

# PROBLEMS OF INTERPRETATION IN SPOHR'S SYMPHONIES

By Keith Warsop

## 1. Introduction

THE completion of the first integral recording of Spohr's nine published symphonies makes it an opportune moment to survey the problems involved in interpreting these works. By referring to the recordings, together with rival ones and radio broadcast tapes, and comparing the outcome with Spohr's own known views and comments it should be possible to pinpoint some of the matters which need to be addressed if a Spohr performance tradition is to be re-established.

## 2. Recordings and scores

We begin with some comments on the history of the Marco Polo recorded cycle. The Fourth Symphony, recorded in November 1987, in which Alfred Walter conducted the Budapest Symphony Orchestra, and released in autumn 1989, was not then planned as the start of a complete set; after all, Marco Polo already had a recording of Spohr's Second Symphony with a different orchestra and conductor in their catalogue. No doubt the idea was that over the years other Spohr symphonies might be recorded and eventually perhaps all nine might be completed. But this was far from a scheduled project. What changed matters was our enthusiastic reaction to this recording; in particular our perception that Alfred Walter, with his care over tempi, dynamics and expression marks, had exactly the right attributes to project Spohr in a positive manner. And so it proved. Whatever reservations we might have about matters of detail in this cycle Mr. Walter's overall view has earned a generally good reception. As one reviewer put it: "far from contenting himself with a mere run-through of these rarities, he suggests that Spohr's music has qualities all its own." For the remaining eight symphonies Mr. Walter turned from Budapest to the Slovak State Philharmonic Orchestra based in Košice in eastern Slovakia — a better orchestra though still not a world-class one. Our plan was first to record those symphonies which did not exist in rival versions — numbers one, five, seven and eight — the idea being that if the project foundered before completion, at least all of the symphonies would be available on one label or the other. The next principle was to avoid clashing with the recommendable Orfeo coupling of numbers six and nine; then we tried to pair programme and non-programme works; we also took into account the playing time of each CD; and finally allocated one of the better symphonies to each disc. The outcome is as follows:

8.223122 No.4 (38:49) + Faust (6:37) & Jessonda (7:35) overtures. Total 53:01 (recorded 25-28 Nov. 1987)  
8.223363 No.1 (34:52) + No.5 (27:09). Total 62:01 (recorded 30 Nov-2 Dec 1990)  
8.223432 No.7 (33:31) + No.8 (35:02). Total 68:33 (recorded 26-28 Mar 1991 No.7; 27-28 Sep 1991 No.8)  
8.223439 No.3 (32:57) + No.6 (29:40). Total 62:37 (recorded 12-16 Nov 1991)  
8.223454 No.2 (30:40) + No.9 (26:44). Total 57:24 (recorded 26-30 Oct 1992)

Other commercial recordings available for comparison were as follows:

No.2 Marco Polo LP 6.220360 (1985) Singapore Symphony Orchestra/Choo Hoey  
No.3 Bärenreiter LP RBM3035 (1975) Southwest German Philharmonic Orchestra/Tamás Sulyok  
Schwann LP VMS1620 (1984) Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra/Gerd Albrecht  
Amati CD SRR8904/1 (1990) Southwest German Radio Symphony Orchestra/Leopold Hager  
No.6 Orfeo LP SO94841A (1984) Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra/Karl Anton Rickenbacher  
No.9 Orfeo LP SO94841A (1984) Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra/Karl Anton Rickenbacher

In addition we had a number of radio broadcast tapes, as follows:

No.1 Vienna Symphony Orchestra/Vaclav Neumann  
No.2 Northern Sinfonia/Manoug Parikian  
No.3 Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra/Carl Garaguly  
No.4 Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra/Artur Rother  
No.5 Radio Symphony Orchestra, Stuttgart/Gustav Koslik  
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra/Paul Schmitz

No.6 BBC bi-centenary broadcast of October 1959  
No.7 BBC Northern Orchestra/Raymond Leppard  
Munich Philharmonic Orchestra/Jan Koetsier  
No.8 BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra/Norman del Mar

We next list the scores of the symphonies we consulted:

Original editions: No.4; No.9  
Facsimiles of original editions (Garland): No.4; No.5; No.6; No.7  
Handwritten scores: No.1 (Garland); No.2 (Garland); No.8 (BBC)  
Modern edition (Bärenreiter): No.3

