American Brahms Society Officially Founded

The Board of Directors of the newly-formed American Brahms Society held its first full meeting on 4 May 1983 at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Action taken by the Board included the approval of articles of incorporation and bylaws formally detailing the organization of the Society and expressing its objective: to foster and disseminate research on the life, music, and historical position of Brahms through the publication of a series of Brahms Studies and the creation and maintenance of a Brahms Archive.

The officers of the Board and officials of the Society elected at this meeting are listed inside the back page of this Newsletter. To encourage and strengthen communication with Brahms scholars, societies, and projects in Europe, the Board also elected several Corresponding Directors to serve on the Board as non-voting, advisory members.

The Board of Directors, acting as editorial board, discussed the nature of the initial two volumes of Brahms Studies and confirmed the publication schedule announced in the last issue of this Newsletter. Negotiations are currently under way with publishers to issue the Proceedings of the 1983 International Brahms Conference, Washington, D.C., as Volume I. For the second and subsequent volumes, scholars are encouraged to prepare analytical, critical, theoretical, bibliographical, archival, and documentary studies, as well as translations of important material that has appeared in foreign languages. Proposals and suggestions for Volume II should be sent to Walter Frisch by 1 January 1984; finished articles will be requested on a schedule determined by the editors.

Negotiations are also in progress to establish the Society's Archive, and discussions have been undertaken to coordinate this project with similar facilities to be created in Germany for the proposed new Brahms edition.

On Saturday, May 7th, the Society's first membership meeting took place at the Library of Congress, during the 1983 International Brahms Festival and Conference. Held on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the birth of Johannes Brahms, this meeting marked the official founding of The American Brahms Society.

Conferences Mark Brahms Sesquicentenary

Scholars in North America and Europe have contributed to the celebration of the Brahms sesquicentenary in a number of conferences. In addition to the five events announced in the last issue of this Newsletter (Indianapolis, Washington, D.C., Hamburg, London, and Vienna), symposia on Brahms have taken place in Florence (at the end of May), Assisi (Accademia Musicale Ottorino Respighi, 12-16 July), Linz ("Johannes Brahms and Anton Bruckner," Anton Bruckner Institute, 8-11 September), Marburg (Gesellschaft für Musikforschung, 2-5 October), Kiel ("Analytical Studies on the Works of Brahms," 5-9 October), and Leipzig ("New Insights into the Life and Works of Brahms," 7-8 October). Two of these conferences are reviewed below; further reports will appear in the next issue of this Newsletter.

Washington Brahms Conference

Music-making and scholarship, too often pursued separately, co-existed happily at the International (continued on next page)
Brahms Festival and Conference, held 3-8 May 1983 at the Library of Congress. The conference, sponsored by the University of Washington (Seattle), with assistance from the National Endowment for the Humanities and Mercedes-Benz, included three and a half days of formal papers; the Festival, sponsored by the Library’s Music Division, comprised five evening concerts. Bridging the gap between performance and scholarship were four pre-concert lectures given by Edward Cone, Ludwig Finscher, Boris Schwarz, and Christoph Wolff.

Conference director George Bozarth drew upon the talents of both recognized Brahms scholars and talented “outsiders,” attracting papers of higher quality than one normally finds at conferences devoted to a specialized theme. Brahms remained primarily (and most interestingly) an analyst’s composer: over two-thirds of the papers involved detailed examination of the music. (Although one session was designated “Brahms Theory,” it differed little in methodology from the others.) There was, however, a refreshing variety of approaches; speakers concentrated not only on pitch relationships, but also on matters of meter, rhythm, tempo, texture, expression, and form. Sonata-form movements dominated the sessions (James Webster, Robert Bailey, Walter Frisch, Siegfried Kross, Claudio Spies); indeed, speakers frequently focused on the same passages from well-known works. But there was also critical-analytical discussion of slow movements (Elaine Sisman, George Bozarth), short piano pieces (Charles Rosen, David Lewin, David Epstein), Lieder (Edward Cone, Imogen Fellsinger, Ludwig Finscher), choral music (Virginia Hancock), and Brahms’s edition of Schubert Ländler (David Brodbbeck).

Other theoretical topics treated by conference participants were Schoenberg’s conception of Brahms (Michael Musgrave), the special qualities of Brahms’s D major pieces (John Rahn), and proportional tempo relationships (David Epstein). There were also several papers with a historical or bibliographical focus, including Brahms as an editor of his own music (Robert Pascall) and as an editor of Schumann (Linda Roesner), trial performances of his works (Margit McCorkle), and his historicism (Christoph Wolff).

