

Music and Society
Early Romanticism 4
ca. 1820-1850

Schumann (cont'd) and Brahms

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1849-57: The Schumanns move to Düsseldorf where Robert becomes music director in 1850. Not very organized. Relieved of his duties in 1853. Clara has a miscarriage and another child. She continues to promote her husband's works through concerts

In 1853, the young composer Johannes Brahms meets and impresses the Schumanns

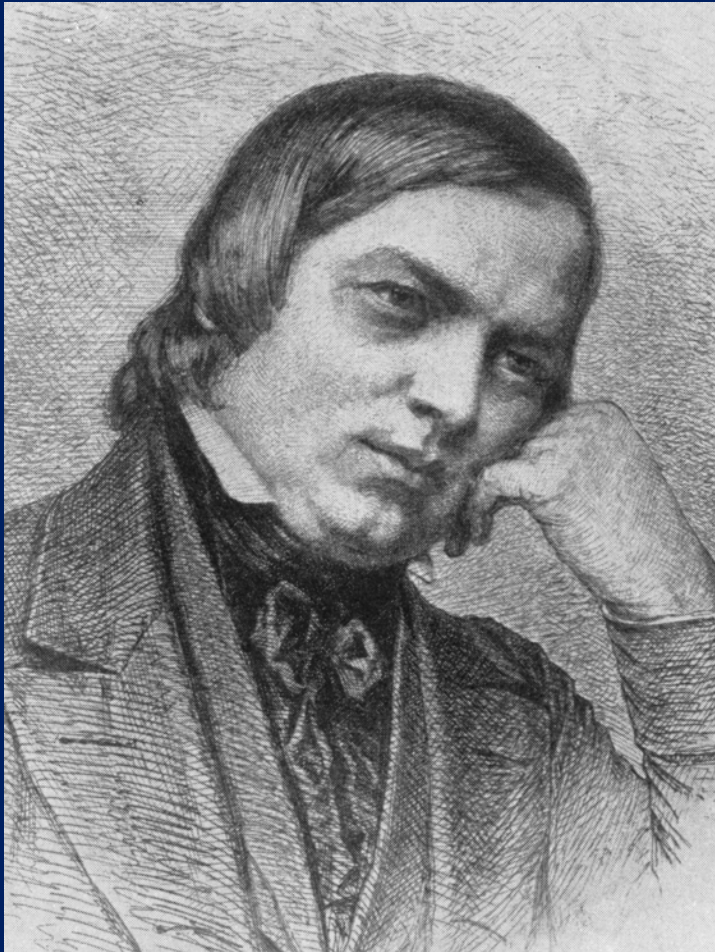
... soon we turn to Brahms

On 26 February 1854 Robert throws himself into the River Rhine and is rescued by sailors. The day before this suicide attempt he asked to be moved to an asylum. The hallucinations which had before obsessed him had returned with alarming force and he could no longer sleep.—Upon leaving he tells Clara:
“It won’t be long and I will come back cured.”

He is admitted to an asylum near Bonn. Has a piano at his disposal, could compose, have friends visiting, take walks. But Clara is not allowed to see him.

Next time she saw him was at his deathbed about two years later.

Robert Schumann's works



1810-1856

Before 1840: Piano music

1840: **Year of Song** (ca. 150), *Liederkreis, Dichterliebe, Frauen-liebe und leben*

1841: Symphonies No. 1 and 4

1842: **Year of Chamber Music**. Three string quartets, piano quartet, piano quintet

