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978-1-107-04270-4 - Brahms in the Home and the Concert Hall: Between Private and Public Performance

Edited by Katy Hamilton and Natasha Loges

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## Brahms in the Home and the Concert Hall

Johannes Brahms was a consummate professional musician, a successful pianist, conductor, music director, editor and composer. Yet he also faithfully championed the world of private music-making, creating many works and arrangements for enjoyment in the home by amateurs. This collection explores Brahms's public and private musical identities from various angles: the original works he wrote with amateurs in mind; his approach to creating piano arrangements of not only his own, but also other composers' works; his relationships with his arrangers; the deeper symbolism and lasting legacy of private music-making in his day; and a hitherto unpublished memoir that evokes his Viennese social world. Using Brahms as their focus point, the contributors trace the overlapping worlds of public and private music-making in the nineteenth century, discussing the boundaries between the composer's professional identity and his lifelong engagement with amateur music-making.

KATY HAMILTON holds the post of Junior Research Fellow in Performance History at the Royal College of Music, specialising in the vocal music of Johannes Brahms and his contemporaries. She is the author of *William Hurlstone: A Catalogue of Works* and was assistant to pianist Graham Johnson for his three-volume encyclopaedia *Franz Schubert: The Complete Songs*. In addition, she is an active chamber accompanist and repetiteur, having worked with instrumentalists, singers and choirs in England, Ireland, Spain and Germany. From 2008 to 2013 she was the course organiser and music director of ISSMUS, a specialist summer school for singers, composers, conductors and pianists.

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*Edited by* KATY HAMILTON AND NATASHA LOGES



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## Contributors

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and *Gavotte and its Recompositions* (Ashgate, 2013). He served two terms as President of the Society for Music Analysis, is Corresponding Director of the American Brahms Society, Honorary Professor of Music Philology at the University of Cambridge and an Honorary Member of the Royal Musical Association. He is a conductor and organist.

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HEATHER PLATT is Professor of Music History at Ball State University, Indiana. She is the author of *Johannes Brahms: A Research and Information Guide* (Routledge, 2011) and, with Peter H. Smith, co-edited *Expressive Intersections in Brahms: Essays in Analysis and Meaning* (Indiana University Press, 2012). Her research on Brahms's lieder embraces the works' structural elements and their historical context and reception. Her articles on these topics have appeared in *Brahms Studies*, *The Journal of Musicology*, *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied*, the *International Review of Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, *Intégral* and *Indiana Theory Review*. She has also published review-essays concerning theoretical approaches to Brahms's music in *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* and the *Journal of Music Theory*. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the American Brahms Society, and served as the Society's President from 2007 to 2011.

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leading specialists. His editorial work is focused on the Brahms Complete Edition (he is editor/co-editor of the Double Concerto, the Piano Quintet, Symphony No. 2 and various other works). He is also active as a music critic and pianist. In 2009, he was awarded the Schumann Prize of the city of Zwickau; in 2010, together with his colleagues at the New Brahms Edition, he received the Brahms award from the Brahms Society Schleswig-Holstein.

MARIE SUMNER LOTT is Assistant Professor of Music History at Georgia State University, Georgia. Her research investigates chamber music in the nineteenth century, illuminating the relationships between contemporary innovations in the publication, performance and composition of music from Schubert to Brahms. Marie's interests also include relationships between gender or class and musical participation, the intersection of painting and other arts with music, and Romantic medievalism during the long nineteenth century. She has published articles and reviews in the *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, the *Journal of Musicological Research*, *Ad Parnassum* and *MLA Notes*. Her 2012 article on Brahms's Op. 51 string quartets, published in the *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, won the Deems Taylor Award for outstanding writing about concert music given annually by the American Society of Composers, Artists, and Publishers. Her book *Producing and Consuming String Chamber Music in the Nineteenth Century* is forthcoming from University of Illinois Press.

