The American Brahms Society Presents

Brahms in the New Century

March 21-23, 2012

Hosted by
The Brook Center for Music Research
at the Graduate Center of
The City University of New York

Keynote Speaker
Scott Burnham
Scheide Professor of Music History,
Princeton University

Sponsored by the College of Fine Arts, Ball State University
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Welcome

On behalf of the officers, Board of Directors, and membership of the American Brahms Society, I would like to extend you a warm welcome to the conference Brahms in the New Century. This three-day event brings together more than 40 participants from as close as the greater metropolitan region of our host city of New York to as far as Sydney, Australia. The range of topics for scholarly consideration is similarly broad with presentations devoted to Brahms’s life and his relationships with key figures of his circle, performance practice and reception history, newly discovered correspondence, and, not least, engagement with the musical intricacies, expressive potentials, and cultural milieu of Brahms’s wondrous compositions.

An event such as this does not come together without the considerable effort of many individuals. As a small token of appreciation, I would like to recognize their contributions here. First, thanks are due to the members of the Program Committee for which I served as Chair: Walter Frisch of Columbia University, Ryan Minor of Stony Brook University, and Heather Platt of Ball State University. Prof. Platt has also generously served as Conference Convener, and it is fair to say that this conference would not have been possible without her scholarly vision and tenacious work ethic. Valerie Goertzen of Loyola University has assisted Prof. Platt in organizing the event, and the American Brahms Society’s dedicated webmaster Daniel Beller-McKenna of the University of New Hampshire designed the webpage and coordinated advertising via social media outlets.

We are also grateful to Barbara Dobbs Mackenzie, Director, Barry S. Brook Center for Music Research and Documentation and Editor-in-Chief, Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale (RILM), who generously agreed to host the event. Zdravko Blažeković, Executive Editor of RILM, and Michele Smith offered much needed advice and assistance with the local arrangements.

Jane Gottlieb, Vice President for Library and Information Resources at the Juilliard School, and Robert Kosovsky of the Music Division of the Library for the Performing Arts, New York Public Library, enthusiastically took on the task of creating imaginative exhibits of their libraries’ holdings of Brahms related manuscripts.

Finally, special thanks are due to Robert Kvam, Dean of the College of Fine Arts, Ball State University, for his unfailing support and generous financial sponsorship to defray costs of the conference.

Peter H. Smith
Professor of Music, The University of Notre Dame
President, The American Brahms Society
Wednesday, March 21
9:30am-5:45pm: Registration, Room C 198

Session 1: 10:00am-1:00pm, Room C 198
Opening Remarks

Brahms and His Circle. Michael Musgrave, Chair
“Joachim, Reményi ... and Brahms,” Robert W. Eshbach
“Improvisational Idyll: Joachim’s ‘Presence’ and Brahms’s Violin Concerto, op. 77,”
Karen Leistra-Jones
“Rethinking the ‘Billroth Affair’,” David Brodbeck
“Brahms’s Letters: Reassessing the Past, Considering the Future,”
Styra Avins

Session 2: 2:30pm-4:00pm, Room C 198
Reception History. Ryan Minor, Chair
“Brahms in the Priesthood of Art?” Laurie McManus
“Brahms, Marxist Criticism, and Historiography: Adorno’s Cultural Pessimism versus
Bloch’s Cultural Optimism,” Nicole Grimes

Session 3: 4:00pm-5:30pm, Room C 198
Performance Practice I: The Piano. Norman Carey, Chair
“Weekly Meetings with Brahms at Home: Etelka Freund’s Interpretations of Brahms’s
Piano Music,” Neal Peres Da Costa
“Brahms Performance Practice in a New Context: The Bruce Hungerford Recorded
Lessons with Carl Friedberg,” Ann Riesbeck DiClemente

Thursday, March 22
9:00am-5:00pm: Registration continues, Segal Theater

Session 4: 9:00am-11:15am, Segal Theater
Sonata Form. James Hepokoski, Chair
“S-C Complications in Brahms’s Sonata Movements,” Kyle Jenkins
“Cyclicism and Expanded Type 1 Forms in Chamber Works by Brahms and Dvořák,”
Carissa Reddick
“Brahms, the ‘Tonic-Heavy’ Sonata, and Deep-Level Developing Variation,”
Boyd Pomeroy

Beverage Service, 11:15am, Segal Theater
Session 5: 11:15am-12:45pm, Segal Theater
Music with Text I: Artistic Aspirations, Commercial Concerns. Barbara Dobbs Mackenzie, Chair
“Between Aesthetic Ideals and Commercial Needs: Brahms’s Solo Songs From the 1860s,” Natasha Loges
“At Home, in Concert, and Without Words? The Performance and Reception of Brahms’s Liebeslieder op. 52,” Katy Hamilton

2:15pm-3:15pm, Segal Theater
Keynote Address
“Between Schicksal and Seligkeit: Mortality as Music in Brahms,” Scott Burnham

Refreshments: 3:15pm-3:45pm, Segal Theater

Session 6: 3:45pm-5:15pm, Segal Theater
Cycles of Pieces, Cycles of Thirds. Daniel Beller-McKenna, Chair
“The Allure of Beethoven’s ‘Terzen-Ketten’: Third-Chains in Studies by Nottebohm and Music by Brahms,” Marie Rivers Rule

Session 7: 5:30pm-6:30pm, Segal Theater
Performance Practice II: Piano and Strings Chamber Music. Heather Platt, Chair
“Brahms Revealed: A Lecture/Demonstration,” Neal Peres Da Costa, piano, and Robin Wilson, violin, with members of Ironwood

Friday, March 23: CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Session 8a: 9:00am-11:15am, Segal Theater
Rhythm and Meter. Joel Lester, Chair
“On the Oddness of Brahms’s Five-Measure Phrases,” Sam Ng
“Ten Measures From Opus 5,” Richard Cohn
“Hemiola as an Agent of Metric Resolution in the Music of Brahms,” Ryan McClelland
**Session 8b: 9:45am-11:15am, Recital Hall**  
**Music with Text II: Meaning and Cultural Context.** Richard Kramer, Chair  
“Brahms’s *Zigeunerlieder*: Naturalization, Nostalgia, and the Politics of Race and Feeling in Late Nineteenth-Century Vienna,” Seth Houston  
“The Biblical Context of Johannes Brahms’s *Ein deutsches Requiem*,” R. Allen Lott

**Session 9a: 1:00pm-4:00pm, Segal Theater**  
**Analysis and Meaning.** L. Poundie Burstein, Chair  
“Variation as Thematic Actualization: Brahms’s Opus 9,” Jeffrey Swinkin  
“Faith and Doubt in Brahms’s Requiem: The Sixth Movement’s Great ‘Fugue’,”  
Frank Samarotto  
“Sweet Dalliance: *Un poco presto, e con sentimento* from Brahms’s Violin Sonata No. 3 in D minor,” Eric Wen  