The all-Brahms concerts of the festival featured works owned in autograph manuscripts by the Library—an elegant idea which, although it resulted in some rather odd groupings in the Lieder programs, allowed audiences to hear some less familiar items, such as Brahms’s own two-piano arrangement of the Third Symphony. Perhaps the most outstanding single performance was of the D minor Violin Sonata, Op. 108, by violinist Gidon Kremer and pianist Valery Afanassiev. Also compelling were Elly Ameling’s interpretations of a dozen Lieder, Richard Stoltzman’s lyrical yet powerful performance of the F minor Clarinet Sonata, Op. 120 no. 1, and the Cantilena Chamber Players’ spirited rendition of the B flat major Sextet, Op. 18.

Even when he was not being heard or heard about, Brahms was in evidence in the exhibition held in the conference area (see separate article), and in the attractive drawing by Library staff artist Donald Shomette, a composite of four views of the composer at different ages which appeared on the festival program booklet and poster.

Copies of the program booklet, as well as the Library’s new handlist of its Brahms collection, can be obtained by writing to the Music Division of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540.

Walter Frisch

England Honors Brahms

Goldsmiths’ College of the University of London sponsored a scholarly conference on Brahms from 9 to 11 July 1983 at which musicologists and music theorists from England, Germany, Austria, and the United States assembled to share new insights on Brahms and his music. Michael Musgrave, the conference organizer, opened with a lecture on Brahms and England. To complement this theme, an exhibition on the same topic had been prepared by Nigel Simeone (see separate article).

Of the twelve papers presented, five dealt with historical issues connected with the Brahms legacy. Siegfried Kross constructed a profile of the Brahms repertoire at the end of the 19th century from accounts in the Musikalisches Wochenblatt, and Imogen Fellsinger called attention to Brahms’s “way” as a composer. Robert Pascall analyzed problems in chronology that remain to be resolved, while Otto Biba discussed Brahms’s Nachlaß and the years of controversy over its ultimate fate. George Bozarth, discussing Brahms’s posthumously published compositions and arrangements, questioned several attributions and invited discussion on the still problematic A major piano trio.

The conference proceeded to some theoretical aspects of Brahms’s string quartets in an analysis forum: Arnold Whittall compared the finales of Op. 51 nos. 1 and 2; Allen Forte considered motivic design and structural levels in the first movement of Op. 51 no. 1; and Jonathan Dunsby examined continuity in the exposition of the first movement of Op. 67. In exploring clues to Brahms’s compositional choices, Louise Litterick investigated how he worked through various stages of composition in the first movement of the Fourth Symphony. Christopher Winstle unfolded an interpretation of Brahms’s “progressive” harmony.

Performances of Brahms’s music were not forgotten in the planning of the conference. A choir of conference participants and singers from Goldsmiths’ College illustrated Virginia Hancock’s paper on Brahms’s links with German Renaissance music; and in a brilliant concert given in the ideal setting of the Ranger’s House, Blackheath, violinist Vanya Milanova and pianist Jonathan Dunsby performed the Scherzo from the F-A-E Sonata and the Sonatas, Opp. 78 and 108. As Michael Musgrave observed in his remarks at the conclusion of the conference, this was a fitting manner in which to celebrate Brahms’s connection with England.

Elfrieda F. Hiebert
Brahms Festivals and Concerts

Throughout the United States and Europe this year the music of Johannes Brahms has been featured on orchestral and choral concerts, chamber and solo recitals, and radio and television broadcasts. In Hamburg, the city of Brahms’s birth, the concerts of the Brahms-Wochen '83 filled most of the month of May with performances by various Hamburg orchestras and choirs, visiting groups like the Vienna Philharmonic, and innumerable chamber ensembles and soloists. In Vienna, Brahms's second home, the annual Festwochen were devoted heavily to the music of Brahms, and further recitals focusing on Brahms and his Viennese contemporaries will take place later this year at the Musikverein, during the Wiener Brahms-Kongress ("Brahms and Vienna," 10-15 November).

In the preceding article appear comments on the five-day International Brahms Festival that took place at the Library of Congress in May. During the rest of the year Washingtonians are being treated to further Brahms concerts at the Library, performed by such renowned groups as the Juilliard String Quartet and the Beaux Arts Trio, and by the end of 1983 they will have had the opportunity to hear all of Brahms's chamber and solo piano music.