### 3. Some factual matters

#### Size of orchestra

We know the make-up of Spohr's orchestra in Kassel in the year 1825 as reported by Sir George Smart: "[Spohr] informed me that the full Royal band consisted of sixteen violins, four violas, four celli and four basses, though I only counted three, together with a double set of wind instruments, therefore they always had two good ones of each." (Leaves from the Journal of Sir George Smart edited by H. Bertram Cox and C.L.E. Cox, London 1907). However, there would be other ensembles of differing sizes just as there are today. For instance, when Spohr's First Symphony was performed at the Frankenhäusen Music Festival in 1811 the constitution of the orchestra as mentioned in a review included ten first and ten second violin, six violas, six celli and six basses. Furthermore, the symphonies Spohr wrote in the 1840s, especially numbers 8 and 9 show from the less chamber-like quality of their orchestration that he was aware of the practical considerations involved through the larger numbers to be found by that time in the orchestras in major centres.

In any case, today's concert halls were designed for the much larger Brahms-Wagner-Strauss orchestral forces of the late 19th century so that slimming down the forces is not always the best course. Naturally, recording techniques allow simulation of whatever acoustic is considered appropriate. It is not possible to be prescriptive; each performance will have to be decided according to its own merits.

#### Policy on repeats

Spohr marked exposition repeats in the first and last movements of symphonies 1, 2, 5 and 8. In addition there are exposition repeats in the first movements of symphonies 4 and 7 and one in the last movement of No.3. There are also repeats in the scherzos (counting the *Spring* movement of No.9 here) of symphonies 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8 and 9, though some of these are written out and varied. The second and third movements of No.4 also include a short repeat.

According to W.W. Cobbett (born 1847) in his *Cyclopaedia of Chamber Music* (1929) repeats were invariably observed during his youth in the 1860s and he mentions Schubert's Octet as lasting for more than an hour. During his lifetime exposition repeats gradually became the exception rather than the rule and even, sometimes, the longer second repeats in scherzos were omitted.

This trend may be put down to two things; an aesthetic one which looked on development as the highlight of a composition (such as the school of Schoenberg which adopted a standpoint of "continuous development") or, as with the neo-classic ethic of Stravinsky, looked for concision and "leanness" as an ideal, so that repetition was considered a "lesser" attribute; and a practical one as in the case of 78rpm recordings which led to the excision of repeats in recorded performances, as well as in social changes which saw the shortening of the length of concert programmes, especially broadcast ones. So we can be sure that most performances of Spohr's symphonies this century until the 1980s would have been shorn of repeats except for the basic ones in the scherzos — certainly that is the experience of the handful of broadcast tapes we have from the 1950s to the 1980s.

A number of factors have led to a climate in which exposition repeats are again the norm rather than the exception. The turnaround perhaps stemmed from scholars who argued that if Beethoven did not mark repeats (as in the first movement of the first Rasumovsky quartet), then when he marked them he expected them to be

observed. Conductors influenced by this line of argument began to take the repeats in Beethoven's symphonies and, by extension, to other standard classics such as Haydn and Mozart. But at this time it was still the general view that composers such as Spohr, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Schumann marked repeats because they were merely following convention rather than through any structural need. The next development came when the period performance movement, with its aim of recreating the music as its composer might have heard it, reinforced and extended this tendency to observe repeats, especially when some of the period groups moved into the early Romantic era with recordings of symphonies by Schubert, Mendelssohn and Schumann. This came at the same time as the rise of the CD as the major medium for recorded music which neatly reversed the much earlier influence of the limited playing time of the 78rpm record. Now the greater playing time of the CD became part of marketing strategy with playing times advertised on the cover; so the inclusion of repeats enabled a CD to show "value for money" playing time without the performers having to learn an additional piece of music as well as avoiding all the extra costs that might entail.

However, with Spohr's symphonies, a policy of "repeat everything marked" would not give the correct result in one case — the Scherzo of Symphony No.1 in which the composer decided against observing the repeat marks but only after the performing material had been published.

### **Tempi**

Spohr belongs to the classical period in relation to his tempi and one of the major temptations to be resisted is to broaden everything in an attempt to make him sound like a later Romantic and bring out the Brahmsian hints in his style. As he wrote in his Violin School when commenting on the interpretation of his Ninth Violin Concerto: "In this concerto, the tempo remains the same throughout each movement. In fact, my compositions rarely call for any acceleration or retarding of the tempo for the purpose of enhancing the effect of expression. So the interpreter should but seldom resort to this means, and then with moderation even when inner emotion urges him to do so, lest the introduction of a tempo differing entirely from the original mar or destroy the whole character and harmony of the composition." There is no doubt that a major disappointment with many modern Spohr performances has been this Romantic rather than Classical approach to tempo. Happily, both Alfred Walter and Christian Fröhlich in their respective recordings for Marco Polo and CPO avoid this failing and indeed show how impressive Spohr can be when treated with the tempi he deserves.

