



## **BRAHMS FEST**

**Castalian String Quartet**

**Timothy Ridout, viola**

**Zlatomir Fung, cello**

**Angela Cheng, piano**

**Benjamin Hochman, piano**

**Sunday November 3 2024**



## **Leon! Are you listening?**

I cannot think of a more fitting musical event than this to dedicate to the memory of Leon, my husband, father of Sara and Daniel, and in many ways, father of the VRS.

Leon loved chamber music and especially our Vancouver Chamber Music Festival. He loved the musicians, and the fact that many of them were coming together for the first time, as they are today. The camaraderie, the intense rehearsals and partying around the exciting performances.

We planned these concerts at least two years ago.

We did not plan for Leon not to be in his seat.

We know that he's out there, listening to and enjoying every note.

- Leila

# From the Artistic Director

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Dear Friends:

The idea for this “mini” Brahms Festival has been percolating in my mind for several years now. The last time Leon and I were in Vienna we attended a chamber music concert with the Ébène Quartet who performed with violinist Antoine Tamestit and cellist Nicolas Altstaedt. They played both Brahms String Sextets and Schoenberg’s Verklärte Nacht.

It was a reminder of how much I missed our Chamber Music Festival. Back in those days, we were able to program such wonderful works with the number of musicians needed for such an endeavour.

This is now a reality, thanks to the support of so many of you.

Some of the musicians you’ll hear in these two concerts are getting together for the first time, which adds a layer of excitement. They have been in Vancouver for three days of intensive rehearsals, and now we can enjoy the results.

Our thanks to, first of all, our Season Sponsor, the Peak Group of Companies, and the concert sponsors: Elizabeth Arnold-Bailey and Robert Bailey, Colleen and Nick Filler, Ric and Lynda Spratley, and Lynn Kagan.

We are also most grateful to Timothy Agg and Stuart Alcock, Dawn Binnington and Peter Jackson, Joost Blom, Gillian Chetty, Judy Finch, Ann Harding, Jon and Christine Wisenthal, Baldwin Wong, and one anonymous supporter, who have helped us cover the accommodation costs of the musicians while they’re in Vancouver.

We would also like to thank the City of Vancouver for its support.

Finally, thank you for being here.



Leila



## CELLPHONES

The use of cellphones and recording devices is prohibited in the concert hall. Please take this opportunity to turn off all electronic devices.

音乐厅内禁止使用手机，禁止拍照，录音，录像。请观众关闭所有电子器材，谢谢您的合作。

# Program - Concert 1

[SEE PAGE 23 FOR THE CONCERT 2 PROGRAM]

**Angela Cheng**, piano  
**Timothy Ridout**, viola  
**Zlatomir Fung**, cello  
**Benjamin Hochman**, piano

## **Castalian String Quartet:**

**Sini Simonen**, violin  
**Daniel Roberts**, violin  
**Natalie Loughran**, viola  
**Steffan Morris**, cello

**Sunday, November 3, at 2:30 pm**  
**Vancouver Playhouse**

Season Sponsor



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**JOHANNES BRAHMS**  
(1833–1897)

**Timothy Ridout**, viola  
**Benjamin Hochman**, piano

## **Sonata No. 2 for Viola and Piano** **in E-flat major Op. 120 No. 2**

*Allegro amabile*  
*Allegro appassionato*  
*Andante con moto*  
*Allegro*

(approx. 22 minutes)

**Zlatomir Fung**, cello  
**Angela Cheng**, piano

## **Violin Sonata in G major Op. 78** **arr. for Cello and Piano** *Vivace ma non troppo*

*Adagio — Più andante — Adagio*  
*Allegro molto moderato*

(approx. 28 minutes)

## INTERMISSION

**Castalian String Quartet**  
**Timothy Ridout**, viola  
**Zlatomir Fung**, cello

## **String Sextet No. 2 in G major Op. 36**

*Allegro non troppo*  
*Scherzo. Allegro non troppo*  
*Adagio*  
*Poco allegro*

(approx. 42 minutes)



# Castalian String Quartet

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## Castalian String Quartet:

**Sini Simonen**, violin

**Daniel Roberts**, violin

**Natalie Loughran**, viola

**Steffan Morris**, cello

**Early Life & Education:** Formed in 2011, the quartet studied with Oliver Wille at the Hochschule für Musik, Hannover, before being selected by the Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT) in 2016. The quartet is the Hans Keller String Quartet in Residence at the University of Oxford and was named Young Artist of the Year at the 2019 Royal Philharmonic Society Awards.

**This Season:** In November 2024, the Quartet returns to North America for performances in Vancouver, Indianapolis, College Park (MD), Montreal, Boston and Utica (NY). Recent debuts include New York's Carnegie Hall, the Berlin Philharmonie, Vienna Konzerthaus, Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie and Paris Philharmonie.

**Recordings:** In 2022, the Castalian String Quartet released *Between Two Words* (Delphian Records), an album of music by Orlando di Lasso, Thomas Adès, Ludwig van Beethoven and John Dowland.

**Awards & Prizes:** The quartet was awarded First Prize at the 2015 Lyon International Chamber Music Competition, and in 2018 they were recipients of the inaugural Merito String Quartet Award and Valentin Erben Prize, and a prestigious Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship.

**Did you know:** The quartet's name is derived from the Castalian Spring in the ancient city of Delphi. According to Greek mythology, the nymph Castalia transformed herself into a fountain to evade Apollo's pursuit, thus creating a source of poetic inspiration for all who drink from her waters. Committed to inspiring a diverse audience for classical music, the Castalians have performed everywhere from the great concert halls to maximum security prisons and even the Colombian rainforest. When not on stage, Finnish first violinist Sini Simonen bags Munros, American violist Natalie Loughran mixes mean cocktails, and the Welshmen, second violinist Daniel Roberts and cellist Steffan Morris, get overly emotional about rugby.



Photo credit: Kirk Truman

The Castalian String Quartet is represented by David Rowe Artists, Marblehead, MA

# Angela Cheng, piano

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**Early Life & Education:** Angela began piano studies with her mother at age three. Not long after, Angela's aunt, a professional piano instructor in Hong Kong, took over her tutelage. In 1970, Angela arrived in Edmonton to study piano at the Alberta College with Vera Shean and at the University of Alberta with Ernesto Lejano. With the support of the Anne Burrows Music Foundation, she continued her studies at the Juilliard School in New York with Sascha Gorodnitzki and at the University of Indiana with Menahem Pressler.

