

DIE QUARTE

THE FOURTH

A Publication of the
International Hans Rott Society
Vienna

In your hand you hold the first issue of a publication which will replace the circular letter to our members. **DIE QUARTE?** The Fourth? A good many people will ask themselves what made the Internationale Hans Rott Gesellschaft come up with this name.

It is with an (ascending) fourth the main theme of Hans Rott's Symphony No. 1 in E major begins. This interval can also be found in many other of his themes: in a sketch for the Scherzo of his second symphony, in the Prelude to "Julius Caesar", in the Prelude to "Hamlet"...

"At all times, the ascending fourth has been a symbol of joy and expectation", our interviewee Catherine Rückwardt told radio station Deutschlandradio. This statement conveys the goal of this magazine. So we hope it is with joy that you read this first issue and that we will meet your expectations in our next. **mb**

How Slow is "Very Slow"?

Impressions of the performance of the Symphony No. 1 in E major by the WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln with Neeme Järvi conducting on October 16, 2004

After Franz Xaver Scharwenka's Piano Concerto No. 4 in f minor, given in the first part of the concert, I found myself developing grave doubts. For there had been serious problems with the ensemble playing and especially with the sound which was anything but transparent.

With the Rott Symphony the orchestra luckily showed a better side. Perhaps because the musicians enjoyed the work? First trumpeter Peter Mönkediek said that this at least was the case with the brass. And with the other musicians, too, one could catch a smiling face and content looks now and then.

It was the same with me. At long last there is someone who takes the dynamic extremes seriously, I thought. Well, in contrast to just listening to a CD, the optical impression during a concert might have played an important role, for sometimes one could tell by the musicians' faces directions such as "with greatest energy" or "wild". And without the help of one's eyes? To me many of the loud sections sounded with a convincing force never heard before. The ear alone was enough to note the importance of a contrabassoon in some sections. It is astonishing what you can get out of this score! The ingenious instrumentation in many parts! Oh let's stop picking on that triangle for a change.

The tempo of the 4th movement had been my problem first and is it

now again. In the finale, Järvi had a completely different, at least twice as fast opinion of "very slow" as he had had with the same tempo direction in the 2nd movement. At first, this was irritating, as it was absolutely unfamiliar, and yet, in the moment of the performance, Järvi's conception worked for me. Thus one of the, in my opinion, most problematic passages (finale, bars 224 – 264) became bearable, new contents became clear, and tension built up in unexpected sections. But irritation, too, which a glance into the score after the performance justified. At the beginning of the "Brahms theme" the tempo direction says "The minims like the crotchets before. Animated.". If, like Järvi did, the tempo is strongly reduced, suddenly something seems to be wrong. No trace of "animated". Is habit the only reason? I do not think so.

Had I been praising Järvi's seriousness with the translation of the dynamics in the beginning, I now come across contradictions with the tempo. And yet, after the concert I was absolutely thrilled by this version of the finale. Does this movement "work" better for the symphony if one interprets Rott's tempo directions more freely? Anyhow, the tempo directions – and naturally not only they – seem to me a bit problematic sometimes. I wish I could have a recording of this concert – does anyone at WDR read this article? – and check what I have said. **fl**

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This Dig has been Worthwhile

General Music Director Catherine Rückwardt talks about her work on Hans Rott's Symphony No. 1 in E major



Photo: Martina Pipprich

Hans Rott
Symphony No. 1 in E major
Philharmonisches Orchester des
Staatstheaters Mainz
Catherine Rückwardt
Recorded at Staatstheater Mainz/
Germany, March 4 – 6, 2004



Available from acousence records (www.acousence.de). For special price for IHRG members see opposite page.

How did you come across Hans Rott and his symphony?

When we had been planning our concert programme the work was proposed to me. I then had a look at it and thought it would not only fit into our programme but also be a very good match for our orchestra as to the "Mainz Orchestral Sound".

We are trying to create a regional sound profile and are doing very well so far. Rott's symphony is just very suitable for this. I liked it at first sight.

What have been your impressions when studying this work?

