Brahms’s Fantasies:
In Accorde with Max Klinger

**Part I**

Musicians today are most likely to know Max Klinger (1850–1920) as the sculptor of a Promethean image of Beethoven. Klinger’s sculpture, the epitome of heroic musical reception in the Romantic tradition, was shown to great acclaim in the Vienna Secession exhibit of 1902. Less than a decade before, the Leipzig-based artist had sent to Vienna another attempt at “visible music” (as his sculpture of Beethoven would be described), one that employed an intimate format meant primarily for private contemplation at home, with gallery display limited to special occasions. Klinger had indeed directed this effort, his “Opus XII” print cycle of 1894, at a single privileged recipient for whom his esteem bordered on worship: Johannes Brahms.

The work, Klinger’s *Brahmsfantasie*, grew out of a misunderstanding between the gruff maestro, the much younger aspiring artist, and their mutual publisher, Fritz Simrock. In 1885 Simrock commissioned Klinger to create title pages for two of Brahms’s Lieder collections, Opp. 96 and 97. (Klinger had already shown his enthusiasm for Brahms by dedicating his “Opus V,” a cycle of prints on the theme *Amor and Psyche*, to the composer in 1880.) Leery of endorsing any specific illustration or decoration of his music, Brahms rejected their inclusion at the last minute. He confided to Simrock that he found the imagery alarming and without relation to his music; to Klinger he remained encouraging, placing the blame on Simrock’s haste and undue pressure. (Simrock used the title pages anyway.) The magisterial *Brahmsphantasie*, which began as a reworking of some of the title-page imagery, occupied the artist for the next nine years, with Brahms privy to its development. Finally delivered as a leather-bound presentation copy to the composer on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday, the volume bore the inscription “dedicated in all reverence to Herr Dr. Johannes Brahms by the author Max Klinger, Leipzig, 8 October 1894.”

One hundred fifty complete sets of the *Brahmsphantasie* were produced before Klinger destroyed the plates. Each set sold for 400 Marks, a substantial fee—though Klinger gave many to friends and institutions. By the turn of the twentieth century the price had increased tenfold; more recently the complete *Brahmsphantasie* appeared at auction with a beginning price of $25,000. Although some sets were leather-bound in a deluxe folio edition, most remained boxed in a matted portfolio format that sacrificed the intended integration of text, music, and image to protect the individual prints from wear. Only when excerpts began to appear in fine-arts magazines at the turn of the twentieth century did some of the work’s more striking imagery become available to the interpretive fantasy of the general public.

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public, though still deprived of its larger context. Most of the exhibitions and their catalogues in the wake of the Klinger rediscovery in the 1970s have continued to present the graphic art shorn almost entirely of the music. To this day very few people have seen Klinger’s Opus XII complete.

In *Malei er und Zeichnung*, a theoretical monograph completed about the same time as the *Brahmsphantasie*, Klinger attempted to distinguish the content appropriate for painting as opposed to the various black-and-white media. While he found the first medium suitable for elevated, optimistic themes, Klinger maintained that the latter have a great affinity for music, melancholy, and cyclic arrangement. Initially hailed as “the father of modern German graphic art,” by the end of the century Klinger had become a “total artist,” “the new Michelangelo” of German art, because of his subsequent mastery of larger-scale painting and sculpture. But extended work with a chisel tragically destroyed his hands’ ability to perform the nuanced detail of engraving seen in the *Brahmsphantasie*, and Klinger would complete only one more worthy print cycle, Opus XIII (published in 1898). This cycle, together with the death of Klinger’s father, moved Brahms to dedicate his own meditations on death, *Vier Erste Gesänge* (Op. 121), to the artist. Klinger honored Brahms posthumously in a life-sized sculpture completed in 1900 for the Hamburger Musikhalle.

Part I of the *Brahmsphantasie* contains five Lieder of Brahms selected by Klinger to form a cycle: “Alte Liebe” (Op. 72 No. 1), “Sehnsucht” (Op. 49 No. 3), “Am Sonntag Morgen” (Op. 49 No. 1), “Feldleismarkeit” (Op. 86 No. 2), and “Kein Haus, Keine Heimat” (Op. 94 No. 5). Part II presents a piano reduction of Brahms’s choral-orchestral setting of Hölderlin’s *Schicksalslied*, a work suggested (indirectly) by Brahms himself as appropriate to such a project. Klinger’s forty-one images, which demonstrate the virtuosity of his graphic technique at its height, range from symbolic borders created through stone lithography to full-size prints made from a combination of engraving, etching, aquatint, and mezzotint on copper plates. The art work includes graphics interspersed among the vocal music, as well as a self-contained cycle of seven prints depicting the Prometheus legend as counterpart to the *Schicksalslied*. Klinger insisted that his imagery did not “illustrate” the music, but rather provided allegorical interpretations of similar themes in the spirit of the music.