Angela is currently on the artist faculty of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, where she was honoured with the 2011-12 Excellence in Teaching Award.

**Performances:** Recent performances include a debut with the Fort Worth Symphony, performing Rachmaninoff's "Variations on a Theme of Paganini", under the baton of Robert Spano, and a return to the Vancouver Symphony, performing Ravel's Concerto in G with Otto Tausk. Next season will include the Boulder Philharmonic, Newfoundland Symphony, Okanagan Symphony, Saskatoon Symphony, Saguenay Symphony and the Symphony of Northwest Arkansas.

**Recordings:** In 2001, Angela recorded her debut CD of two Mozart concerti with Mario Bernardi and the CBC Vancouver Orchestra. Other CDs include Clara Schumann's Concerto in A minor with JoAnn Falletta and the Women's Philharmonic for Koch International; four Spanish concerti with Hans Graf and the Calgary Philharmonic for CBC Records; both Shostakovich concerti with Mario Bernardi and the CBC Radio Orchestra; and a solo disc of selected works of Clara and Robert Schumann. In 2006, an all-Chopin recital CD was released by Universal Music Canada.

**Awards and Prizes:** Angela was a Gold Medallist at the Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Masters Competition and was the first Canadian to win the prestigious Montreal International Piano Competition. Other awards include the Canada Council's coveted Career Development Grant and the Medal of Excellence for outstanding interpretations of Mozart from the Mozarteum in Salzburg.



Angela Cheng is represented by Schmidt Artists International, Inc. New York

# Timothy Ridout, viola

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**Early Life & Education:** Born in London in 1995, Timothy studied at the Royal Academy of Music, graduating with the Queen's Commendation for Excellence. He completed his master's at the Kronberg Academy with Nobuko Imai in 2019 and, in 2018, took part in Kronberg Academy's Chamber Music Connects the World. Timothy plays on a viola by Peregrino di Zanetto, c. 1565-75, on loan from a generous patron of Beare's International Violin Society.

**Performances:** The 2023-24 season saw Timothy join WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse and Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra alongside the likes of Kazuki Yamada and Sir Simon Rattle. Timothy also appears as a soloist with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, hr-Sinfonieorchester, Odense Symfoniorkester, Symphony San Jose and the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, amongst others.

Further highlights include his return to America with Camerata Pacifica and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, his debut with Royal Northern Sinfonia, and a plethora of exciting chamber music concerts.

**Recordings:** Timothy regularly records for the Harmonia Mundi label. His latest release, recorded with Martyn Brabbins and the BBC Symphony Orchestra, features Lionel Tertis's arrangement of Elgar's Cello Concerto for viola and orchestra and Ernest Bloch's Suite for Viola and Orchestra. It builds on his already impressive discography comprising works by Prokofiev and Schumann on *A Poet's Love* and a recording of Berlioz's *Harold en Italie* with John Nelson and Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg across various albums.

**Awards & Prizes:** A former BBC New Generation Artist, Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship 2020 winner and recipient of the Royal Philharmonic Society 2023 Young Artist Award, Timothy is one of the most sought-after violists of his generation. In 2020, Timothy won Symphoniker Hamburg's inaugural Sir Jeffrey Tate Prize and joined the Bowers Program of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in 2021.

Timothy Ridout is represented by HarrisonParrott Group, London, UK.



Photo credit: Jiyang Chen

# Zlatomir Fung, cello

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**Early Life & Education:** Zlatomir was born in Corvallis, Oregon in 1999. He is of Bulgarian-Chinese heritage and began playing cello at age three. He studied at the Juilliard School under the tutelage of Richard Aaron and Timothy Eddy. Zlatomir was awarded an Avery Fisher Career Grant in 2020 and a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship in 2022.

**This Season:** In the 2024–2025 season, Zlatomir gives recitals in New York City, Boston and St. Louis, and performs the complete Bach Cello Suites at Mechanics Hall in Worcester, Massachusetts and in Arcata, California. He returns to the Aspen Music Festival and makes his debut at the Ravinia Festival. As concerto soloist, he joins the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, the San Antonio Philharmonic and the Billings Symphony Orchestra, among others. Internationally, he performs with the Barcelona Symphony in Spain and the Evergreen Symphony Orchestra in Taiwan with Jaap van Zweden conducting, and he returns to the London Philharmonic Orchestra; he also appears in France, Poland, Romania, Korea, Japan, China and Italy.



Photo credit: Jiyang Chen

**Recordings:** In January 2025, Signum Records will release Zlatomir’s debut album, a collection of opera fantasies and transcriptions for cello and piano. The recording includes Zlatomir’s own fantasy on Janáček’s *Jenůfa* and world premiere recordings of Marshall Estrin’s *Fantasia Carmen*, as well as a virtually unknown transcription of Rossini’s *William Tell* by 19th-century composer François George-Hainl.

**Awards & Prizes:** A winner of the 2017 Young Concert Artists International Auditions and the 2017 Astral National Auditions, Zlatomir has taken the top prizes at the 2018 Alice & Eleonore Schoenfeld International String Competition, 2016 George Enescu International Cello Competition, 2015 Johansen International Competition for Young String Players, 2014 Stulberg International String Competition, and 2014 Irving M. Klein International String Competition, as well as First Prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition Cello Division 2019. He was selected as a 2016 U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts and was awarded the 2016 Landgrave of Hesse Prize at the Kronberg Academy Cello Masterclasses.

Zlatomir Fung is represented by Kirshbaum Associates Inc. New York.



# Benjamin Hochman, piano

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**Early Life & Education:** Born in Jerusalem in 1980, Benjamin's musical foundation was laid in his teenage years, playing in masterclasses for Murray Perahia and Leon Fleisher. Benjamin studied with Claude Frank at the Curtis Institute of Music and with Richard Goode at the Mannes School of Music in New York. At the invitation of Mitsuko Uchida, he spent three formative summers at the Marlboro Music Festival.

**This Season:** Highlights of 2024-25 include Benjamin conducting the Szeged Philharmonic in Hungary and the Orlando Philharmonic in Florida. He appears as piano soloist in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 with the Rheinische Staatsphilharmonie conducted by Benjamin Schwartz in Germany and in Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with the South Florida Philharmonic conducted by Sebrina Alfonso.



