~ PROGRAM ~
Eastman Philharmonia
Neil Varon, conductor

Symphony No. 9 in D minor, WAB 109 (1887-1894)
I. Feierlich, misterioso
II. Scherzo: Bewegt, lebhaft
III. Adagio: Langsam, feierlich

Anton Bruckner
(1824-1896) 63’
Symphony No. 9 in D minor, WAB 109

Anton Bruckner’s (1824-1896) Ninth Symphony stands as a testament to a lifetime of dedication and musical exploration. The symphony, which the composer worked on during his final decade, shows a relentless, arduous, pursuit of perfection. In his last years, Bruckner suffered from debilitating physical and mental problems. Despite all that, he worked on the Ninth persistently. So much so, that at the time of his death, the manuscript with sketches of an unfinished fourth movement lay open on his desk.

Bruckner’s symphonies have long divided the public opinion due to their length, ambiguous structures, and unconventional harmonic language. These compositions represent Bruckner’s unique attempt to answer an elusive musical question, often venturing into the spiritual unknown; typical of the composer, who was a humble man of extraordinary piety.

The opening movement unfolds with an anxious anticipation. Murmuring strings and an occasional low wind note set the stage for a mysterious and solemn journey. Over the course of the movement, the music slowly grows and expands until it feels almost as if the fabric of sound itself could tear at any moment.

The second movement of the Ninth Symphony, a *scherzo*, reveals Bruckner’s obsession with numerical precision. His score is filled with machine-like repetitions which create a forceful and relentless atmosphere. It should be noted at this point that numbers and numerology played a significant role in Bruckner’s life, whether in the form of prayers or musical repetitions. The symphony served as his numerical research laboratory, where he sought the ideal structure and harmonies to realize his musical vision.

In the third movement, the music takes on a mysterious quality. Though Bruckner never intended for the symphony to conclude with this movement (he simply passed away before he could complete the final movement), it is hard not to sense a search for the transcendent, the inexplicable, in the final minutes of the piece. Bruckner’s dedication of the work to G-d reflects the subtle splendor he sought to convey through this composition. The movement, and this version of the symphony, conclude in the key of E Major. A step above the original key of D minor (in itself an ode to Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, which begins in the same key), E Major brings on a quiet ascension of the spirit.

While several completions of the finale exist, the three-movement version offers a unique interpretation of Bruckner’s vision. It ends with the enigmatic atmosphere of the third movement rather than the intended power and victory of the fourth. Perhaps this serves as a fitting conclusion, allowing us to imagine Bruckner at rest after a long career, enjoying a moment of quiet contentment. This final symphony is a testament to Bruckner’s unwavering dedication to his craft and his life-long pursuit of musical perfection, even in the face of life’s challenges. - Yonatan Dvir
Upcoming Collegium Concerts
Events are free unless otherwise noted.

Thursday-Sunday, November 2-5
Eastman Opera Theatre: A Double Bill - Mythology Through a New Lens!
Heggie To Hell and Back & Okoye We’ve Got Our Eye on You
Wilson Southerland, conductor
Kilbourn Hall • 7:30PM/Sunday 2:30PM

Monday, November 6
Eastman Jazz Ensemble & Eastman New Jazz Ensemble
Christine Jensen & Dave Rivello, directors
Kilbourn Hall • 7:30PM

Wednesday, November 8
Eastman Wind Orchestra
Music of Read Thomas, Maslanka, Lindveit, and Brodack
Mark Davis Scatterday and Zachary Griffin, conductors
Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre • 7:30PM

Monday, November 13
The Eastman Wind Ensemble
Music of Higdon, McCune, and Messiaen
Mark Davis Scatterday and Kevin Fitzgerald, conductors
Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre • 7:30PM

We acknowledge with respect the Seneca Nation, known as the “Great Hill People” and “Keepers of the Western Door” of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We take this opportunity to thank the people whose ancestral lands the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester currently occupies in Rochester, New York.

Information about upcoming Eastman concerts and events can be found at: www.esm.rochester.edu/calendar

Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre fire exits are located along the right and left sides, and at the back of the hall on each level. In the event of an emergency, you will be notified by the stage manager. If notified, please move in a calm and orderly fashion to the nearest exit.

Restrooms are located on each level of Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre. Our ushers will be happy to direct you to them.

Please note: The use of unauthorized photo-graphic and recording equipment is not allowed in this building. We reserve the right to ask anyone disrupting a performance to leave the hall.

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