This music's interpretation does differ from its presentation on paper. New dimensions open up during work which one does not even think of when reading the notes for the first time. It is an interesting interplay between the frequencies and the registration, that is the orchestration of the work. It is even more different

from the work of those composers generally mentioned in comparison, for instance Bruckner and Mahler. Actually, this was the most interesting experience during rehearsals and work.

The orchestra had been grumbling at the symphony's technical requirements. Did they learn to appreciate the work though?

[laughs] Grumbling? Who told you that?

I think had I to take up studies and rehearsals again I would cast eight horns as it is done, for instance, with the greater works by Strauss. The score says four horns, I, however, would double them. In doing so a realization of the technical requirements would be more on the possible side. But just now, after the CD has come out, many musicians come to me again to say how beautiful they think this work is.

During the concert - especially during the Scherzo and at the beginning of the fourth movement - I have the impression that you got the utmost out of the orchestra...

[laughs] Actually, these are the parts which are so very typical for Rott and so very atypical for others. I really feel that he has opened a door there, especially at the beginning of the fourth movement. Many composers have constructed similar movements and tried to integrate the other themes into the final movement. But I think that it is Rott who succeeded in doing this in an unimaginably atmospheric way. It was great fun.

When listening to the CD it came back to me, however, that it had been hard work, and again I felt the sweat on my brow.

How do you judge Rott's importance and that of his only finished symphony? How do you judge its "rank" in comparison with the symphonic works of its time and the following years?

I wish he had written more. It is truly a pity that many of his works are just fragments, especially his second symphony. I really wish he had written more of that, because his tone and colour theme are truly unique and at the same time an interesting pendant to other late romantic composers.

To me, Rott above all has become a key to Bruckner's symphonies. At the beginning of our season we had been rehearsing Bruckner's Symphony No. 7. And I noticed that I had a different approach to this work thanks to my experiences with Rott. I would not have thought it possible.

Catherine Rückwardt, daughter of a famous singer and a conductor, was born in Los Angeles. Already at the age of three she took up piano playing. After her studies (piano and violin in Hamburg and Lübeck) she became conductor at the theatre in Bremen. In 1997 she received a call to the opera house at Frankfurt/Main. Her work as General Music Director of the Mainz Staatstheater began in 2001 with the reopening of the renovated opera house.

Also in the field of concerts Catherine Rückwardt dedicates her work to contemporary music. First being referred to as personal tip she has become a welcome visitor to many orchestras, last but not least to the German radio stations SWR and WDR. In May 2004, she had her exceptionally successful US debut at the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra.

NEW in January 2005



Hans Rott
Symphony for String Orchestra
String Quartet in c minor
Philharmonisches Orchester des
Staatstheaters Mainz
Enrico Delamboye
Mainzer Streichquartett
Recorded at Staatstheater Mainz/
Germany, March 2004

Available from acousence records
(www.acousence.de) as from January 2005. For special price for IHRG members see below.

This makes me unimaginably happy. And it also makes me proud that so many others, too, play this work these days.

You are a visiting conductor welcome everywhere. Will you do the symphony with other orchestras, too?

I hope that this will be possible. In most cases, the programme is either already fixed when you get an invitation or one does not have the necessary number of rehearsals one would need.

But I would like to work on the symphony again somewhere else or play it with my Mainz orchestra somewhere else. I would prefer the latter.

Do you intend to perform other works by Rott, for instance the Pastoral Prelude?

At the moment, we are thinking about how to integrate this work in our programme. If we cannot put it on next season then it will be on the season after. It is just the kind of music which works very well with our orchestra.

How did people react to the concerts?

Many people told me they had not known that such a beautiful work existed and that they were glad to have been introduced to it. This dig has been worthwhile indeed.

Martin Brilla talked to Catherine Rückwardt.

