The “London Version” of
Ein deutsches Requiem:
Further Perspectives

Introduction and Background

The “London Version” is the name now regularly given to the performance of Brahms’s Ein deutsches Requiem using Brahms’s own four-hand arrangement of the whole work in lieu of the orchestral part. The “London” reference is to a private performance given in July 1871 at the London home, 35 Wimpole Street (see Figure 1), of the English pianist Kate Loder, who as Lady Thompson was the wife of the noted surgeon Sir Henry Thompson. She played the arrangement with the veteran English musician Cipriani Potter with a choir conducted by Julius Stockhausen, who also sang the baritone part, and who had been the baritone soloist in the six-movement premiere in Bremen on 10 April 1868. The soprano soloist was Anna Regan (later Anna Shimon-Regan). This performance predated the first public performance in London of the Requiem with orchestra on 2 April 1873 by the Philharmonic Society with different soloists (Charles Santley and Sophie Ferrari) under William Cusins, and also a partial “public rehearsal” conducted by John Hullah the previous day. The purpose of this essay is to clarify the background of the July 1871 performance more fully, and to evaluate the medium of performance used.

Although there are only the barest of records of this private event, it has become familiar through both the steady growth in Brahms research over recent years—as an unusual but very accessible medium in the work’s early performance history—and the publication of a widely available facsimile of the first edition of the four-hand arrangement. These have encouraged increasingly frequent performance and recording. An almost inevitable consequence has been the growth of the assumption that this was a performance medium intended by Brahms. The claim has even been made that it was “the original” version of the Requiem.¹

The background to the event is known very partially, apparently recorded by only three personal witnesses: George Alexander Macfarren, Julius Stockhausen himself, and George Grove. Florence May’s important information appears to be secondhand (see below). None of these reports contextualizes the performance, though Macfarren and May’s accounts largely complement each other. Stockhausen notes the event only in passing in a letter to Brahms outlining the importance of 1871 in recent performances of his music in England, written upwards of a year later, in March 1872. Additionally, George Grove, who was also present, confirms the event and date, though indirectly and with no description.²

Macfarren’s record exists in three sources, of which the third is the most informative. It is apparently also the only one of the three previously cited in references to or discussions of this performance.³ Macfarren’s first source appears in the notes to the Philharmonic concert of 20 March 1872 featuring a performance of Potter’s second symphony, in the course of which Macfarren discusses Potter’s last appearance: this was “not in public but in a large assembly, at a private performance of the German Requiem of Johannes Brahms, given by Lady Thompson at her residence on the 7th of July, in which he took part in the arranged pianoforte accompaniment, showing, in his
feeble state of frame, the full vigour of his mind by entering with the utmost keenness into the infinite beauties of that extraordinary composition."

The second reference is a short mention of the event in the course of extensive Analytical Remarks by G. A. Macfarren on A German Requiem, a 15-side essay with music examples published shortly after the Philharmonic premiere in “July 1873,” but based on its program notes. Comparison of Macfarren’s heavily edited copy of this Philharmonic program (which resides in the British Library) shows it to have served as the proof for the Analytical Remarks, which refine its contents. The Analytical Remarks were seemingly intended for quick subsequent publication and wider dissemination by the publishers of the English vocal score as a response to the groundswell of enthusiasm for the work in Germany, since the Philharmonic program specifies that the performance was “By special Desire.” Although the program itself contains no reference to the 1871 event, the Analytical Remarks add this, stating that the Requiem “was first performed, privately, at the residence of Lady Thompson, July[...]1871; and, publicly at the Philharmonic concert of April 2 1873.”

This account is interesting in showing that the work was, by this date, sung in English, the first English edition having been issued by the same publishers (Stanley Lucas, Weber and Co, London; J. Rieter-Biedermann, Leipzig and Winterthur) the previous year, 1872. Macfarren presents the work as “An English Requiem,” giving the English translations from the published edition, since, as he states, its Protestant texts were commonly known in the English church. Since no English score was available in 1871, the private performance must have been in German, which may have contributed to the lengthy rehearsals that Macfarren seems to suggest.