**Session 9b: 1:00pm-2:30pm, Recital Hall**  
**Genre and Intertextuality.** Walter Frisch, Chair  
“Op. 99 and Brahms’s Late Turn to F major,” Rowland Moseley  
“Brahms the Conservative: Genre, Allusion, and Meaning,” Matthew Gelbart

**Refreshments: 4:00-4:15pm, Segal Theater**

**Session 10: 4:15pm-5:45pm, Segal Theater**  
**Romantic Relationships and Compositional Reinvention.** Jane Gottlieb, Chair  
Wednesday, March 21

Session 1: 10:00am-1:00pm, Room C 198

Opening Remarks
Peter H. Smith, President, Board of Directors of the American Brahms Society.
Barbara Dobbs Mackenzie, Director, Barry S. Brook Center for Music Research and Documentation and Editor-in-Chief, Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale (RILM).

Brahms and His Circle
Michael Musgrave, Juilliard, Chair

JOACHIM, REMÉNYI ... AND BRAHMS

Robert W. Eshbach
University of New Hampshire

The story of Johannes Brahms’s first encounter with Joseph Joachim in May, 1853 has been told many times — not always accurately, and seldom without a certain condescending bias toward Ede Reményi, the man who made that meeting possible. It seems that bias originated with Joachim himself: Joachim was famously possessive in friendship and in love, and, at the beginning of his relationship with Brahms, he can fairly be described as having been “smitten.” From the first, he coveted for himself not only an exclusive relationship with the beautiful, enigmatic young tone-poet, but also the role of being Brahms's “discoverer.”

In his festival address at Meiningen on October 7, 1899, Joachim coined the phrase die ungleichen Kunstgenossen (“the unequal comrades-in-art”) to describe not merely a difference in talent or temperament between Brahms and Reményi, but a difference in moral/artistic outlook, thus placing the young Brahms at the parting of two paths: Reményi/Liszt and Joachim/Schumann. As Joachim told the story, his “discovery” of Brahms was a tale of rescue — of the “young fellow at whose cradle graces and heroes stood watch” from the sinking weight of temporal concerns and the corrupting snares of musical charlatanism. Yet, everything we know of Brahms leads us to believe that, already as a youth, he was confident and incorruptible in his own judgments, and well understood the choices that lay before him.

This presentation will attempt to provide a new, more accurate perspective on this early and important encounter.

IMPROVISATIONAL IDYLL: JOACHIM’S “PRESENCE” AND BRAHMS’S VIOLIN CONCERTO, OP. 77

Karen Leistra-Jones
Franklin & Marshall College

Boris Schwarz has aptly characterized Brahms’s Violin Concerto, Op. 77, as an “intangible interplay between the art of Brahms and that of Joachim.” Indeed, the celebrated
violinist was not only the inspiration for this concerto; he also played a crucial role in its compositional genesis and early performance history. But while Joachim’s compositional contributions to the concerto have been well documented, his importance as a performer is usually acknowledged only in vague terms.

This paper addresses this imbalance through an examination of the intersections between Joachim’s style, persona, and reputation as a performer and specific formal and expressive features in the Violin Concerto. Its central argument is that the concerto was not merely influenced by Joachim; it staged him in the role of soloist, and the qualities and meanings associated with his delivery represented a significant ontological component of this concerto as a “work.” Particularly important was Joachim’s perceived ability to present composed musical works as though they were being improvised, created on the spot through a mysterious fusion of Joachim himself with the mind and spirit of the composer. This ideal of spontaneous, unmediated subjectivity, or nonalienated oneness between creator and interpreter, was not only activated in Joachim’s performances, but also thematized in the concerto itself. Combining close readings of select passages (including Joachim’s own cadenza) with recordings and contemporary accounts of Joachim’s playing, this paper arrives at an understanding of this concerto that merges two seemingly incompatible critical orientations: “presence” and “meaning.”

RETHINKING THE “BILLROTH AFFAIR”

David Brodbeck
University of California, Irvine

In Hitlers Vätergeneration: Die Ursprünge des Nationalsozialismus in der k.u.k. Monarchie (2005), the historian Michael Wladika described the publication in 1875 of Theodor Billroth’s Über das Lehren und Lernen der medicinischen Wissenschaften an den Universitäten der deutschen Nation as an “epochal date” for racial, that is, non-religiously motivated antisemitism in Austria, a development whose “cutting edge,” as he rightly notes, took place on the campuses of Austria’s universities. What Wladika has in mind here are student disturbances, violent at times, that took place in the halls of the Vienna Medical School in the wake of the publication of Billroth’s tome. These were prompted by what the author, in a brief excursus, had written about the matriculation at that institution of large numbers of poor, mostly Jewish students from Hungary and the eastern provinces of Galicia and Bukowina. In her recent adumbration of the “political views held by Brahms and his Viennese circle,” appearing in the framing chapters of Lateness and Brahms (2007), Margaret Notley cites Billroth’s discussion of this matter as evidence of the “unthinking anti-Semitism” of which he (and by implication Brahms as well) was occasionally guilty. If Notley sees this as a kind of Liberal foible, other scholars have been much harsher in their assessment. Indeed, among many historians of medicine, Billroth is known as an out-and-out racial antisemite, who, in the words of John M. Efron, argued that “Jews could never make competent physicians in the German mold” because they were separated from the Germans by a “cleavage” brought on by “blood.” In view of the explosiveness of such charges, and of Billroth’s interest to music historians on account of his close friendship with Brahms, a detailed examination seems in order. By scrutinizing the entire “Billroth Affair”—as the controversy came to be known in the Viennese press—this paper aims to show that Billroth’s alleged antisemitism (of whatever stripe) is by no means as self-evident as many scholars have suggested.
BRAHMS'S LETTERS: REASSESSING THE PAST, CONSIDERING THE FUTURE

Styra Avins
New York City

Brahms's correspondence is a crucial source of information about him, given his reluctance to speak about himself or his music. About 4,000 letters have long been available, mostly in German, some in English, in approximately thirty volumes and in many memoirs and journal articles. So what is there still to say about Brahms's letters? This presentation will discuss the usefulness, even the necessity, of comparing the originals with their published versions where possible. Although his letters were usually published without deletions (I will present one exception), they were edited in subtle ways, which change our perception of the man.