CDs at a special price
for IHRG members:

Symphony No. 1 in E major
Philharm. Orch. d. Staatsth. Mainz
Catherine Rückwardt 12.00 Euro*

Symphony for String Orchestra
String Quartet in c minor
Philharm. Orch. d. Staatsth. Mainz
Enrico Delamboye
Mainzer Streichquartett 12.00 Euro*

String Quartet in c minor
Mandelring Quartett
and works by Mahler, Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Shostakovich,
Schumann, Schwertsik, Wagner
Gustav Mahler Music Weeks
Toblach 2003 (3 CDs) 22.90 Euro*



*prices plus actual p&p, available only as long as our stock lasts. Please contact Martin Brilla, Aachen (see imprint, p. 8)

The Bells of Kiruna

Hans Rott going north

Should the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra decide to include Hans Rott's Symphony No. 1 in E major in their programme and take it on tour to Sweden's most northerly municipality Kiruna, a theme would have a somewhat familiar ring to the local audience. For every evening at six sharp the Town Hall's carillon plays the bars 125 - 157 from the 4th movement.

Our member Anders Nyholm is the man behind this unconventional idea to take Hans Rott's music north the Artic Circle. After having clarified the performing rights, Anders contacted the local music teacher Jan Sydberg in charge of the carillon who considered playing a tune by Hans Rott, of whom he had not heard before, a nice idea. Jan Sydberg had transposed the tune to D major to make it playable on the bells, and on May 5, 2004 the notes stole into the evening for the first time, introducing the inhabitants of Kiruna to Hans Rott's music.

Being a man who does not do anything by halves, Anders was also successful in alerting the media: A fortnight later, the local newspaper Norrbottens-Kuriren featured a lengthy article about an "Unknown Vienna Symphonist heard in Kiruna" in which Anders told the story of Hans Rott's life and his importance as composer. But that's not all: The nation-wide Swedish radio channel P2 did a feature about bell towers on May 28 in which the Kiruna Rott carillon as well as Segerstam's recording of the symphony's finale were played and information about the composer was given.

In early June, Anders made the IHRG Board sit up when he sent



them a report on his activities along with his recording of the Kiruna carillon which our members will find on the CD which is this year's annual gift.

Concerts and theatre are flourishing in Kiruna and Sweden's prominent artists have left their marks there. 26,000 square kilometres of

unspoiled landscape, clear air, mountains, and more than 6,000 lakes - the extremely sparsely populated region of Kiruna, this "last wilderness in Europe", would have appealed to nature-loving Hans Rott and perhaps inspired him. And he would have liked the idea of The Bells of Kiruna.

hw

Gelingt Rott diesmal der Einzug ins Finale?

Does Rott Make It Into The Finale This Time?

Aachener Zeitung December 12, 2002

Catherine Rückwardt while rehearsing the 4th movement:
"Don't let me infect you, don't catch my heclic!"

Annual Gift 2004

The enclosed CD for IHRG members will give an acoustic impression of the carillon.

Also on the CD: recordings of the world premiere of the Prelude to "Julius Caesar", the Symphony in A-flat major for String Orchestra (see p. 6 f.), etc.

ハンス・ロット (Hans Rott) in Tokyo

On November 11, 2004, Hans Rott's Symphony No. 1 in E major had both its Japanese and Asian first performance in Tokyo's largest concert hall. That day and the next, Ryusuke Numajiri, principal conductor of the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra (JPO), presented Hans Rott's best-known work at the Suntory Hall at Herbert von Karajan Square, Tokyo. Both concerts were a great, almost overwhelming success with many cheers heard.

A very hard rehearsal time lay ahead of those two concerts and I think the extremely successful reception by the audience came as a surprise to the orchestra and Maestro Numajiri. From November 8 to 10, there had been three days of rehearsals at the Ohta Kumin Hall Aprico situated about 15 km outside Tokyo, a somewhat smaller rehearsal hall which, however, proved to be architectonically right for Rott.

In the afternoon of November 8, the JPO members were challenged by the "new symphony" for the first time. And they made the same experience as other orchestras who had been tackling this work so difficult to play before them. In the first place it was the wind instruments and among them especially the horns which had been facing problems in finding a neat common entry as well as a constant intonation later on.