Photo credit: Marco Borggreve

**Recordings:** Benjamin recorded Mozart's Piano Concertos Nos. 17 and 24, playing and directing the English Chamber Orchestra (Avie Records). His solo recordings include *Homage to Schubert* (works by Schubert, Kurtág and Widmann) and *Variations* (works by Knussen, Berio, Lieberman, Benjamin and Brahms), selected by the *New York Times* as one of the best recordings of 2015.

Benjamin's new album, *Resonance*, will be released by Avie Records on November 1, 2024. It includes Beethoven's Piano Sonatas Op. 109 and 110, George Benjamin's *Shadowlines* and works by Josquin de Prez and John Dowland.

**Did you know:** Benjamin founded the Roosevelt Island Orchestra, consisting of some of New York's finest orchestral and chamber musicians alongside promising young talent from top conservatories. Benjamin made his VRS debut at the Playhouse in 2003 with violinist Elisabeth Batiashvili.

Benjamin Hochman is represented by Kirshbaum Associates Inc., New York.

# Program Notes - Concert 1

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## Johannes Brahms

### Sonata No. 2 for Viola and Piano in E-flat major Op. 120 No. 2

At a time when European music was turning towards large story-telling orchestral works performed in grandiose public concerts, Brahms continued to write music created from just the basic building blocks of the tonal system, intended for private performance by small ensembles. In so doing, he established the foundations for a rich new literature of chamber works that featured hitherto neglected instruments such as the clarinet and viola in a leading role. Indeed, the duo-sonata literature for these instruments can be said to begin with Brahms.

His special interest in the clarinet came late in life when, in 1891, he encountered the playing of Richard Mühlfeld, principal clarinetist in the court orchestra of Meiningen (Thuringia), noted for his warm tone and expressive playing. Brahms' last published chamber works were two sonatas Op. 120 composed in 1894 for clarinet and piano (dedicated to Mühlfeld) and then re-issued with slight revisions by the composer in a version for viola.

\* \* \*

The second of these, the three-movement Sonata in E flat, Op. 120, No. 2, is remarkable for its relaxed ease of expression and its underlying tone of moderation, both in mood and in tempo. It begins with a sinuous, songlike melody with many a winding turn but nary a care in the world.



A second theme arrives, less meandering but equally carefree, that even the occasional outburst from the piano cannot perturb.



This first movement is what a happy, contented old age sounds like.

The formal contrasts that normally distinguish sections within first-movement sonata form are much attenuated in this, the last sonata movement that Brahms was ever to write. The fluidity of form is most keenly felt in the development section, where tumult is avoided in favour of civilized lyrical conversation.



Despite the odd provocation from the piano, the blood pressure rarely rises beyond a slight quickening of pulse from duplets to triplets, so that the recapitulation arrives like a welcoming hostess announcing to her guests that dinner is served. The coda, marked *Tranquillo*, nudges the movement to a conclusion with the viola playing beneath the piano for the last chord.

\* \* \*

The ***Allegro appassionato*** second movement is where one would expect real fire, but this is not a whip-cracking scherzo like that in the F-minor Piano Sonata, Op. 5, nor the heaven-storming scherzo of the Piano Concerto No. 2.

Although written in the dark key of E-flat minor, the passion here seems more remembered in affection than vividly experienced in the present moment.



Its headlong impetus, most persuasively argued for in the massively demanding piano part, is blunted by the relatively gentle pace, one-in-the-bar rhythmic feel and frequent use of feminine phrase endings for its flowing melody line.

Indeed, there are even tentative, halting passages where the forward momentum seems to stall noticeably.



The middle-section trio is a fervent, hymn-like elegy with a long piano introduction before the viola enters with its plaintively resigned melody.



This trio maintains the seriousness of mood, contrasting only in the stern evenness of its steady quarter-note pacing.

\* \* \*

In keeping with the relaxed mood of this sonata, Brahms gives us a moderately paced theme-and-variations finale marked ***Andante con moto***. The gracious theme of this movement is constructed out of little bite-sized mini-phrases, all in the same repeating rhythm of dotted notes and even notes, with each short phrase ending in a contented sigh.



For his first four variations, Brahms teases the listener to find the theme hidden in textures featuring rhythmic displacement or ornamental decoration.

The first variation staggers the viola and piano parts with rhythmic offsets, sounding almost as if preparing for a fugato.



In the second variation, the two instruments take turns enveloping the theme in a lace-like tracery of arpeggiation. The third variation intensifies the decorative detail into a constant patter of 32nd notes while the fourth slows down the pace to linger lovingly over the resolution of a constant chain of syncopations.

A set of variations in a major key usually features a *minore* variation just before the end, paced slow to provide a springboard for a brilliant and vigorous final variation. But Brahms turns the tables on this practice by giving us the movement's first real spurt of energy in the fifth variation in E-flat minor.



This leaves the last variation the task of building up momentum from an almost pastoral mood to one of vigorous celebration as the work ends.



## Johannes Brahms

### Violin Sonata in G major Op. 78 (arr. for cello and piano)

In the summer of 1879 Brahms completed his Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano, which he later also arranged for cello. In this warm and tender work, we catch a rare glimpse of the close personal relationship between the composer and his lifelong friend, the pianist and composer Clara Schumann (1819–1896).

Brahms was godfather to Felix Schumann (1854–1879), the youngest and most artistically talented of the Schumann children, who, just months before, had died of tuberculosis. Brahms' sonata contains affectionate poetic allusions and musical references woven into the score that Clara was sure to recognize. As such, it stands as a personal gesture of sympathy to a grieving mother and a fellow musician.

Chief amongst these allusions are quotations from two of Brahms' own songs that Clara was particularly fond of: *Regenlied* (Rain Song) and *Nachklang* (Reminiscence) from a collection published as the composer's Op. 59 in 1872. With texts by Brahms' friend Klaus Groth (1819–1899), they present contrasting images of rain both as a metaphor for the simple joys of childhood and as Nature's sympathetic tears for an unbearable loss.

The first stanza of *Regenlied* opens

Walle, Regen, walle nieder,  
Wecke mir die Träume wieder,  
Die ich in der Kindheit träumte,

Flow, rain, flow down,  
Awaken in me the dreams  
That I dreamt in my childhood.

while *Nachklang* begins

Regentropfen aus den Bäumen  
Fallen in das grüne Gras,  
Tränen meiner trüben Augen  
Machen mir die Wangen nass.

Drops of rain from the trees  
Fall onto the green grass,  
Tears in my sorrowful eyes  
Make my cheeks wet.