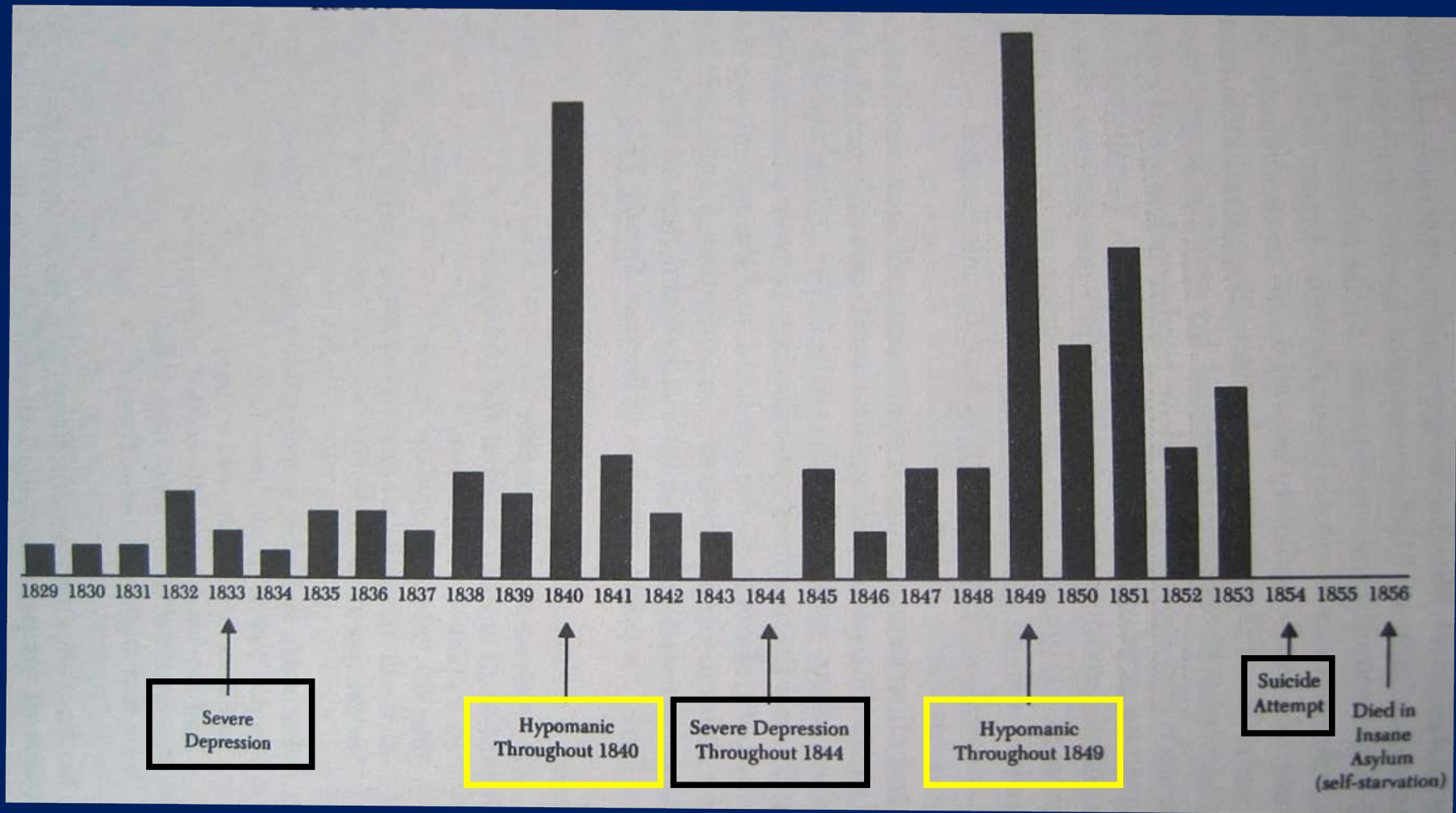
1845: Finishes the A-minor Piano Concerto

1848-52: Very prolific. Ca. 60 works, incl. Symphonies 2 and 3, a cello concerto, one opera (*Genoveva*), incidental music (*Manfred*), two requiems, Romanzen, songs, chamber music, and piano works

1853: Last major work, Violin Concerto

Ca. 150 songs

Nearly 50 works



Schumann probably suffered schizoaffective disorder (depressed mood, manic behavior, and hallucinations)