### **Dynamics**

The old idea of Spohr as "soft and sentimental" dies hard and as with tempi, many are the disappointing performances in which dynamics are ironed out to produce a soulful, romantic sound. On the contrary, if Spohr is to sound his best, the dynamic contrasts need to be exaggerated, if anything. Contemporary comments on Spohr's conducting usually mention his attention to such matters. When Sir George Smart attended the unveiling of the Beethoven statue in Bonn in 1845, he heard Spohr conduct the Choral Symphony and noted: "The Mass in D is too complicated in parts but was well performed, particularly by the chorus and the band, and well conducted, so was the Sinfonia, "The Ode to Joy", which went famously. The pianos and fortes were so well attended to that I never heard this Sinfonia so well performed before." And when Spohr conducted the Philharmonic Society orchestra in his Fourth Symphony in London in 1843, one reviewer commented: "He absolutely brought the players to a pianissimo, hitherto as fabulous a thing among them as the Unicorn; thus imparting to the first allegro an exquisite and fanciful delicacy, without which one half of its import is lost."

### **4. Symphony No.1 in E flat major, Op.20 (April 1811)**

The First Symphony shows Spohr to some degree still under the influence of his models, Haydn, Mozart and early Beethoven (this last mainly in the use of a scherzo and some elements of the orchestration). But there is one significant difference between Spohr's symphony and the high classical prototype; Spohr's *Allegretto* tempo for his finale. None of Mozart's mature symphonies (from the *Paris* to the *Jupiter*) and none of Haydn's last 20 or so works (the *Paris* to the *London* sets inclusive) ask for anything slower than *Allegro*. In Beethoven's case, there was the finale of the *Pastoral* but that was a special case determined by the expression of the programme.

So one of the most important decisions for a conductor of Spohr's First Symphony is how to interpret this *Allegretto* instruction. Neumann, in his radio broadcast, opts for a slightly faster tempo than Walter in his Marco Polo recording and this gives a livelier, more finale-like atmosphere to the music. On the other hand, Neumann excises the entire development section. In examining Walter more closely, it seems that his choice of tempo has

taken into consideration the triplet figuration for the cellos in the development's fugato. Anything faster may well have caused articulation problems.

Nevertheless, it seems that the appropriate approach is to treat *Allegretto* as only a shade slower than *Allegro* rather than a shade faster than *Andante*. For evidence we do not need to worry about the absence of classical forerunners of such a movement. *Allegretto* finales are central to the major compositional thread which runs through Spohr's early career — the 16 concertos he had composed by the time he came to write the First Symphony. The number of performances of Spohr's violin concertos in which soloists have laboured at a lumbering tempo compared with those where a much livelier approach has been evident show quite clearly that Spohr's *Allegretto* must not be taken too slowly.

Another consideration here is to avoid taking the *Scherzo* at a tempo which makes it too similar to the finale. This is where Neumann is at fault, even though he cuts much of the return of the scherzo after the trio. Compare his steady pace with Walter's much more dynamic approach and one can then also see that the latter's tempi for both scherzo and finale fit together quite nicely.

### 5. Symphony No.2 in D minor, Op.49 (March 1820)

The first movement of the Second Symphony is one of Spohr's finest creations but melding the constituent parts together is no easy task, as is evident from the various performances available for study. The conductor has firstly to integrate properly the role of the movement's opening material. The first question raised is to define exactly what this role is. Clive Brown, in his definitive critical biography of Spohr, suggests that it is the beginning of a multi-part first subject, while the present author, in his booklet notes for the Marco Polo CD conducted by Alfred Walter, suggests on the other hand that Spohr makes a notable innovation by replacing the conventional slow introduction with one in the main *Allegro* tempo. But, while the theme which appears just after the double bar feels like a first subject and is treated throughout as if it is — especially its return in the major at the start of the recapitulation — the introduction is something more than a conventional slow one with the tempo altered to *Allegro*; it permeates much of the movement, has motivic links with other material and plays a key role at the end of the development, the leadback to the recapitulation and in the coda.