In the western United States, music lovers in Santa Fe and Seattle this summer could hear many of Brahms's major solo and chamber compositions performed by the artists of the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, and this autumn Brahmsians in California will be able to attend the sixth annual Southern California Brahms Festival for six programs of vocal, piano, chamber, choral, and orchestral music, to be held on the campus of the University of La Verne under the direction of James R. Low (30 October to 6 November; for a prospectus, write to the Southern California Brahms Festival Office, 1988 Yorba Drive, Pomona, California 91768).

Brahms Exhibits in the United States and Europe

The Brahms year of 1983 has witnessed the mounting of numerous exhibits of Brahms manuscripts, first editions, letters, photographs, and memorabilia of his life and work. Some of these exhibits were designed to display the riches of single collections; others focused on his special relationship to the geographical area in which the exhibit was mounted.

In the United States the largest exhibit took place in early May at the Library of Congress, in conjunction with the International Brahms Festival and Conference. Coordinated by Charles Sens of the Music Division, the display was drawn entirely from the Library's extensive Brahms collection and included autographs of such major works as the first string sextet, the piano quintet, the horn trio, the Handel and Schumann variations, and the violin concerto. Special attention was given to the Third Symphony, Op. 90, which celebrates its 100th anniversary this year; on view were the full autograph score, the autograph of Brahms's two-piano arrangement, and correction lists prepared by Robert Keller for the printed edition.

In Austria two regional exhibits took place. Starting April 16th, the Kammerhofmuseum in Gmunden presented an exhibit chronicling Brahms's life in photographs, concert programs, memorabilia (including Brahms's beloved tin soldiers), and facsimiles of manuscripts once in the collection of Brahms's Gmunden friend, Dr. Viktor von Miller zu Aichholz. In 1880 and 1882 Brahms first spent his summer vacations at nearby Bad Ischl, and from 1889 on he returned there every summer, often coming to visit the Miller-Aichholz family in Gmunden. Shortly after Brahms's death, Dr. von Miller zu Aichholz erected a small house in his garden with the dimensions of Brahms's rooms in Ischl, and furnished it with the Ischl furniture and a display of his private collection of Brahms manuscripts, letters, concert programs, portraits, busts, medallions, and secondary literature. The manuscripts and letters are now in the Stadts- und Landesbibliothek in Vienna, but in 1936 the other materials were acquired by the city of Gmunden, and these formed the basis for this exhibit. A catalogue can be obtained from the Kammerhofmuseum der Stadt Gmunden, A-4810 Gmunden, Austria.

One of the year's major exhibits, "Brahms in Vienna," opened in the Archiv der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna in mid-April. Drawing exclusively from its own collection, which includes Brahms's estate, the Library mounted a display of nearly three hundred items, including autograph manuscripts of Brahms works; autograph copies and arrangements by Brahms of compositions by Haydn, Mozart, and Schubert; autographs by these composers, as well as Beethoven, which Brahms owned; first and early editions of works by Brahms and his contemporaries; programs for his concerts in Vienna; and scores of photographs of Brahms and members of his circle. The lavish catalogue prepared for this exhibit by Dr. Otto Biba, director of the Archiv, and available from the Archiv der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Bösendorferstraße 12, A-1010 Wien, for AS 100, contains numerous facsimiles of pages from Brahms manuscripts and photographs of many of Brahms's friends and associates.

"Brahms in Switzerland" was the topic of an exhibit shown at the Wohnmuseum in Zürich from 1 May until mid-August and then in Lucerne, where it was displayed at the Zentralbibliothek from 20 August to 10 September. Brahms made his first trip to Switzerland in 1856 shortly after the death of Robert Schumann, visiting Kloster Einsiedeln and the lakes at Constance, Gersau, and Lucerne with his sister and Clara Schumann. From the mid-1860s on, he often returned there to perform, visit friends, and enjoy the scenic beauty. An inspiration of his 1868 trip was the alhorn motive of the First Symphony, which he sent to Clara Schumann that year for her birthday. He spent the summers of 1868-88, during which he composed the works Opp. 99-109, in Hofstetten on the Lake of Thun, with a magnificent view of the (continued on next page)
Bernese Oberland. From 1858 to 1873 the Swiss publisher J. Rieter-Biederman brought out twenty-two of Brahms's works, and Brahms's Swiss friends included the poet Gottfried Keller, three of whose poems Brahms set to music; the composer Hermann Goetz; the pianist and organist Theodor Kirchner; the writer Joseph Victor Widmann, Brahms's traveling companion on three trips to Italy; and the violinist, conductor, and composer Friedrich Heger, who played chamber concerts with Brahms and performed all of Brahms's orchestral music and large choral works with his Züricher-Tonhalle-Orchester, and to whom Brahms presented the autograph score of the Fourth Symphony. The Zürich-Lucerne exhibit, organized by Werner G. Zimmermann of the Stadtarchiv Zürich, was accompanied by a brochure listing Brahms's contacts with Switzerland and containing brief essays on his Swiss friends and visits (Musiksammlung, Stadtarchiv Zürich, CH-8000 Zürich).