Macfarren’s third source appears in the course of a lecture he gave to the Musical Association in which he expands more fully on the life and work of Potter himself in 1884.

Potter’s last appearance, I can scarcely say in public, but in a large assembly, was given on the 10th [sic] of July in the year 1871, in which year he died. Lady Thompson then gave in her drawing rooms the first performance in England of the German Requiem of Brahms[,] a large number of ladies and gentlemen constituted the chorus, and the pianoforte part in the form of a duet (there being no possibility of a band in the space), was played by Lady Thompson and Mr. Potter. His enthusiasm on that occasion extended itself to everyone who was concerned with the performance. The occasion was memorable as introducing a composition of the rarest merit to a first hearing among us; Mr. Julius Stockhausen, who has carefully trained the singers, conducted the music, and the audience were aglow with interest in the work and its rendering.

Macfarren’s great enthusiasm for the work was already confirmed in his Analytical Remarks, where he places the Requiem in succession to the great choral works “from Purcell … to Beethoven,” in stating that “it is impossible in the space of these comments even to hint at the extraordinary merit, technical and aesthetical, of the composition under our notice.”

May’s account was published much later, in her biography, the first edition of which appeared in 1905 but adds significant detail.

[The Requiem] was performed on July 7 (1871) for the first time in England, before an invited audience, at the residence of Sir Henry Thompson. Stockhausen conducted the rehearsals and performance, and sang the baritone solo, Fräulein Anna Regan, the soprano solo. The chorus was composed of about thirty good musicians, and accompaniments were played in their arrangement as a pianoforte duet by Lady Thompson and the veteran musician Cipriani Potter, then in his eightieth year.

Since May identifies that there were about thirty singers, the name of the soprano and her German appellation, that Stockhausen sang as well as conducted, and that the audience was invited, this might seem to indicate that she was present. But this cannot have been the case, as she was in Baden-Baden from May till autumn 1871 as a pupil of Clara Schumann, during which time she had the lessons with Brahms that she describes so vividly in the introduction to her biography.

Further information that May provides in the second edition of this book (and which appeared first in the German translation of 1911) is also not first-hand: this account continues with the
important information that “the first, second, fifth, and sixth numbers were performed by students of the Royal Academy of Music at a “public rehearsal” given under the direction of John Hullah, the then conductor of the Academy orchestra, on April 1 1873, at the Hanover Square Rooms.” But in her first edition, she merely footnotes that Charles Stanford had recalled to her that a performance by students of the RAM had been given prior to the Philharmonic performance, but that she had “not succeeded in ascertaining the date.” However, this actually contradicts Stanford’s clear statement of the event—that he and his Cambridge students “had hoped to give its first public performance in England” but had been anticipated by Hullah and the RAM, then the Philharmonic. May’s information for both performances therefore seems to have come from a third party, though not Stanford for the 1871 event, since he makes no reference to it.10

Whatever the background intricacies of Macfarren’s and May’s information, these details confirm the centrality of the Royal Academy of Music to the 1871 private event. Macfarren was a long-serving teacher of the RAM, soon in 1876 to become its Principal; Kate Loder was a former student and teacher; Hullah was a teacher and conductor there until around the time of the 1873 performance.11 Even Stockhausen connects to it, adding to his information to Brahms that the soloist in the UK premiere of the Piano Concerto in D Minor was an RAM student. None of this is entirely surprising: prior to the opening of the Royal College of Music in 1883, the RAM was the only conservatory of importance in London and the focus for interest in new music. And given that the Philharmonic did not have a regular choir until 1882 but relied on ad hoc ensembles, it seems very unlikely that the two performances on adjacent days were unconnected in their choral personnel.