This paper will report findings of a visit to the Paul Sacher Foundation in Basel, which holds a dozen Brahms letters, among them autographs of letters included in the Brahms-Simrock correspondence, edited by Max Kalbeck. Here is a useful glimpse into Brahms's letter writing style versus Kalbeck's editorial process, which is more invasive than one might have expected. The unpublished letters at the Sacher Foundation highlight a second purpose of this paper: to discuss a number of unpublished letters that have something of interest to tell about Brahms. Some of these unpublished documents are in my possession, and others are held at the Sacher Foundation. Despite the obvious existence of such unpublished letters, who would have thought that thirty existing volumes represent merely the tip of the iceberg?

The searchable internet data base, the Brahms-Briefwechsel-Verzeichnis (BBV) of the Brahms-Institut an der Musikhochschule Lübeck, at present stores information on 10,800 letters to and from the composer. This paper will present a brief introduction to the site and the project, which has enormous potential for additional insight into Brahms and his music.

Session 2: 2:30pm-4:00pm, Room C 198

Reception History
Ryan Minor, Stony Brook University, Chair

BRAHMS IN THE PRIESTHOOD OF ART?

Laurie McManus
Shenandoah Conservatory

During his lifetime, Brahms garnered a variety of critiques relating him to a priest of music—in both positive and negative formulations. This quasi-religious trope generally expressed devotion to one's art—a renunciation of worldly pleasures for a life of study. Drawing on the model of Schumann's "Neue Bahnen," critics contributed to a rhetorical muddle involving concepts of priesthood, purity, and asceticism. Both supporters and detractors applied this language broadly to Brahms and his music, and the phenomenon seems to have been prompted by many factors: musical characteristics such as tonal
counterpoint and traditional techniques including fugue and canon; Brahms's work in early music as both performer and editor; and the association of early music with sacred themes and instrumental music with purity. While many critics considered these characteristics admirable, others devalued them as too chaste or ascetic and ultimately inexpressive.

The varied incarnations of this trope indicate a central theme characterizing the critical strife in German musical aesthetics and in Brahms reception specifically. Although many studies of Brahms situate him in a conflict between progress and tradition, when analyzed from the perspective of this trope, competingvaluations of musical purity come to the foreground. Fully understanding the negative aspect of this reception also requires contextualizing “purity” in relation to Wagnerian notions of sensuality. Furthermore, a broader approach to the discourse of purity and the so-called priesthood of art helps expand on studies of art-religion in this period and demonstrates the effects on Brahms reception of the nineteenth-century trend to conflate biography and artistic evaluation.

BRAHMS, MARXIST CRITICISM, AND HISTORIOGRAPHY: ADORNO'S CULTURAL PESSIMISM VERSUS BLOCH'S CULTURAL OPTIMISM

Nicole Grimes
University of California, Irvine/University College Dublin

To date, the dominant historiographic model of Brahms has been firmly rooted in the documentary and analytical traditions of post-war West German and Anglo-American musicology. Cognizant of Margaret Notley’s call to give sustained attention to “implications for Brahms studies of the ideas sketched by Lukács, Adorno [...] and others,” this paper aims to broaden the historiographic model by focusing on Marxist criticism of Brahms, an approach that has as its starting point an interpretive tradition rooted in philosophy and sociology, and a commitment to historical perspectives. Drawing primarily on the writings of Theodor Adorno and Ernst Bloch, among other commentators, this paper will ascertain how critics working in different historical, cultural, and social contexts interpreted features such as the intellectual and expressive qualities of Brahms’s music in different ways. It will juxtapose the dominant historiographic model regarding the role of Brahms with a later Marxist reception. The aim is to both enrich our view of Brahms and deepen our understanding of Brahms historiography. The exploration of a Marxist approach to Brahms’s music will bring a valuable dimension to Brahms studies, which have thus far developed without ever meaningfully engaging with Marxism. The value of this latter tradition is that it problematizes the former by drawing attention to the cultural context of Brahms’s work. In so doing, it broadens the field of Brahms critical reception to include aspects outside the internal properties of the works themselves.
WEEKLY MEETINGS WITH BRAHMS AT HOME: ETELKA FREUND'S INTERPRETATIONS OF BRAHMS'S PIANO MUSIC

Neal Peres Da Costa
Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney

Brahms's musical circle included some of the most revered musicians of his day, among them the violinist Joseph Joachim and of course the pianist Clara Schumann and her students. Brahms often listened to and coached Clara's best students who included Fanny Davies (1861-1934), Adelina de Lara (1872-1961) and Ilona Eibenschütz (1872-1967). Domestic surroundings provided a haven for teaching and performing, a chance for these students to experience and absorb the stylistic traits and peculiar musicianship of Brahms and his circle.

We can gain much important insight about stylistic practices appropriate in the performance of Brahms's piano music through the recordings of Clara's aforementioned students. But another source of information, so far fairly untapped, exists in the recordings of the little-examined pianist Etelka Freund (1879-1997). Freund did not study with Clara Schumann. Her piano studies were guided by her famous brother Robert Freund (1852-1936), himself a student of Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870). She eventually spent a year in Vienna during which time she visited Brahms at home on a weekly basis and received one-to-one coaching from him on many of his solo piano works. So enamored was Brahms with Freund's piano playing that he arranged for the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde to accept her as their youngest ever member. She went on to have lessons with Busoni, who admired her greatly. And she became a great friend of Bartók and a fine interpreter of his works. After 1936, she re-established her concert career having taken time off to raise a family. She made her US debut at the National Gallery in Washington DC in 1947 but by that stage she was considered too old to be engaged by music agents. In 1951 she made live recordings for Remington of a range of her concert repertoire.

Etelka Freund's recordings of Brahms's Sonata Op. 5 as well as many of his smaller piano works are an invaluable source for the study of Brahmsian performance practice. This paper compares Freund's use of dislocation between melody and accompaniment, unnotated chordal arpeggiation, rhythmic alteration, and tempo modification (techniques that were all but outlawed by the time she recorded and that were no doubt developed during her lessons with Brahms) with written texts emanating from within and outside Brahms's circle.
BRAHMS PERFORMANCE PRACTICE IN A NEW CONTEXT: THE BRUCE HUNGERFORD RECORDED LESSONS WITH CARL FRIEDBERG

Ann Riesbeck DiClemente
Columbus, OH

Within the setting of the Juilliard School in 1945, a student-teacher relationship commenced between Australian pianist Bruce “Leonard” Hungerford (1922-1977) and German pianist-pedagogue Carl Friedberg (1872-1955). A rich legacy of this relationship is found in the preserved and newly-transcribed recordings of fifteen lessons of more than twenty hours from February 1951 through May 1952, now part of the Bruce Hungerford Collection at the International Piano Archives at Maryland.