In Karlsruhe the Badische Landesbibliothek and the Brahmsgesellschaft Baden-Baden e.V. mounted an exhibition of nearly two hundred items documenting Brahms's close relationship to this region of Germany. At first the attraction for Brahms to Baden-Baden was Clara Schumann, who in the 1860s owned a house there. In the summer months Frau Schumann's family and friends would congregate in this resort town, and Brahms would take rooms nearby in Lichtenthal. During these holidays he first met some of his most interesting friends and acquaintances, including Hermann Levi, then conductor of the opera house in Karlsruhe; the painter Anselm Feuerbach; the engraver, photographer, and Feuerbach biographer Julius Allgeyer; the Russian novelist Ivan Turgenev; the famous singer Pauline Viardot; the pianist Anton Rubinstein; and Vienna's "Waltz King," Johann Strauss. All of this varied cast of characters, and many more, appear in the Karlsruhe exhibit, together with contemporary photographs of Baden-Baden, Karlsruhe, and environs; first and early editions of the works of Brahms and his contemporaries; programs for Brahms concerts in these cities; facsimiles of pages from manuscripts of works Brahms composed while residing in this region; autograph letters; and the autograph manuscripts of four canons for women's voices (Stadtrhiv, Karlsruhe) and for the F major String Quintet, Op. 88 (Brahmsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden). In addition to detailing the contents of this exhibit (in a few cases, the full texts of unpublished letters are given) and reproducing many of the items in facsimile, its catalogue contains a "Zeitafel" of Brahms's contacts with Baden-Baden and Karlsruhe prepared by Joachim Draheim, and eight full-length articles by various authors on such topics as the relationship of Brahms and Hermann Levi and the Karlsruhe version of the First Symphony. This catalogue, a worthy addition to any Brahms library, is available for DM 12.50 (plus postage) from the Badische Landesbibliothek, D-7500 Karlsruhe, BRD.

During the London Brahms Conference in early July, an exhibit on "Brahms and England" was on view at Goldsmiths' College, University of London. Organized and catalogued by Nigel Simeone, the exhibit, assembled from the collections of Oliver Davies, Robert Pascal, Nigel Simeone, and the Royal College of Music, featured items recording the concert activities in England of Brahms's friends and colleagues, including Clara Schumann, Joseph Joachim, Georg Henschel, Hans Richter, and Hans von Bülow, and bearing witness to the enthusiastic reception of Brahms's music in 19th-century England. A handlist of exhibited materials can be obtained from Michael Musgrave, Department of Music, Goldsmiths' College, University of London, New Cross, London SE14 6NW.

The Brahms exhibition in Ulm, West Germany, this summer was the work of Kurt Hofmann of Hamburg and consisted mainly of items from his private collection. Scholars in the United States had an opportunity to see a large portion of this collection in 1980 at the International Brahms Festival and Congress in Detroit (an illustrated catalogue was published at the time by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra). Materials in the collection range from such memorabilia as an elaborately tooled leather writing case presented to Brahms by the New Philharmonic Orchestra of Hamburg and a lock of the master's hair, to books from Brahms's personal library, concert programs, dedication copies of first editions, autograph letters and postcards, and an autograph manuscript of the duet "Am Strande," op. 66 no. 3.

George S. Bozarth
Brahms the Ambivalent

At the 1983 International Brahms Conference in Washington, D.C., Dr. Karl Geiringer, Professor Emeritus of the University of California at Santa Barbara and author of Brahms: His Life and Work, delivered a keynote address entitled “Brahms the Ambivalent.” We print it here, in advance of its publication in the Conference Proceedings, for the edification and enjoyment of the members of the American Brahms Society.

Webster’s Dictionary of the English Language defines the word ambivalence as “simultaneous attraction toward and repulsion from an object...or action.” Very few persons in the history of music experienced such a state of mind more frequently than did Johannes Brahms. In his actions and thoughts, and even in his creative activities, he was full of contradictions. Zerlina’s immortal “vorrei, e non vorrei” (“I would like to and I would not like to”) could be used as a kind of motto for his attitude.

