

BRAHMS IN CONTEXT

Brahms in Context offers a fresh perspective on the much-admired nineteenth-century German composer. Including thirty-nine chapters on historical, social and cultural contexts, the book brings together internationally renowned experts in music, law, science, art history and other areas, including many figures whose work is appearing in English for the first time. The essays are accessibly written, with short reading lists aimed at music students and educators. The book opens with personal topics, including Brahms's Hamburg childhood, his move to Vienna and his rich social life. It considers professional matters from finance to publishing and copyright; the musicians who shaped and transmitted his works; and the larger musical styles which influenced him. Casting the net wider, other essays embrace politics, religion, literature, philosophy, art and science. The book closes with chapters on reception, including recordings, historical performance, his compositional legacy and a reflection on the power of composer myths.

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EDITED BY
NATASHA LOGES
KATY HAMILTON



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*Dedicated to the memory of our dear friend Robert Pascall,
whose brilliant scholarship and boundless generosity have
been an inspiration to Brahmsians around the world.*

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Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	page xi
<i>List of Music Examples</i>	xiii
<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	xiv
<i>Preface</i>	xxiii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xxvi
PART I PERSONALITY, PEOPLE AND PLACES	I
1 Childhood in Hamburg <i>Renate and Kurt Hofmann</i>	3
2 The Schumanns <i>Thomas Synofzik</i>	14
3 Vienna <i>Camille Crittenden</i>	23
4 Leipzig and Berlin <i>Karen Leistra-Jones</i>	33
5 Personal Habits <i>William Horne</i>	44
6 Correspondence <i>Wolfgang Sandberger</i>	52
7 Holidays <i>Inga Mai Grootte</i>	60
PART II IDENTITIES, ENVIRONMENTS AND INFLUENCES	69
8 Finances <i>Jakob Hauschildt</i>	71

viii	<i>Contents</i>	
9	As Pianist <i>Katrin Eich</i>	80
10	As Conductor <i>Walter Frisch</i>	88
11	As Arranger <i>Valerie Woodring Goertzen</i>	98
12	As Editor <i>Peter Schmitz</i>	114
13	As Teacher <i>Johannes Behr</i>	123
14	Private Music-Making <i>Katy Hamilton</i>	130
15	Concert Life <i>Laurenz Lütteken</i>	138
16	Genre <i>Matthew Gelbart</i>	149
17	Folk Music <i>George S. Bozarth</i>	164
18	Early Music <i>Virginia Hancock</i>	175
	PART III PERFORMANCE AND PUBLISHING	185
19	Singers <i>Natasha Loges</i>	187
20	Conductors <i>Leon Botstein</i>	196
21	Pianists <i>Michael Musgrave</i>	206
22	Other Instrumentalists <i>Heather Platt</i>	215
23	Instruments <i>Anneke Scott</i>	227

<i>Contents</i>		ix
24	Publishers <i>Peter Schmitz</i>	236
25	Copyright <i>Friedemann Kawohl</i>	246
PART IV SOCIETY AND CULTURE		257
26	Politics and Religion <i>David Brodbeck</i>	259
27	Literature <i>Natasha Loges</i>	269
28	Philosophy <i>Nicole Grimes</i>	277
29	Visual Arts <i>William Vaughan and Natasha Loges</i>	286
30	Science and Technology <i>Myles W. Jackson and Katy Hamilton</i>	296
PART V RECEPTION AND LEGACY		305
31	Germany <i>Johannes Bebr</i>	307
32	England <i>Katy Hamilton</i>	316
33	Analysis <i>Heather Platt</i>	324
34	The Era of National Socialism <i>Ulrike Petersen</i>	336
35	Editing Brahms <i>Michael Struck</i>	347
36	Recordings <i>Ivan Hewett</i>	357
37	Historical Performance <i>Michael Musgrave</i>	367

x	<i>Contents</i>	
38	Inspiration <i>Markus Böttgermann</i>	376
39	Mythmaking <i>Natasha Loges and Katy Hamilton</i>	384
	<i>Further Reading</i>	393
	<i>Index</i>	395