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## Foreword: A different Brahms? New perspectives on his output

MICHAEL MUSGRAVE

It is very appropriate that the presentation of a fresh perspective on Brahms's output should emerge from an event held at the Royal College of Music,<sup>1</sup> for few English-speaking institutions can claim as direct a connection to the composer and his world. The College's founder-director George Grove (1820–1900) was personally acquainted with Brahms from the composer's relatively early days, visiting him in Vienna in the 1860s and again later in the 1880s, and kept Brahms informed about the performances of his music in Britain.<sup>2</sup> Of the younger generation Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924), the first professor of composition at the College, also knew Brahms and passed his knowledge to a yet younger generation of teachers, some of whom lived to teach today's musical scholars, the present writer included.<sup>3</sup>

The Brahms they admired was essentially the Brahms of the great orchestral, instrumental and choral works. Though aware of the much wider range of his output, they took the numerous smaller works as a given in an overall mastery that was judged first in the public sphere of large-scale concert music. Grove had seen both the growth of public concert life from its diverse origins before mid-century, and the growing study of the instrumental repertory that enabled Brahms's major works to assume such a great status by the later century. And this status was sharpened and made political by its perceived counterbalance to the radical musical developments of Liszt and his school in the field of programme music, and of Wagner in musical drama, trends which, by comparison, received little support from Grove, Stanford and their circle. For them, Brahms was the natural successor of Beethoven as the ruling spirit of the orchestral and especially symphonic tradition.

But if the perspective from which Grove viewed Brahms seems clear, how fully does this represent Brahms's own outlook? On the face of it the answer is obvious: the alleged Beethoven succession in Brahms's First

<sup>1</sup> *Brahms in the Home*, conference held at the Royal College of Music, 4–6 November 2011.

<sup>2</sup> C. L. Graves, *The Life and Letters of Sir George Grove*, C. B. (London: Macmillan, 1903), pp. 148, 259–60.

<sup>3</sup> Such as Stanford's pupil Herbert Howells (1892–1983).

Symphony has become a compass point in symphonic history, through the interpretation of various quotes by the composer, as most famously to the conductor Hermann Levi that ‘You just don’t know what it’s like for one of us always to hear such a giant marching behind one.’<sup>4</sup>

Yet, the instrumental tradition was only one aspect of Brahms’s output and commitment. Of 122 published opuses there are only thirteen orchestral works, of which only four are symphonies: together with four concertos, two serenades, two overtures and one set of orchestral variations, these constitute a tiny part numerically. Even if one includes the chamber works (which were a much greater preoccupation of the composer) and collections of piano works with the sonatas and variation sets as larger-scale works, this only makes twenty-four more chamber opuses (seven works for strings alone; sixteen with piano, and clarinet quintet with strings); and fifteen piano opuses and one for organ, Op. posth. 122. Everything else is some kind of vocal and choral work: well over half. Most are domestic, appropriate for performance in the home (solo songs with piano, vocal duets and quartets) or in some local social or religious setting, some pieces requiring organ instead of piano support. And if the list is extended to works published without opus number, or posthumously, the bias is even more striking, with around a hundred solo folk-song settings, and many unaccompanied choral settings. And to these can be added the numerous arrangements for four hands of his chamber and orchestral works by the composer himself.

Of course, it can be argued that such a pattern is common to all composers who wrote for the consumer market rather than, for example, the theatre or for their own virtuoso professional use. Domestic works must be easier to perform and market, and are often composed from economic need, and thus characterised less by originality than by standardised forms of expression – the template generic dance movements, hunting choruses or barcarolles set for voices or keyboard that fill the catalogues of the nineteenth century. But Brahms’s works stand out here because he attached as much importance to the small as to the large, both as a composer and as a teacher. The smaller works were integral to his entire achievement and he gave them as much attention, often commenting to the effect that his small works, even folk-song arrangements, had given him particular pleasure, and of the necessity of mastering basic tasks thoroughly before extended ones.

But Brahms’s commitment was not limited to creative discipline for its own sake: implicit in these values was the sense of potential – that from small ideas great structures could grow. The interconnection of the small

<sup>4</sup> Author’s translation. *Kalbeck I*, p. 165.