Each of the two parts opens with a frontispiece, titled “Accorde” and “Evocation” respectively; these have become the best-known extracts. As the point of entry to a *Gesamtkunstwerk* for the parlor, “Accorde” constitutes a discourse on Romantic musical aesthetics, offering a vision of the musical “absolute” in the seemingly contradictory clarity of graphic representation. I will focus my remarks on the reception history and rich iconography of this fantasy of absolute music.

“Accorde” presents an allegorical image of utter connectedness in the aesthetic experience of absolute music. Hovering over the waters, as if in a dream, a pianist sits before the black-and-white universe of the modern piano keyboard in a bourgeois parlor. The outstretched arms of the woman in white direct our attention from such “reality” to the surreal harp, itself a primordial piano; a scale of steps likewise leads down from the dais past the swimming nereids to the harp’s base. The pure but ghostly presence of the beloved above and the multiple eroticism of the water nymphs below represent the archetypal extremes of male fantasy. A gracing triton, in profile like the pianist, raises the moaning harp from his loins. An Aeolian wind blows through this harp of man’s suffering, pushing a storm-tossed boat across the oceanic unconscious—the eye may see only the melody of the surface, but the heart senses the harmonies below. Though the course is difficult, the goal lies in sight: an ancient tomb representing heaven’s gate, the final cadence into an eternal consonance. Transfiguration continues in the heroic landscape of mountain-tops reflecting the light of the sun hidden behind the parlor’s curtain, at which point the circuit of the bi-level concert—a network of gazes, gestures, touches, and grimaces—is complete. When we notice that the right hand of the woman in white rests behind the mask on the harp’s saddle, the image suddenly takes on a heightened three-dimensional effect: the harp’s head thrusts out past the apparent foreground defined by the dais, creating an illusion of dizzying rotation. The temporal allegory representing the successive stages in the life-cycle of music collapses into a single harmonious vision, “in accord.”

Each of the carefully assembled archetypes carries a considerable cultural charge. No commentary on “Accorde” fails to mention that the tomb across the waters, an evocative image with cemetery cypress, refers specifically to Arnold Böcklin’s well-known painting *Toteninsel* (*Isle of the Dead*). Klinger augments the theatricality of Böcklin’s image by making it a single moment in the cosmic narrative of “Accorde”; familiarity with *Toteninsel* tells us that the storm-tossed boat will deliver its passenger in calm waters.

Icons such as the harp and the storm-tossed boat also have an extensive history well beyond the visual arts. For Klinger, an ardent reader of Schopenhauer, the latter image may have recalled a famous passage from *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*: “Just as the boatman sits in his small boat, trusting his frail craft in a stormy sea that is boundless in every direction, rising and falling with the howling, mountainous waves, so in the midst of a world full of suffering and misery the individual man calmly sits, supported by and trusting the *principium individuationis*, or the way in which the individual knows things as phenomena.” Goethe had fastened his own emphasis upon the ancient metaphor: “man is given the rudder of his fragile bark in order that he follow not the caprice of the waves but his own will, informed by insight.” Further instances could be compiled, ranging from concepts of Christian morality to the European painting genre “Storm at Sea,” with its gratuitous sublimity. The meaning of Klinger’s sailboat depends upon this entire tradition; unlike the tomb from Böcklin, no single reference dominates the significance of the endangered boat.

Perhaps the harp’s mask represents the Titan Okeanos or the Olympian Poseidon, successive lords of the sea; the
Max Klinger, "Accorde" from *Brahmsphantasie, Op. XII* (1894)

Arnold Böcklin, *Toteninsel* (1880)
smaller bust behind could be Eros, both oldest and youngest of the gods. It is also possible that the mask represents Dionysus—intoxicated, awe-struck, dithyrambic, his bardic eyes wide looking outward—with his brother Apollo—lyrical, reposed, contemplative—behind. The harp is string backwards, its shape contorted into that of a lyre, or perhaps of a heart with strings. As universal as these symbols and relations may be in cultural history, Klinger nevertheless presents a deeply personal vision of music-aesthetic experience. If the harp’s Schopenhauerian mask suggests the tragic knowledge of Nature’s musical Will, the artist also includes himself: the mask shows Klinger’s own howling face peering out, addressing the viewer directly.

Again, this specific reference does not restrict the content. (Even to perceive this subtext requires knowledge of Klinger’s physiognomy and his habit of self-portrayal.) Like other Romantic works, such icons suggest with a dream-like logic and an excess of paradoxical meaning, often contradictory and always supplementary. For instance, the sun symbolizes the source and goal of the absolute, but its blinding light is evident only in what it illuminates: it cannot be shown directly. On the horizon, it simultaneously represents dawn and dusk, alpha and omega, its tangential position perhaps suggesting a momentary hovering between an absolute temporality and a centripetal fixity.

