TOCCATA CLASSICS

Julius BITTNER

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC, VOLUME ONE

VATERLAND: SYMPHONIC POEM
SYMPHONY NO. 1 IN F MINOR

Siberian Symphony Orchestra
Dmitry Vasiliev

FIRST RECORDINGS

JULIUS BITTNER, FORGOTTEN ROMANTIC

by Brendan G. Carroll

Julius Bittner is one of music's forgotten Romantics: his richly melodious works are never performed today and he is perhaps the last major composer of the early twentieth century to have been entirely ignored by the recording industry – until now: apart from four songs, this release marks the very first recording of any of his music in modern times. It reveals yet another colourful and individual voice among the many who came to prominence in the period before the First World War – and yet Bittner, an important and integral part of Viennese musical life before the Nazi *Anschluss* of 1938 subsumed Austria into the German Reich, was once one of the most frequently performed composers of contemporary opera in Austria. He wrote in a fluent, accessible and resolutely tonal style, with an undeniable melodic gift and a real flair for the stage.

Bittner was born in Vienna on 9 April 1874, the same year as Franz Schmidt and Arnold Schoenberg. Both of his parents were musical, and he grew up in a cultured, middle-class home where artists and musicians were always welcomed (Brahms was a friend of the family). His father was a lawyer and later a distinguished judge, and initially young Julius followed his father into the legal profession, graduating with honours and eventually serving as a senior member of the judiciary throughout Lower Austria, until 1920. He subsequently became an important official in the Austrian Department of Justice, until ill health in the mid-1920s forced him to retire (he was diabetic). Remarkably, he combined a very busy professional life with that of an even busier, prolific and much-performed composer – and from his early childhood, he had always declared that music was his true calling.

When one considers Bittner's beautifully crafted scores, such as the two works on this recording, it seems almost inconceivable that, after some basic initial instruction

from his father and piano lessons from his mother, he was, until his late teens, largely self-taught.

Like many of his contemporaries, he fell under the spell of Richard Wagner, in his case after attending a performance of *Lohengrin* at the age of twelve. Somewhat alarmed by this turn of events, his musically conservative father turned to Brahms for advice. Brahms recommended that young Bittner be sent to the celebrated blind Austrian composer Josef Labor (1842–1924) for formal instruction. Labor, a brilliant organist, taught a number of other important musicians, including the pianist Paul Wittgenstein (who later, having lost his right arm in the First World War, commissioned left-hand piano concertos from Ravel, Prokofiev and Korngold, among others). Labor was also Alma Schindler's teacher for six years (well before she became the wife of Gustav Mahler) and even gave some lessons to the young Schoenberg. He was an ideal mentor and brought order and rigour to young Bittner's untutored but undoubted talent, giving him a thorough grounding in musical form within the strict confines of classical harmony and, above all, counterpoint. Bittner made rapid progress, and by his early twenties he had mastered harmony and orchestration. In addition, as well as being proficient on both violin and organ, he became an accomplished pianist.

In spite of his father's concerns, he never entirely threw off the influence of Wagner, who was to remain his operatic model. According to an autobiographical sketch written in 1917, he had already begun to compose by his early teens and had even written a short one-act opera at age fourteen for voices and piano, based on an Indian theme (subsequently lost, along with most of his juvenilia).[1] A number of unpublished works did survive, including at least three operas listed by his first biographer, Richard Specht,[2] dating well before 1891: they are preserved today, along with most of his manuscripts, in the Staatsbibliothek in Vienna. By 1900, he felt sufficiently confident to show some of these works to his close friend Bruno Walter, by then beginning his celebrated career as a conductor at the Vienna Hofoperntheater.

[1] Julius Bittner, 'Autobiographische Skizze', *Neue Musik-Zeitung*, October 1917.
[2] *Julius Bittner*, Zeitgenössische Komponisten, Vol. 10, Drei Masken, Munich, 1921, pp. 25–31.

It was through Bruno Walter that Bittner met Gustav Mahler, Musikdirektor of the Opera, in an encounter that was to prove decisive in his career. Mahler was impressed by Bittner's first mature opera *Der rote Gred* ('The Red Gred' – the main character, Gred, being a young peasant dancer) and apparently made many suggestions. After its premiere in Frankfurt in 1907, *Der rote Gred* was performed in Vienna the following year at the instigation of Mahler's successor at the opera, Felix Weingartner (with Bruno Walter conducting), and was a considerable success. Weingartner, one of the major conductors of pre-war Vienna, was to become one of Bittner's most supportive advocates.