Investigation of these recorded lessons presents the researcher with a repository of information, beyond the apparent technical and interpretive, concerning many composers and pianists from the common practice era through the mid-20th century. As one of the last surviving students of Clara Schumann and a protégé of Johannes Brahms, Carl Friedberg offers a unique perspective through commentary and demonstration, particularly into Brahms as pianist and conductor and most notably on the issue of tempi. The congenial collaboration between Friedberg and Hungerford is revealed throughout and most exemplified in Friedberg’s accompanying his student in Brahms’s Piano Concerto no. 1.

The invaluable repository of primary-source insight into Brahmsian performance practice within the Hungerford-Friedberg recorded lessons, until now unknown and unused, is considerable; its significance for both the historian and the pianist is unprecedented.

Thursday, March 22

Session 4: 9:00am-11:15am, Segal Theater

Sonata Form
James Hepokoski, Yale University, Chair

S-C COMPLICATIONS IN BRAHMS’S SONATA MOVEMENTS

Kyle Jenkins
University of Arizona, Tucson

Brahms’s complex treatment of sonata form has been the subject of several studies that attempt to explain the paradoxical relationship between the composer’s classical tendencies and his propensity for formal and structural innovation (see, e.g., Smith and Webster). Drawing on James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy’s Sonata Theory, this paper will approach this topic as it relates to formal anomalies within and between the expositional S and C areas, and especially concerning their formal demarcation. Such “S-C complications” fall into two categories: EEC Deformation and S-C Entanglement. The former refers to local complications that in some way weaken or undermine the moment of EEC itself; the latter, to cases where C-rhetoric arrives prematurely in S, or the reverse situation where S rhetoric...
spills over into C-space. Both techniques result in a blurring of the boundary between S and C, prompting the question of how to reconcile the obscured formal articulation with the highly goal-directed nature of the sonata process.

The paper will suggest that Brahms utilized the generically sensitive S-C portion of the exposition to explore and even test the limits of the classical sonata principle. Composing in an era when "normative procedure" held little meaning, Brahms exhibited a uniquely acute awareness of this vitally important formal juncture by deliberately undermining and thwarting it. The first movement of the Piano Sonata in C, Op. 1, the fourth movement of the Horn Trio in E Flat, Op. 40, and the first movement of the Piano Trio in C, Op. 87, will be discussed. The S-C complications in works by some other nineteenth-century composers will also be briefly considered.

CYCLICISM AND EXPANDED TYPE 1 FORMS IN CHAMBER WORKS BY
BRAHMS AND DVOŘÁK

Carissa Reddick
University of Northern Colorado

Recent interest in finale movements by Brahms and other late nineteenth-century composers has brought their unusual formal attributes to the fore. One remarkable form, associated with Brahms by James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, is their so-called expanded Type 1 sonata. In this form, the recapitulation follows the exposition (or a brief retransition), with no intervening development; instead, a developmental section is inserted sometime after the double return of the primary theme in the tonic key. This post-recapitulatory developmental section can be conceived in two ways: 1) as a shift of development function past the point of double return, and 2) as an expansion of the "secondary development" found in eighteenth-century sonata forms described by Charles Rosen.

That this form often occurs as a finale movement also suggests a connection to cyclicity. In a multi-movement work, the first movement typically utilizes a standard sonata form with a development before the recapitulation (a Type 3 sonata). When the finale constitutes an expanded Type 1 form, development function migrates from before the recapitulation in the first movement to after it in the finale. Indeed, many of the works with expanded Type 1 finales also exhibit other cyclic traits, such as thematic links and tonal cross-references. This paper explores the relationship of the expanded Type 1 finale with cyclical procedures in Brahms's Piano Trio in B Major, Op. 8 (1854 and 1889), Piano Quintet in F Minor, Op. 34 (1862), and Dvořák's String Quartet in E Major, Op. 80 (1888).

BRAHMS, THE “TONIC-HEAVY” SONATA, AND DEEP-LEVEL DEVELOPING VARIATION

Boyd Pomeroy
University of Arizona, Tucson

Brahms's notable penchant for variants of sonata form with dual returns of the tonic, at the beginning of the development as well as the usual location, has often been related to rondo principles (see Pascall, Daverio, and Galand). From another perspective, James
Hepokoski and Warren Darcy's Sonata Theory has recognized Brahms's practice as a late flowering of classical sonata-formal Types 3 (in its variant with expositional repeat feint) and 1 (especially in its expanded form, with a development inserted within the reprise of P). For Schenkerians, the challenge posed by such forms has been to explain the structural status of the early-returning tonic, ranging from merely apparent to structural at the highest level, or alternatively, “anticipatory” of a later structural tonic (see Adrian and Jackson). They also raise questions regarding interruption—whether retained at its normal location, displaced to the beginning of development space, or overridden altogether.

Examination of Brahms's repertory of such movements shows remarkable diversity. Indeed, it seems that he was concerned to systematically explore every possibility regarding the relation of sonata types to tonal structure (for practical purposes, this paper excludes genuine [Type 4] sonata-rondos).

Why did Brahms prefer these forms? This paper will suggest that they proved well adapted to his penchant for developing variation, by enabling its emergence on a large formal scale. They reflect an attempt to reconcile antithetical formal principles: on the one hand, the highly articulated, tonally polarized, strongly goal-directed and essentially dramatic nature of classical sonata form; on the other, developing variation's basis in both continuously evolving organicism and recurrent cyclicity.

Session 5: 11:15am-12:45pm, Segal Theater

Music with Text I: Artistic Aspirations, Commercial Concerns
Barbara Dobbs Mackenzie, Brook Center, Graduate Center, City University of New York, Chair

BETWEEN AESTHETIC IDEALS AND COMMERCIAL NEEDS:
BRAHMS’S SOLO SONGS FROM THE 1860S

Natasha Loges
Royal College of Music

The creation, publication, and reception of Brahms's songs, more than his other compositions, depended on various "extra-musical" factors such as their texts, their professional performers, and the “approval” of a vast body of amateur music-lovers who constituted his principal market. As witnessed by the careers of Schumann, Schubert, and numerous other figures, song composition was particularly crucial in order to generate a steady income and a wide base of admirers. Brahms's decisions regarding song show a keen awareness of these commercial considerations, which needed to be balanced with his strongly-held musical ideals.

This paper seeks to explore the tangling of practicality and artistry that was the hallmark of Brahms's engagement with song. Through case studies drawn from Op. 33, Op. 43, and WoO 33, we can trace the often opposing ways in which Brahms negotiated the tightrope between artistic aspiration and market demands, particularly during the 1860s when he was somewhat financially insecure. The case studies embrace folksong arrangements, lieder in a volkstümlich style, extended Gesänge, and a vast and problematic
“song-cycle.” By considering Brahms’s compositional and publication decisions, as well as the reception of the songs, this paper aims to show how Brahms carved out a distinct territory between increasingly influential aesthetic divides, for example between “popular” and “art” music, and between “authentic” composition versus “inauthentic” arranging.