Then we turn to page two. In “Alte Liebe” the dais of Klinger’s dream concert no longer hovers safely above the sublime waters, but rematerializes as the terrace of the artist’s roof-top studio overlooking the city of Rome, center of the clear light of Classical culture. Disheveled and prostrate in the shadow, the melancholic pianist reads old love-letters in the company of a spectral cupid, the piano abandoned in the room behind. (The woman in white in “Accorde” was a real person whose portrait Klinger painted in “Auf der Terrasse” in 1891 on the same terrace under the bright Italian midday sun.) To the right of Brahms’s song is an image representing the wheel of time, which starts to turn now that we have moved on from the eternal musical presence of “Accorde.” Here begins the cycle of Brahms’s Lieder, charting a course of individual suffering from lost love through escapist fantasy to bitter despair, the print cycle on the myth of Prometheus and Brahms’s Schicksalslied will broaden the theme to the collective tragedy of the human condition.

Many viewers have not appreciated the romantic irony represented in the Brahmsphantasie: a self-reflexive allegory about aesthetic experience with the disillusion and melancholy of “Alte Liebe” supplying an essential pendant to the transcendence of “Accorde.” While those sympathetic to
Klinger saw the dawn of a great new era in the arts, others dismissed such extravagance—to borrow Debussy's description of Wagner—as a sunset mistaken for a sunrise. Indeed, from the beginning the lurid detail of Klinger's quasi-Wagnerian imagery drew reproofs from partisans of Brahms such as Clara Schumann and Eduard Hanslick. Klinger completed the work at a time when culture wars had forced Liberal champions of Brahms's music into a position of untenable formalism; moreover, epigones of Klinger readily exploited the cycle's innovations in graphic art. In the words of one critic, "Cycles of etchings in which the eternally rewarding themes of Woman and Love and Death and the Beyond were treated with much deep meaning and aquatint poured out by the hundreds." By guilty association with what it seemed to spawn, Klinger's art came to be seen as indecent and decadent to Liberal partisans of a pure, Brahmsian absolute music.

Musicologists today tend to relegate Klinger's role in Brahms's life to a footnote and to frown upon the Brahmsphantasie with a superior air of "enlightened" sobriety. Carl Dahlhaus, for instance, described "Accorde" in ambivalent terms, simultaneously conjuring an image of a kitschy, failed opera set and analyzing the social significance of the print within the high culture of the era as a compensatory fantasy for the harshness of material reality: "Klinger has not balked at combining his pictorial motifs into glaring paradoxes to underscore the meaning of his allegory all the more drastically.... It is especially characteristic that a sober, positivistic age like the nineteenth century should have described in music, an alternative world to its own, the tendency toward sublime style that Brahms shared with his musical opposite, Wagner" (Nineteenth-Century Music, trans. J. Bradford Robinson [Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989], 254).

Though Dahlhaus was wont to finding common ground for late-nineteenth-century (German) music, we should remember the animosity and political differences between these two camps over the question of transcendent sublimity in absolute music. For the Wagnerian stigma followed Klinger into the art world as well. The famous critic Julius Meier-Graefe, that steadfast voice of embattled Liberal cosmopolitanism in the German art world, would sum up Klinger's legacy in 1920: "We owe to our metaphysics the World War...burn the trash...it is a metaphysical swindle. The only justice we can do to such people is to give them a proper burial." In the following decade the Nazi propaganda machine would find Klinger attractive—or at least those images by him that seemed to depict their heroic values, such as "Accorde" detached from the disillusionment of "Alte Liebe." Brahms would be useful to this crowd in large part through his connection to Klinger's fantasies. And now the Brahmsphantasie lies dismantled.

Thomas K. Nelson


Max Klinger, "Auf der Terrasse" (1891)
Brahms and “Willed Achievement”

*Publications from the Brahms Year*

*(Part 2)*


In his introduction, Swafford writes that “while this is primarily a life of Brahms and the focus is on my man, his music lies at its center.” Swafford has not attempted to go through Brahms’s life work piece by piece; instead, his book includes discussions of many of the most important compositions. Thus, he writes evocatively about the Variations on a Theme of Haydn, and aptly applies Carl Dahlhaus’s notion of Brahms’s “centripetal harmony” (as opposed to Wagner’s “centrifugal harmony”) to the slow movement of the Second Symphony. In another passage, aimed at situating Brahms in Vienna, Swafford makes a number of felicitous remarks about his music as a whole:

Brahms’s art is a kind of transcendent historicism in sound, fashioned with immensely more mastery than the committees of artists who planned the Hofoper and Parliament and Burgtheater. . . . Only Mahler approached Brahms in such resonance with history, and in Mahler the seams, the despair and dissolution, are left to be heard and contemplated.

Yet the music does not seem to lie at the center of this book. Nor is it quite a scholarly biography, despite the presence of endnotes and a bibliography that refers to a wide range of work on Brahms and his times. Swafford’s book reads more like a novelized account of the composer’s life. He writes in an easy, offhand manner that sometimes veers into silliness, as in this sentence: “Music lovers of every stripe began growing up between Brahms’s ‘Lullaby’ and his *Requiem*, from the cradle to the grave.” And he repeatedly goes too far in his speculations, which gives the book an appearance of haste and carelessness. For example, he makes the reasonable assertion that, as Robert Schumann’s condition deteriorated in the asylum at Endenich, his wife Clara “went on living and working, incapable of deciding anything, Johannes her mainstay,” then spoils the paragraph with the gratuitous remark that follows: “But neither then nor in the decades after did Clara ever really know what he was thinking.” Some fifty pages later he writes:

She felt . . . that Johannes composed for her first and the rest of the world after. Given the kind of people they were, with their ideals, a physical connection could not have meant more to either of them than that kind of communion.