Like Lortzing, Cornelius and, especially, his near-contemporary Franz Schreker, Bittner preferred to write his own opera libretti, which were often based either on Austrian alpine or peasant themes or on his own fanciful fairy-tales. He was a devoted Austrian patriot throughout his life and so became known as the 'Anzengruber of the opera', a reference to the nineteenth-century Viennese playwright Ludwig Anzengruber (1839–89), most of whose works dealt with Austrian peasant life.

Bittner became increasingly prolific after 1914: among his works are a further eight operas, two string quartets, a cello sonata, numerous choral works, six operettas, three ballets and a number of substantial incidental scores for plays by Nestroy, Schiller, Shakespeare and others.

As well as composing, Bittner somehow found time to teach and also to write music criticism. He was, for a time, editor for the prestigious journal *Der Merker*, having contributed numerous articles to the magazine from 1909 onwards, as well as contributing frequent reviews and *feuilletons* for the *Musikblätter des Anbruch* and the *Neue Freie Presse,* among other important publications in Austria and Germany.

Like his contemporaries Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Joseph Marx and Franz Schmidt, Bittner was a formidable orchestrator with a distinctly personal voice. His predilection for lavishing the richest possible instrumentation on even the slightest operatic material led to some typically Viennese barbs that were nevertheless made with much affection. The critic Julius Korngold (father of the composer), hardly known for humour, reviewed the premiere of Bittner's opera *Der Bergsee* ('The Mountain Lake') in 1911, describing it tartly as *'Die Bauerndämmerung'* ('The Twilight of the Peasants').

Later, after a performance of Bittner's highly successful one act-opera *Das Höllisch Gold* ('The Gold of Hell' – a fairy-tale about the Devil coming to earth to claim a human soul), the notoriously sarcastic conductor Franz Schalk (then co-director of the Vienna Opera with Richard Strauss), mischievously noting that its impossibly luxuriant orchestration gave a nod to Erich Wolfgang Korngold, said it ought to have been called '*Die tote Vorstadt*' ('The Dead Suburb'). Such mildly pejorative remarks amused the composer, particularly in view of the substantial box-office takings his works enjoyed.

Bittner was highly influential in Vienna and he knew practically everybody worth knowing, so much so that he was even able to use his influence to arrange for Arnold Schoenberg's exemption from active military service during the First World War. In 1915, he had been the proud recipient of the first Mahler prize for composition, established after the composer's death. He had actually been Mahler's personal lawyer, assessing his estate for probate, and he revered Mahler and his works all of his life. Indeed, Bittner's musical relationships were surprisingly broad, bestriding all of the various artistic movements and musical factions of his time. By all accounts a lovable and witty man, Bittner had a keen musical intelligence, an abundant sense of humour and, above all, an expertise in the tricky matter of musical copyright, ensuring that he was friends with most of his musical contemporaries, from the decidedly conservative Franz Schmidt to the notorious triumvirate of the New Viennese School, Schoenberg, Berg and Webern.

Bruno Walter remained his devoted friend and left a touching memoir of Bittner in his autobiography *Theme and Variations*:

> His personality could not fail to move one deeply. He was a typical Viennese, a tall, ponderous, blonde man with a reddish face, loud voice and roaring laugh. His profound religious faith helped him to overcome a painful illness and the eventual amputation of both legs. He remained cheerful and patient to the end [...].[3]

Perhaps his closest friend and colleague among Vienna's diverse musical fraternity was Erich Wolfgang Korngold, some twenty years his junior, whose aforementioned father, Dr Julius Korngold, was Vienna's most feared and influential music-critic,

[3] Alfred A. Knopf, New York/Hamish Hamilton, London, 1947, p. 154.

successor to Eduard Hanslick at the *Neue Freie Presse*. Julius Korngold was also a lawyer and had practised as such in Moravia before moving with his family to Vienna in 1901. He would certainly have known of, and possibly even met, Bittner in those early days, and by 1908, when the eleven-year-old Erich Wolfgang was beginning his meteoric rise to fame, he welcomed Bittner's first operatic success, *Der rote Gred,* with a favourable review.