The soprano Anna Shimon-Regan (1841–1902) had no apparent connections with the RAM, but rather with the Philharmonic Society and the London performances of the Brahms circle. At this time she also appeared in Vienna, where she enjoyed some aristocratic employment, and in several German cities, including with the tenor Gustav Walter. She was mainly active latterly in Leipzig. She must have met Stockhausen through these connections. (Her later husband, Adolf Shimon, had studied with him.) Foster claims her link with the Philharmonic Society was through family connections: she had previously appeared at two Philharmonic concerts in 1869 (on 10 March, the program featuring Joseph Joachim, and 19 April featuring Karl Reinecke) and would appear a third time on 15 April 1872 in a concert featuring Clara Schumann. (In this year she also appeared in one of Clara Schumann’s London piano recitals, at St. James Hall on 22 February 1872.) Regan preferred concert engagements to operatic roles. Contemporaneous reviews suggest that her clear, pure voice would have been attractive in a small hall with piano accompaniment.12

Since only Macfarren’s third, 1884, source has been cited in recent references to the 1871 performance, a query has naturally arisen regarding the dating as between the 7th and 10th July (in the early secondary literature the dating depended on whether Macfarren or May was given as a source; the editor of Stockhausen’s biography cites May). As Macfarren’s first source indicates, there is no discrepancy: both agree on 7 July. However, the fact that Macfarren recorded the date as 10 July in his last presentation naturally redirects attention more closely to the background of his record—and, in turn, no less to that of May.

Macfarren had been completely blind since 1861; although he maintained an active musical life, he had to use various amanuenses. It is therefore difficult to understand how he managed to give his 1884 speech so apparently effortlessly. It must have been prepared with support and memorized for presentation, unless edited subsequently for publication, which seems more likely. He may have kept the date only in memory, or his earlier notes may have been gathered by someone else and left uncorrected. An interesting irregularity concerning the printing of the 1873 Analytical Remarks may relate to this, as has emerged in my transcription “July [...]”. The specification of the date of performance which should appear after “July” at the end of the right justification has been left blank so as to leave a space in place of the date, the next line simply continuing “1871.” This seems to indicate that the date was queried at the very last minute before printing.

A final confirmation that 7 July was indeed the date of the performance comes indirectly, but clearly, from Grove, whose biographer refers to his attending Stockhausen’s Schubert recital in London on 5 July 1871, and, on July 7th, “Brahms’s Requiem for the first time.”13

Stanford’s allusion to a rivalry with the RAM (Cambridge University Music Society eventually gave the work in 1876) gives a clue to the motivation of the performers: that the new Brahms enthusiasts among the students and faculty wanted to get a performance without waiting for the Philharmonic. That interest in the Requiem was, however, in the air is also clear from the recent review of the full score and vocal score that had appeared in the May 1871 issue of the The Monthly Musical Record.14

Given the pressing desire for a performance, a striking feature of the 1871 event is its domestic setting and personnel. As piano
accompanist, an advanced student or professional certainly could have been engaged to cope with the solo reduction in the vocal score had this been wished. In seeking reasons for engaging these two particular London performers, their status and reputation stand out. Both Loder and Potter were elder and respected figures. Although only around 45, Loder had long ago, upon her marriage, retired from the public stage as a leading player. Potter, who had received advice from Beethoven as a young man and was a revered figure in England, was, though still vital, at the end of his life. Moreover—still unusual for the time—he had always been a great supporter of Schumann as in turn of Brahms, and thus shared his pupil Macfarren’s historical perspective, as Macfarren’s vivid description of Potter’s committed participation (in the first source) makes clear. That they wished to give the students and supporters of the RAM the chance to perform the work that had created such an impression in Europe as soon as they could seems likely. Potter’s presence and the courtesy to Loder as providing the early venue in her home must explain the event and probably the performance format of the duet medium. Since, as Macfarren states, there was no space for an orchestra, the four-hand orchestral substitute satisfied social as well as musical purposes.

In summary, since there is no reference to further performances with four-hand accompaniment in England, but only to this one event, and no participation or comment by Brahms, let alone such an edition, one cannot properly speak of a “version,” which must imply some form of authority or permanence through repetition. Admittedly, the subject is contentious, and the term is often used where an earlier form of a work has been composed and/or performed, then discarded or revised by a composer. But that is not the case here, and the term is therefore misleading.