Klaus-Dieter Schramm talked to Maestro Numajiri about Hans Rott and his Symphony. In the next issue of DIE QUARTE you will read the interview in which Ryusuke Numajiri gives an insight into his relation to Hans Rott.

As the Symphony means a constant challenge for the wind instruments, Maestro Numajiri had put on eight horns and five trumpets as well as three trombones. JPO's first visiting conductor Neeme Järvi had done the same with the WDR Symphony Orchestra on October 15 and 16, 2004 in order to relieve the horns and the trumpets, thus securing the quality. This procedure seems to have become the rule now in performances and orchestration.

During the break of the first rehearsal I was presented to the orchestra as member of the International Hans

Rott Society who had come to Tokyo to attend the Japanese first performance. In a short address I talked about the goal and the work of our Society, gave the musicians the very best wishes of all our members and the board, and thanked the JPO for putting on the first performance in Japan.

The next two days, rehearsals took place at the Ohta Kumin Hall Aprico from 11.00 a.m. to 4.30. p.m. Day by day, Maestro Numajiri - assisted by committed concertmaster Yumino Toyoda who lives also in Germany - never tired in convincing and filling the orchestra with enthusiasm for Rott's work. Spirited and bursting with energy, strict yet always with an inherent politeness he succeeded in forming the flow of the work.

The final rehearsal took place at



Ryusuke Numajiri

Foto: JPO

Suntory Hall on November 11 from 3.30 to 7.30 p.m. When listening to the last notes of the 4th movement I already knew that the first Japanese performance would be a great success for the JPO and their principal conductor Ryusuke Numajiri as well as for the founder of the new symphony.

Klaus-Dieter Schramm

Read part two in the next issue of DIE QUARTE



IHRG Board Re-elected

In the IHRG General Assembly on October 16, 2004 in Cologne/Germany, the Board had been re-elected for a second period: Dr Uwe Harten (Vienna), Erwin Horn (Würzburg), and Martin Brilla (Aachen).

Membership Fees Reduced

In the IHRG General Assembly on October 16, 2004 in Cologne/Germany, some of the future membership fees have been reduced:

Full Members	
Individuals	30.00 Euro
Married couples	45.00 Euro
Associations etc.	45.00 Euro

All other membership fees remain unchanged.

The IHRG Board and the **DIE QUARTE** Editors wish all members and readers Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

How Hans Rott came to the Aargau

Some personal remarks on the world premiere of Rott's String Symphony

Chance has to put up with a few detours if it wants to bring about the world premiere of a study by a Viennese student of composition, 120 years after his death, in Baden, a Swiss provincial town with no connection to that composer who most likely did not even know it existed. The fact that Hans Rott's Symphony for String Orchestra in A-flat major found its way to Canton Aargau is mainly to blame on four people: a well-read professor of music history, a communicative girl-friend, a curious conductor and an obliging secretary.

I cannot tell how the well-read professor of music history had come across Hans Rott. It all began in February 2003 when said professor gave a lesson about Gustav Mahler at the Music Academy Zurich and introduced a symphony by a fellow student of Mahler. My girl-friend who is studying piano at Zurich attended that lesson and talked about the work when she rang me in the evening, still full of it. But she could

not remember the composer's name. I therefore read the article on "symphony" in the new MGG (Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart) edition looking for composers of the Mahler circle. Name number four – was it Hans Rott? Yes, that's him. It was only then that I remembered having seen the name before in that very article. In search of little-known however artistically valuable symphonies I then had underlined some names, among them Hans Rott's. However – I had forgotten him long ago.

Burning with curiosity

So my interest was kindled again, first by the enthusiasm of my girl-friend and second by the judgement on Rott's symphony given in that article: "a work that is just as unbalanced as it is brilliant". As I am constantly looking for new works for my chamber orchestra I almost automatically thought: what if Rott had also written works for string orchestras... At that time, I had been a student who, whenever burning with curiosity,

used to set aside university for some hours. I therefore set out to gather more information about that enigmatic composer, hoping that the internet might come up with first hints. To my great surprise I immediately found a website containing biography, works index and bibliography. Confirmed Rott fans had made a thorough job of it! A glance at the works index quickened my pulse and left me gaping at the screen for some moments when I read in black and grey: "Symphony for String Orchestra (eight parts) in A-flat major".