The Schumann Children (with age of death)



Clara Schumann (1819-1897) **76**
Robert Schumann (1810-1856) 56

Marie (1841 - 1929) **86**

Elise (1843 - 1928) **85**

Julie (1845 -1872) **27**

Died from tuberculosis

Emil (1846 - 1847) 16 months

Ludwig (1848 - 1899) 51

Schizophrenic, asylum at age 20

Ferdinand (1849 - 1891) 42

Drug addict, 6 children

Eugenie (1851 - 1938) **87**

Felix (1854 - 1879) 25

Died from tuberculosis

Taken after Robert's death



From 1857 onwards, Clara Schumann tours Europe performing and promoting her husband's music.

Revises and publishes Robert's compositions. Also publishes her papers and diaries.

In 1878 she is given the position "First teacher of piano" at the new Hoch (High) Conservatory in Frankfurt. Retires in 1892.

Plays her last concert in 1891.

Dies from a stroke in May 1896, 76 years old.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

The Remembrance of Schumann is sacred to me. I will always take this noble pure artist as my model.

Born in Hamburg

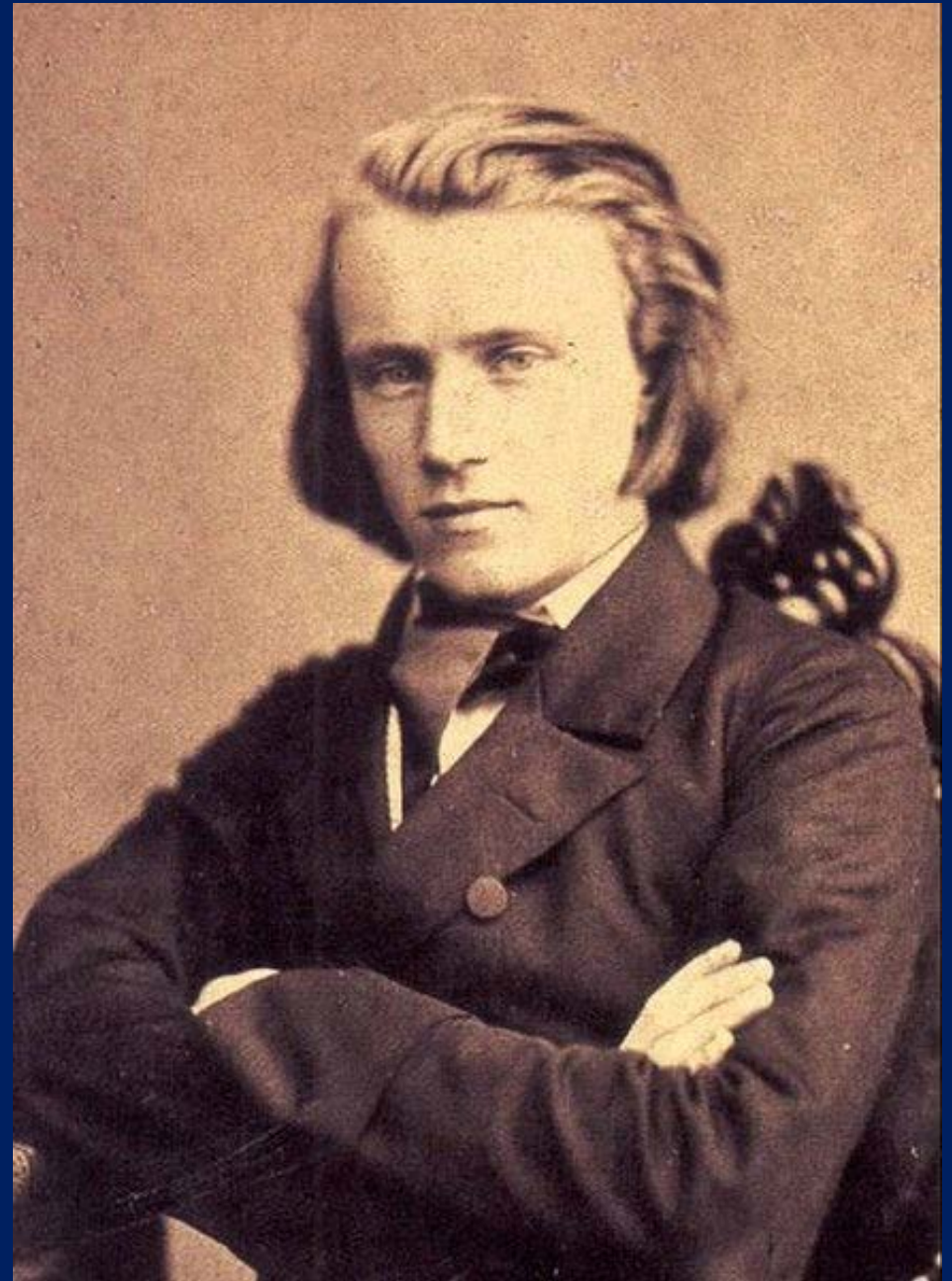
Father: horn player, later
orchestral double bass player