**Performance Evaluation**

The reason that the performance of the “London Version” has become a critical issue is not just that Brahms gave no precedent, but because of the inherent performance problems it presents. Brahms’s arrangement is not a four-hand arrangement of the orchestral score or even an elaborated alternative of the rehearsal piano reduction in the vocal score, but an idiomatic realization of the complete work, choral as well as orchestral parts, for piano duet performance (Figure 2 shows the cover). The most obvious and extensive difference between the two concerns doubling, both of the unaccompanied choral parts and the accompanied solo parts. Such examples as the hushed unaccompanied choral opening “Selig sind, die da Leid tragen,” the sudden contrast at “So seid nun geduldig” in the second movement, or the dramatic baritone opening to Movement 3, “Herr, lehre doch mich,” hardly need mentioning to present readership. Contrast and dramatic effect are ruined by the doubling on the piano, which can never match the flexibility of expression required in the voices, and which destroys the vocal character.

![Figure 3: The first page of the Requiem in Brahms’s arrangement for four hands with text, Secondo and Primo.](image-url)
The London performers were, of course, very well aware of these issues. The fortunate survival of the copy they apparently used enables their solutions to be observed to some extent. The copy has been marked up with the rehearsal marks from the vocal score/full score for rehearsal purposes. The doubling of unaccompanied parts has been deleted, as at the beginning (see Figure 3), though not throughout. Surprisingly, only one solo vocal passage has been crossed out: the return of the opening idea at mm. 67–82 of Movement 3. Whether the lack of necessary deletions confirms the actual performance cannot be known: the rendering must have had a degree of spontaneity, given that Stockhausen was also conducting. But these inconsistencies almost certainly reveal much broader performance problems than the mere deletion of doublings in unaccompanied choral passages. Much more problematic would have been the resulting texture if choral or solo parts were deleted where they formed an essential part of the four-hand sonority. To take an obvious example, in Movement 2 at the entry of the choir in octaves at “Denn alles Fleisch” at m. 22, the deletion of these parts leaves a gap where the trombones double and the harps fill the harmony. It is therefore likely that the players tended to keep the full texture and turned a deaf ear to the result.

Although Brahms never had to resolve these issues himself, the performance under discussion did nonetheless take place, and in the hands of the baritone who first performed it and with distinguished performers and an invited audience. It therefore presents a considerable challenge in the evaluation of its historical significance and artistic value, which is bound to encourage some broader reflection on performance realities in Brahms’s work and time.

Set in historical perspective, the use of the arrangement gains much more legitimacy. Brahms devoted huge attention to four-hand arrangements of his works. They stand as independent realizations of the concepts of these works, often distinct in details and crafted with great attention to idiomatic keyboard effect. And they had a distinctive place in musical life, which was still rooted in local social and amateur music-making and especially piano playing. Indeed, the next performance that Stockhausen recalls to Brahms in his letter is of the Serenades played four-handed. Arrangements were the primary means through which audiences first came to know many large-scale works before the burgeoning of public concert life and subsequently broadcasting and recording. Melchior Rieter-Biedermann published several arrangements of the Requiem not made by Brahms, including the whole work for piano, three movements set for piano and harmonium, and two movements for organ. Brahms showed a mastery of the blending of choral and ensemble voices with piano in many works. Indeed, the Liebeslieder Waltzes were effectively for similar forces, since Brahms marked the score “for voices ad libitum,” which has resulted in frequent choral performance as he must have anticipated. The purely orchestral passages of the Requiem are, of course, very effective, because they were probably first conceived for piano anyway.

It therefore seems ultimately doubtful that Brahms, any more than Stockhausen, would have objected in principle to such an adapted performance, provided that attention was paid to the necessary amendments to ensure musical effectiveness—as Stockhausen sought to do: Brahms was nothing if not a practical musician. Though Stockhausen did not specify to Brahms the forces that he used, the fact that he informed him at all of this house performance is clear enough indication that it was done with piano, and that to Stockhausen it was musically valid. Other early performances with piano in lieu of orchestra in Germany were also known to Brahms. The critic Adolf Schubring wrote to Brahms on 9 February 1869 about his performance in Dessau on 3 January 1869 with 12 singers and piano and an audience of about 60, also mentioning it in his article “Schumanniana Nr. 12.” His comment that it was arranged “durch eine gemeinschaftliche Wiener Freundin” (through a mutual female friend in Vienna) seems to align it with the social aspect of the circumstances of the London performance. Further, the soprano Livia Frege hosted a performance at her home in Leipzig using piano, string quartet, and organ, a performance mentioned by Max Bruch in a letter to Brahms on 25 February 1869, only eight days after the first complete performance of the work in the city on 18 February. Whether the London performers knew about these is not recorded, but the London circumstances certainly seem analogous.