Coincidentally, one of Bittner's most important clients was the owner of a large apartment building in the First District in Vienna, at 7, Theobaldgasse. In 1909, the Korngold family, after seven years of living in various cramped apartments in the city, moved into a spacious flat on the second floor of this building. Their neighbour on the floor above was Bruno Walter. Was that a coincidence? Probably not. Either way, Julius Bittner became closely acquainted with Erich Wolfgang from then on and in the next quarter-century both he and his wife Emilie (a fine contralto, whom he had married in 1908) were to assume the role of surrogate parents to the young prodigy, who was a frequent and welcome guest at Bittner's elegant home on the Dietrichsteingasse.

In 1929, when Korngold was creating his operetta *Walzer aus Wien* (based on the lives of the Strauss family), he decided to include Bittner's name on the score, even though he had virtually no involvement in the project. This gesture was intended to give Bittner (who was by then struggling financially) a regular income, and it was to prove providential: *Walzer aus Wien* (later known in English as *The Great Waltz*) was the most successful Strauss-based operetta of all time and ensured Bittner, in his last years, was able to live comfortably on the substantial international royalties.

Bruno Walter referred to Bittner's strong faith. He was a devout Roman Catholic, and in 1926 composed what he considered to be his *magnum opus*, the *Grosse Messe mit Te Deum* for large orchestra, organ, choir and mixed soloists. Like the oratorio *Das Buch mit Sieben Siegeln* ('The Book with Seven Seals') by his friend Franz Schmidt, Bittner's grandiose Mass became a cornerstone of the Austrian choral repertory before the Second World War. The British composer and musicologist Harold Truscott (1914–92) once told me that he had heard it over short-wave radio from Vienna in the 1930s and never forgot it, declaring it to be a masterpiece.

In spite of serious illness, Bittner still managed to enjoy one final operatic triumph in 1934, when his opera *Das Veilchen* ('The Violet') was premiered in a lavish production at the Vienna State Opera designed by Alfred Roller, Mahler's major collaborator, and performed under the baton of Clemens Krauss. The all-star cast included Karl Hammes, Luise Helletsgruber, Adele Kern, Charles Kullmann and Richard Mayr. Bittner's eldest son, Otto, had to carry the ailing composer into the theatre for the occasion, on 8 December 1934, his arrival provoking a standing ovation from the packed house. It marked a touching and glorious end to his public career.

Julius Bittner died on 9 January 1939 and was buried in a grave of honour in the Zentralfriedhof, the major cemetery in Vienna. At his death he left incomplete the scores of a comic opera, *Der Rosenkranzfest* ('The Festival of Rosaries'), and a Requiem Mass. Although the Roman Catholic Bittner's music had been inexplicably prohibited by the new Nazi administration in Austria, Radio Vienna nevertheless broadcast a memorial concert in tribute. It included the celebrated Greek mezzo Elena Nikolaidi performing the song-cycle *Sechs Lieder von der unglücklichen Liebe der edlen Dame Ping Tschi-Yu* ('Six Songs of the unhappy Love of the noble Lady Ping Tschi-Yu') – superb, quasi-operatic songs with large orchestra, written in 1922 to texts based on Chinese love-poems; they continue very much in Mahler's tradition of symphonic Lieder. Happily, a rare recording of this broadcast survives in the archive of the ORF, the Austrian national broadcaster.

Although Bittner considered himself first and foremost an opera composer, his orchestral music does not deserve the neglect it has encountered. This first recording of any of it presents the First Symphony, completed in May 1923, when he was at the height of his powers (a Second Symphony, still unpublished, followed in 1934), and the tone-poem *Vaterland* composed in 1915 as a patriotic tribute to his homeland.

With the outbreak of the First World War, many composers, on both sides of the conflict, felt inspired – or obliged – to write works in support of the war-effort. Elgar may have been the earliest with his *Carillon*, Op. 75, for recitation with orchestra in aid

of the Belgian resistance, followed swiftly by *Polonia*, Op. 76, composed for a Polish Victims' Relief Fund Concert in Queen's Hall in London in 1915. In Germany, Max Reger composed *Eine vaterländische Overtüre* ('A Patriotic Overture') and even Franz Lehár felt moved to compose a *Kriegslied* ('War Song'), to be sold in aid of war charities.