From then on, things got moving. That very evening I wrote a few lines to the email address given on the Rott website asking whether there had already been a performance of the String Symphony and was a printed edition available. Next morning I leaved through the two publications on Hans Rott and came across an annotation on the String Symphony, an incipit of the first movement and – most important – the shelf-mark of the autograph kept in the Austrian National Library. That was every indication that this work had never been performed so far. Shortly afterwards, the answer from Martin Brilla, the obliging secretary of the International Hans Rott Society, confirmed my supposition. He wrote: "Up to now there has been no performance (as far as we know), and there are no plans (at least not at the moment) to have the work edited." Well, all I had to do was to call the Austrian National Library in Vienna and order copies of the Rott autograph. Thus the first steps were taken.

The next ones took some months. When, after several weeks, the copies had finally arrived from Vienna, I was right in the middle of my graduation and therefore had to postpone tackling the score for the time being. I had in mind to do the edition in autumn, and during the sporadic email exchange with Martin Brilla even negotiations with a publisher were men-



Cappella dei Giovani

tioned. In April I learned, however, that the Frankfurt-based musicologist Johannes Volker Schmidt had already done a ready to print score as part of the preparatory work for his thesis on Rott. The generous young researcher was willing to first put his material to my disposal for the world premiere and only afterwards make it available to third parties. There was no need of further detours any longer. All I had to do was to fix the date for the world premiere. We decided to do it as soon as possible and so it was to be early January 2004.

Heading for the third stage

Next I found myself heading for the third stage. In autumn I studied the score a bit closer and was first slightly disappointed as there was no trace of a tonal idiom even distantly related to Gustav Mahler's music. I rather spotted Robert Fuchs peeping through the tones in almost every bar, and Mendelssohn, Bruckner and Wagner, too, had left their marks. When I had come to terms with these facts, I became more and more interested in the score's cleverly developed details of motif, harmony and tone colour. My observations gradually became a first impression which later on should turn out right: Somebody who had thoroughly learned his craft, was heading for his first masterpiece. Certainly, Hans Rott's String Symphony is a far cry from a masterpiece. And yet, we may consider this piece a remarkable contribution to the repertory of chamber orchestras.

Therefore, Rott's String Symphony – to say it plainly – would certainly have deserved a world premiere other than it got in the end. The *Cappella dei Giovani* with whom I was to premiere this piece of music, is a young chamber orchestra whose members are students and advanced pupils, and it cannot meet the standards of a professional ensemble. Besides, this winter project stood under a not really lucky star. We had been pretty unlucky with some newcomers, and between rehearsals the leading cello player brought back from a skiing tour a complicated fracture of the neck of the femur. Despite all that, the work

was exciting. True, the members of the orchestra reacted totally different to the piece, their reactions ranging from sceptical reserve to wild enthusiasm. But everybody agreed that it was a very special feeling to play in concert for the first time a piece, created 130 years ago, which up to then we had only heard on a midi file. So we had been curious how the audience would react to the String Symphony. As for the audience, their reactions, too, were different. The fact that there were only limited storms of enthusiasm we did not attribute to the piece itself but rather to our inadequate performance.

I should like to conclude by giving a short comment on our performance. The members of the International Hans Rott Society will find a recording of the third concert of our world premiere project on a CD, the annual gift 2004. It took place of January 4, 2004 in Wohlen (Canton Aargau). Two days before, Baden saw the world premiere to which we could welcome three members of the International Hans Rott Society. On January 3, there was another concert in Aarau. When listening to the recording, one will have to put up with a reduced quality. First – I have already mentioned it – the *Cappella dei Giovani* is not an orchestra from which to expect a technically perfect live recording. As for intonation, precision and sound you have to turn a blind eye – or better a deaf ear – to some passages. Second, the recording had been done with a cheap microphone, placed somewhere in the middle of the audience which resulted in awfully piercing acoustics. You will get the best result if you turn the sound dull and use cheap loudspeakers, if possible...