To some extent Brahms may have inherited this disposition from his father. Johann Jakob Brahms was born into a respectable, narrow bourgeois family. But he did not want to follow in the footsteps of his forebears; he yearned for the imagined freedom of a musical career. Before long he played various string instruments, as well as flute and horn, tolerably well, and went with high expectations to the city of Hamburg. After a prolonged struggle he achieved a modest position as a contrabass and horn player, settled down, got married, and raised a family. However, his restlessness made itself felt again. Jakob tried various kinds of financial experiments—started raising rabbits, pigeons, and chickens, opened a small store which soon was sold again at a loss, and even considered emigrating to America. Eventually he refused to live with his wife and moved out of the apartment they had shared for many years. When Brahms’s mother, who was seventeen years older than her husband, died, the man of fifty-nine married again, this time a woman eighteen years his junior.

In Johann Jakob, who, after all, had only modest talents, opposing forces were still to some extent compatible. In the genius Johannes, however, they created substantial difficulties: an urge for bourgeois respectability and bourgeois comfort warred with a desire for independence and an unwillingness to suffer any restraint.

In his daily life Brahms displayed very simple tastes. His clothing was plain and inexpensive; he ate in cheap restaurants and spent little on his food. He never owned a house, but lived in a rented apartment and used furniture belonging to his landlady. He did not even spend much for his beloved collection of musical autographs by great composers.

Brahms kept pedantic order among his books and music. He prided himself on being able to find immediately—even in the dark—any of the books of which he was particularly fond, such as, for instance, the Bible in Martin Luther’s translation. He was an avid reader and liked to underline sentences which particularly appealed to him, while pedantically correcting every mistake he noticed in a book or piece of music. If he found something remarkable, he would write a big “NB” in the margin. Brahms even made a special collection of parallel fifths and octaves he found in compositions of the past.

In financial matters too Brahms showed a typically bourgeois mentality. He displayed a certain shrewdness in affairs of business and liked to be well paid for his compositions.

Most of all he longed for a fixed position which would enable him to settle down and give up his life of perpetual concert tours. Specifically, he was anxious to be appointed as the conductor of the Hamburg Philharmonic orchestra and of the chorus connected with it, because he wanted to live as a respected citizen in the city in which he was born and had spent his youth. His greatest wish was to find a congenial partner with whom to share his life, get married, and raise children, of whom he was particularly fond.

All these traits in Brahms’s character were opposed, however, by others diametrically different. While as a rule he made it a point to eat very plain and inexpensive fare, and was always satisfied with the simplest meals, he loved to be invited by some of his wealthy friends and admirers to quite sumptuous feasts. Frau von Miller, the wife of a rich music lover, kept a diary of the food she served to Brahms on each of his frequent visits, so as to avoid embarrassing repetitions. We find there, for instance, that she offered him on 20 February 1892 brain consommé, lobster salad, fillet de boeuf garnished with vegetables, ham cooked in Madeira wine, hazel grouse, ice cream, pastry, champagne, and coffee. Other meals always included soup, fish, and three kinds of meat.

Brahms’s ample girth in later years thus finds an easy explanation.

Brahms’s insistence on neatness and order in the arrangement of his books and music was not, however, carried over to his personal appearance and the state of the rest of his property. His suits were always hopelessly creased, his pants pulled up too far. Instead of an overcoat he liked to wear a plaid over his shoulders, held in place by a huge safety pin. His hat was always in his hand, never on his head. Brahms’s cupboard for his clothing and linen was, as a rule, in the most terrible disarray, although his landlady did her best to keep everything neat and in good order.

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Brahms, who was pleased when he had an opportunity to earn money, displayed no interest in it once he owned it. He kept bundles of banknotes uncounted in his closet and gave money away easily. Family members and friends were given generous financial gifts. He never checked his bank account, and left the management of his considerable fortune to his publisher Fritz Simrock. Once when Simrock speculated with Brahms's money and lost the substantial sum of 20,000 Marks, the composer consoled him with the following letter: "Dear Friend, do not make an unnecessary fuss...of course, I have not worried for a moment about the matter...because I think of money only while I am talking about it."

Brahms's ardent desire to occupy a permanent position in his home town was certainly based on self-delusion. In 1863 he was appointed as leader of the distinguished Wiener Singakademie, and later he served as the highly respected artistic director of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna, but in both cases he resigned after a while because he was unable to put up with a settled activity which interfered with his creative work. He likewise refused tempting offers from Berlin and Cologne, and even when the coveted invitation from Hamburg finally arrived, the man of sixty-one did not accept it, claiming that it was now too late for him. He never admitted, even to himself, that he was temperamentally and mentally unsuited to become a steady member of a well-organized bourgeois society.