Mother: a seamstress, 17 years
older than his father

Piano lessons at seven, debut
at 10. Composes his first works
at 13. First solo concert at 15

Studies Bach and Beethoven

Totally set on composing



1848: Uprising all over Europe. Begins in Sicily and spreads to France, Germany, Italy, and the Austrian Empire. Longest uprising in Hungary. All uprisings failed.

Lots of Hungarian refugees come to Hamburg, including musicians.

Tours with Hungarian violinist Ede Reményi. Learns to play *alla zingarese*

He inspires Brahms to collect gypsy tunes, write Hungarian dances, and incorporate gypsy music into his works

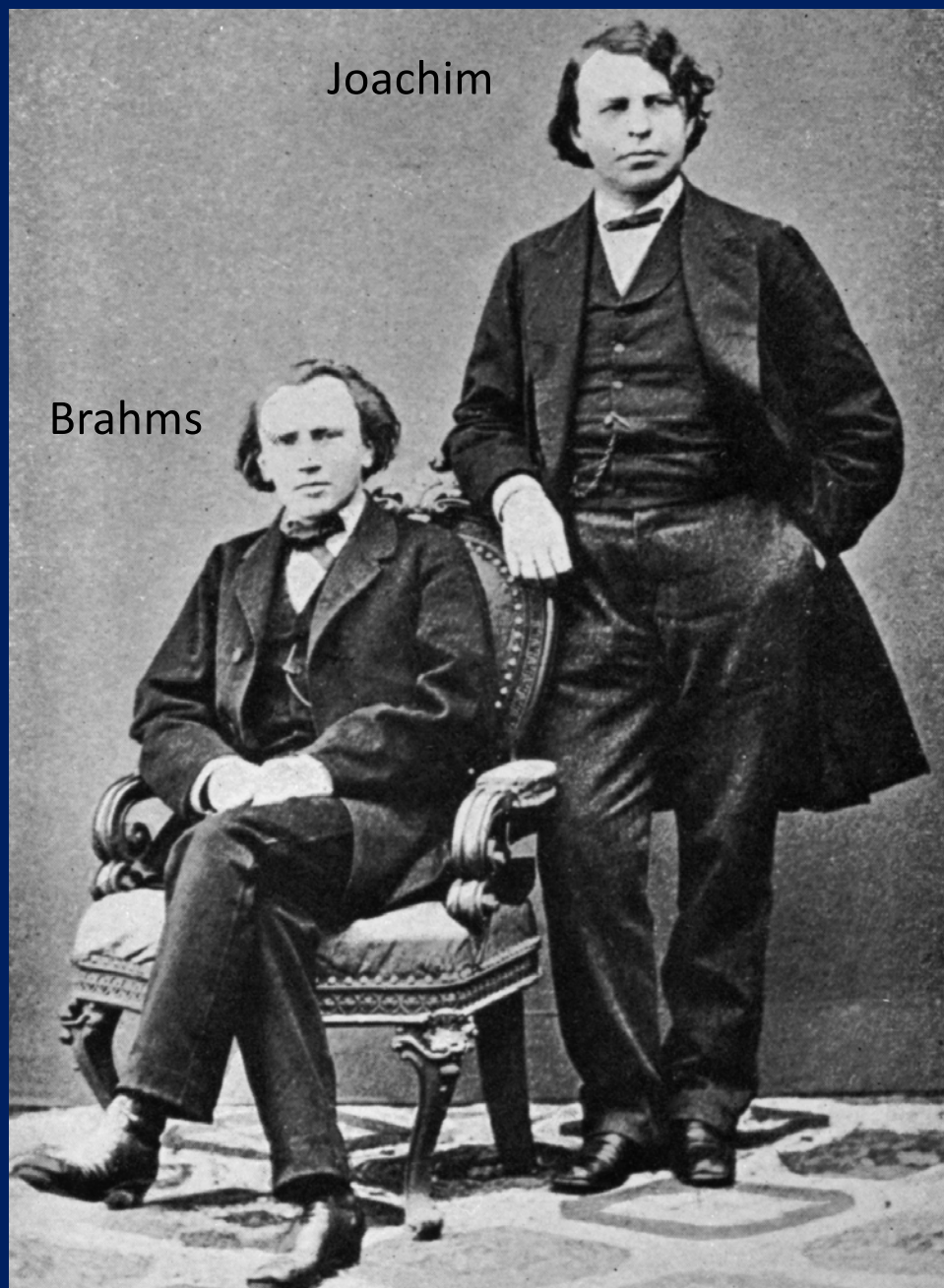
Meets Franz Liszt in Weimar.