In retrospect I regret that we did not endeavour to use several microphones for the recording in a room with good acoustics and with a chance to do several takes. But I hope that – despite of all shortcomings – you will gain a first impression of Hans Rott's approach to that orchestral idiom in which he was to find such impressive phrasing a few years later. And I ask you to be indulgent towards us to whom joy in



David Schwarb was born 1976 in Baden-Rütihof (Switzerland). The Aargau School for Church Music saw his first contact with conducting. Following his graduation in 1995, he attended a course in conducting held by Janos Tamas the same year. Besides studying musicology at Bern University, he took private lessons in conducting with Ewald Körner with the aim of becoming a conductor.

Since 1997 David Schwarb is head of the chamber orchestra *Cappella dei Giovani*. The orchestra won a first prize with honours in the Swiss Youth Orchestra Contest in 2000 and a first prize at the Valiant Forum Murten in 2003. Since late 2001 he also acts as conductor of the *Berner Musikkollegium*. In March 2004 he was elected head of the *Orchesterverein Aarau*. His regular occupation is that of a music editor at Swiss radio station DRS2.

adventuring a world premiere ranked higher than meeting the interest of Rott fans by giving the String Symphony the world premiere it would have deserved. Perhaps we may hide behind the argument that Hans Rott had written this piece when he was still a student and therefore it might have been written for a students' orchestra. We therefore may assume: had there been a possibility of a performance back in 1875 – and copies of the parts indicate that Rott had one in mind – the piece might have sounded similar...

David Schwarb

Upcoming Events 2005:

For tickets call:

Neue Philharmonie Westfalen

Johannes Wildner

Hans Rott: Symphony No. 1 in E major and

Richard Wagner: Prelude to "Tristan and Isolde"

Richard Strauss: Concerto for Horn and Orchestra No. 2 in E-flat major

March 14/15, 8.00 p.m.	Gelsenkirchen/Germany, Musiktheater im Revier	+49 / 2 09 / 4 09 72 00
March 16, 8.00 p.m.	Kamen/Germany, Konzertaula	+49 / 23 03 / 27 17
March 17, 7.30 p.m.	Papenburg/Germany, Forum	+49 / 49 61 / 82-307 or -337
March 19, 8.00 p.m.	Recklinghausen/Germany, Rurfestspielhaus	+49 / 2 09 / 14 77 90
March 20, 11.00 a.m.	Dortmund/Germany, Konzerthaus	+49 / 18 05 / 44 80 44

Philharmonisches Orchester Hagen

Antony Hermus

Hans Rott: Suite in E major – **World premiere** – and

Joseph Haydn: Symphony No. 22 in E flat major Hob. 1:22 ("The Philosopher")

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

April 12, 8.00 p.m.	Hagen/Germany, Stadthalle	+49 / 23 31 / 2 07 3218 or -3219
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Huaröds Kammarorkester

Mats Rondin

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

April 14 – 17	Sweden (place not known yet)
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Orchester des Staatstheaters Kassel

Rasmus Baumann

Hans Rott: Symphony No. 1 in E major and

Alban Berg: Seven Early Lieder

April 17, 11.00 a.m.	Kassel/Germany, Kuppeltheater	+49 / 5 61 / 1 09 42 22
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NDR Sinfonieorchester

Alan Gilbert

Hans Rott: Symphony No. 1 in E major and

Gustav Mahler: Des Knaben Wunderhorn, Lieder for Baritone and Orchestra (a selection)

April 22, 8.00 p.m.	Hamburg/Germany, Musikhalle	+49 / 18 01 / 78 79 80
April 23, 8.00 p.m.	Kiel/Germany, Schloß	+49 / 4 31 / 9 35 29
April 25, 7.30 p.m.	Lübeck/Germany, Musik- und Kongresshalle	+49 / 4 51 / 7 02 32 18

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