The ambivalence of Brahms's feeling manifested itself with particular clarity in his attitude towards marriage. It is characteristic that his first and greatest love belonged to a woman who was fourteen years his senior (an echo of his father's attitude) and the mother of seven children. It was obvious that the almost penniless young composer could not possibly have married Clara Schumann, who was a widow at age thirty-seven. Later, after the first great passion for Clara had turned into a lifelong friendship, he was captivated several times by the charms of other members of the fair sex, particularly when the young lady was endowed with a fine voice. As he was very handsome, famous, and wealthy, he could easily have succeeded in finding a partner for life. However, he found it impossible to take the last decisive step and form a permanent connection. He was basically unwilling and unable to exchange his unfettered freedom for the bliss of a shared existence. To a friend he once uttered: "Here in my room, I am quite alone and undisturbed. Oh, this is wonderful."

It appears particularly fortunate that a genius with such ambivalent feelings lived in an artistic period which, to some extent, seemed to produce a certain amount of contradictory elements. In a way Brahms was just the right person for his time. In order to explain this statement, it is necessary to consider the year of his birth—1833—in a larger context.

Between 1810 and 1813 no less than five of the greatest composers in the field of romantic music were born: in 1810, Robert Schumann and Frederic Chopin; in 1811, Franz Liszt; and in 1813 Richard Wagner and Giuseppe Verdi. Half a century later, between 1860 and 1864, four other outstanding composers were born who gave romantic music a new direction and imbued it with a different meaning: in 1860, Gustav Mahler and Hugo Wolf; in 1862, Claude Achille Debussy; and in 1864, Richard Strauss. In between these two peaks of revolutionary artistic activity we find a valley of comparatively quiet, unhurried, conservative thinking, an instinctive return to the values of the past. In this period of moderate retreatment occurred the compositional activity of Johannes Brahms, whose date of birth lies approximately midway between 1810 and 1860. He was, as we all know, a romantic composer, writing music with numerous progressive features; at the same time he felt strongly attracted by the ideas of earlier musical thinking. Thus the ambivalence of his nature found expression in his art. Brahms was, as Wagner rather derisively stated, a classical romanticist.

Fifty years ago, in 1933, Arnold Schoenberg offered his famous lecture "Brahms the Fortschrittliche" ("Brahms the Progressive"), which he later transformed into an extensive essay. In the same centennial year, not knowing of Schoenberg's lecture, I published an article "Brahms als Musikhistoriker." Since that time, numerous studies which emphasize either the modernistic or the retrospective nature of Brahms's art have been published. The richness of his harmonies, the frequent inclusion of non-harmonic notes in his chords, and his predilection for unconventional modulations are pointed out; in addition, his use of asymmetric phrases, irregularities of meter, and complicated rhythmic structures—peculiarities of his style which point into the future—surpass in certain respects even the innovations of the revolutionary Wagner. On the other hand, as we are well aware, Brahms gained inspiration from works of the past. The great masters of earlier times, from Palestrina and Schütz through Schubert and Schumann, served as godfathers to some of his works. Hardly any great composer of the nineteenth century felt so completely at home in the strict forms of the past, such as fugue, canon, chorale prelude, and motet; and no other great composer was so easily induced to change his role and do purely editorial work in order to save valuable music of the past from oblivion.

We have learned that Brahms was in some respects unable to reconcile the contradictory elements in his character. In his art, however, he succeeded magnificently in fusing opposing forces into a glorious new unity. In Brahms's music there is no conflict between old and new, between experimental and traditional; instead, a peaceful dialogue leads to a harmonious solution. In his compositions, diametrically opposed artistic elements are completely reconciled. Goethe's famous saying, "Und das Gesetz nur kann uns Freiheit geben" ("Observance of the law alone leads to freedom"), might well have been coined for Brahms's work. We may begin to comprehend the true nature of the composer's art if we keep in mind that in Brahms's music strictness and freedom have reached an indivisible, unique union.

Karl Geiringer
New Brahms Bibliographies

The appearance of two book-length bibliographies within the next two years, one published on each side of the Atlantic, will at last fill a major gap in Brahms research. The European offering, announced by Hans Schneider, Tutzing, is a Brahms-Bibliographie prepared by Siegfried Kross of the University of Bonn. A description of this publication will appear in the next issue of this Newsletter.