Bittner was a committed nationalist and a fervent patriot all of his life. Faced with the prospect of a world war engulfing his beloved Austria, he created a symphonic poem called, simply, *Vaterland* ('Fatherland') 1, cast in a single movement in the Lisztian tradition and scored for a large orchestra, comprising an unusually rich woodwind section of three flutes, three oboes, a clarinet in D, a further three clarinets in B, three bassoons and a double bassoon, a large brass group of six horns, four trumpets, a bass trumpet, three trombones and a bass tuba, a large percussion section, two harps, organ and strings.

The key is D minor. A hushed, mysterious opening marked *Heftig, stürmisch* ('Violent and stormy') sets the tone, as a sombre theme rises up from the lower strings towards a gradual crescendo and is then subjected to rigorous symphonic development. Indeed, the entire work, which is almost twenty minutes in duration, could easily have been the opening movement of a symphony.

Its military flavour perhaps indicates a hidden programme of heroic battle manœuvres, with frequent flashes of martial brass and percussion. After a thorough working-out that builds to an abrupt climax, a sudden dramatic pause ushers in the surprising intervention of the organ, intoning the famous Lutheran chorale tune *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott* ('A mighty fortress is our God'), which had memorably provided the basis for Joachim Raff's once popular overture to a 1865 play about the Thirty Years War, a work doubtless known to Bittner: its association with an earlier conflict may have suggested the idea to Bittner. Here a change of key, to the brighter tonality of E major, is striking, and as the whole orchestra gradually joins in, the original main theme combines with this noble chorale, bells toll and the work ends in triumphant, victorious mood.

Although well received (and widely performed) in both Austria and Germany at the time, *Vaterland* disappeared from the repertoire at the end of the war with the collapse

of the Hapsburg monarchy. Today, stripped of its nationalist and political overtones, it would make a most effective opening work for any concert using similar orchestral forces.

Like Brahms, Bittner waited until almost his 50th year before attempting to write a symphony. Unlike the earlier *Vaterland* and indeed, the effulgent orchestral music of his operas, this First Symphony, completed in May 1923, seems to have been deliberately cast in a more classical vein. For one thing, the orchestra is not especially large (apart from its woodwind group, which takes centre-stage for the deliciously diabolical scherzo). Harmonically, too, the work could easily have been written some forty years earlier, a kind of melding of early Brahms with a restrained Bruckner.

The dramatic first movement, *Allegro* 2, opens with a busy, undulating figure in the violas somewhat reminiscent of the Third Symphony by Franz Schmidt, written a few years later (in 1927–28). The main theme (with a solo oboe and bassoon paired) is then heard over this viola figuration. The music never strays far from the tonic key of F minor, and the long-spanned (seventeen-bar) principal melody, with an angular, almost oriental character, is treated in strictly classical sonata form, with a thorough development and recapitulation. It gradually builds momentum through a series of dramatic episodes, with frequently exposed instrumental colours – it might easily have been written by Brahms. The concluding bars, where the busy string figure now becomes a serene, lyrical theme, ends in the manner of a pastorale.

The impressive, Brucknerian slow movement, marked *Sehr langsam* ('Very slow') 3, is in D flat major. A long-breathed *Adagio* in a solemn mood, it lasts almost a quarter of an hour and builds inexorably, becoming ever more chromatic as it does so, before reaching a powerful climax.The rising sevenths of its main theme then peacefully die away in the final bars. Next comes the scherzo, *Sehr rasch* ('Very quickly') 4, once again in the tonic key, and in many ways the most impressive movement of the four, fiendish in character, spiky and rhythmically driven, with the harmonically piquant style of the writing for woodwind and brass in stark contrast to a brief, chorale-like trio in F major. The critic

Elsa Bienenfeld thought it resembled the music 'of a Viennese Berlioz',[4] although I feel it to be closer in character to the scherzos of Bittner's mentor, Gustav Mahler. Julius Korngold's review[5] called it a 'Höllisch Tanz' ('hellish dance'), adding that the ghosts of Dvořák and Smetana were often close at hand. Yet if one knows Bittner's operas, and especially their rich orchestration, it's clear that the music is highly typical of the composer, particularly his distinctive voicing of the woodwind and brass groups.

The finale, also marked *Sehr rasch* 5, carries on in a similar mood. It bustles along in a brisk, loping $\frac{6}{8}$ based on a short fragmentary motif heard at the outset in solo bassoon with two timpani, before giving way to a more lyrical second subject. The music, in the manner of a furiant, builds through several climactic episodes, all packed with incident, at one point even taking on a martial character with a battery of percussion, before a sudden, surprising release of tension in an unexpected fermata. Then, equally without warning, a swift return of the quirky main theme is heard in a triumphal, marching coda that hurtles the work towards an emphatic, brisk F major finish.