*Zart bewegt*

Gu-ten A - bend, gut Nacht, mit Ro - sen be-  
Gu-ten A - bend, gut Nacht, von Eng - lein be-

dacht, mit Näg - lein be - steckt schlupf un - ter die Deck: mor - gen früh,  
wacht, die zei - gen im - Traum dir, Christ - kind - leins Baum. Schlaf nun se -

Example 0.1. Brahms, 'Wiegenlied' Op. 49 no. 4, bars 1–11.

and large is especially apparent in Brahms's output and can be illustrated by numerous examples. It is appropriate that one of the clearest of these shows the relationship of perhaps Brahms's most famous piece with the general public – the 'Wiegenlied' Op. 49 no. 4 for solo voice and piano (composed 1868) – to one of his largest and most expansive works, the Symphony in D major Op. 73 (completed 1877).

The song represents one of the simplest structures to be found in Brahms: a four-bar idea enclosing statement and response, repeated four times, the third statement slightly developmental, and varied, like the second, to make the tonic cadence (Example 0.1).

In the Waltz Op. 39 no. 15 a very similar idea in the same metre,  $\frac{3}{4}$ , generates a binary dance structure in which an eight-bar balancing first section is repeated, and the second section extended by a six-bar digression/development before a reprise of the opening is stated twice, the second making the cadence (Example 0.2).

In the Symphony, the second theme of the first movement is clearly a minor version of the 'Wiegenlied' melody, stated in two complementary four-bar ideas, but then developed, on the basis of the cadential motive, into a seamless passage of twelve bars that completely transcends the formality of the second half of the waltz, to make a total of twenty bars (Example 0.3). Furthermore, the theme then serves in varied form in the

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Example 0.2. Brahms, Waltz Op. 39 no. 15, bars 1–9.

Example 0.3. Brahms, Symphony No. 2, first movement, bars 82–90. Piano reduction, transposed to E $\flat$  minor for comparison.

Example 0.4. Baumann, 'Du moanst wohl, du glaubst wohl', bars 1–4.

rest of the exposition, appearing from bar 155 in the major version that discloses its origin.

But striking as these stylistic sources for the symphonic theme are, the origin may even be taken a stage further back. For it has been reliably pointed out that not only was the 'Wiegenlied' itself dedicated to a specific singer whom Brahms held in cherished memory and friendship, but it also includes in its piano accompaniment the outline of a popular Viennese waltz song that she often sang. Thus the possible stimulus to Brahms's own melody, or at least a borrowed idea, was part of its early conception.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The singer was Bertha Porubsky, later Bertha Faber (1841–1910). The evidence of the connection to Alexander Baumann's song beginning 'Du moanst wohl, du glaubst wohl' is provided by Hermann Deiters, quoted by M. Friedlaender, *Brahms' Lieder: An Introduction to*

Examples such as these do not merely illustrate craft, however. They embody larger values intimately connected with the world in which the works were conceived and performed. Brahms's domestic music was essentially for performance by amateurs. The role of the amateur was central to the development of the creative tradition of which Brahms was a part. Amateurs provided an informed receiving audience for creations intended for their fuller appreciation, and many were of high technical competence: even Brahms's complex chamber music would involve amateur performers. Amateur performance meant being involved with the technical essence of the work – its construction as much as its aesthetic effect – the actual art involved. Such performance developed an instinct for every aspect of musical meaning, and the typical domestic or social music-making, for example, as singer, or collaborative or duo pianist, was the basis of musical education and the means of building musical culture. For if one plays and sings, one listens differently and more intently, even if the technical standard attained is not at professional level.

The bifurcation of the function of the amateur and professional on the grounds of performance standard rather than musical understanding – and the consequent devaluation and redefinition of the term 'amateur' (and with it the increasing alienation from and ignorance of the basic theoretical concepts that lay behind music as performed) – is one of the most defining features of modern musical history. Though the acceleration of professional executant skills was already well under way in Brahms's time, the change was settled by the advent of recordings in the early twentieth century. From this point the music lover no longer needed to be an executant musician of any kind in order to access and become deeply familiar with the repertory, though now only as a vicarious experience.