Both songs make use of two musical motives that Brahms incorporates into the score of his sonata. The first is that their melody lines both begin with a “motto” figure in a dotted rhythm on a single pitch. The second is an accompaniment figure in rolling 8th notes imitating the gentle drip-drip of falling raindrops, as in the opening of *Nachklang*:

The image shows a musical score for the opening of Brahms' *Regenlied* and *Nachklang*. The title "Sanft bewegt" is at the top. The first system shows the vocal melody for *Regenlied* in G major, starting with a dotted quarter note on G4, followed by a half note on A4, and then a dotted quarter note on B4. The lyrics "Re - gen - trop - fen aus den Bäu - men" are written below the notes. The second system shows the piano accompaniment for *Nachklang*, starting with a piano (p) dynamic and a rolling eighth-note figure in the right hand, with the word "raindrops" written below. The left hand has a dotted quarter note on G3, followed by a half note on A3, and then a dotted quarter note on B3, with the word "motto" written below.

Brahms' *Regensonate* (Rain Sonata), as this work has come to be known, begins with three iterations of this same “motto” figure built into its gentle and consoling opening theme that casually lilts on the weak beats of the bar.

Johannes Brahms, Op. 78  
(Veröffentlicht 1880)

**Vivace ma non troppo**

Noticeable right away is how Brahms' famously "hefty" piano textures are kept in check to allow the solo instrument (violin or cello) to sing out clearly, although Brahms' equally famous penchant for cross-rhythms finds employment in this picturesque imitation of falling raindrops in the piano accompaniment.

Ever the economical motivic craftsman, Brahms uses the motto's same dotted rhythm, starting on the same beat of the bar, in his expansive and deep-breathing second theme, with its steady comforting pedal tone in the bass.

With such peaceful material to work with, the development section aims more for glorification of its themes than conflict between them. It engages the ear first with running 8th notes from the first theme and then ruminates at length over the motto motive's dotted rhythm as a means of slipping effortlessly into the recapitulation, which, without unnecessary drama, brings a rounded sense of closure to the movement.

\* \* \*

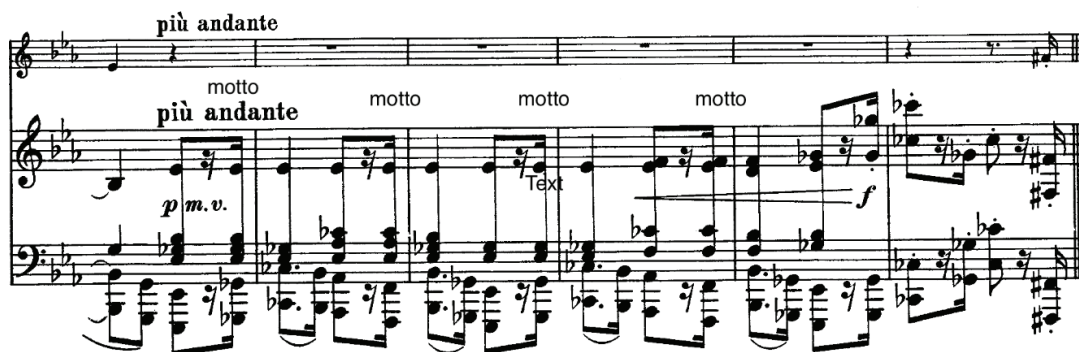
Brahms' relatively light touch in his keyboard writing in this first movement allows the solo instrument's sunny tone to sing out easily at the top of the texture. By contrast, the meditative and inward-looking *Adagio* that follows is overspread with a dark pall of rich Brahmsian piano tone emanating from the depths of the instrument's bass register.

This sombre tonal colouring is evident from the piano's opening thematic statement, with its halting, almost sobbing syncopations that struggle to find their bearings over the distant rolling thunder of the harmonies that support them down below.



When the solo instrument enters, it does so tentatively, with a series of plangent sighs, before emerging into a rhapsodic lament both wistful and comforting – a meditation, perhaps, on the passing of Felix Schumann.

This notion finds support in the movement's middle section, which, with its move from E-flat major to E-flat minor, has the stern implacable character of a funeral march.



Notice how densely Brahms has packed meaning into the motto's dotted rhythm, which in the first movement prompted misty memories of Klaus Groth's poetic imagery but here in the heart of the slow movement stares directly into the eyes of Death.

When the opening material returns, it is the solo instrument, in double stops, that now holds forth with the theme while the piano weaves a magnificent tapestry of sonorities at cross-rhythms with the syncopated melody above.



The motto's dotted rhythm makes one more appearance when, after a reprise of the funeral march in a more optimistic and comforting E-flat major, it rumbles as a pedal point in the bass in the coda to take the movement to its peaceful conclusion.



Brahms' most explicit reference to his settings of Klaus Groth's poems – and the meaning they have for Clara Schumann – comes in the finale, which opens with a literal quotation from *Nachklang*, in both its melody and its “raindrop” accompaniment.



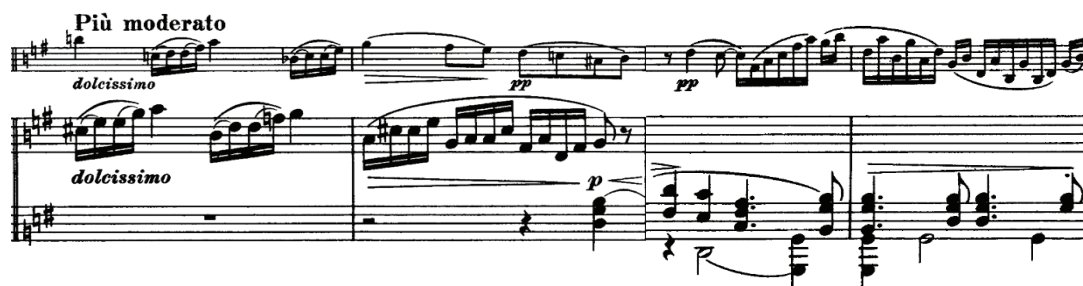
Unusually written in the minor mode, this finale is structured as a rondo, meaning that recurrences of the opening refrain are interrupted by various episodes of a contrasting nature.

Of special interest is the second of these, in which the solo instrument presents the opening melody of the slow movement in double stops, in its original key of E-flat major.



But it becomes clear as its melodic line develops that it has lost its grave demeanour, emerging with a sweeping sense of confidence and a gentle lilt that marks its possible transformation from a dirge to a dance.

This hopeful turn of events is confirmed in the third episode, in which the key changes from G minor to G major, and this same second-movement melody is proudly intoned by the piano.