Illustrations

1.1	City Map of Hamburg, 1846. Hamburg Edition vol. 3, HHE 01019, Archiv-Verlag Hamburg.	<i>page</i> 6
1.2	City Map of Hamburg, 1882. Hamburg Edition vol. 1, HHE 01014, Archiv-Verlag Hamburg.	12
3.1	Strauss II, <i>Seid umschlungen Millionen</i> Op. 443 (Berlin: Simrock, 1892), frontispiece. Brahms-Institut, Lübeck.	26
3.2	Construction site of the new Court Opera on Vienna's Ringstrasse with Heinrichshof building, c. 1863. Bildarchiv Austria.	29
4.1	Elisabeth von Herzogenberg, photographed by Wilhelm Robert Eich, Dresden, 1860s. Universitätsbibliothek der Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Graz, kindly supplied by Bernd Wiechert and Sven Nielsen.	35
4.2	Heinrich von Herzogenberg, photographed by Wilhelm Robert Eich, Dresden, 1860s. Universitätsbibliothek der Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Graz, kindly supplied by Bernd Wiechert and Sven Nielsen.	36
10.1	Brahms conducting, drawn by Willy von Beckerath, 1895. Alamy.	96
11.1	Autograph engraver's model of Brahms's arrangement of the First Piano Concerto Op. 15 for piano duet, last page of first movement, with revisions in ink in Brahms's hand. The Library of Congress (Whittall Foundation), Washington, DC.	102
11.2	Concert Programme, 29 November 1862, Saal der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. Brahms-Institut Lübeck.	109
11.3	Concert Programme, 14 March 1873, Grosser Saal des Convent-Gartens Hamburg. Brahms-Institut Lübeck.	111

12.1	Revision copy of Chopin's Barcarolle Op. 60 (prepared for the Chopin-Gesamtausgabe) with annotations by Johannes Brahms. Verlagsarchiv Breitkopf & Härtel Wiesbaden, Sig. N 35 <1>.	118
15.1	The 'Komponistenhimmel' in the Tonhalle, Zurich. Brahms-Institut, Lübeck.	140
17.1	Brahms, 'Ade mein Schatz, ich muß nun fort', German folk-song copied by Brahms into his handwritten collection of folk-songs from different countries, c. 1850 (Washington DC, Library of Congress. ML30.8b.B7 CASE).	168
22.1	Portrait of the Joachim Quartet. Beethoven Feier in Bonn, 11–15 May 1890. Royal Academy of Music, London.	220
22.2	Adolph Menzel's 1891 sketch of Mühlfeld as a Greek god. Alamy.	223
24.1	Assignment of Rights for Opp. 7–8. Handschriften- und Musikabteilung der Hessischen Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Darmstadt.	237
24.2	Breitkopf & Härtel Calculation List. Staatsarchiv Leipzig, Bestand Breitkopf & Härtel 21081. Sig. 6465, Bl. 110.	241
29.1	Adolph Menzel, <i>Joachim and Clara Schumann in Concert</i> (1854), pastel (now lost).	290
29.2	Anselm Feuerbach, <i>Iphigenia</i> (1862), oil on canvas. Held by Hessisches Landesmuseum Darmstadt.	291
29.3	Arnold Böcklin, <i>Isle of the Dead</i> (1880), oil on wood. Held by Kunstmuseum Basel.	293
34.1	Unattributed caricature of Brahms, c. 1938.	339
35.1	Part of an engraved metal plate for the old Urtext edition by G. Henle Verlag, Munich 1976 of J. Brahms, <i>Intermezzo</i> Op. 117 no. 1, middle section. Henle Verlag. Reproduction by kind permission of G. Henle Verlag Munich and the Brahms-Forschungszentrum Kiel.	352
39.1	Portrait of the youthful Johannes Brahms, a gift to Sir George Grove in the early 1890s. Royal College of Music/ArenaPAL.	388
39.2	Portrait of the elderly Johannes Brahms. Royal College of Music/ArenaPAL.	389