Given that Stockhausen’s performance reflected such social values and musical circumstances, the relevant question is whether such performance with four hands, chorus, and soloists has such a place today—and whether in public as well as private. In the present writer’s opinion, the Requiem indeed remains very well suited to this performance format, which is why the format is appealing to performers. But the problem with many modern performances is—at least on personal observation—that they do not actually seek to simulate the recorded amendments of the “London Version” (which is, in any case, unavailable to the general public), or those of musical sense, but play the arrangement literally, with the negative results outlined.

Whether Brahms, given the choice, would actually have approved of such a performance in public, we can never know. But, just as arrangements are no longer necessary (or in many quarters acceptable), so modern performance circumstances have also changed. In Brahms’s time choral participation was the backbone of musical life, which is why the Requiem made his name. But today, far fewer music lovers sing in choirs or have the chance of participation in a major choral work, and just at the time when this work is better known than ever through professional performances in multiple recordings. It is therefore extremely encouraging that smaller choirs with soloists in local and probably economically constrained circumstances should wish to perform it. But if it is to be performed in this form and for such reasons, it is artistically important that it be done with the necessary sensitivity to the adapted medium. Then perhaps performances can more properly be claimed to be “after the London performance of 7 July 1871.”

Michael Musgrave

Call for Papers:  
**Joseph Joachim at 185**  
Deadline for Proposals: 10 January 2016

An international conference celebrating Joseph Joachim and his world will be held 16–18 June 2016 at the Goethe Institut, 170 Beacon Street, Boston. The keynote speaker is Prof. Dr. Christiane Wiesenfeldt, Director of the Department of MusicoLOGY Weimar-Jena. In addition to three days of papers and lecture-recitals, the conference will include a concert Friday evening at the First Church in Boston featuring James Buswell, violin; Carol Ou, cello; Victor Rosenbaum, piano; and Mana Takuno, piano. Conference organizers are Robert Eshbach, University of New Hampshire, and Valerie Goertzen, Loyola University New Orleans. The conference website, including information about invited speakers and registration, is http://joachimconference.com.

The organizers welcome proposals for papers, panels, and lecture-recitals relating to the life and career of the composer-violinist; his compositions, arrangements, repertory, recordings, and performance practices; his legacy as a teacher; his connection to contemporary figures and to the music of earlier composers; and his ideology and cultural milieu. A formal call for papers may be found at https://joachimconference.wordpress.com.

News from the Board of Directors

At the meeting of the ABS Board of Directors on 13 November 2015 in Louisville, KY, Paul Berry, Marie Sumner Lott, and Scott Murphy were elected to the Board and memberships were renewed for Styra Avins, Kevin Karnes, and Peter Smith. New officers as of 1 January 2016 are Ryan McClelland, President; Valerie Goertzen, Vice-President; David Brodbeck, Secretary; and Marie Sumner Lott, Treasurer. Camilla Cai, Virginia Hancock, and Ryan Minor will move to the Advisory Board. The Geiringer Committee will be Richard Cohn, Chair, Paul Berry, and Heather Platt.

The Society is healthy in terms of financial assets and membership. The Board voted to contribute funding in support of the conference *Joseph Joachim at 185*, to be held 16–18 June 2016 in Boston.

Twenty-seventh Annual Geiringer Scholarship

The Karl Geiringer Scholarship was founded in 1990 in honor of Professor Geiringer’s commitment to graduate education and to continue his legacy of scholarship. The Scholarship is presented annually as meritorious candidates present themselves. The competition is open to those in the final stages of preparing a doctoral dissertation in the English language. Guidelines for applicants are posted on the Society’s website. Applications should be emailed to Dr. Richard Cohn, Chair, Geiringer Scholarship Committee, at richard.coen@yale.edu by 1 June.