And with this, the work of this sonata is done, and in the mildest possible coda we are led by the hand to a surprisingly un-triumphant but entirely Brahmsian quiet close.

Clara Schumann, in a letter to Brahms, said that she wept while playing through the score for the first time. And Brahms, for his part, confided to a friend that he thought the work “too intimate for the concert stage.”

We can only be glad that it did reach the stage, to allow us to overhear this very private musical conversation between two of the 19th century's most accomplished musicians.



## Johannes Brahms String Sextet No. 2 in G major Op. 36

Clara Schumann was not the only woman in Brahms' life, nor was she the only one to inspire hidden messages in his musical scores. In 1858 Brahms was briefly engaged to soprano Agathe von Siebold (1835–1909), the daughter of a professor from Göttingen University. Both Clara and Agathe are present – each in their own way – in Brahms' Sextet in G major, Op. 36, composed in 1864.

Clara was the inspiration for the opening melody of the slow movement, while Agathe appears as a musical cipher in the second theme of the first movement, cryptographically intoned in the notes A-G-A-H-E (the letter T being omitted and H functioning as the German name for B natural).

Romantic musical gestures notwithstanding, this is not a “lovey-dovey” work. It has none of the free expansive lyricism and clear textures of Brahms' songful Sextet No. 1, Op. 18. Its many densely contrapuntal passages reveal Brahms' mastery of compositional technique, but these displays of skill inevitably lead to creating darker, more intellectually involved textures that require the full attention of the listener's ear. And there is, moreover, an odd bittersweet quality to the overall sound of this second sextet, an underlying sense of unease pervading it that perhaps relates to the unsettled quality of Brahms' love life.

The sense of unease is immediately audible in the viola's mysterious murmur that accompanies the appearance of the opening theme in the first violin.



This opening theme, initiated with two rising 5ths, is pursued entirely in chordal skips, with nary a stepwise melody anywhere.

When an “intervallic” theme like this appears at the opening of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, it communicates a profound sense of cosmic mystery. And a similar chordal-skip theme evokes nobility at the outset of the “Eroica” Symphony No. 3.

But Brahms' theme, with its sudden chromatic wanderings right at the start – from G major to E-flat major and soon after to B major – bespeaks in its harmonic instability a strange sense of bewilderment and uncertainty.

But fortunately, the skies clear, and more straightforward lyrical impulses characterize the movement's gently lilting second theme presented first in the first cello and then in the first violin:



Here the viola's constant murmuring serves as simple harmonic support. But it returns to its disquieting role as an eerie wavering sonority “stalking” the first theme in the development section, where this second theme is forgotten and all eyes – or rather ears – are on the motivic tug-of-war that develops between rising and falling 5ths in the upper voices.



Its passion spent, the development section ends with a dramatic two-octave chromatic descent in the first violin to initiate the recapitulation.



The extensive coda that Brahms attaches to this movement tells us which part of the second theme he really likes: it's the cryptic AGA(T)HE cipher from the exposition, repeated over and over again as if he just can't let go of it.



This first movement – at 605 bars, one of the longest that Brahms ever wrote – is impressive not just for its rhetorical weight but also for the full use that Brahms makes of all six instruments as contrapuntal protagonists in the texture.

\* \* \*

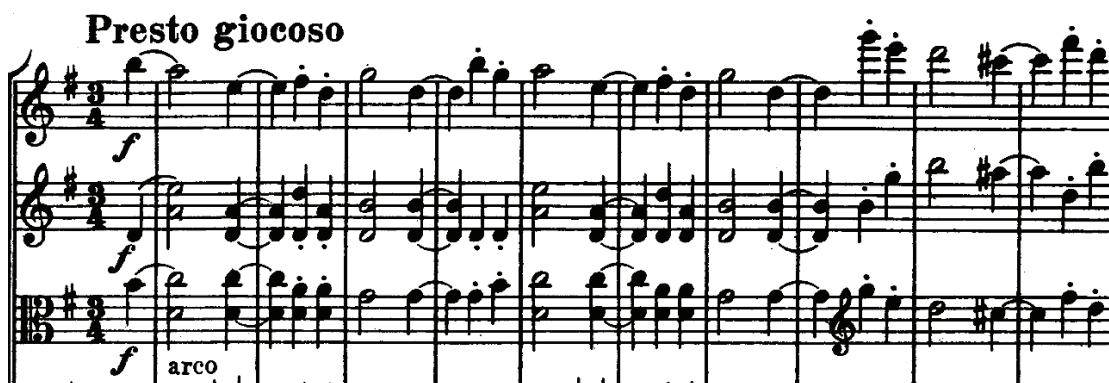
The **Scherzo** that follows reverses the normal A-B-A pattern of activity in such movements. Usually, it is the A section that is rhythmically rambunctious while the B section offers a respite from all the commotion.

In this movement, however, Brahms begins with a kind of moderately paced *intermezzo*, strangely mysterious with its minor-mode colouring and slightly antique-sounding mordent embellishments in the melody line.



It seems to simply pulse in place rather than move and shake as a real scherzo would do. Contributing to its slightly “nerdy” demeanour is the eyebrow-knitting fugal treatment it gives to its rolling scale figures.

Where the real hoe-down breaks loose is in the thumping Ländler (a rural version of the big-city waltz) that counts as the movement’s Trio.



Here the mode turns to the major, the duple metre changes to triple, and even that is undermined by hefty syncopations that transform pairs of bars in hemiola back to big triplet measures, all enlivened by the heavy stomping of farmers’ boots.

\* \* \*

The **Poco adagio** slow movement takes the form of a theme and variations, with a melody composed in the mid-1850s, almost a decade before the sextet as a whole. This melody, we understand from Brahms’ correspondence, expressed the longing of the young composer for Clara Schumann, 12 years his senior. Its two rising 4ths may well have inspired the two rising 5ths of the opening movement.



Forlornly presented in E minor without any harmonic support from the bass whatsoever, it features in alternating bars a contrast between aspiring rising intervals and descending sigh motives, austere accompanied by two chromatically inflected alto voices in two-against-three cross rhythms below.

A very odd expression of love-longing indeed.

The five variations that follow seem to be rarefied abstractions of the theme rather than celebrations or expansions of its lyrical content. The first variation puts the chromatic downward slide of the alto voices into the soprano



while the second ruminates over the sigh motives in an equally spare texture. This “learned” intellectual approach, privileging motivic development over lyrical appeal, is confirmed in the full-on canonic imitation of the third variation with its upward-leaping octave gestures, developing into downward leaps as the variation progresses.