AT HOME, IN CONCERT, AND WITHOUT WORDS?
THE PERFORMANCE AND RECEPTION OF
BRAHMS’S LIEBESLIEDER OP. 52

Katy Hamilton
Royal College of Music

Of Brahms’s seven opuses for vocal quartet and piano accompaniment, by far the most popular were the Liebeslieder Op. 52. It is clear from Brahms's correspondence that these pieces were intended to appeal to a Hausmusik audience; however, the Liebeslieder also appeared in many public concerts during Brahms’s lifetime, and were enthusiastically promoted by Clara Schumann and Amalie Joachim. Their appearance alongside repertoire as diverse as Beethoven piano sonatas, Mozart arias, and Schumann symphonies is revealing in terms of concert programming practice.

Brahms chose to issue Op. 52 with the performative designation “Pianoforte zu 4 Händen (und Gesang ad libitum).” On the one hand, this was to cause some anxiety as he struggled to reconcile the adaptability of domestic music making with his wish for control over the set. On the other hand, its critical reception suggests that the “ad libitum” designation was used as a means of “elevating” the Liebeslieder to the status of abstract instrumental music, as further proof of Brahms’s mastery of this “superior” medium.

This paper seeks to address the performative and generic issues of these diverse public and private manifestations. Their performance and reception histories will be considered in detail, along with the aesthetic implications of remarks made by reviewers and members of Brahms’s immediate circle. The significance of this opus as a popular triumph, and model for contemporaries and followers, makes it unique among works in this unusual and otherwise rarely-performed genre.

2:15pm-3:15pm, Segal Theater

Keynote Address

BETWEEN SCHICKSAL AND SELIGKEIT:
MORTALITY AS MUSIC IN BRAHMS

Scott Burnham, Scheide Professor of Music, Princeton University.
"CAPRICIOUS PLAY": VEILED CYCLIC RELATIONS IN 
BRAHMS'S BALLADES OP. 10 AND FANTASIES OP. 116

William A. Kinderman
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Already in early phases of his career, Brahms displayed a keen interest in creating subtle connections between the successive pieces that make up collections such as the four Ballades, Op. 10, from 1854. At the time he composed the Ballades—and their predecessor, the first part of the “Blätter aus dem Tagebuch eines Musikers”—Brahms was strongly attracted to the aesthetics of E.T.A. Hoffmann, and employed the pseudonym “young Kreisler”. What Hoffmann described ironically in his novel *Kater Murr* as “launische Spiel des Zufalls” (“capricious play of accidents”) —events that on closer inspection reveal themselves to be anything but accidental—applies well to some of Brahms's musical procedures.

In the Op. 10 Ballades, not only the individual pieces but also the overall musical narrative is shaped to some degree by audible links whose full appreciation requires close familiarity with the music. For instance, the two-bar phrases in B minor and then B major in mm. 10-13 of the D-major Ballade (no. 2) foreshadow shifts from B minor to major in both of the following pieces. The third Ballade, marked “intermezzo,” involves a radical polarity that seems to reflect the contradictory qualities of Hoffmann’s character Kreisler. William Horne’s suggestion that the uncanny middle section may be linked to a passage in *Kater Murr* is convincing, and the point can be extended in relation to the outer sections of this scherzo-like interlude.

That such veiled cyclic relations do not disappear in Brahms’s ripest works is shown by the seven Fantasien, Op. 116, from 1892. In this work, the three swift framing capriccios in minor keys (nos. 1, 3, 7) are joined to four quiet intermezzi. The textures of third-chains that invest the capriccios sometimes reappear with astonishing effect in the sharply contrasting world of these slower pieces. Whereas the opening gesture of the *Adagio* (no. 4) reshapes the falling-third motive from the capriccios as a progression from E-major to C-sharp-minor harmonies, its later *dolce* phrases (mm. 15-17) gently transform the passionate opening idea from the preceding capriccio. The falling thirds return in the *dolce* episode in G-sharp minor in no. 6; while in the final accented gesture in m. 52 of this *Andantino teneramente* (no. 6), we may perceive a surprising veiled kinship to the outset of no. 3. The analysis of such poetic procedures shows not only how Brahms goes beyond the technical principle of “contrasting derivation” but helps open new perspectives on large-scale integration in op. 116. In this group of fantasies, we can also discern some parallels to strategies used in graphic cycles of Brahms’s artist friend Max Klinger, such as *Ein Handschuh (A Glove)* (1880) and Klinger's homage to the composer, *Brahmsphantasie* (1894).
THE ALLURE OF BEETHOVEN'S “TERZEN-KETTEN”:
THIRD-CHAINS IN STUDIES BY NOTTEBOHM AND MUSIC BY BRAHMS

Marie Rivers Rule
St. Paul, MN

Brahms had a lifelong fascination with the sketchbooks of Beethoven, an activity that was triggered by his encounter with Gustav Nottebohm, a music scholar and composer recognized for his pioneering research on Beethoven's sketchbooks. New findings on Beethoven's use of “Zirkel-Ketten” (circle-chains) drawn from Nottebohm's Nachlass at the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna as well as previously unpublished correspondence between Nottebohm and Brahms support my argument that Nottebohm enabled Brahms's study of Beethoven's sketch materials by facilitating the composer's access to Beethoven's sketches for the “Hammerklavier” Sonata, Op. 106 among others. The study of these sketch materials was bound up in turn with Brahms's intensive exploration of “Terzen-Ketten” (third-chains) and their subsequent incorporation and development in his later compositions.


Session 7: 5:30pm-6:30pm, Segal Theater

Performance Practice II: Piano and Strings Chamber Music
Heather Platt, Ball State University, Chair

BRAHMS REVEALED: A LECTURE/Demonstration

Neal Peres Da Costa, piano, and Robin Wilson, violin,
with members of the period-instrument ensemble Ironwood, Veronique Serret, violin;
Nicole Forsyth, viola; Daniel Yeadon, cello
Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney

This lecture-recital of Brahms's beloved 1864 Piano Quintet Op 34 in F minor will explore evidence of string and keyboard performing practices preserved in written texts and early sound recordings emanating from Brahms, his circle, and the German school. The performance will experiment with the addition of portamento, a narrower-style of vibrato (used ornamentally), dislocation, arpeggiation, various types of rhythmic alteration, and tempo modification. These practices were indispensable in mid- to late-nineteenth-century performances, particularly those of the German School, and performances informed by these techniques reveal Brahms in his true colors.
ON THE ODDNESS OF BRAHMS'S FIVE-MEASURE PHRASES

Sam Ng
University of Cincinnati

Among phrases of irregular lengths, five-measure phrases (FMPs) have often been singled out for criticism. Two issues recur throughout centuries of discussions: (1) whether a FMP is “true” or derived from an underlying basic phrase; and (2) how FMPs are combined with other phrases. While nineteenth-century theorists recognize the usefulness of FMPs as a means to avoid four-measure squareness, they also recommend that FMPs should be a necessary consequence of the musical idea and employed in conjunction with other FMPs. In other words, a FMP must be unavoidable in its supplanting of the basic phrase, and its peculiarities must be the basis of further rhythmic development.