On their relationship, as on several other key biographical questions, he seems to have developed no coherent position (nor does this appear deliberate).

Swafford wholeheartedly accepts the stories of Brahms having played the piano in Hamburg’s *Animiertlokale*, sordid taverns frequented by sailors and prostitutes, as a youth. Indeed, references to the *Animiertlokale* and to Brahms’s apparent later reliance on prostitutes, as well as to what Swafford clearly believes to have been his disturbed relations with women in general, function as leitmotifs through-out the book. Although he finds it “conceivable that Brahms had an affair with one or more of his Frauenchor singers” (he is referring to the chorus of young women in Hamburg that Brahms conducted between 1859 and 1861), he adds that “one finds no real record of Brahms ever having more than a Platonic connection to any ‘respectable’ woman.”

Given the sexual mores of the time and place, could Brahms have been intimate with a respectable unmarried woman? Since Brahms’s relationships with women are crucial in Swafford’s account of his life, one wishes that he had approached the matter more systematically; for instance, that he had read Kurt Hofmann’s research concerning Brahms’s early years in Hamburg, and that he had assembled the evidence concerning his later patronage of prostitutes. For the most part Swafford’s scholarship does not seem sufficiently thoughtful or thorough. Because he indulges in many flights of fancy and uses endnotes inconsistently, it becomes difficult to sort out which observations are backed by documentation.

This is a frustrating book to read because of Swafford’s evident love for his subject, the basic gracefulness of his writing style, and his occasional original insights. Perhaps the impending centennial year caused him to rush its preparation.

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The subtitle indicates that this is an “attempt at a critical documentary biography.” According to information on the dust jacket, Kross calls his book an attempt because he is trying to make the composer’s life and artistic development comprehensible to people today. Kross’s reliance on primary source material makes this a documentary biography, which he qualifies as critical because those documents “frequently reflect only interests, opinions, sometimes emotional outlooks of their authors” and therefore must be assessed carefully. The bibliography is restricted to the “fundamental literature” on Brahms. For Kross this means the collected editions of Brahms’s works and letters, the thematic catalogues compiled by Kurt Hofmann and Margit McCooyke, the time line by Renate and Kurt Hofmann, the bibliographies by Thomas Quigley and Kross himself, and Gustav Ophuls’s collection of the texts edited and set by Brahms. Max Kalbeck’s massive biography, four volumes in eight, is notable by its absence from the list.

Together the two volumes of Kross’s biography, minus the scholarly apparatus at the end, are organized under fourteen headings. Of these sections, the second, “Childhood and Youth in Hamburg,” stands out for its excellence. Here Kross draws on the work of a number of other musicologists and general historians, in particular, Kurt Hofmann’s research into the Hamburg of Brahms’s early years. Hofmann took the initiative to publish the long, bitter letter that Brahms’s mother wrote immediately before her death. In this document she accused her estranged husband, among other things, of having been constantly concerned with the stylishness of their home. She had come
from a lower-middle-class family of some cultivation, while Brahms’s father was struggling to rise above proletarian roots. Both parents were focused, in different ways, on their social status; moreover, they invested considerable efforts into their son’s education. Following Hofmann’s line of reasoning, Kross finds it inconceivable that Brahms’s parents would have sent their son to play the piano in Aniimiertlokale. (The letter by Brahms’s mother also implies that his father earned and then spent a great deal of money.) He astutely notes the natural tendency to exaggerate the bleakness of Brahms’s background—of his musical and general education and his family circumstances—to make the composer himself all the more resplendent in his overcoming of its limitations.

Kross also challenges an assumption often encountered in historical writing about middle-class Germans in the nineteenth century: that disappointment and official repression caused them to turn inward and take little interest in politics. Borrowing the title from a book by Helmut Schanze, Kross writes of the “other Romanticism.” He finds this other side of the nineteenth century in the nationalistic and republican sentiments expressed in numerous passages that Brahms culled from various authors and entered into a diary. In fascinating and well-grounded commentary, Kross speculates about the effects on the young Brahms of both a Hanseatic tradition of anti-monarchism and the revolutionary activity across much of Europe in the middle of the century.

