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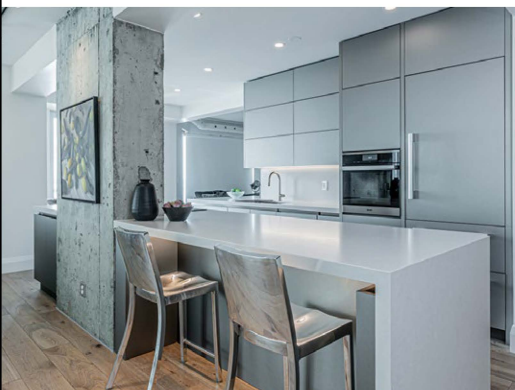


Kingston
Symphony

Bruckner Festival

Sunday, September 28, 2025
2:30 p.m. at the Isabel

Bruckner: Symphony No. 4
Evan Mitchell, Conductor




PHOTOS: S. WILD

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Bruckner Festival

Kingston Symphony
Evan Mitchell, Conductor

Program

Bruckner (1824-1896)

Symphony No.4 E-flat Major (Romantic)

I. Bewegt; nicht zu schnell

II. Andante quasi Allegretto

Intermission

III. Scherzo: Bewegt

IV. Finale: Bewegt; doch nicht zu schnell

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Notes from our Maestro

Bruckner is one of the symphonic greats, but his musical language somehow never really spoke to me. I decided to challenge myself and the orchestra by throwing ourselves at a Bruckner spotlight, hence the choice to have Bruckner's Symphony No. 4 (The Romantic) be the focus of this year's composer festival.

Bruckner made many revisions to the Fourth Symphony. There are seven distinct versions of the work, each featuring very different material. We will be performing the 1880 version, considered the most complete and "canon" version of Bruckner's masterpiece.

You will hear two things right off the bat that illustrate Bruckner's distinctive style. First, he loves the usage of tremolo in the strings, when the players make very fast bow changes, resulting in a soft rustling sound. Second, the work famously opens with an extremely exposed and heroic French horn solo, a favourite Bruckner device.



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About the Composer



Josef Anton Bruckner was born in a small provincial town in Upper Austria in September 1824. At the age of 13, following the death of his father, Bruckner enrolled as a chorister in the monastery of St. Florian near the town of Linz. There, he learned the organ, piano, violin, and music theory. Bruckner's years of study at St. Florian had a huge influence on him, both musically and in his religious life. He remained a devout Catholic until his death in 1896.

In early adulthood, Bruckner worked as a cathedral organist in Linz, developing a reputation as one of the greatest organ virtuosos in Europe. He studied music theory in Vienna and began composing sacred music. When Bruckner was nearly 40 years old, his composition teacher, Otto Kitzler, introduced him to the music of Wagner. Bruckner idolized Wagner for the remainder of his life and was greatly influenced by his compositional style and ethos.

Bruckner's best-known works are undoubtedly his symphonies, consisting of nine published works and two early unpublished compositions. Wagner's influence on Bruckner is evident in his large-scale structures, the great length of his symphonies, his lush harmonies, and his sequential repetition of entire passages. Bruckner's experience as an organist clearly informed his orchestration, in which instruments or groups are brought in, opposed, and combined, like the contrasting keyboards of an organ.

Bruckner's works were not widely accepted during his lifetime, which deeply troubled him. He was a sensitive individual and frequently revised his symphonies in response to criticism from friends and colleagues. As a result, most works exist in two or three versions.

In his later years, Bruckner finally received some recognition for his genius. He was given an honorary doctorate from the Vienna Conservatoire and was invited by the emperor Franz Joseph to live in the Belvedere Palace. He continued performing and composing for the remainder of his life. Even on his deathbed, he worked on his Ninth Symphony, but completed only three of the four movements before he died. He was buried, according to his wishes, under the organ at the St. Florian monastery.

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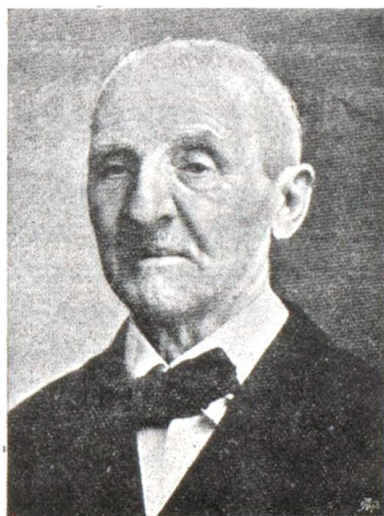
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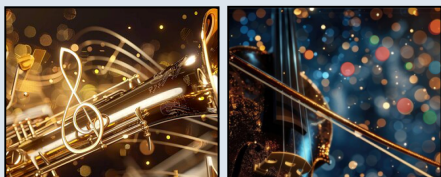
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