In the United States, Scarecrow Press will release in 1985 Thomas Quigley’s Johannes Brahms: An Annotated Bibliography of the Literature, an outgrowth of the author’s participation in the Brahms Cataloguing Project in Vancouver, B.C. Building on the earlier but by now severely outdated Brahms bibliographies of Lajos Koch and Ingrid Lübke, Mr. Quigley has sought to create a volume which will contain citations of all secondary literature on Brahms from his times to the present and will conform to contemporary expectations of bibliographic practice. Access to this catalogue of about five thousand entries is facilitated by cross references, a system of citations reflecting current bibliographic standards, and descriptive notes. Mr. Quigley reports having consulted over sixty bibliographic sources and having examined the majority of the items he will list. (The author invites readers having any information which should be included in this bibliography and its periodic supplements and not available through customary bibliographic channels to send this material to him at 1355 Harwood Street, #408, Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6E 3W3).

Brahms Manuscript Discoveries

Auctions and sales of autographs in the United States and Europe, together with manuscript discoveries in Poland, Russia, and Germany, have brought to light over the last year a number of Brahms manuscripts which had dropped from sight, and have added one previously unknown composition to the Brahms oeuvre.

In the summer of 1876 Brahms gave an autograph of his song “Alte Liebe,” Op. 72 no. 1, to Georg Henschel, singer, composer, and later conductor of the Boston Symphony. The other autographs owned by Henschel—the Groth *Heimweh* songs in Op. 63 and the duet “Edward,” Op. 75 no. 1—passed through the hands of various private collectors and are now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and the Morgan Library, NYC. However, the whereabouts of the “Alte Liebe” autograph remained unknown until 1982, when it reappeared in catalogue 7 of the Hudson Rogue Co., Nelsonville, NY, with an explanation of its long absence: during his tenure in Boston, Henschel had given the manuscript to Henry Lee Higginson, president of the Boston Symphony, and it had remained in the possession of his family ever since. Unfortunately, though, this manuscript is still not available for study; it was purchased by another dealer and has again dropped from sight.

Brahms’s copy of Schubert’s song “Amalia” (Fr. Schiller), D. 195, was offered for sale by J.A. Stiargard (Catalogue 628) in March 1983 and purchased by the Archiv der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna, where it now joins the numerous Schubert autographs and manuscript copies of works which Brahms owned. The impressive efforts of Brahms to cultivate public appreciation of his predecessor’s compositions has recently been recounted by Robert Pascall in *The Musical Times* (May 1983), and the influence of Schubert’s music on the chamber works of Brahms’s “first maturity” has been convincingly demonstrated by James Webster in the pages of *19th-Century Music* (July 1978 and July 1979). Brahms’s knowledge of Schubert’s Lieder is evident even in his earliest songs (compare, for example, “Anklänge,” Op. 7 no. 3, with “Die liebe Farbe” in *Die schöne Müllerin*), and this copy of “Amalia,” probably prepared in the early 1860s, offers further testimony of this knowledge. This manuscript may also prove interesting to Schubert scholars, for, as an erased but still legible pencil annotation on it indicates, Brahms copied this song directly from a Schubert autograph then owned by Gustav Peter in Vienna, but now apparently lost.

A few years ago word reached the West that many of the musical manuscripts missing from the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin after the Second World War had been located, safely housed in Kraków, Poland. At the time, descriptions in the press cited several individual items and listed many of the composers whose manuscripts were among those preserved, but no mention was made of the three Brahms manuscripts which have been listed since 1945 as “verschollen”: autographs of the *Triumphlied*, Op. 55; the first movement of the Violin Sonata in A major, Op. 100; and the thirty-two folksongs first published by Max Friedlaender in 1926. Now Margit McCorkle reports the receipt of confirmation that these manuscripts are indeed in Kraków. Furthermore, G. Henle Verlag has ascertained that in the Glinka Museum in Moscow are preserved five of the Lieder autographs which Brahms gave to his close friend Bertha Faber, née Porubsky, including one of the two autographs for Brahms’s most famous song, the “Wieneglied;” Op. 49 no. 4, composed for Frau Faber upon the birth of her second son in July 1868. The other Faber manuscripts in Moscow are for three early “folksongs”—“Trennung,” “Ständchen,” and “Selbstdnung”—Op. 14 nos. 5, 7, and 8—and for Brahms’s setting of Goethe’s “Trost in Tränen” (Op. 48 no. 5). The “Wieneglied” autograph has often appeared in facsimile, but all of the other Faber manuscripts have been unavailable for study since Kalbeck examined them.