Elsewhere Kross has less use for the work of other scholars, which at times proves to be a liability. According to the jacket, he sees Brahms’s relationship to Clara Schumann and musicological discourse about the symphony after Beethoven as two areas that require “a careful critical sorting of the transmitted sources.” While he devotes an entire chapter to the first of these topics, discussion of Brahms’s relationships with Robert and Clara Schumann forms an inevitable thread throughout the volumes. Kross appears particularly concerned to clear Brahms of sensational charges leveled by one of the Schumanns’ grandchildren: that Brahms fathered Felix Schumann, born less than eight and a half months after he first met Clara and Robert Schumann, and that the supposed nature of the relationship between Clara and Brahms led Robert to attempt suicide by throwing himself into the Rhein. Kross likewise dismisses the suggestion that Robert may have had homosexual inclinations. It is understandable that Kross does not want even to name biographers of the Schumanns—most obviously, Peter Ostwald and Eva Weissweiler—whose elaborations of these topics, and others nearly as controversial, he rejects out of hand. But the way he gets around bringing up their names, by casting blanket aspersions on “American psychiatry” and “feminist Clara-Schumann literature,” risks offending those of us who do not consider either phrase inherently pejorative.

Kross openly aims his discussion of the post-Beethoven symphony at the late Carl Dahlhaus. According to the latter scholar, no symphonies “of distinction” appeared between 1850, the year in which Schumann completed his Rhenish Symphony, and the 1870s and 1880s, when Brahms and other illustrious composers began to write symphonies, and which Dahlhaus therefore considered to be the beginning of the genre’s “second age.” As Kross notes, composers, among them Carl Reinecke and Ferdinand Hiller, produced symphonies in the intervening decades, as well. Because of what he sees as the vagaries of canon formation, Kross questions the wisdom of conferring “distinction” on only those few works that have managed to stay in the repertory.

He also takes Dahlhaus to task for having, as Kross sees it, uncritically applied Paul Bekker’s ideas about the symphony to Brahms. In a monograph entitled Die Sinfonie von Beethoven bis Mahler, Bekker suggested that Mahler was Beethoven’s only “true” successor in the genre, basing this assertion on the premise that Beethoven composed symphonies because he “wished to speak to a mass audience through instrumental music.” Charging Bekker with the “smearing of historical details [Geschichtsklitterung],” Kross adduces as counterexample the elitism of Viennese music life in the early nineteenth century, Beethoven’s opinion that sixty players were ideal for performances of his symphonies, and the size of the rooms in which the premieres of his symphonies took place: for example, the Palais Lobkowitz, in which the Eroica was first performed. Here Kross misses the point being made by both Bekker and Dahlhaus, which has to do with a well-known aesthetic of symphonic style that dates back to the late eighteenth century and, more particularly, with the dramatically intensified style of the Eroica and the symphonies that followed—not with historical performance practice, or with the social reality of Beethoven’s Vienna.

Tracing Bekker’s view of Beethoven’s symphonies to the writings of Richard Wagner, Kross refers to it as a “New German” position. This attitude toward the symphony was, however, much more widely disseminated in the late nineteenth century than Kross recognizes. More than once it surfaces even in reviews by Gustav Dömpke, the most vehemently anti-New-German of the Viennese critics. Kross’s broader point is that Dahlhaus and others who have drawn on Bekker’s ideas—although Kross does not mention his name, this would include Theodor Adorno—have inadvertently perpetuated New German ideology. While this is an interesting and provocative thesis, it does not quite hold up, at least as Kross has formulated it.

His ongoing concern is to subject Kalbeck’s biography, the basis of all subsequent treatments of Brahms’s life and works, to close scrutiny. It is refreshing to have someone question, for example, whether Brahms intended to spell the musical letters of Agathe von Siebold’s first name in the G-Major String Sextet, Op. 36. In his thoughtful “Instead of an Afterword,” Kross suggests that we should not assume unity between Brahms’s life and his works. This review will conclude with Kross’s appeal to scholars, based on a wonderful insight into the composer’s character, also from the afterword: we should “expose and elaborate, rather than cover up, contradictions between the person and the work, tensions between intellect and feeling, mind and soul, to which we may owe precisely some of his best works.”

Margaret Notley
Brahms at Auction

On 26 May 2000 Sotheby's in London sold a manuscript in Brahms's hand that documents his reactions to the piano accompaniments written for a number of German folksongs by the Elberfeld publisher and folksong collector Friedrich Wilhelm Arnold and submitted to Brahms for his critique. The manuscript—a single bifolium bearing musical notation and verbal commentary on its initial three pages—was reportedly purchased by an unidentified buyer for $75,000. The auction catalogue (sale L00209, item 47) includes an excellent black-and-white facsimile of the manuscript's second page. Unfortunately, its speculation on the history of this source is somewhat wide of the mark.

Brahms had come into contact with Arnold in the middle 1850s, when he negotiated with him concerning the publication of several of Robert Schumann's compositions. The nine-volume compendium of 136 Deutsche Volks-Lieder aus alter und neuer Zeit gesammelt und mit Clavierbegleitung versehen (German Folksongs collected from earlier and recent times and provided with piano accompaniment) arranged by Arnold and issued by his press in the 1860s superseded the merely chordal harmonizations that Friedrich Silcher and others had published with folksong melodies. With their more artistic approach to the piano accompaniments, Arnold's arrangements provided a model for Brahms's famous collection of forty-nine Deutsche Volkslieder of 1894. Brahms's early efforts at accompanied folksong, sent to Clara Schumann in 1858, had remained close to the Silcher tradition and were considered by Brahms to be "very quick sketches" that he expected Frau Schumann would not like, but that might give her "a premonition of future things" (see the last twenty-eight folksongs published in volume 26 of the Johannes Brahms sämtliche Werke).