Music Examples

11.1a	Brahms, Second String Quintet Op. 111, first movement, <i>page</i> 104 bars 57–69.	104
11.1b	Brahms, Second String Quintet Op. 111, arrangement for piano, four hands, first movement, bars 57–69.	105
16.1	Brahms, Second String Quintet Op. 111, bars 1–19.	150
16.2	Mendelssohn, Octet Op. 20, bars 1–25.	152
16.3	Brahms, Motet Op. 74 no. 2, ‘O Heiland, reiss die Himmel auf’, bars 18–36.	155
17.1	Transcription of melody handwritten by Brahms and annotated by Reményi (Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Carl von Ossietzky, Musiksammlung, BRA: Aa8).	169
17.2	Brahms, <i>Variations on a Hungarian Song</i> Op. 21 no. 2, bars 1–8.	170
22.1	Evolution of the solo violin line in the Violin Concerto Op. 77, first movement, bars 102–4, reproduced from B. Schwarz, ‘Joseph Joachim and the Genesis of Brahms’s Violin Concerto’, <i>Musical Quarterly</i> 69/4 (Autumn 1983), 514.	217
22.2	Brahms, Clarinet Quintet Op. 115, second movement, bars 52–7.	224
33.1	Schubring’s diagram of motivic relationships between the movements of Brahms’s Piano Sonata Op. 2.	326
33.2	Brahms, ‘Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer’ Op. 105 no. 2, bars 41–7.	331
33.3	Score reduction and Richard Cohn’s analysis of Brahms, Double Concerto Op. 102, first movement, bars 268–79, reproduced from ‘Maximally Smooth Cycles, Hexatonic Systems, and the Analysis of Late-Romantic Triadic Progressions’, <i>Music Analysis</i> 15/1 (March 1996), 14–15. Reproduced with permission of Wiley.	332

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Notes on Contributors

xv

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xxi

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Preface

Natasha Loges and Katy Hamilton

Fiction, imaginative work that is, is not dropped like a pebble upon the ground . . . fiction is like a spider's web . . . attached to life at all four corners . . . when the web is pulled askew, hooked up at the edge, torn in the middle, one remembers that these webs are not spun in mid-air by incorporeal creatures, but are the work of suffering human beings, and are attached to grossly material things, like health and money and the houses we live in.

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

It is unusual to write a book about a composer which does not focus on their works. However, putting those works to one side, as these essays mostly do, allows us to sense the web which attaches that composer to the world. If we have omitted repertoire, we have managed to include reading habits, religion and recipes. Our hope is to inspire new ways of understanding this endlessly fascinating figure. We have also sought to reflect the ways in which musical scholarship is changing and how the word 'context' is expanding ever outwards. To that end, we have drawn together scholars from different traditions, disciplines and countries, aiming for a balance between established and emerging figures, older and newer perspectives.

The chapters are organised in broad sections. We open with the people and places that were most important in Brahms's life, beginning with his family in Hamburg, taking in the pivotal meeting with the Schumanns and his settling in Vienna, and considering his extended circle of friends and colleagues in two other major cities. Next, we turn to more private matters: his habits, letter-writing, holidays and finances. The focus then shifts to his various interlocking professional musical roles aside from composition, the spaces for which he wrote music, the genres in which he wrote and the broad musical styles which shaped his work beyond his immediate contemporaries and predecessors. In order to convey the sense of interconnectedness which inspired the book, each essay includes copious cross-references to other essays in the volume and is also supplied with a short,

dedicated reading list of key texts (in both English and German) to encourage further exploration.

We have aimed to give a sense of the importance of Brahms's collaborators, the numerous fine musicians who brought his work to life across Europe and beyond. Those figures are one part of his public interface; others include the instruments of his day, his astute publishers and the state of copyright law during his lifetime, all of which shaped his life and music in subtle ways. The notion of context is then expanded still further outwards to confront, within this brief format, the vast topics of politics, religion, literature, philosophy, visual arts and science and technology – the grand sweeps of historical change which transformed the world in which he lived and worked.

The book closes with essays which consider Brahms's afterlife in different ways. Space only permits two explorations of reception history, but the idea of reception is stretched to include his contribution to the shape of musical analysis, the editing of his music today, the recent shifts in historical performance practice, the vast discography of his music, and the ways in which he has inspired more recent composers. The closing chapter aims to pull together on a small canvas various factual and less factual depictions of the man and his music.