Perhaps we can expand on an idea put forward by Hans Keller in his book *The Great Haydn Quartets* (London, 1986). In discussing Op.33, No.3 (The Bird) Keller says "Its opening innovation had such a wide and long influence on the history of composition that it almost became one of many opening conventions; as a result, it has become difficult for us to experience it as an innovation. I am, of course, referring to the beginning before the beginning, the initial accompaniment to nothing...The structural purpose is to increase the range of a movement's, indeed a work's tension...historically an ever more urgent purpose in proportion as themes themselves came to unfold on higher levels of tension, owing chiefly to the development of harmony and the rising norms of consonance and dissonance." We suggest that what Spohr's Second Symphony opens with is, in Keller-style terminology, "the first subject before the first subject" and the intention is exactly stated by Keller above "to increase the range of a movement's, indeed a work's tension." Once we conceptualise this, we can identify other Spohr's works of around this period in which similar treatment can be found; for instance the first movement of the Seventh Violin Concerto of 1814 and the finale of the E flat major string quartet, Op.58, No.1 of 1821. Perhaps Spohr's first use of such an idea comes in the finale of the G major string quintet, Op.33, No.2 of 1813, which Spohr himself refers to as the half-melancholy half-merry subject.

### 6. Symphony No.3 in C minor, Op.78 (March 1828)

A crucial decision is the tempo of the *Andante grave* slow introduction. If the tempo is "grave" as marked and it returns in place of the development section at the same tempo, then it is necessary to avoid taking the *Allegro* too fast in order to accommodate this return. If a speedy *Allegro* is chosen, then the introduction cannot be too slow — or can it? A third way is chosen by Alfred Walter in his Marco Polo recording: the introduction sounds appropriately "grave" and the *Allegro* quite quick so that when the introduction returns it is in fact slightly quicker than it was at the start of the movement. The conductor here may be thought to be indulging in "sleight of ear" and not all will accept his solution as the one to follow. Another difficult spot is the transition from *Andante grave* to *Allegro*. Does one impose a slight *accelerando* (as in the Sulyok recording) or *decelerando* (as

with Gerd Albrecht)? In contrast, Walter keeps strictly to tempo here and he is perhaps more justified as when the same passage returns to herald the recapitulation Spohr does not ask for any alteration to the tempo.

Finally, the most famous crux in this symphony — the tempo for the *Larghetto*. This is the only one of the movements which lacks a metronome mark in the score and conductors have felt free to diverge widely in their tempi for it. Sulyok takes four minutes, Garaguly six, Hager six and a quarter, Walter seven and a half, and Albrecht eleven. Sulyok and Albrecht are far too extreme; the others are in the right range though Walter would have benefited from a fractionally faster tempo.

#### **7. Symphony No.4 in F major, Op.86 (July-October 1832)**

*‘Die Weihe der Töne’*

Spohr himself wrote a letter to a conductor about to prepare the Fourth Symphony and what he says covers most of the necessary points: “In order to make it easier, I had an account of the contents of the four movements put in the programme notes, although the poem is very well known here, and I would advise you to do the same at Frankfurt, as such an explanation will make clear the manner in which I have tried to interpret the poem in music. A reading of the poem before the performance or the distribution of copies in the hall should take place anyway.

“A good performance of this symphony, not simply of the notes, but also of all the written out nuances of *p* and *f* and even of those that are not written out and have to be modified according to the characteristics of the location, is certainly no easy matter and so I ask you once again to make provision for really thorough rehearsals. So that individual passages can be repeated frequently without a lot of time being wasted, letters have been placed in all parts to help in restarting. Such more frequent rehearsals are particularly needed for the middle part of the first allegro, where the murmur of the spring on the first violins is joined by the bird songs of the two flutes, the clarinets, oboes and horn, and where the power of each individual strand must be measured exactly in relation to the others, so that the listener can grasp completely the total effect of the combination of sounds. Among these solos the ones for the Terzflöte and the clarinet are particularly difficult and must therefore be practised carefully beforehand. Furthermore, the beginning of the second part (the uproar of the elements) is very difficult for the violins and so needs more frequent rehearsal.