A table of contents for and discussion of this manuscript was published by George S. Bozarth in his article "Johannes Brahms und die Liederersammlungen von David Gregor Corner, Karl Severin Meister und Friedrich Wilhelm Arnold," Die Musikforschung 36 (1983): 182-88, 198). Recently the same writer called attention to this autograph as a key source in establishing the long-debated origin of Brahms's well-known arrangements of "In stiller Nacht" (Notes 53 [1996]: 363-380, with a facsimile of the first page on page 375).

As explained in one of the annotations on this manuscript, Brahms entered some of his ideas directly on Arnold's originals (a source whose current location is unknown), while others he registered on this bifolium. His opinion of Arnold's settings was generally positive, though with a few reservations. Many of the arrangements were very successful, he observed; if only they were as good as a few, he added frankly. Single out as "extordinarily successful was Arnold's simple but effective arrangement of "Soll sich der Mond nicht heller scheinen," and the influence of Arnold's arrangement on Brahms's 1894 version is clear. On the other hand, Brahms felt Arnold's arrangement of "Es warb ein schöner Jüngling" to be "somewhat obstinate," and he provided "an attempt to make it otherwise," drawing upon the opening of his own 1858 setting, a suggestion that Arnold adopted, with a few variants, as his own.

Recent Brahms Publications, Papers, and Recordings

The following books, articles, papers, editions of music, and recordings of special interest have come to our attention since the last issue of this Newsletter:

Books, Articles, and Dissertations


"Wiener Einflüsse auf die Klaviermusik von Brahms"
Zur Ballade op. 10 Nr. 3, dem 'Intermezzo'
"Brahms' op. 116: Das Unikum der sieben Fantasien"
"Streicherklang und Streichtechnik im Klaviersonat von Brahms"
"Brahms – Chopin: Ein Versuch"
"Werkausstattung und Diskographie"


Öffentliche Vorträge

Robert Pascall, "Machen Sie es wie Sie es wollen, machen Sie es nur schön": Wie wollte Brahms seine Musik hören?
Ludwig Finscher, "Kunst und Leben: Bemerkungen zur Kunstanschauung von Johannes Brahms"
Constantin Floros, "Aspekte der Brahms-Biographie"
Otta Biba, "Brahms und das Wiener Musikleben in seiner Zeit"
Reinhold Brinkmann, "Zeitgenossen: Johannes Brahms und die Maler Feuerbach, Böcklin, Klinger und Menzel"

Kammermusik

Siegfried Kross, "Bach-Zitat oder Schubert-Pasticcio? Die I. Cellosonate e-Moll op. 38"
Hans Kohlhase, "Konstruktion und Ausdruck: Anmerkungen zu Brahms' Klavierquartett op. 26"
Friedhelm Krummacher, "Von 'allerlei Delikatessen': Überlegungen zum Streichquartett op. 67 von Brahms"
Peter Petersen, "Rhythmishe Komplexität in der Instrumentalmusik von Johannes Brahms"

Aufführungsgeschichte und Aufführungspraxis

Michael Musgrave, "Aufführungspraxis in den Chorwerken Volker Scherliess, "Zu Tempo und Charakter in Brahms' Instrumentalmusik"

Klavermusik

Camilla Cai, "Historische und editorische Probleme bei den Ungarischen Tänzen von Johannes Brahms"
Deleuf Kraus, "Streicherklang und -technik im Klaviersonat von Brahms"
Imogen Fellinger, "Brahms' Klavierstücke op. 116-119: Kompositorische Bedeutung und zeitgenössische Rezeption"

Editorisches Roundtable

Michael Struck, "Bedingungen, Aufgaben und Probleme einer neuen Gesamtausgabe der Werke von Johannes Brahms"
Wolf-Dieter Seifert, " Crescendo- und Decrescendo-Gabeln als Editionsproblem der Neuen Brahms-Gesamtausgabe"

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Renate Hofmann, "Die Briefsammlung August Walter: Die Beziehungen zwischen August Walter und Johannes Brahms, dargestellt auf der Grundlage der Korrespondenz August Walters und seiner Erinnerungen aus seinem Nachlaß im Brahms-Institut Lübeck"

Jürgen Neubacher, "Das Brahms-Archiv der Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg: Ein überblick über dessen Geschichte und Bestände"

Brahms' Verhältnis zu musikgeschichtlichen Aspekten
Hans Joachim Marx, "Brahms und die Musikforschung"
Bernhard Stockmann, "Brahms und der Generalklant"