Because the definition of context is limitless, a book of this sort can never be comprehensive. Apart from omissions we have not yet identified, we have had to exclude considerations of topics that other editors may regard as crucial: essays on Brahms's relationships with specific musicians such as Clara Schumann, Franz Liszt, Richard Wagner, Anton Bruckner and others; the musical influences of such significant figures as Bach, Handel, Haydn, Beethoven and Schubert; issues of identity such as gender; the War of the Romantics; and we have not attempted to define what it meant to be a freelance musician in Brahms's lifetime. As the late nineteenth century recedes further from the present day, the notion of reception becomes infinitely more geographically and chronologically complex and diverse. Brahms societies exist in Japan, for example, but this volume only permitted considerations of Brahms's reception in Germany and England. In terms of later reception, we chose to focus on one pivotal historical moment – the period of National Socialism – but space limitations precluded detailed consideration of other major historical periods since Brahms's death. And, although this volume is in itself motivated by historiographical imperatives, we could only touch briefly on historiography itself. Nevertheless, we have covered what is hopefully a rewarding range of perspectives; for example, we have deliberately not reconciled the

various translations of Schumann's seminal review article 'Neue Bahnen', but sought to retain each author's individual reading of this elusive text.

The following chapters were translated by Natasha Loges: 1. 'Childhood in Hamburg', 2. 'The Schumanns', 6. 'Correspondence', 7. 'Holidays', 8. 'Finances', 9. 'As Pianist', 12. 'As Editor', 13. 'As Teacher', 15. 'Concert Life', 24. 'Publishers', 25. 'Copyright', 31. 'Germany' and 35. 'Editing Brahms'. All work titles have been rendered in English except where the German titles are more familiar to an English readership in the original language, or where a translation results in loss of accuracy, e.g. the distinction between *Lieder* and *Gesänge*.

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Abbreviations

The following standard texts are presented with short titles throughout this book:

<i>Avins</i>	S. Avins (ed.), <i>Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters</i> , trans. S. Avins and J. Eisinger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)
<i>Brahms Handbuch</i>	W. Sandberger (ed.), <i>Brahms Handbuch</i> (Stuttgart: Metzler and Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2009)
<i>Briefe</i>	M. Kalbeck et al (eds.), <i>Johannes Brahms Briefwechsel</i> , 19 vols. (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, reprinted and continued by Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1974–95)
<i>Heuberger</i>	R. Heuberger, <i>Erinnerungen an Johannes Brahms</i> , ed. K. Hofmann, 2nd edn (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1976)
<i>Kalbeck I–IV</i>	M. Kalbeck, <i>Johannes Brahms</i> , 2nd edn, 4 vols. (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1912–21, repr. Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1976)
<i>Litzmann I–III</i>	B. Litzmann, <i>Clara Schumann, ein Künstlerleben nach Tagebüchern und Briefen</i> , 3 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1918–20)
<i>May I–II</i>	F. May, <i>The Life of Johannes Brahms</i> , 2 vols. (London: Edward Arnold, 1905)
<i>SBB I and II</i>	B. Litzmann (ed.), <i>Clara Schumann–Johannes Brahms. Briefe aus den Jahren 1853–1896</i> , 2 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1927)
<i>Werkverzeichnis</i>	M. McCorkle, <i>Johannes Brahms. Thematisch-Bibliographisches Werkverzeichnis</i> (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 1984)

Abbreviations for Scores from 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.

<i>JBG, 1. Symphonie</i>	<i>Symphonie Nr. 1 c-Moll op. 68</i> (Series I, vol. 1), ed. R. Pascall (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 1996)
<i>JBG, Violinkonzert</i>	<i>Violinkonzert D-Dur op. 77</i> (Series I, vol. 9), ed. L. Correll Roesner and M. Struck (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 2004)
<i>JBG, Doppelkonzert</i>	<i>Doppelkonzert a-Moll op. 102</i> (Series I, vol. 10), ed. M. Struck (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 2000)
<i>JBG, Arrangement 2. Klavierkonzert</i>	<i>Klavierkonzert Nr. 2 B-Dur op. 83, Klavierauszug (Bearbeitung für zwei Klaviere)</i> (Series IA, vol. 6), ed. J. Behr (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 2014)
<i>JBG, Arrangements fremder Werke 1</i>	<i>Johannes Brahms, 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)
<i>JBG, Arrangements fremder Werke 2</i>	<i>Johannes Brahms, Ein- und zweihändige Klavierbearbeitungen von Werken anderer Komponisten</i> (Series IX, vol. 2), ed. V. W. Goertzen (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 2017)

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