“New” autographs of Brahms’s early songs have also been discovered in Germany. Until 1981, scholars knew of only one extant manuscript for the songs in Opp. 3 and 6—the autograph of “Liebetreu,” Op. 3 no. 1, which Brahms gave to the artist J.B. Laurens in 1853 (Carpentras, France). Then, as reported in the last issue of this Newsletter, complete sets of manuscripts for these opera (continued on next page)
emerged from a private collection on Cape Cod and were acquired by the Library of Congress and the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. Now, thanks to the efforts of Dr. Joachim Draheim, three more autographs—for the two “Liebe und Frühling” (Fallersleben) and for the “Lied aus dem Gedicht Ivan” (Bodenstedt), Op. 3 nos. 2-4—have been found in a private collection in Karlsruhe. The first of the Fallersleben songs and the Bodenstedt setting bear dedications dated “Düsseldorf in October 1853,” and the second of these names the sisters Louise and Minna Japha, intimate friends of Brahms. Louise Japha’s vivid recollections of her youthful studies with Schumann and companionship with Brahms appear in the Brahms biographies of Max Kalbeck and Florence May. From May we learn that Louise Japha was also a composer of songs and that she and Brahms often discussed each other’s works, so it is not surprising that Brahms would have presented some of his manuscripts to the Japha sisters, or have dedicated his Sechs Gesänge Op. 6 to them. These manuscripts will prove valuable for the additional information they will give editors of these songs. Perhaps even more important, though, is what appears at the end of the second Fallersleben song: the initial twenty-two measures (the full first stanza) of an unknown Brahms song, a setting of Chamisso’s poem “Die Müllerin.” Brahms had copied this poem into his early handwritten collection of poetry, and later set it for women’s choir (Op. 44 no. 5), but until now it was not known that in the early 1850s he had already composed a setting of it for solo voice and piano. Later this year Breitkopf and Härtel, Wiesbaden, will publish Dr. Draheim’s edition of this song.

George S. Bozarth

Discounts Available to ABS Members

The American Brahms Society is pleased to announce that discounts are now available to its members on the following publications:


Black-and-white facsimiles of highest quality, printed on 250-year-life paper, of all the autographs of Brahms’s instrumental music owned by the Library of Congress and not previously published (String Sextet, Op. 18; Piano Quintet, Op. 34; Waltzes, Op. 39, arranged for Piano Two-Hands and Piano Two-Hands, Simplified; Horn Trio, Op. 40; Piano Trios, Op. 87; and Intermezzi, Opp. 118 no. 1 and 119 no. 1), with an introductory essay describing the importance of these manuscripts, as well as detailed notes on their physical characteristics; oversize format, ca. 280 facsimile pages.

Johannes Brahms, Alto Rhapsody, Opus 53. Introduction by Walter Frisch. New York: The New York Public Library, 1983. $40.00 (reg. $50.00), payable to the New York Public Library (check or money order only).

A facsimile edition of the autograph manuscript owned by the NYPL, reproduced in three colors; introduction describing the role of the Rhapsody in Brahms’s personal and musical life and the significance of this manuscript and of earlier sketches (also reproduced); 75 pages (44 in facsimile).


A full-color facsimile of the presentation autograph, on paper with decorative borders, given by Brahms to Wilhelm Linde, a banker in Mannheim; 4 facsimile pages.


A collection of essays, prepared by English, American, and German scholars, discussing Brahms’s cultural world, his interest in early choral music and Mozart, the difficulties of editing his music, his symphonic output, and, in more detail, his Tragic Overture, Fourth Symphony, Fantasien, Op. 116, the song “Vorüber,” Op. 58 no. 7, and the Vier ernste Gesänge, Op. 121; 210 pages, 4 plates.

G. Henle Verlag plans to offer a 10% discount to ABS members on Margit McCorkle’s forthcoming Brahms Thematische-Bibliographische Werkverzeichnis, scheduled to appear at the end of the year.

To take advantage of these discounts, please send your order, with payment(s) by check, money order, or credit card, as designated above, to the Society’s office in Seattle; you may use the order form in this Newsletter. If purchasing with credit card, please include your card number and expiration date. We will verify your membership in the Society and forward your order to the appropriate publisher(s), who will send the publication directly to you.
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The American Brahms Society has applied for and expects to receive a determination from the IRS that will allow donations in excess of dues to be considered as charitable contributions.

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Please Note:

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will take place on the evening of Thursday, 27 October 1983, during the national meeting of the American Musicological Society in Louisville, Kentucky. An informal reception will follow at 8:30 p.m. in the Lord Crewe Room of the Galt House Hotel, and all interested in the goals and projects of The American Brahms Society are invited to attend. On Friday evening, 28 October, pianist Lee Luvissi will perform a recital at the School of Music of the University of Louisville devoted entirely to Brahms's keyboard music.

Material for the Spring 1984 issue of the Newsletter should be sent to the Newsletter Editor by 1 February 1984.