This paper will examine Brahms’s response to the above issues by analyzing the inevitabilities of FMPs in the opening theme and their impact on the overall rhythmic shape in Op. 117, no. 3, Op. 118, no. 3, and Op. 119, no. 4. Combining Schenkerian phrase-rhythmic and Schoenbergian formal-functional concepts, I construct possible enger Sätze for each FMP, and investigate the superiority of each FMP through a counterpoint of perspectives: (1) delineation of sentential structure; (2) engagement of Schenker’s equilibrium principle; (3) projection of expressive categories; and (4) development of prime motivic ideas. These considerations work in tandem to illuminate Brahms’s aesthetic concerns in the writing of these FMPs and the significance of these irregular phrase constructions as form-building essentials.

TEN MEASURES FROM OPUS 5

Richard Cohn
Yale University

The first movement of the Op. 5 Piano Sonata (1853) indicates that Brahms was deeply immersed in metric dissonance of a rather complex genus already by age twenty. This paper focuses on a pair of five-measure phrases that begin at m. 7. The phrases project pulses that clash at multiple levels, forming a complex hemiola that is modeled on a three-dimensional version of a ski-hill diagram. The paper introduces three new types of hemiola to Brahms research: Balkan, mended, and embedded (the latter borrowed from Channan Willner’s work on Bach and Handel). Through a combination of these three techniques, the five-measure phrases of Op. 5 can be generated from three-measure prototypes; viewing these phrases in terms of this mode of generation encourages one to see other connections between parts of the movement. The paper concludes by inviting a reassessment of claims
that Brahms’s compositions fully integrated metric ambiguity and complexity for the first time during the early 1860’s, or that they were a product of his exposure to the music of Handel in 1854.

HEMIOLA AS AN AGENT OF METRIC RESOLUTION IN THE MUSIC OF BRAHMS

Ryan McClelland
University of Toronto

In recent scholarship on nineteenth-century music, metric dissonance has received considerable and worthy attention. Analysts have revealed how varying types and intensities of metric dissonance produce structural narratives not unlike tonal ones. The most frequently encountered metric dissonance is hemiola, a grouping dissonance that substitutes duple for triple groupings of pulses (or vice versa) at some level(s) of the metric hierarchy. With its analogy to pitch structure, the term metric dissonance implies a state of tension that resolves when the contrametric elements recede. Yet despite this terminology, hemiola often performs a stabilizing role. A frequent interaction of hemiola with tonal structure is well-known: hemiola prepares many important tonal arrivals and cadences. Hemiola’s ability to exert a stabilizing role on metric design, however, has not been as widely acknowledged. This paper explores hemiola’s restorative metric function in the music of Brahms. Specifically, the paper first demonstrates hemiola’s potential to facilitate the resolution of displacement dissonances. It then turns to hemiola’s ability to clarify or alter the relative hypermetric strength of adjacent downbeats. At hypermetric levels, hemiola can re-establish a strong sense of hypermeter after a passage with conflicting hypermetric cues, and it can also prepare an upcoming hypermetric reinterpretation.

Session 8b: 9:45am-11:15am, Recital Hall

Music with Text II: Meaning and Cultural Context
Richard Kramer, Graduate Center, City University of New York, Chair

BRAHMS’S ZIGEUNERLIEDER: NATURALIZATION, NOSTALGIA, AND THE POLITICS OF RACE AND FEELING IN LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY VIENNA

Seth Houston
University of Southern California

Brahms’s 1887 Concerto for Violin and Cello, Op. 102, was widely criticized for being overly academic and lacking in feeling. This criticism was nested in a right-leaning political environment in Vienna that favored feeling over intellect and propounded increasingly radical strains of nationalism fueled by antisemitism. Although Brahms and his circle opposed Anti-Liberal ideas, they also accommodated themselves to the changing ideological
landscape. In the *Zigeunerlieder*, Op. 103, Brahms created a work that was perceived by his peers to embody feeling more than intellect, nature more than artifice, and a vision of Gypsiness shorn of ethnic connotation and elevated in style.

Brahms achieved this delicate balance by incorporating idioms of the *Style hongrois*, the evocation or representation of Hungarian Gypsies and their music in Austro-Germanic art music, in specifically partial ways. In doing so, he drew on some strands of longstanding Austro-Germanic discourses about Gypsies, such as the idea that Gypsies were a people of nature endowed with primordial poetic qualities, but avoided reference to others, such as the concern that Gypsies posed a threat to German identity. In the *Zigeunerlieder*, Brahms “naturalized” earlier nineteenth century ideas of Gypsiness, both in the sense of highlighting their perceived identity as people of nature and eliminating specific ethnic or national connotations. This made the idea of Gypsy songs palatable in Vienna’s antisemitic political environment, helps explain the success of the *Zigeunerlieder* vis-à-vis the “Double” Concerto, and signaled the twilight of *Style hongrois* as a vital component of the Austro-Germanic musical language.

**THE BIBLICAL CONTEXT OF JOHANNES BRAHMS’S**

**EIN DEUTSCHES REQUIEM**

R. Allen Lott
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

The meaning of Johannes Brahms’s *Ein deutsches Requiem* has been the object of much scholarly investigation, but a thorough exegesis of the libretto within its original biblical context has yet to be explored. I will offer an interpretation of the text that follows the spirit of Hermann Kretzschmar’s exhortation in 1903 for a musical hermeneutic that will “explain and analyze the whole by obtaining the clearest possible understanding of every smallest detail.” Commentators have too often focused on what is absent in Brahms’s compilation, while failing to explicate many textual details that relate specifically to the Judeo-Christian tradition, including references to a deity in each movement, the use of proper names and phrases that carry specific theological significance, and promises of comfort made to an exclusive group. Examined within its original biblical context, the text is far from universal in its creed but rather presents a masterly summary of the unique Christian view of death and the afterlife. In addition, Brahms’s fidelity to the quotations from a single religious text (free from omissions or corruption from other texts) encourages the listener to share the same faithfulness. Ultimately, however, the focus on Brahms is as a composer, who set the text sensitively, persuasively, and dramatically, undergirding it with such appropriate music that its meaning is made to seem inevitable and incontrovertible.
VARIATION AS THEMATIC ACTUALIZATION: BRAHMS’S OPUS 9

Jeffrey Swinkin
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Variations within variation sets have traditionally been viewed as decorations of the theme. In this view, the theme is implicitly conceived as an autonomous entity with fixed melodic and harmonic patterns susceptible to such decorative accretion. Against this view, I contend that in the variation technique of many nineteenth-century composers—most notably Beethoven and Brahms—variations do not so much embellish a theme as dissect and analyze it, teasing out thematic details and granting them a significance they would not otherwise possess. The theme in this view is less a self-defined, concrete entity than an abstract realm of possibilities, some of which are actualized by the variations. In other words, the theme is to some extent inextricable with its varied presentations.