Does not like his modern music.



Hungarian uprising in 1848

Meets Joseph Joachim, the most famous violinist in Europe.
They become very close friends



Two years older than Brahms. **At age 12**, performed Beethoven's Violin Concerto at the Leipzig *Gewandhaus* with Mendelssohn conducting

Brahms later writes his Violin Concerto for (and consulting) Joachim

Joachim about Brahms' music: *Never in the course of my artist's life have I been more completely overwhelmed*

Introduces Brahms to Clara and Robert Schumann in 1853

Both Schumanns are very impressed by Brahms' music and his playing. Robert calls him *The Great Eagle from the North* in his *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, something that makes Brahms more scared than happy

After having written three piano sonatas and 18 songs, Brahms writes his first work for three instruments, his *Piano Trio No. 1* in 1853-54

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viPLLjpujOU>

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Brahms falls madly in love with Clara and, it seems, she with him.

He becomes a great help to Clara during Robert's illness, going between the two and helping Clara manage her household and schedule (1854-56). He loves her kids and they him

In May 1856 he writes:

My Beloved Clara, I wish I could write to you as tenderly as I love you and tell you all the good things that I wish you. You are so infinitely dear to me, dearer than I can say. I should like to spend the whole day calling you endearing names and paying you compliments without ever being satisfied.... Your letters are like kisses to me.

After Robert's death, Brahms does not want to marry Clara (or she does not want to marry him?); it would ruin his career (after all, he is only 24 and she has seven children). Clara moves to Berlin, Brahms moves back to Hamburg. They continue to collaborate and correspond for the rest of their lives.



Brahms' favorite picture of Clara Schumann

1858: Falls in love with singer Agathe von Siebold. Gets engaged.



Contemplates marriage but backs off:
I love you! I must see you again! But I cannot wear fetters! Write me whether I may come back to fold you in my arms, to kiss you, to tell you that I love you!"