The culture that lay behind Brahms's music is now only a memory. But one can come to a much greater sensitivity towards his music through a heightened awareness of its full range and of how different genres interact. And in this, the remarkable breadth of the recorded repertory can play an essential role in the dissemination of music, little of which is widely performed or known today. For of all the composers of his era, none – as the chapters which follow demonstrate – is more rewarding of such study than Brahms.

*the Songs for One and Two Voices*, trans. C. L. Leese (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), p. 79. The verbal text is given at greater length and, as varied in the bracketed text of Example 0.4, in *Kalbeck I*, p. 367.

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Many individuals have shown great generosity in supplying illustrations and permissions. For their kind permission to reproduce images, we wish to thank Robert Eshbach (Figure 2.3), Michael Freyhan (Figure 8.1), Marie Kuhn-Oser (Figures 9.1, 9.3, 9.4, 9.7 and 9.8), and Ursula Prokop (Figure 9.2). The editors also gratefully acknowledge the following organisations for permission to reproduce images: the Forschungsstelle der Johannes Brahms Gesamtausgabe, Musikwissenschaftliches Institut der Christian-Albrechts-Universität, Kiel (Example 5.8); the Library of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (cover illustration and Examples 7.2a, 7.2b, 7.4a, 7.5a and 7.5b); the Brahms-Institut Lübeck (Examples 8.21, 8.24, Figures 9.5, 11.1 and 11.2); the Poltun-Sternberg Music Collection, Vienna (Figure 5.1, Examples 5.1 and 5.2); the Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College MA (Figure 10.2); Art Resource (Figures 2.2, 14.3, 14.4 and 14.5); the Bridgeman Art Library (Figures 14.1, 14.2 and 14.8); and George Eastman House (Figures 14.9 and 14.10). The editors particularly wish to thank *Johannes Brahms Gesamtausgabe* and Dr Wolf-Dieter Seiffert of G. Henle Verlag for generous permission to reproduce Examples 5.3, 5.5, 5.7, 6.2b, 6.3b, 6.3c, 7.1a, 7.1b, 7.4b and 7.6. We also thank Eric Wilson for his expert setting of music examples.

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## Abbreviations

<i>Briefe I</i>	<i>Johannes Brahms Briefwechsel</i> vol. I: <i>Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel mit Heinrich und Elisabeth von Herzogenberg</i> , ed. M. Kalbeck (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1906, repr. Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1974)
<i>Briefe III</i>	<i>Johannes Brahms Briefwechsel</i> vol. III: <i>Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel mit Karl Reintaler, Max Bruch, Hermann Deiters, Friedrich Heimsoeth, Karl Reinecke, Ernst Rudorff, Bernhard und Luise Scholz</i> , ed. W. Altmann (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1907, repr. Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1974)
<i>Briefe V and VI</i>	<i>Johannes Brahms Briefwechsel</i> vols. V and VI: <i>Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel mit Joseph Joachim</i> , ed. A. Moser (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1908, repr. Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1974)
<i>Briefe IX and X</i>	<i>Johannes Brahms Briefwechsel</i> vols. IX and X: <i>Johannes Brahms: Briefe an P. J. Simrock und Fritz Simrock</i> , ed. M. Kalbeck (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1917, repr. Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1974)
<i>Briefe XI and XII</i>	<i>Johannes Brahms Briefwechsel</i> vols. XI and XII: <i>Johannes Brahms: Briefe an Fritz Simrock</i> , ed. M. Kalbeck (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1919, repr. Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1974)
<i>Briefe XIV</i>	<i>Johannes Brahms Briefwechsel</i> vol. XIV: <i>Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel mit Breitkopf &amp; Härtel, Bart[h]olf Senff, J. Rieter-Biedermann, C. F. Peters. E. W. Fritsch und Robert Lienau</i> , ed. W. Altmann (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1920, repr. Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1974)
<i>Briefe XVI</i>	<i>Johannes Brahms Briefwechsel</i> vol. XVI: <i>Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel mit Spitta und Dessoff</i> , ed. C. Krebs (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1920, repr. Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1974)
<i>Briefe XVII</i>	<i>Johannes Brahms Briefwechsel</i> vol. XVI: <i>Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel mit Herzog Georg II. von Sachsen-Meiningen und Helene Freifrau von Heldburg</i> ,