Brahms News

The past year’s Brahms Award winner at The Ohio State University was pianist David Pettit, a senior from Portsmouth, Ohio. David was a pre-med/piano performance double major, as well as the drum major of the OSU Marching Band. The Brahms Fund was established by longtime ABS member and emeritus philosophy professor, Tony Pasquarello, in memory of his son, violinist A. Joseph Pasquarello, and in honor of Johannes Brahms.

We have received word from Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Sandberger of the Brahms-Institut Lübeck that the Archive’s entire Joachim holdings will be digitalized in the coming year, including the extensive collection of letters between Joseph Joachim and his brother Heinrich.

Recent Publications

Books and Articles


How did Brahms’s music sound to contemporaries? What can we reconstruct of Brahms’s own performing practices? How might any evidence influence our own approaches to his music? Three performer-scholars have spent years researching these questions, with their work now culminating in a series of critical Urtext editions of Brahms’s chamber music for solo instrument and piano published by Bärenreiter. Their companion volume of critical notes, *Performing Practices in Johannes Brahms’ Chamber Music*, offers general guidelines for performance—and a compelling case for adopting some of the nineteenth-century techniques they detail.

The authors, Clive Brown, Neal Peres Da Costa, and Kate Bennett Wadsworth, bring their individual performing expertise to each section; Brown focuses on string techniques, Peres Da Costa on piano performance practice, and Wadsworth on Brahms and the cello. They draw on a wide variety of sources, including letters, printed recollections of contemporaries, reviews, as well as the precious few recordings left by those in Brahms’s circle and beyond. The discussion is detailed and includes precise references to the recordings, so that one could go to YouTube, listen to many of these recordings, and learn by example.

The individual editions of the sonatas include extensive notes on performing practice, ranging from general guiding principles to detailed suggestions for interpreting individual markings. The Op. 78 G-Major Violin Sonata (BA 9431), edited by both Clive Brown and Neal Peres Da Costa, contains the piano score with suggested fingerings and two violin parts, one Urtext and one with performance indications by Brown (see Figure 1), as well as notes on the history of the sonata’s conception, its publication, and early reception. In interpreting Brahms’s markings in this particular sonata, the editors have drawn on seven editions published between 1917 and 1933 by musicians with some connection to Brahms.

Brown’s edited violin part reflects the performing practices; for example, numerous harmonics in the opening line would prevent the continuous vibrato preferred today.

![Figure 1: Beginning of the violin part for the G-Major Sonata with performance indications by Clive Brown.](image)

The asterisk in m. 1 connects with a footnote referring the user to the notes on performing practice in the full score. *Johannes Brahms, Sonata for Violin and Piano G Major Op. 78 (BA 9431), Urtext Edition published by Bärenreiter-Verlag.*

The companion volume is organized into four sections: commentary on tempo and rhythmic flexibility in general, string-specific techniques, piano performance practice, and “Brahms and the Cello.” Clive Brown’s notes on tempo and rubato open with a reported Brahms comment on metronomes: “I myself have never believed that my blood and a mechanical instrument go well together” (p. 3). This begins a strong case for adopting more rhythmic and tempo flexibility in the performance of his music. Reviews and first-hand testimonials indicate that Brahms employed rubato, which may be fairly well known today, but the tendency to take different tempos for different musical themes is less accepted now. Tempo modifications may be indicated by dynamic signs in Brahms or not indicated at all, as performances of Joseph Joachim suggest. This should come as a call for more experimental use of tempo fluctuation in Brahms performance today.

In Brown’s section on string performance practice, he urges us to abandon the dichotomous notion that now we employ vibrato and in the past they did not. Drawing on turn-of-the-century sources, including violin treatises and recordings, he notes that while continuous vibrato was foreign to Brahms’s circle, vibrato was used occasionally for special effect. It was left to the discretion of the performer. This section includes helpful historical context in contrasting the performing practices of the Brahms circle with those of the Franco-Belgian school (Ysaÿe, Kreisler), where vibrato was employed more liberally and at a variety of speeds. Brown also notes that portamento was common for a range of emotional conditions or simply as a means of achieving a legato line, even citing its appearance in a Bach recording by Joachim. The documentary evidence from those in Brahms’s circle also includes recordings by violinists Marie Soldat, Hugo Heermann, Leopold Auer, Karl Klingler, and cellists Hugo Becker and Julius Klengel.