She responds by breaking off the engagement, he by composing a song about parting and lost love using the *Agathe Motive* (AGA(T)HE).

The note B is called H in Germany and elsewhere in Europe, so the motive is AGABE.

First used the AGATHE theme in his romance: *Und gehst du über den Kirchhof* (If you walk across the Church Yard) in 1859

Returned to the theme in 1864
in *String Sextet No 2 in G-major*
Op 36, "Agathe"

9.

The image shows two pages of a musical score for a string sextet. The top page is numbered '9.' in the upper right corner. It features six staves of music. The first staff has a 'sva...' marking above it. There are two red rectangular boxes highlighting specific passages in the first and second staves. The bottom page is numbered '6474.' at the bottom center. It also features six staves of music. The first staff has a 'sva' marking above it. There are several red rectangular boxes highlighting passages in the first, second, and third staves. The word 'arco.' is written above the fourth staff, and 'pizz.' is written above the fifth staff. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'f'.

String Sextet No. 2 in G-major Op. 36, "Agathe"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNm55XUohGQ>

1859: Piano Concerto No. 1 in D minor, Op. 15.

Premiered in Hanover on 22 January with Brahms as soloist.
Not well received by the audience.

The second performance in Leipzig on 27 January was a total failure
The audience hissed so much, Brahms wanted to stop playing

The third performance in Hamburg with Brahms' father playing
double bass and his family in the audience is a great success

The fourth performance, a revision, is a flop.

The fifth performance on 3 December 1861 with Clara Schumann
being soloist is also not well received. Clara later writes:

*I was certainly the happiest person in the whole room ... the joy of
the work so overcame me, but added that the public understood
nothing and felt nothing...*

Brahms to Clara: *the Adagio* is a gentle portrait of you

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arKoBwtmuX0>

Piano Concertos 1 and 2 with Bernstein/Zimerman
You heard the 3rd movement from No. 1

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra



No female members until 1997!!!

1862: Brahms settles in Vienna

Directs the *Wiener Singakademie*, first mixed choir in Vienna, now the choir of the Wiener Konzerthaus. Reintroduces lots of Baroque and even Renaissance works to the Viennese public.

1872: director and conductor of the *Wiener Gesellschaftskonzerte* (Society of Friends of Music in Vienna) = *Wiener Musikverein*.

Is much better at composing than directing, so he quits in 1875.

1873 onwards:

Lives off royalties and conducting his own works. More and more popular abroad



1867: The *Singverein* and the *Musikverein* orchestra under Johann Herbeck stage the premiere performance of Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem* (A German Requiem) first three movements.

The influential German critic Eduard Hanslick called it a mixture of late Beethoven and J. S. Bach.

The requiem was probably first conceived as a reaction to Schumann's death in 1856 and ultimately to the death of Brahms' mother in 1865. Brahms told Joachim, however, that he *ought to know how deeply and intimately ... the work belongs to Schumann*. Completed 1868

First movement:

Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted (Matt. 5:4)

Last movement:

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them. (Revelation 14:13)

Focuses on bringing the living comfort and joy

And ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you (John 16:22)

Kathleen Battle is soloist with Wiener Philharmoniker and Wiener Singakademie. Herbert von Karajan conducting

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpDv4VVsHgl>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQGQG79xBFg>

Last is the entire Requiem with Klemperer, Schwarzkopf, and Fisher-Dieskau



Hans Schliessmann's
caricature of Gustav
Mahler conducting
the Vienna State Opera

FINALLY premiere of Brahms' First Symphony on 4 November 1876.

Took 20 years to finish! (He has Beethoven angst: *You have no idea how someone like me feels when he hears such a giant marching behind him all the time.*)

Beethoven as model (his 5th symphony beginning in C-minor and ending in C-major.)

The renowned European conductor Hans von Bülow calls Brahms' First Symphony Beethoven's 10th. He groups Brahms with J.S. Bach and Ludwig van Beethoven as one of the Three B's of music

Writes his Second Symphony in 1877.