The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra gave the first performance of the work in the Golden Hall of the Musikverein on 16 December 1923, with Felix Weingartner once again on the podium. By all accounts it was a considerable success with the public, with Bittner called many times to the platform to take the applause. The critics were impressed, too, and the reviews (considering that this premiere took place in sharp-tongued Vienna) were unusually positive.

This unknown, late-Romantic Austrian symphony, written in the same year as Zemlinsky's *Lyric Symphony* and Sibelius' Sixth, is clearly no musical also-ran. Its ideas are strong, the score is expertly structured and the whole work is beautifully written for the orchestra throughout. It is a most welcome discovery for all those who, like myself, find endless fascination with the music of the inter-War period, which is undoubtedly the most richly diverse of the twentieth century.

[4] *Neues Wiener Journal*, 17 December 1923.
[5] In the *Neue Freie Presse*, 17 December 1923.

*Brendan G. Carroll is a musicologist, writer and freelance journalist specialising in music of the early twentieth century. His biography of Erich Wolfgang Korngold (*The Last Prodigy*, Amadeus, Portland, 1997;* Das letzte Wunderkind*, Böhlau, Vienna, 2013) is considered definitive. He has written and lectured internationally on Korngold and his contemporaries and is currently writing the first biography in English of Julius Bittner.*

Dmitry Vasiliev was born in 1972 in the city of Bolshoi Kamen in Primorsky Kraj in the Russian Far East. He graduated from the Rostov State Conservatoire and then took a post-graduate course and probation period under the guidance of Alexander Skulsky at the Nizhny Novgorod State Conservatoire. He also participated in the master-classes of Alexander Vedernikov and Vladimir Ziva in Moscow.

He has since been active all over Russia. In 1997 he set up the Tambov Symphony Orchestra in Tambov, south of Moscow, which he led as artistic director and chief conductor until 2005, touring with the Orchestra to France and Moscow. While in Tambov he was artistic director of the International Rachmaninov Festival in 2001 and 2002, the Tambov Musicians' Festival in 1999, 2000 and 2001 and the Musical Province Festival in 2002. In 2003–5 he held the position of guest chief conductor of the Sochi Symphony Orchestra on the Black Sea, and since 2005 he has been principal conductor of the Siberian Symphony Orchestra in Omsk (it is known domestically as the Omsk Philharmonic), where since 2008 he has been he was artistic director of the biennial New Music Festival. In June 2009 he took the Siberian Symphony Orchestra to Moscow to participate in the Fourth Festival of World Symphony Orchestras.

Since then Dmitry Vasiliev and the SSO have toured many times, to Moscow (Tchaikovsky Concert Hall) and Saint-Petersburg (Mariinsky Theatre) and other Russian cities, as well as to Austria, China and Italy. He has also conducted in Moscow with the National Philharmonic

Orchestra, the 'Evgeny Svetlanov' State Academic Symphony Orchestra and Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as with the St Petersburg State Capella, the Nizhny Novgorod and Rostov Philharmonic Orchestras and elsewhere in Russia and, internationally, in China, France, Italy, Poland and South Korea. Dmitry Vasiliev has made recordings on a number of different labels, among them Toccata Classics, Antes Edition and ArtBeat Music.The soloists with whom he has appeared include the soprano Hibla Gerzmava and bass Vladimir Matorin, the pianists Boris Beresovsky, Denis Matsuev, Nikolai Petrov and Eliso Virsaladze, the violinists Pierre Amoyal, Oleh Krysa, Vadim Repin, Sayaka Shoji and Leonard Sreiber, the cellists Boris Andrianov and Misha Maisky and trumpeter Sergey Nakariakov.

Among the world premieres Dmitry Vasiliev has to his credit are works by Mikhail Bronner, Sofia Gubaidulina, Ilya Heifets, Alemdar Karamanov, Ephraim Podgaits, Tolib Shakhidy, Andrey Tikhomirov and Mieczysław Weinberg, as well as Russian premieres of music by John Adams, Woldemar Bargiel, John Corigliano, Karl Jenkins, Christopher Rouse, Charles Villiers Stanford, Alexander Tchaikovsky, Eduard Tubin and others.