Chorsymphonische Vokalmusik
Christian Martin Schmidt, "Subtilität harmonischer Formung: Zum 1. Satz des Deutschen Requiem op. 45"
James Webster, "Der stilistische Ort der Alt-Rhapsodie und ihre Bedeutung für Brahms' künstlerische Entwicklung"
Annette Kreutziger-Herr, "Hölderlin, Brahms und das Schicksalslied"

Vokalmusik mit Klavier
Virginia Hancock, "Brahms, Daumer und die Lieder op. 32 und 57"
Heinrich W. Schwab, "Brahms und das kontrapunktische Lied"
Hartmut Krones, "Harmonische Symbolik im Vokalschaffen von Johannes Brahms"

Symphonik
Walter M. Frisch, "Echt symphonisch": Fragen zum historischen Kontext der Symphonien von Brahms"
Timothy L. Jackson, "Diachronische Transformation im Schenkenschen Kontext: Brahms' Haydn-Variationen"

Fragen der Brahms-Rezeption
Ingrid Fuchs, "De mortuis nil nisi bene – oder doch nicht?: Das Brahms-Bild in den Nachrufen"

Ingrid Zinnow, "30 Jahre Johannes Brahms-Gesellschaft in Hamburg"
Gerdt Rienäcker, "Brahms contra Wagner?"
Otto-Hans Kühler, "Zu Hugo Wolfs Brahms-Kritiken"
Peter Roggenkamp, "Von einigen Berührungspunkten zweier großer Musiker: Brahms und Busoni"
Werner Rackwitz, "Anmerkungen zum Verhältnis Friedrich Chrysanders zu Johannes Brahms und Joseph Joachim"
Renate Hofmann, "Aus dem Umkreis von Johannes Brahms: Der Schweizer Komponist August Walter und seine Korrespondenz"* Volker Lorentzen, "Maria Lorck, Ahnfrau von Matthias Claudius, Johannes Brahms und Theodor Storm"
Jürgen Neubacher, "Brahms' Bergräbnisgesang op. 19: Neue Quellen und Erkenntnisse zur Werkgeschichte"
Christoph Hohfeld, "Zwei Motetten für gemischten Chor a cappella op. 74"
"Die Internationalen Brahms-Wettbewerbe—Eine Dokumentation"
"Bisher erschienene Brahms-Studien"

Papers Presented at Conferences

Paper read at the Pacific Southwest Chapter meeting of the American Musicological Society, 21 November 1998:
Raymond Knapp (UCLA), "Utopian Agendas: Variation, Allusion, and Referential Meaning in Brahms’s 3rd Symphony"

Paper read at the South-Central Chapter meeting of the American Musicological Society, University of Kentucky, 26–27 March 1999:
Roe-Min Kok (Harvard University), "Is There a Chaconne in Brahms’s Passacaglia?"

Paper read at the Allegheny Chapter meeting of the American Musicological Society, University of Akron, 24 April 1999:
Mark A. Peters (University of Pittsburgh), "Brahms: The Intellectual: An Introduction to his Collection of Printed Books"

Paper read at the Georgia Association of Music Theorists, Agnes Scott College, Georgia, 17–18 February 2000:
David Pacun (University of Connecticut), "Cyclic Form and Thematic Transformation in Johannes Brahms’s ‘Handel’ Variations, Op. 24"

Paper read at the Music Theory Symposium, Indiana University, 25–26 February; and at the West Coast Conference of Music Theory and Analysis, University of Oregon, Eugene, 14–16 April 2000:
David Pacun (University of Connecticut), "On the Boundaries of Tonality: Transpositional Combination and Brahms’s String Sextet in G Major, Op. 36"

Paper read at the "Quarto Incontro dei Dottorati di Ricerca in Discipline Musicali," Bologna, 10 May 2000:
Andrea M. Grassi, "Alcune peculiarità di scrittura nelle ultime opere da camera di Brahms."

Music of Brahms


Reissues of Historic Recordings


(continued on next page)
(Recent Publications, continued)


These two releases from Biddulph are extremely welcome additions to the growing catalogue of historical performances of Brahms's symphonies on CD. These are among the earliest recordings of the works; indeed, the Damrosch seems actually to be the earliest of the Second, beating out Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra by over a year. All three of the conductors represented here reveal approaches to tempo and phrasing that, while lost today, were prevalent in Brahms's day and in the first half of this century.

Hermann Abendroth's performances of the First and Fourth with the London Symphony in 1928 were a significant event in Great Britain's musical life, to judge from contemporary reports—and from the fact that they were recorded by HMV. Abendroth, who was active in Germany until his death in 1956, was recognized as a master of a tradition of conducting reaching back into the nineteenth century. In fact, his performances of the Brahms symphonies, which are especially notable for their rhythmic verve, extreme flexibility of tempo, and large-scale control of form, may be as close as we shall ever get to what Brahms himself regarded as ideal. Abendroth's interpretations are strikingly similar to those of Fritz Steinbach, one of Brahms's favorite conductors, who claimed that he took Brahms himself as a "model" for his conducting. (Steinbach left no recordings, but his score markings were transcribed in detail by a student.)