“The most difficult place for the ensemble, however, is that in the second movement where different time signatures and changes of tempo are present along with the cello solo. Here, we had to repeat this section very frequently, until it went smoothly without any hesitation. At the first rehearsal I made use of a metronome, by which I had the semiquaver movement of the different time signatures beaten out harder. This makes the distribution much easier for the musicians. Finally, I want to make two further observations: 1) That the first allegro should not be dragged; 2) That the last movement should be performed really softly and restfully, so that even the *ff* ought not to be rough or hard. The third movement, the march, is easily dragged, so the conductor must continually push it along a little.”

In addition to these guidelines, it is known that Spohr later authorised a number of small cuts in the sequential material of the central section of the march movement as he felt that it could become too repetitious. These should certainly be followed and many scores and sets of parts in major orchestral collections which were in use later in the 19th century have them marked in. In the Marco Polo recording of this symphony, it would have been better had these cuts been made and the first movement repeat been observed.

#### **8. Symphony No.5 in C minor, Op.102 (August-September 1837)**

This is generally regarded as Spohr’s finest symphony and, perhaps because of the work’s stature, there seem to be fewer Spohr-specific problems to tackle. One which is evident from various broadcast tapes is the temptation to “Brucknerise” the interpretation by slowing the tempi, especially in the *Andante* slow introduction and the *Larghetto*, in search of greater expressive depth. The risk is that the symphony becomes long-winded and boring. Alfred Walter’s recording was the first performance to show an appreciation of the correct approach, although in the *Larghetto* he perhaps went to the other extreme and a slightly broader cantabile here would have made this movement perfect. In the development of the first movement he was not afraid to push the music along a little, taking note of Spohr’s advice relating to the Fourth Symphony.

### 9. Symphony No.6 in G major, Op.116 (July-August 1839)

*“Historische”*

Because of the stylistic models Spohr has chosen, the interpreter is limited in the range of options available and, while it would not be strictly true to say that “the symphony plays itself” there are fewer points which have to be addressed in relation to a Spohr performing tradition. One performing tradition decision to be made is highlighted by comparing the recordings by Alfred Walter and Karl Anton Rickenbacher in the Bach-Handel movement. Walter reminds us of Sir Henry Wood conducting the Queen’s Hall Orchestra or Furtwängler with the Berlin Philharmonic in the 1930s but Rickenbacher is leaner and more athletic as if the “period performance” approach of the present day has influenced him. So, does the conductor aim for what is today believed to be “authentic” Bach or does he choose something akin to what Spohr would have done in 1839 which was, we believe, more in the Sir Henry Wood-Furtwängler mould? We suggest the latter and circumstantial evidence to support this view is simply that the movement otherwise seems too lightweight to figure as the opening one of a symphony. The finale, too, offers interpretative choices; does one play it for all it is worth as a piece of hokum, giving the percussion a field day, or does one find this an embarrassment and underplay these elements in an attempt to make it sound “respectable”?

### 10. Symphony No.7 in C major, Op.121 (August-September 1841)

*Double-Symphony “Irdisches und Göttliches im Menschenleben”*

The problem of where to place the small orchestra was not solved by Spohr himself. Various experiments were tried — when the work was performed in a theatre, the small orchestra was placed on the stage with the large one in the orchestra pit. On another occasion the small orchestra was sited on a platform above the main one. Obviously this is a case of what the particular location allows one to do. In recordings or broadcasts, the use of stereo and microphone placings allow the producer to help here. It should be noted that in the Marco Polo recording no attempt was made to have the orchestras on left and right as this was definitely not Spohr’s intention (unlike his Double-Quartets). A formal crux which needs solving is that the second movement has the “feel” of a normal symphonic first movement but Spohr starts this symphony (after a slow introduction) with an *Allegretto* “The World of Childhood”. The danger is that this can seem a rather low-key opening movement unless it is given a feeling of innocent playfulness. Alfred Walter is a little too strait-laced here and the Raymond Leppard broadcast in 1979 approached nearer to the ideal.

### 11. Symphony No.8 in G major, Op.137 (September-October 1847)

The major problem in approaching the Eighth Symphony is to establish a convincing tempo for the first and last movements. The thematic material has a broad Brahms-like feel to it yet in performance the adoption of what might appear to be appropriate tempi for such material produces a rather sleepy outcome. On the other hand, a faster, livelier approach can fail to give the material its true emphasis. Therefore, a happy compromise has to be found and the line between success and failure is a very narrow one. A second difficulty is that in the development sections of the two outer movements Spohr relies on fugato working which can easily sound routine in a less than dedicated performance. Additionally, the scherzo and finale need approaching with a somewhat playful touch in view of the nature of the material. Overall, emphasising the full range of dynamic contrasts will help in bringing out the full character of the music.

