruckner scores that would be deemed authoritative. Even if what Haas did with the Bruckner Second, Seventh, and Eighth symphonies (e.g., deleting the cymbal crash at the climax of the Seventh's Adagio) remains controversial, his presentation of the Fifth is unquestioningly reliable. Improvements in the draft Bruckner completed in May 1876 are on a relatively small scale. As Dermont Gault points out -- *The New Bruckner: Compositional Development and the Dynamics of Revision* -- in his excellent study of Bruckner's editing processes -- the changes marked in the original draft cannot for certain be identified as revisions made at that time or later in 1877 when Bruckner returned to the score to add its most noticeable enhancement, a part for tuba included in the finished version of January 1878. Haas' work is so excellent that when Leopold Nowak took over for Haas in 1946, his 1951 edition of the Fifth is practically identical. Anyone who can notice differences between the Haas and Nowak editions of the Fifth might find glee in knowing that in the fourth variation of the fourth movement of Shostakovich's Eighth Symphony, the theme is harmonized with seven descending minor triads. The rest of us can go on with our lives minus the burden of such minutiae. The large size of Dover's score is both a strength and a weakness. It's really easy on the eyes. At 9 inches by 12 inches, however, it can be a bit cumbersome to hold in your lap if you're trying to read while listening to a recording. That's the closest I can get to a criticism. As compensation, the binding is sewn so that you don't have to worry about cracking the spine and having pages fall out. Haas provides an excellent glossary of German terms used in the score plus a page of footnotes and longer score notes. None of the print is smeared from shoddy reproduction. Everything is ideally clear. There are no obstructions between you and one of the most stupendous, awe-inspiring musical monuments ever created by humankind. Would that this would be the case with all Bruckner symphonies.

As an avid Brucknerian, I've been trying to find good quality hard copies of the scores of his symphonies. I was very excited when I found that Dover finally decided to publish the 5th Symphony, and was also excited that it was printed with the same quality as their Mahler scores. This was money very well spent.

This is one of the great symphonies, and a peculiarly over-looked one. Nevertheless, it is little doubted that this work will some day have its place in the sun. A large scale piece of impeccable construction, organic growth and monumental tendencies, it may reasonably be considered proper company with Beethoven's 9th, Mahler's 9th and Strauss' Zarathustra. This score is a must-have for every composer and conductor.

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