Brahms’ gradual build-up of textural complexity reaches its peak in the fourth variation, in which all six voices take part in the contrapuntal rumble of motivic ping-pong that plays out. The final variation moves to E major, and in contrast to the barren landscape of the opening, spreads harmonic honey throughout the entire range of the instruments with filled-in arpeggios, in mini-phrases that seem to proclaim:

*“I’m an E-major chord, these are my notes! No, now I’m a D-major chord!”*



This seems to be Brahms’ way of finding a happy ending for what has been a very severe and difficult emotional journey.

\* \* \*



Whatever worries had dogged the previous movements, they are swept away by the relentless exuberance and good spirits of the finale.

The movement opens briskly with an orchestral-style tremolo in the upper instruments, soon imitated by the cellos below in the style of orchestration made famous by Mendelssohn in his scampering and mischievous scherzi.



Although appearing to be just an introductory gesture, these tremolo figures will participate fully in the deliberations of this sonata-form movement.

Their introductory function fulfilled, they give way to the elegiac and gently lilting first theme announced by the first violin, accompanied with typical Brahmsian warmth by parallel sixths in the first cello and then in the first viola.



The radiating warmth of tone produced by these parallel intervals will be a characteristic of this theme each time it is presented in this movement, giving an “orchestral” tonal resonance to the ensemble as a whole.

Brahms provides contrast to the smooth scalar motion of his first theme with his second theme comprised entirely of leaps, boldly and songfully proclaimed by the first cello.



Note how every instrument apart from the second cello at the very bottom of the texture takes part in this hopping “frog pond” of a leap-fest, with the first violin contributing the most athletically to the fun with its octave acrobatics at the top of the texture in the 16th-note motion of the movement’s opening.

These 16ths of the opening commandeer virtually the entire development section, with the second theme’s leaps vainly vying for attention amid a swarm of peppery 16ths in repeated notes echoing left and right in the listener’s ear.

This musical score snippet shows the opening of a movement. It features a complex texture with rapid 16th-note passages in the first violin and other instruments. The first violin is particularly prominent with its octave acrobatics. The score is written for a full orchestra, with staves for the first and second violins, first and second violas, first and second cellos, and first and second basses. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The music is characterized by a hopping, rhythmic quality, with many repeated notes and rapid 16th-note runs.

Then tantalizing hints of the first theme begin to appear, beginning a short re-transition that smoothly modulates its way into the real first theme, which floats to the surface in the most gentle way to initiate the recapitulation.

Tying a nice big bow on the proceedings is a coda based, not surprisingly, on those pesky 16ths that reveal themselves as the perfect counterpoint for both the first and second themes, and just the right way to drive the movement, leaping, to its triumphantly joyous ending.

This musical score snippet shows the coda of the movement. It features a complex texture with rapid 16th-note passages in the first violin and other instruments. The first violin is particularly prominent with its octave acrobatics. The score is written for a full orchestra, with staves for the first and second violins, first and second violas, first and second cellos, and first and second basses. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The music is characterized by a hopping, rhythmic quality, with many repeated notes and rapid 16th-note runs.

Program notes by  
Donald G. Gislason, 2024

# Program - Concert 2

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**Angela Cheng**, piano  
**Timothy Ridout**, viola  
**Zlatomir Fung**, cello  
**Benjamin Hochman**, piano

## **Castalian String Quartet:**

**Sini Simonen**, violin  
**Daniel Roberts**, violin  
**Natalie Loughran**, viola  
**Steffan Morris**, cello

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**JOHANNES BRAHMS**  
(1833–1897)

**Angela Cheng**, piano  
**Benjamin Hochman**, piano

## **16 Waltzes Op. 39 for Piano 4-Hands**

- No. 1 in B major - Tempo giusto
- No. 2 in E major
- No. 3 in G-sharp minor
- No. 4 in E minor - Poco sostenuto
- No. 5 in E major - Grazioso
- No. 6 in C-sharp major - Vivace
- No. 7 in C-sharp minor - Poco più Andante
- No. 8 in B-flat major
- No. 9 in D minor
- No. 10 in G major
- No. 11 in B minor
- No. 12 in E major
- No. 13 in B major
- No. 14 in G-sharp minor
- No. 15 in A-flat major
- No. 16 in C-sharp minor

(approx. 21 minutes)

**Castalian String Quartet**  
**Timothy Ridout**, viola  
**Zlatomir Fung**, cello

## **String Sextet No. 1 in B-flat major Op. 18**

- Allegro non troppo
- Andante ma moderato
- Scherzo. Allegro molto
- Rondo. Poco allegretto e grazioso

(approx. 38 minutes)

INTERMISSION

**Castalian String Quartet**  
**Benjamin Hochman**, piano

## **Piano Quintet in F minor, Op. 34**

- Allegro non troppo
- Andante un poco adagio
- Scherzo. Allegro
- Finale. Poco sostenuto

(approx. 42 minutes)

# Program Notes - Concert 2

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## Johannes Brahms

### 16 Waltzes Op. 39 for Piano 4-Hands

Brahms was no stranger to the popular music of his time. As a teenager he had contributed to the family income by performing in restaurants, at private gatherings and as an accompanist in the theatres of his native Hamburg. Then, when he was barely 20 years old, he had toured with Hungarian violinist Eduard Reményi (1828-1898), performing the gypsy-flavoured repertoire of folk music much in vogue at the time.

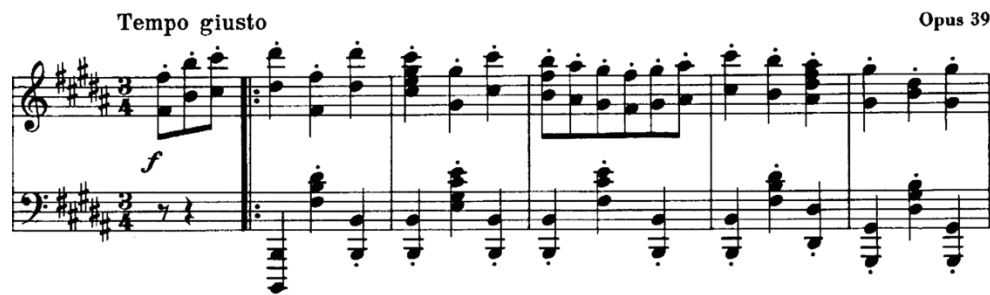
These early experiences no doubt contributed to the immediate success of his collection of 16 waltzes published in 1866, a collection so popular that it became quickly available in versions for both solo piano and piano four-hands.