Neal Peres Da Costa’s notes cover a range of piano performance practices, including dislocation, arpeggiation, and pedal use. He encourages us to experiment with arpeggiation and dislocation, the “separation of melody from the accompaniment (unnotated in the score)—also referred to now as manual asynchrony, hands apart playing, and bass note anticipation—[which] was usually achieved by delaying the melody note, though occasionally by playing it before the accompaniment” (p. 15). Based on the variety of historical treatises and other testimonial references, it seems indisputable that a certain degree of arpeggiation was expected. The vertical, completely synchronous sound that is prized today would have been a special effect in the nineteenth century. Having established the ubiquity of this practice, Peres Da Costa addresses a potentially misleading source from Brahms’s biographer and piano student, Florence May, who wrote that Brahms told her not to arpeggiate chords at all. Peres Da Costa argues that this was a special case of teacher-pupil interaction, and that Brahms may have said this to stop her from arpeggiating...
unreflectively. Certainly we know from numerous other sources that Brahms himself used arpeggiation quite liberally. Through this example, we see the benefits of the extensive research that has gone into these editions.

The copious examples from recordings demonstrate the variety of expressive effects to which these rhythmic techniques might be used. Peres Da Costa surveys the available recordings made by nineteenth-century pianists, from Carl Reinecke, Theodor Leschetizky, Camille Saint-Saëns, to Ignaz Jan Paderewski, Moritz Rosenthal, and others. Ironically, some of the pianists from the Brahms circle are less known today, even among some piano connoisseurs; this group includes the students of Clara Schumann: Fanny Davies, Adelina de Lara, Carl Friedberg, Ilona Eibenschütz, and Leonard Borwick. Peres Da Costa goes into some detail analyzing the remaining records left to us by these pianists, some of whom lived into the 1950s.

Brahms’s pedalling technique and notation may have been inspired by Schumann, who often marked “with pedal” but did not give more detailed indications. Eugene D’Albert, who studied with Brahms, recalled simply that “the Master wished that the use of the pedal be left to the player’s taste” (p. 23). Peres Da Costa also notes that rhythmic (on the beat) and syncopated (to connect a line) pedalling were both used at the end of the nineteenth century, and that there was probably more contrast in sound between pedalled and unpedalled sections of music. In Brahms’s circle, recordings suggest, there is a lack of pedalling at certain moments, such as Etelka Freund’s staccato passages in Op. 118, No. 6.

Kate Bennett Wadsworth opens the final section by reminding us that Brahms played cello and reportedly “got as far as [playing] a Romberg concerto” (p. 27). That said, it is unclear in the case of the first sonata (Op. 38 in E Minor) whether Brahms had outside advice on marking the cello part. But we do know that the second cello sonata was inspired by Robert Hausmann, cellist in the Joachim Quartet. Her edition of the Op. 99 sonata goes into more detail about Hausmann’s particular expressive fingerings, but it seems that his copy is not much marked at all. However, we have recordings and a performing edition by Julius Klengel as well as recordings by Hugo Becker from which we may draw interpretive clues. Wadsworth, a Baroque cellist herself, points out the transition during Brahms’s lifetime from the “Baroque” cello hold (between the knees) towards a less upright position that came about due to use of the endpin; the earlier style would have facilitated more intricate bowing styles. She notes Brahms’s own change in slurring between the original and revised versions of the Op. 8 Piano Trio (1854, 1889) as possible evidence that he was aware of an emerging style of bowing “which favoured mid-length slurs in the middle section of the bow” (p. 31). She also notes a difference between violin and cello portamento: cellists seemed to be more accepting of the “French portamento,” which meant new-finger shifts. Her cello sources tend to corroborate Bowen’s violin sources on the subject of vibrato: continuous vibrato was unaccepted in Brahms’s circle.