1854-59: Piano Concerto No. 1 in D minor

1873: Variations on a theme by Haydn 14 years

1876: Symphony No. 1 in C minor 17 years

1877: Symphony No. 2 in D Major

1878: Violin Concerto

1881: Academic Festival Overture for Large Orchestra

1881: Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major

1883: Symphony No. 3 in F Major

1884-85: Symphony No. 4 in E minor

1887: Double Concerto in A minor for Violin and Cello

The University of Cambridge offers Brahms an honorary Doctorate in Music in 1876, and told him he had to attend the ceremony.

1. Didn't want to cross the Channel
2. Didn't want to attend the numerous festivities

Stayed at home. Did not get the Doctorate.

1879: Receives an honorary Doctorate from the University of Breslau. Honored as: *first among contemporary masters of serious music*. Learns that he has to write a symphony or a choral work as his doctoral theses. Composes instead the *Academic Festival Overture* which is based on student drinking songs, slightly mocking the selection committee and the honor.

The Academic Festival Overture

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5pZR5655Yw>

Brahms, characterized as *first among contemporary masters of serious music*, was seriously attacked by Wagner:

Mendelssohn still had some ideas, then came Schumann, a silly fellow, and now Brahms without anything at all.

Liszt classified Brahms's music as *absolute music*, music that did *nothing better or cleverer than to adopt, propagate, rearrange, and perhaps work over the others' hard-won achievements.*

They meant:

A composer who still worked within the old Baroque and Classical forms like fugues, requiems, masses, motets, sonatas, classical chamber music, symphonies, four movement form, variations over a theme, rondos, sonata form.

Liszt, Wagner, and Berlioz wrote *program music, music that told a story and abandoned form* (like Beethoven did at the end)

Brahms: Violin Concerto in D, Op. 77 (1878)

**written for his friend
Joseph Joachim who wrote
the first movement cadenza
and also was Brahms consultant**

**Joseph Joachim and Clara Schumann
performing together**



Brahms' Violin Concerto, 3rd movement

Paavo Järvi, Hilary Hahn, and Frankfurt Radio Symphony:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UFI9xuYP5T8>

The whole concerto with Hilary Hahn

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OYYBJbI59g

3rd movement:

Itzhak Perlman, Chicago Symphony Orchestra Carlo Maria Giulini

In 1880 Hans von Bülow moves to Meiningen and takes over the court orchestra. Soon becomes one of the finest in Germany.

von Bülow lets Brahms use the orchestra as a “practice orchestra” for his **Second Piano Concerto**, which also premiered in Meiningen, and for his two next **symphonies, No. 3 and 4** (1883 and 1885).

1889: is delighted to be named an honorary citizen of Hamburg

Makes an experimental gramophone recording for Thomas Edison, playing his Hungarian Dances.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZXL3I7GPCY>

Brahms burned an enormous number of his works near the end of his life. Only wanted the best to be left.

1896:

Clara suffers a devastating stroke on 16 May. She dies on 20 May.

Clara's eldest daughter Marie sends a telegram to Brahms:

Our mother fell gently asleep today.

Brahms feels incapable of taking part in Clara's funeral procession. He hides behind some large funeral wreaths and sobs uncontrollably.

1897: Johannes Brahms dies of liver cancer, 63 years old.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Wo4IPNMzWQ&list=RDGMEM8h-ASY4B42jYeBhBnqb3-w&start_radio=1&rv=4iF4Rn2b4T8



Johannes Brahms and Clara Schumann remained lifelong friends. Brahms never married and Clara never remarried. They died within 10 months of each other, she was 76, he was 63. After learning about her death, Brahms said: *Now I have nobody left to lose.*

Brahms *Intermezzo* Op. 118, No 2 (1893) Dedicated to Clara

The End

and welcome to Liszt, Berlioz,
and Wagner in the Spring