In Brahms’s Op. 9, variations disinter and realize latent motives within Schumann’s *Albumblatt*, which serves as the theme. In the process, they engender an intricate network of relations not only between the variations and the theme but also among the variations themselves. The variations actualize thematic components in one of two opposing yet complementary ways: first, a variation renders a latent feature of the theme more explicit—more audible, repetitive, and salient; second, a variation affords such a feature greater structural significance, as when the variation prolongs or composes it out. In other words, a variation concretizes an otherwise obscure thematic feature by rendering it either more perceptible in the foreground or more structurally consequential in the middleground.

FAITH AND DOUBT IN BRAHMS’S *REQUIEM*:
THE SIXTH MOVEMENT’S GREAT “FUGUE”

Frank Samarotto
Indiana University, Bloomington

The sixth movement of Brahms’s *A German Requiem* is like a prelude and fugue, the prelude a dark journey of transformation that overcomes death, the fugue a triumphant celebration of divine power and creation. It is indeed “like” a prelude and fugue: the prelude does less to establish tonality than it does to take it to the edge of coherence. The fugue is even less typical: once past its schematic exposition, standard fugal procedure begins to fall apart—a great deal of the piece is not even polyphonic in texture. There is an undercurrent to the fugue that seems to belie its topic of unshakeable faith. More than just rhetorical *dubitatio*, the musical structure itself is wracked by doubt.

To examine this, I will propose two possible sources for this fugue. These are the final chorus of Bach’s Cantata 21, a work well studied by Brahms, and the double choral fugue
from the finale of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. Both are affirmative, but the latter is preceded by an interlude of dark questioning. The subject material derived from these sources is reworked by Brahms into a model of completeness: his subject and answer close melodic gaps so fully that the piece seems ready to end before it has scarcely begun. Moreover, this exposition completes a large-scale process of melodic continuity begun in the prelude. It becomes an embodiment of certainty, of faith that permits no room for questions.

Questions seem to intrude as the fugue’s steady progress is gradually disrupted. There are disruptions and deformations of the subject that undermine its stability, recollections of the prelude that recall its struggle, and collapse of the musical discourse requiring reassurance and recovery. Consideration of all these will reveal this fugue to compose out a nuanced recognition of the ambivalence of belief.

SWEET DALLIANCE: *UN POCO PRESTO, E CON SENTIMENTO* FROM BRAHMS’S VIOLIN SONATA NO. 3 IN D MINOR

Eric Wen
Mannes College The New School for Music

The third movement of Brahms’s four-movement Violin Sonata No. 3 in D minor, Op. 108, entitled *Un poco presto, e con sentimento*, is the shortest movement in all of the composer’s chamber works. Despite its brevity, this three-minute movement leaves a striking impression. Brahms’s contemporary Eduard Hanslick wrote that the main theme of this movement expresses “an uneasy, intermittent throbbing, like an anxiously beating heart.” A more elaborate description is found in a letter by Clara Schumann dated November 23, 1888, in which she writes that the movement is “like a beautiful young girl frolicking gracefully with her lover. Then suddenly in the middle of it comes a flash of deep passion, before the sweet dalliance resumes, now permeated with a melancholy air.”

Although the analogy of two lovers flirting with one another smacks of purple prose, Clara’s description is not amiss. The movement’s playful and fickle mood stems from the deflections of its tonal progressions, and these project the quality of flirtation, even teasing. Clara’s metaphoric image of the lovers’ “sweet dalliance” reflects the quicksilver changes and unexpected harmonic events of this capricious F-sharp minor movement. This paper will examine the tonal meaning of the many unusual harmonic events in this remarkable movement. It will also attempt to understand them in light of Clara’s narrative of two playful lovers. Finally, the paper will conclude by considering Clara’s idea of a return “permeated with a melancholy air,” and the possible program intended by this description.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TEXT-MUSIC RELATIONSHIPS IN BRAHMS’S OP. 32 *GHAZAL-LIEDER* AND THE NORTH INDIAN *GHAZAL*

Somangshu Mukherji
Princeton University

Johannes Brahms set six of the nearly 200 solo songs he composed to texts based on the Persian poetic form the *ghazal*. Brahms's *ghazal*-lieder were set to free German
interpret an unusual modulation scheme. concision, offers a backstory for the work Schoenberg singled out as difficult, and newly interprets an unusual modulation scheme. Comparison across genre boundaries proves translations made by Georg Friedrich Daumer in 1846 of ghazals in the Persian poet Hafiz's masterpiece the Divan-I-Hafiz. Hafiz's rich symbolism, colorful wordplay and sensuous lyricism provided Brahms with a rich resource for composing his characteristically Romantic art songs. However, the deeper spiritual meaning of Hafiz's texts, for which his passionate images act as mere metaphors, combined with the unusual poetic structure of the ghazal, unfamiliar to Western ears, also beset Brahms with several compositional challenges. This paper will highlight these challenges by making some observations about the traditional ghazal form with examples from the light classical raga-based ghazal tradition of North India (given the shared importance of this form in both West and South Asia), and then, using these observations, it will explore text-music relations in Brahms's three ghazal-lieder Op. 32, nos. 7-9.

The textual organization in both North Indian and Brahms's ghazals is aided by the overarching poetic form of the ghazal, but it is also brought into conflict with tonal organization in both idioms due to the demands of musical syntax—conflicts, as the paper will show, that Brahms and his North Indian counterparts resolve in surprisingly similar ways. In this manner, the paper will be an original, comparative study of text-setting in the art musics of North India and the West.

Session 9b: 1:00pm-2:30pm, Recital Hall

Genre and Intertextuality
Walter Frisch, Columbia University, Chair

OP. 99 AND BRAHMS'S LATE TURN TO F MAJOR

Rowland Moseley
Harvard University

Based on the historical cogency of interpreting Brahms's first string quintet, third symphony, and second cello sonata as a "trilogy" of F major utterances in the 1880s, this paper studies the last of these pieces in relation to the others and presents evidence of compositional preoccupations at work in contrasting instrumental idioms. What are Brahms’s technical devices and aesthetic intentions for the mature F major works? What is Op. 99's particular take on recurrent compositional concerns? And how does the sonata contradict or cut loose of precedents?