In the epilogue we are reminded that all of these techniques related to a general sense of flexibility of rhythm and tempo, which is often lost today. Brahms’s markings do not convey to us what they conveyed to his contemporaries. The authors agree that we may have misinterpreted some quotes from Brahms’s contemporaries (such as the Florence May example described above) to mean that Brahms believed in a strict fidelity to the notated score. They emphasize the importance of recognizing the performative context: as a pianist Brahms may have seemed more restrained to his contemporaries because he eschewed histrionics, but flexibility in service of musical narrative and drama remained. When we compare the recordings of musicians in his circle, such as Joachim or Eibenschütz, to later twentieth-century performances, the former seem much more flexible and “Romantic.” The new Bärenreiter editions are designed to help us explore expressive possibilities in our own performances.

Despite the amount of detail, there is at least one point which might benefit from further exploration. How, if at all, did early music performance practices influence other performance? Often when we approach performing practices of a particular era we focus on how a composer’s contemporaries would have performed his or her music, but we may overlook how those musicians themselves would have performed the music of earlier eras. Peres Da Costa mentions that the practice of dislocation dates at least as far back as the seventeenth century, when keyboardists borrowed the style brisé and other techniques from French Baroque lute practice. The assumption is that the practice of dislocation would have continued uninterrupted until the twentieth century—therefore, dislocation would have appeared to be a “current” performance practice to Brahms and not especially apropos to early repertories. Similarly, the overholding of keys to create finger legato is mentioned as a technique relevant to both eighteenth-century music and Brahms’s contemporary music. Surely changes in performance practice, at least due to the development of the instrument itself, are relevant, as we learn from Wadsworth’s discussion of the transition from a Baroque cello hold to endpin use.

We know, for example, that Brahms’s musicological interest in early music overlapped with his interests as a performer. Elaine Kelly has shown that he was already embroiled in debate in the 1870s over “authentic” realizations of figured bass.1 I too have encountered an “apology” for Brahms’s seemingly excessive use of arpeggiation in his playing of a Bach organ transcription, which explained that Brahms, as a student of Bach, was applying “good organ performance practice.”2 Peres Da Costa also mentions Schumann’s “organ style of pianoforte playing, so that inner parts blended,” so it might be revealing to explore keyboard techniques beyond the piano (p. 22). The question remains: what of an emerging early music performance practice influenced these musicians? When we listen to Joachim’s Bach recordings, how much of what we hear is tempered by his conception of an “authentic” interpretation of 150-year-old music?

For some performers reading these editions, simply encountering the drastic difference in actual performance practices in Brahms’s time, presented in loving detail, may be overwhelming—or also very exciting. Above all, the authors adhere to Brahms’s sense that the interpretation is left to the performer’s discretion, and they encourage us to experiment. Adoption of these performing practices can enliven our music-making, reintroduce a sense of spontaneity, and reinvigorate Brahms performance today.

Laurie McManus

Publications, continued from page 7


Critical Editions


Dissertations


Papers Presented


Heather Platt (Ball State University), “Competing Tonics in Brahms’s Vocal Works: An 1858–69 Compositional Problem”


Paper read at the Allegheny Chapter of the American Musicological Society, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV, 17 October 2015: Jane Hines (Princeton University), “Brahms the Modernist: Historical Influence in the First Sextet”
To join the American Brahms Society, please fill out the form below and mail it with your check (payable to The American Brahms Society) to: The American Brahms Society, Department of Music, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH 03824.

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Papers read at the joint annual meeting of the American Musicological Society and Society for Music Theory, Milwaukee, WI, 6–9 November 2014:
Gillian Robertson (Florida State University), “Brahms’s Emergent Identity: A Narrative Interpretation of Variations on a Theme by Paganini, Op. 35, Book I”
Alexander Stefaniak (Washington University in St. Louis), “Brilliant, Transcendent Virtuosity in Clara Wieck Schumann’s 1830s Concerts”
Papers read at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society, Louisville, KY, 12–15 November 2015:
Paul Berry (Yale University), “Casualties of Scholarship in Brahms’s Piano Trio, op. 8”
Laurie McManus (Shenandoah Conservatory), “Brahms among the Freudians: Pathologizing the Pure Style”