Modelled in scale after the dance miniatures of Schubert, the waltzes are constructed in regular four-bar phrases and divided into two parts, with each part repeated. The first part ends on the dominant or relative major while the second part works its way harmonically back to the tonic, often recalling the opening material to create the “rounded binary” form A :||: B-A.

A wide range of waltz styles is present in the collection, from the gently lilting Viennese variety to the more energetic Ländler type inspired by village dancing. Some are even reminiscent of Brahms’ famous lullaby, drowsily pulsing with pedal tones that lull the ear into a day-dreaming state. Others are vividly alive with the improvisatory spirit of the gypsy fiddler.

While Brahms’ melodies are always simple and memorable, the elegance of his waltz settings is found in his accompaniments, which are more texturally complex than the simple “oom-pah-pah” patterns found in Schubert. Brahms’ waltz harmonies are rich with inner-voice movement, and his sense of rhythmic play at times subverts the metrical regularity of the waltz genre itself.

#### No. 1 in B major



The collection begins with a rousing Ländler-inspired dance full of bold leaps and stomping rhythms contrasted with scurrying scale figures. The texture is full, bass-heavy and almost orchestral in weight.

#### No. 2 in E major



The second waltz is a classic *valse sentimentale*. Its gentle caressing phrases, in the same lilting rhythm throughout, lavish the ear with wistful memories of Sachertorte and whipped cream in a fashionable Viennese café.

### No. 3 in G-sharp minor



This *valse triste* is contemplative but not lethargic. Each bar opens with a sigh, then rushes on to the next bar to sigh again.

### No. 4 in E minor



A strong gypsy element comes to the fore in the next waltz, with the gypsy violinist's rapid-fire embellishments and plangent parallel sixths creating dance music full of pathos and even defiance.

### No. 5 in E major



The fifth waltz is a quasi-lullaby with many a drowsy-making pedal tone. It pulses almost statically as suspensions in the inner voices resolve across the bar line to nudge the top-line melody forward.

### No. 6 in C-sharp major



Audience members with a penchant for toe-tapping will be driven cross-eyed by the ear-teasing metrical irregularities of this (apparently) triple-meter dance rife with hemiolas.

### No. 7 in C-sharp minor



A similar hemiola effect plays out in the seventh dance, with two-bar triple-meter groupings in the top part juxtaposed against single-bar groupings in the accompaniment below. This inner sense of struggle and turmoil is reflected in the wide-ranging excursions of the harmony to produce a surprising amount of drama in such a small piece.



### No. 8 in B-flat major



A wide-ranging melody is supported over many bars by a constant pedal point in the bass, making each change in harmony, when it does happen, a major event.

### No. 9 in D minor



The D-minor waltz might well have been inspired by the same utterly simple texture and repetitive pattern of falling intervals in Chopin's G minor Nocturne, Op. 15, No. 3.



But Brahms' little "nocturne-style" waltz is hardly evocative of the stillness of the night. Its intriguing pattern of harmonies creates a mood of restless rumination and wide-awake tonal curiosity.

### No. 10 in G major



The spiffy double-thirds of the coquettish tenth waltz go by so quickly that the ear hardly has time to process the quicksilver changes of harmony between major and minor that create such an iridescent effect on its sonic surface.

### No. 11 in B minor



The twinkling embellishments and minor-mode seriousness of the eleventh waltz evoke the style of gypsy music,



a style confirmed by the trademark cadencing pattern of its first half.

#### No. 12 in E major



The low tonal register and cavernous bass notes of the twelfth waltz recall Brahms' late piano pieces while suspensions over the bar line give a halting quality to the melody line's slow climb up the scale to its luminous cadence.

#### No. 13 in B major



Bold gestures and exhilarating "run-up" ornaments mark this short piece as another gypsy-inspired waltz.

#### No. 14 in G-sharp minor



The gypsy feel is alive, as well, in the cross-rhythmic metrical groupings between melody and accompaniment of this "ants-in-the-pants" dance piece. With its "whoop-whoop" sense of bravado, it likely would be more at home in a village square than in a Viennese dance hall.

#### No. 15 in A-flat major



This most famous of Brahms' waltzes has a music-box charm reminiscent of the gentle rocking of his equally famous lullaby.

## No. 16 in C-sharp minor



Brahms returns to Vienna for the final waltz of this collection, a gently paced *valse sentimentale* full of lively harmonic movement in the inner voices.

## Johannes Brahms

### String Sextet No. 1 in B-flat major Op. 18

Brahms' first sextet for strings was composed in 1860 and comprises four movements in the canonical forms of the classical sonata: a first movement in sonata form, a theme-and-variations slow movement, a scherzo much in the manner of Beethoven, and a sonata-rondo finale. It contrasts with Brahms' more "abstract" Sextet No. 2 in G major, Op. 36, in being more "songful" and lyrical, with a warmer tone overall.

This warmth of tone largely derives from the unusually prominent role given to the cellos in this work. Having two cellos to work with, Brahms could free one of them for melodic writing, knowing that the other would still be present to maintain a firm bass foundation for the harmony.

Brahms seems to have had a lifelong love affair with the baritone register, a tendency demonstrated clearly in the extraordinarily low range in which he chooses to present the first movement's opening theme, with the two cellos in counterpoint and one viola providing harmonic fill.

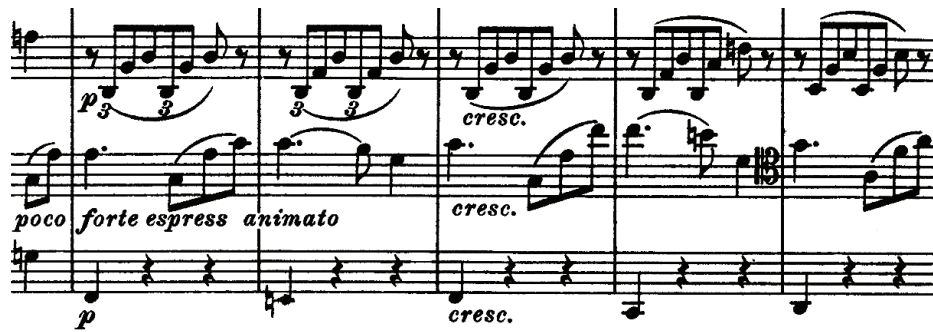


This hymn-like tune is then celebrated by the other instruments as the texture expands to include all of them. A second more active theme emerges, with downward leaps in a dotted rhythm to replace the steady quarter-note pace and smooth scalar motion of the first theme. This time it is the upper instruments taking the lead.