To justify an intertextually driven analysis, I look to striking points of musical contact between Opp. 88, 90, and 99 (aspects of form, thematic fabric, harmonic schemes), and I consider biographical documents. Brahms conceived of keys as sites of finite activity—like the genres whose individual expressions they differentiate—and apparently enjoyed his late turn to F major. It "gave good milk" (as Brahms earlier said of another tonality) during a short span at the peak of his career. Thus Op. 99 is not only a second cello sonata and a product of the "chamber-music summer" but also the third important venture in its key.

This paper supports Frisch's 1984 view of the sonata as an early essay in late concision, offers a backstory for the work Schoenberg singled out as difficult, and newly interprets an unusual modulation scheme. Comparison across genre boundaries proves
BRAHMS THE CONSERVATIVE: GENRE, ALLUSION, AND MEANING

Matthew Gelbart
Fordham University

Brahms’s attitude toward generic conventions was notably conservative, and I argue that acknowledging this stance is crucial to understanding and interpreting his music. For Brahms, each genre was part of a system of communication based on established forerunners, types of content, forms, performance attitudes, and venues. An awareness of Brahms’s strong conception of genre—and the conditioned expectations and responses of his audiences—can restrain or at least help prioritize our speculation about intertextual allusion as a source of meaning in his music. Interpretive claims about Brahms that are sensitive to generic contracts are much more persuasive. For any given piece, such claims evaluate which other pieces constitute the most pertinent contexts for the composer and for audiences (originally and over time), and why. We might conceive overlapping (and sometimes concentric) rings of intertextual contexts for each piece. Furthermore, there were genres (concerto, symphony, etc.) that Brahms inherited and accepted as more closely bound to particular models, predecessors, and aims than others. In these cases, allusive claims require unusual justification if they seem to contradict characteristics such as the public or private nature of the genre. Other genres were newer and more loosely bound to precedent. Here we may find compelling claims for some surprising allusions (such as lieder serving as models for piano ballades), but there still usually lurks a generic motivation or justification for such references. I will briefly consider some examples of these different types.

Session 10: 4:15pm-5:45pm, Segal Theater

Romantic Relationships and Compositional Reinvention
Jane Gottlieb, The Juilliard School, Chair

RECYCLING UHLAND: BRAHMS’S OP. 7 AND OP. 19 LIEDER COLLECTIONS AND THE WANDERLIEDER TRADITION

William Horne
Loyola University, New Orleans

In the 1850s Ludwig Uhland’s Wanderlieder poems were widely regarded as a coherent cycle, prompting some poetry anthologists and composers to use poems from the Wanderlieder to provide a narrative context for new cyclic collections. In keeping with this practice, Brahms placed “Heimkehr,” the final Wanderlieder poem, in which Uhland’s Wanderer rushes back to his abandoned Beloved, at the conclusion of Op. 7, following five songs focused on abandoned, isolated, and vulnerable women. The resonance of this
narrative outline with Clara Schumann’s plight after her husband’s 1854 suicide attempt, and Brahms’s self-appointed role as her rescuer, enriches our reception of Op. 7.

The second and third Wanderlieder songs, “Scheiden und Meiden,” and “In der Ferne,” a musically connected song pair, are placed second and third in Brahms’s Op. 19 collection, the songs of which spring from Brahms’s 1858 courtship of Agathe von Siebold. A manuscript of “Scheiden und Meiden” and “In der Ferne” (dated “Oktober 1858, Österreichische” and which was for a time accessible in the Dermota Collection of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna) enlarges our sense of how these two Wanderlieder poems reflect Brahms’s experience with Agathe. In this source the songs are in E minor rather than the published key of D minor. One could surmise that when he assembled Op. 19, Brahms transposed both songs down a step to align them tonally with the B-flat major songs that precede and follow the song pair. Considered as a small narrative cycle, these songs draw on Uhland’s Wanderlieder narrative, yet also portray a more robust and sensual relationship than the one depicted by Uhland. Brahms may have used the E-minor song pair to send a private message to Agathe, as both contain the prominent pitch motive E-H-E, the German for “marriage.” Op. 19 emerges as a “recycling” of the Wanderlieder in which Brahms accessed the narrative associations of Uhland’s famous cycle to create a new one replete with autobiographical associations.

BRAHMS AND THE “ANGEL OF HISTORY”: A CRITICAL READING OF THE REVISION OF THE TRIO, OP. 8

Benjamin M. Korstvedt
Clark University

The ninth thesis of Walter Benjamin’s “On the Concept of History” pictures “the angel of history” staring back intently at “one single catastrophe.” The angel “would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what is smashed,” but is irresistibly flung forward as time’s onward rush catches his wings. Like Benjamin’s angel, Brahms must have repeatedly looked back at the crucial episode in his life that centered on his triumphant reception by the Schumanns in the autumn of 1853 and the tragic peripetia of Robert’s breakdown and attempted suicide in February 1854.

This presentation explores how these experiences may have inflected his compositional approach later in life. My purpose is not to assign specific biographical significance to the music, but rather to find meaningful analogies between compositional technique and psychosocial dynamics.

My prime musical example is Brahms’s Piano Trio in B, Op. 8, which exists in two versions, one completed in 1854 and the revision of 1889. Whereas the first version of Op. 8, which was conceived just before the young composer encountered the Schumanns, was the last great expression of Brahms the innocent, the composer once sarcastically described his late revision as a “castration.” The composer’s application of his changed technique, formal approach, and expressive agenda, as embodied in the revision, suggests that Brahms acted as his own angel of history in revising the Trio as he sought to master through music a past that remained psychologically unmasterable.
Would you like to know more about recent research into Brahms and his music, or about the activities of the American Brahms Society?

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The exhibit will include all or some of the following manuscripts:

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Double concerto, op. 102
"Im Garten am Seegestate," op. 70, no. 1
Piano concerto no. 2, arr. for 2 pianos
Piano quartet op. 60, movements 3 and 4
Klavierstucke, opp. 118, 119
"Sehnsucht," op. 49, no. 3
String quintet no. 1, op. 88
Symphony no. 2, first movement

Guests may contact Jane Gottlieb for additional information: library@juilliard.edu or Gottlieb@juilliard.edu.

The Music Division of the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center will host an exhibit of their holdings of Brahms’s manuscripts and proof copies containing corrections in Brahms’s hand. Many of these were owned by the pianist Paul Wittgenstein. The exhibit area is in the reading room on the 3rd floor, near the A/V Playback Desk. The hours are:

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