- ed. H. Müller and R. Hofmann (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1991)
- Briefe XVIII* *Johannes Brahms Briefwechsel* vol. XVIII: *Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel mit Julius Stockhausen*, ed. O. Biba, K. Hofmann and R. Hofmann (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1993)
- Briefe XIX* *Johannes Brahms Briefwechsel* vol. XIX: *Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel mit Ernst Frank*, ed. R. Münster (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1995)
- Kalbeck I–IV* M. Kalbeck, *Johannes Brahms*, 2nd–4th edn, 4 vols. (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1912–21, repr. Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1976)
- Schumann-Brahms Briefe I and II* B. Litzmann (ed.), *Clara Schumann-Johannes Brahms: Briefe aus den Jahren 1853–1896*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1927)
- Werkverzeichnis* M. McCorkle, *Johannes Brahms: Thematisch-Bibliographisches Werkverzeichnis* (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 1984)

**Abbreviations for volumes of the *Johannes Brahms Gesamtausgabe* / *New Complete Edition of the Works of Johannes Brahms***

*Johannes Brahms Gesamtausgabe* (JBG): until 2011, ed. Johannes Brahms Gesamtausgabe e. V., Editionsleitung Kiel, in cooperation with Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Vienna; thereafter ed. the Musikwissenschaftliche Institut of the Christian-Albrechts-Universität, Kiel in cooperation with the Johannes Brahms Gesamtausgabe e. V. and the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Vienna.

- JBG, 3. Symphonie* *Symphonie Nr. 3 F-Dur opus 90* (Series I, vol. 3), ed. R. Pascall (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 2005)
- JBG, 4. Symphonie* *Symphonie Nr. 4 e-Moll opus 98* (Series I, vol. 4), ed. R. Pascall (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 2011)
- JBG, Arrangements 1./2. Symphonie* *Symphonie Nr. 1 c-Moll opus 68, Symphonie Nr. 2 D-Dur opus 73, Arrangements für ein Klavier zu vier Händen* (Series IA, vol. 1), ed. R. Pascall (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 2008)
- JBG, Arrangements 3. Symphonie* *Symphonie Nr. 3 F-Dur opus 90, Arrangements für ein und zwei Klaviere zu vier Händen* (Series IA, vol. 2), ed. R. Pascall (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 2013)

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<i>JBG, Arrangements Serenaden und Ouvertüren</i>	<i>Serenaden Nr. 1 D-Dur opus 11, Nr. 2 A-Dur opus 16, Akademische Festouvertüre c-Moll opus 80, Tragische Ouvertüre d-Moll opus 81, Arrangements für ein Klavier zu vier Händen</i> (Series IA, vol. 4), ed. M. Musgrave (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 2012)
<i>JBG, Klavierstücke</i>	<i>Klavierstücke</i> (Series III, vol. 6), ed. K. Eich (Munich: G. Henle Verlag 2011)
<i>JBG, Klavierwerke ohne Opuszahl</i>	<i>Werke für Klavier zu zwei Händen ohne Opuszahl</i> (Series III, vol. 7), ed. C. Cai (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 2007)
<i>JBG, Arrangements fremder Werke I</i>	<i>Arrangements von Werken anderer Komponisten für ein Klavier oder zwei Klaviere zu vier Händen</i> (Series IX, vol. 1), ed. V. W. Goertzen (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 2012)

**Library sigla**

A-Wgm	Vienna, Archiv der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde
A-Wn	Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek
D-LÜbi	Lübeck, Brahms-Institut
D-Zsch	Zwickau, Robert-Schumann-Haus
GB-Lcm	London, Royal College of Music, Library
US-NYp	New York, Public Library at Lincoln Center, Music Division