Damrosch came from a distinguished musical family that also had strong ties with Brahms. His father, Leopold, gave the first American performance of the First Symphony in 1877. Walter's recording of the Second, though marred by some ragged ensemble work, is full of the kind of nuance and tempo fluctuation that might show the influence of his teacher Hans von Bülow, another distinguished Brahmsian. Clemens Krauss's 1930 performance of the Third, made with an orchestra that had given the work its première forty-seven years earlier and played it frequently since then, is warm and appealing. The distinctive sound of that glorious ensemble comes through well on this remastering. WF


Devotees of the singing of Kathleen Ferrier may also find interesting the live performance of the Liebeslieder-Walter, Op. 52 (complete) and 65 No. 15 by Irmgard Seefried, Ms. Ferrier, Julius Patzak, and Horst Günter, with Clifford Curzon and Hans Gál on piano, that was recorded by the BBC at the 1952 Edinburgh Festival and released in 1992 on London, 425 005-2.


Other Recordings of Interest


George Bozarth and Walter Frisch

Note Bene

The topic of the Brahms-Festival Lübeck 2000 was "Brahms, Bach und die alten Meister." An exhibition was mounted at the Brahms Institute from 26 April to 7 May, and on the final day of the display a concert was presented in the Great Hall of the Musikhochschule that included Brahms's arrangement for piano, left hand alone, of Bach's violin Chaconne in D Minor and other works by Gounod, Busoni, and Reger. On 5-7 May the seventh "Brahmsstage" took place in Rüdesheim. The rich program of concerts and lectures included performances of the three String Quartets, Opp. 51 and 67, by the Vogler Quarter of Berlin. The high point of the festival was the opening of the "Rüdesheimer Brahmsweg" on 7 May, the composer's birthday.

Johannes Brahms in Göttingen" was the focus of festivities presented by the Musikwissenschaftliche Seminar der Universität Göttingen, in collaboration with the Göttingen Symphony Orchestra, on 15 May. A program of Brahms Lieder and works by Clara Schumann, Joseph Joachim, and Julius Otto Grimm were performed in the Accouchehaus, the birthplace of Agathe von Siebold.

On 23 June, as part of the 125th anniversary celebrations of the town of Pinneberg, an evening entitled "Brahms und die norddeutsche Romantik" was presented in the Rathaus. Lieder and works for piano and for violin by Brahms, as well as compositions by Eusebius Mandyczewski, Carl Reinecke, and Brahms's teacher, Eduard Marxsen, were performed by soprano Marjorie Patterson, violinist Martin Wulffhorst, and pianist Werner Hagen. Letters and other texts were read by Michael Paweletz.
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Editor's Notes


We also wish to thank George Bozarth for his help with the writing, editing, and production of this issue of the ABS Newsletter, and Nathan Link and Timothy Kinsella at the University of Washington for their assistance with production and distribution.

Correspondence, ideas, and submissions for the Newsletter are always welcome, and e-mail communication is especially encouraged. Materials for the autumn issue should be sent to the Editor by 1 September 2000.

*Margaret Notley*

The American Brahms Society is trying to increase its membership by 10% in each of the next five years. To do so we need your help! Please let your friends and colleagues know about our society and encourage them to consider joining the ABS to support its worthy projects—its Newsletter, the Karl Geiringer Scholarship, its publication *Brahms Studies*, and the Brahms Archive in Seattle. If you would like to have extra copies of any Newsletter to distribute to individuals or at your lectures or concerts, please request them from the Brahms Archive.

The JBG at Thirty

The American Brahms Society is most pleased to wish the Johannes Brahms Gesellschaft Internationale Vereinigung e.V. in Hamburg a "Happy 30th Birthday!" Our colleagues passed this milestone on 7 November 1999.

Founded as the Brahms Gesellschaft Hamburg, over the past three decades this society, which has been led by four presidents—Kurt Stephenson (1969–73), Helmut Wirth (1973–81), Detlef Kraus (1981–97), and Eckart Besch (since 1997)—has accomplished much. In 1971 it established a Brahms Museum in Hamburg (Peterstraße 39), which is overseen by Ingrid Zinnow, and it also maintains the graves of the Brahms family in Hamburg. Since 1974 it has issued twelve volumes of *Brahms Studien* containing a total of seventy-six articles.

The society has contributed significantly to Hamburg cultural life by sponsoring thirty lectures and fifty concerts, and has kept the world informed about Brahms events in Germany and elsewhere by issuing regular announcements in the publications of the Patriotische Gesellschaft von 1765, of which it is a member. Since 1983 the society has also mounted eight international performance competitions. Numerous other Brahms activities in Hamburg and other cities have benefited from the support of the JBG. On the occasion of this anniversary the society has issued an attractive booklet documenting its history.

We of the ABS join Brahmsians worldwide in saying "a job well done" and best of luck for the next thirty years!