The **Siberian Symphony Orchestra** (SSO) is one of the largest of Russian orchestras. It was founded in 1966 at the instigation of the conductor Simon Cogan, who remained at its head for more than ten years. From the beginning it attracted talented graduates from the Leningrad, Novosibirsk and Ural Conservatories, each institution with a well-earned reputation for producing dynamic and highly professional musicians. For many years the Siberian Symphony Orchestra toured the cities of the former Soviet Union, giving concerts in Moscow and Leningrad, Krasnoyarsk and Chita in central and eastern Russia, the cities along the Volga cities, Riga in Latvia, Kiev in Ukraine, Minsk in Belarus and Almaty in Kazakhstan. From 1975 the Orchestra participated in the contemporary-music festivals organised by the Union of Composers of the USSR, performing music by Khachaturian, Khrennikov, Shchedrin and other prominent composers.

From 1978 the Siberian Symphony Orchestra was headed by the conductor Viktor Tietz, under whose leadership it reached artistic maturity and developed a wide repertoire, winning first prize at All-Russian Competition of Symphony Orchestras in 1984. From 1992 to 2004 the chief conductor of the Orchestra was Evgeny Shestakov. Since 1994 the Siberian Symphony Orchestra has regularly travelled abroad on tour and in 1996 it was awarded the title of 'Academic' – an honour in Russia.

Photograph: Marina Bikova

Over the years the Orchestra has also worked with such distinguished conductors as Veronika Dudarova, Karl Eliasberg, Arnold Katz, Aram Khachaturian, Fuat Mansurov, Kirill Petrenko, Krzysztof Penderecki, Nathan Rachlin, Abram Stasevich and Alexander Vedernikov. The soloists with whom the SSO has worked include the pianists Dmitri Bashkirov, Lazar Berman, Peter Donohoe, Denis Matsuev, Mikhail Pletnev, Grigory Sokolov and Eliso Virsaladze, the violinists Pierre Amoyal, Viktor Pikayzen and Viktor Tretyakov, the cellists Natalia Gutman, Mstislav Rostropovich and Daniil Shafran and baritone Dmitry Hvorostovski.

The last decade has been a period of growth and flowering for the SSO. Its huge repertoire ranges from the symphonic classics to works by composers of the 21st century. The composition of the Orchestra is in line with European standards, boasting more than 100 experienced, highly professional musicians. The discography of the SSO includes the four symphonies of the Danish composer Victor Bendix on Danacord and the Orchestral Suites Nos. 1 and 2 by Vissarion Shebalin, the first of its recordings for Toccata Classics (TOCC 0136), which was followed by albums of music by Woldemar Bargiel (his Symphony in C major and the overtures *Prometheus*, *Overture to a Tragedy* and *Medea* on TOCC 0277), two of the music of Mieczysław Weinberg (*Polish Tunes* and Symphony No. 21 on TOCC 0193, and *Six Ballet Scenes* and Symphony No. 22 on TOCC 0313) and Philip Spratley (*Cargoes*, *A Helpston Fantasia* and Third Symphony on TOCC 0194); a second recording of Shebalin orchestral suites is in preparation. In recent years the Orchestra has also toured in Austria, Germany, Italy, Spain, Ukraine and the USA.

Since 2005 the principal conductor of the Orchestra has been Dmitry Vasiliev. Under his direction the repertoire of the SSO has become even wider and now includes not only the classics but also contemporary music, jazz, rock, musicals, film soundtracks, and so on, and participates in a wide number of innovative projects, from festivals of contemporary classical music to the World and European ballroom dancing championships. In 2009 the SSO took part in the Fourth Festival of World Symphony Orchestras held in the Hall of Columns in Moscow; and in April 2010 and 2018 it became a member of the Forum of the Symphony Orchestras of Russia in Yekaterinburg. The SSO is a permanent participant of the concert series of the Moscow State Philharmonic and the Mariinsky Theatre in St Petersburg.

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I would like to express my thanks to Dr Michael Haas of the exil.arte Centre in Vienna for locating and translating the first reviews of Bittner's F minor Symphony, some of which are referenced in my booklet notes. *Brendan Carroll*

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JULIUS BITTNER Orchestral Music, Volume One

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3 II *Sehr langsam*	15:00
4 III *Sehr rasch – etwas langsamer*	8:25
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Siberian Symphony Orchestra
Dmitry Vasiliev, conductor

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