### 12. Symphony No.9 in B minor, Op.143 (March-April 1850)

*“Die Jahreszeiten”*

The first (Winter) and last (Autumn) movements are the ones which have come under most criticism in this symphony and it is no coincidence that they are the two which produce the major interpretative problems. Winter has been condemned as having nothing wintry about it but this is not so as Alfred Walter proves. He tightens up the tempo when necessary, emphasises the dynamic contrasts and is not afraid to let his orchestra get away with a bit of untidiness provided that the wintry climate is projected forcefully. Certainly this movement should not be too slow (as it is under Karl Anton Rickenbacher) and the brass for once should be given a nod of encouragement.

The finale is marked *Allegro vivace* and needs to be as lively as possible. A study of Spohr’s writing for the horns in this movement shows a most “unbuttoned” approach — the season of wine festivals, no doubt. The horns have trills, grace notes and plenty of opportunities to come to the fore. Unfortunately, little of this can be

heard in either recording although Walter is better but the reverberation prevents the horns from making their full impact. No doubt a live performance would make a greater impression in this area.

### 13. A note on the Tenth Symphony

The autograph manuscript of this unpublished symphony is in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, marked by Spohr at the end "Cassel im April 1857". The story is told in his memoirs (in the final section added by his heirs) how, after writing a string quartet in autumn 1856 he was dissatisfied with the outcome when he heard it rehearsed, how he revised it but was still unhappy so put it aside with instructions that it was never to be performed. The same happened with the symphony and also another quartet he completed in the summer of 1857. When Hans Glenewinkel was researching for his standard monograph on Spohr's chamber music for strings, he scored and performed with his own group all 36 string quartets, including the two unpublished ones of 1856 and 1857.

What Glenewinkel has to say about them applies also to the Tenth Symphony: "Spohr...decided to embark on a radical reform of his style, The later published quartets contained elements which were hard to accept; all too often the chromaticism was overworked, the arabesque-like figures disproportionate, the harmony artificial, they were overladen with synthetically constructed counter-voices which lacked inner life, and there were melodies of a sentimental superficiality which would have been more suited to the salon than to chamber music. All this Spohr now determinedly rooted out. Instead, he obviously took as models the quartets of his idols Mozart and Cherubini, making his guiding principle the return to the classical ideals of his youth. In one respect, that of structure, he attained his ideal...As to the harmony, Spohr could not change out of all recognition, and he was still writing a great deal of chromaticism, but the energy with which he attempted to burst the bonds of mannerism is still evident. He had reined in his predilection for pedal points and for confused, turgid harmonies. There are even certain features, such as secondary seventh chords, which indicate a move forward in the direction of the new Romanticism which had taken such a powerful hold in the 1850s; his increasing use of syncopation is also forward-looking. A significant innovation may also be seen in the unaccustomed clarity and transparency of his writing. He has cast aside his tendency to overburden his writing with counter-melodies, ornaments, finicky rhythmic details melting away unchecked; yet the polyphony does not suffer...The listener is struck by the extraordinary concision of the layout, which keeps within almost the same limits as Op.4, No.1. Thematically it is noticeable that Spohr has turned his back on his previous method of shaping melody. Gone are the tortuous lines and, as in his Vienna period, Spohr again prefers to use a firm diatonicism; his themes are sane and robust."

The extraordinary concision of layout mentioned by Glenewinkel also applies to the symphony. Spohr's previous non-programme symphony, the Eighth, totalled 966 bars compared with the Tenth's 598. The details are:

Symphony No.8, G major, Op.137			Symphony No.10, E flat major, WoO 8 (Op.156)		
1.	Adagio-Allegro	408	1.	Allegro	189
2.	Poco Adagio	90	2.	Larghetto	99
3.	Scherzo. Allegretto	162	3.	Scherzo. Allegretto	121
4.	Finale. Allegro	306	4.	Finale. Allegro	189

If this symphony and the two quartets had been up to Spohr's best standard and had they been published we would now be writing about a new "neo-classical" period in his development many years before composers such as Reger, Busoni, Stravinsky and Hindemith came on the scene. Sadly, that was not to be but interest in Spohr's music is now growing to such an extent that it is possible the Tenth Symphony will be recorded. If that comes about, we must never forget that, whatever shortcomings we can point to, its composer was there first and in his ban on performance, was its first and most severe critic.