But this Theme 2 is in the "wrong" key, A major. Where is the theme in the dominant, as stipulated by "correct" sonata form?

The even more wide-ranging Theme 3 soon arrives, presented once again by Cello 1 in the baritone range. Note the two-against-three rhythms between viola and cello.



By contrast with the exposition, the development section begins in the upper voices, first chewing over bits of its first theme in echoing antiphonal responses between instruments



before putting Theme 2 through its paces in various harmonic guises.

The recapitulation arrives at the climax of a big build-up of sound and motivic intensity in an expanding passage marked *sempre crescendo*. But this time the opening theme is presented by the trio of Violas 1 and 2 plus Cello 1.

Here Brahms writes quite thickly, and his thematic instruments struggle to be heard in the middle of the texture, surrounded top and bottom by throbbing offbeats in the other instruments. A short coda in pizzicato rounds out the movement.

The second movement *Andante ma moderato* sets aside the lyrical tone of the first movement to give us a set of five variations on a bold and gritty theme in D minor, a theme that keeps struggling upward against all odds.



This theme is not presented by the cellos, as in the first movement, but by the next best thing, a solo viola, before being handed over to the other members of the ensemble for processing.



Brahms creates forward momentum by using the time-tested technique of increasing subdivisions of the beat. First the harmonies of the theme are filled in by 16ths tossed between the instruments (led by the cellos), then triplet 16ths, and finally, in Variation 3, in great sweeping scales in 32nds – with the cellos, the stars of this sextet, taking the leading role, of course.



Things calm down considerably in the fourth variation, which switches to D major for a change of tonal colour. Here is where the violins finally get their place in the sun, singing out an assured, expressive melody supported by a faithful accompaniment of steady 8ths and quarter notes.

Brahms steps back even further in the scaled-down “music box” fifth variation, with its drone 5ths in the Viola 2 and no cellos at all in the texture.



The honour of closing out the movement in the charming coda is once again given to Cello 1, which intones the opening theme once again, restored to its original minor mode but strangely more reconciled to ending in the major.

The last few variations have been hinting at a folk origin for this theme, and the little run-up ornaments and grace notes that embellish it in this gentle coda seem to confirm that impression.

This is the most popular movement of the sextet, and Clara Schumann liked it so much that Brahms even prepared a piano version of it for her.

The third-movement **Scherzo** is a short little punchy affair, patterned after the scherzo movements of Beethoven, with a bouncy staccato theme, off-beat accents, and syncopated jostling in its forward movement.



And its Trio – usually the section of peaceful repose that contrasts with the hectic pace of the opening – is even more frenetic!





The **Finale** is a sonata-rondo, meaning that it operates according to the rondo principle of alternating a recurring refrain with contrasting episodes, but the central episode is something of a “development” section, as in a sonata.

The opening refrain tune has, in many respects, the same calm, assured mood and relaxed tone of the opening theme of the first movement. And it even has the same texture as well, with Cello 1 proclaiming the tune to the simple accompaniment of just Cello 2 and Viola 2 alone.



But equally important for the developmental aspects of this theme is how it continues in the viola and two cellos:



Brahms being Brahms, he likes to re-use the same material over again in different guises. So many of his “contrasting” episodes in this movement are not woven from entirely new material but fashioned in part by slyly recycling various motivic fragments from the opening refrain.

The rising arpeggio figure from the continuation of the refrain, for example, is used extensively in the first episode, while the repeated-note figure completely dominates the “developmental” second episode



and is accompanied by a variant of the rising arpeggio figure in diminution, and in canon, no less! And yet, such passages greet the ear as if they are completely original ideas, unrelated to anything else in the movement.

Brahms' friend violinist Joseph Joachim (1831-1907), who led the string ensemble at the work's premiere, noticed this recycling of musical ideas and urged Brahms to introduce more overt contrast, but he refused.

Brahms, you see, was a Romantic-era composer with learned Classical-era and even Baroque-era tendencies. But he didn't want to sound "archaic". He was just committed to the idea of *ars est celare artem* (the art is in hiding the art).

As this finale proceeds in its second half, the refrain theme and its "contrasting" episodes increasingly blur into one another.

Finally, an animated coda, still fixated on the repeated-note motive,



rounds up all the motivic stragglers and briskly whisks the movement to its bright conclusion.

## Johannes Brahms Piano Quintet in F minor Op. 34

The F-minor quintet has had many lives. It began in 1862 as a string quintet with two cellos, perhaps in homage to the great Schubert String Quintet in C, but then was recast as a work for two pianos and eventually emerged in its final form as a piano quintet. All of this shuffling between instrumental ensembles represents no fault in the work's initial conception but rather points to a central quality of Brahms' music as a whole: its unwavering commitment to the primacy of musical ideas over the appeal of any specific instrumental colouring. In this, Brahms looks back to the aesthetic ideals and compositional practices of the Baroque, and to Bach in particular.

And yet the tone of this work as a whole is entirely that of the Romantic era: moody, restless, rebellious and heroic, with an emotional undercurrent of tragedy ever present. The masterful manner in which Brahms uses the same small number of motives over and over again to create a large-scale structure cross-swept with compelling emotions is amply demonstrated in the densely argued first movement.

This movement is unusually dark in mood, with both its first and second themes set in the minor mode. It begins with a mysterious and slightly spooky bare-bones statement of its first theme with all instruments in unison, a theme that rocks back and forth around a number of common chords.



But then the piano suddenly bolts out of the gate with an impetuous round of 16ths – but not just *any* 16ths.



They perfectly reproduce the melodic outline of the opening unison theme, but in smaller note values. Deriving both contrast *and* continuity from the same musical material – that’s Brahms in a nutshell.

Embedded in the opening theme is a motive that will dominate this first movement, and indeed recur throughout the quintet as a whole: the *semitone*.

The alternation of C and D-flat is what gives the opening theme its wavering emotional colouring, and the transition to the second theme, spun out by Violin 1 in plaintive semitone sighs, makes crystal clear the importance of this small interval in the musical discussion.



Not to be outdone, the second theme in the minor key of C#, the alternate spelling of D-flat, features both a melody line based on this alternating interval in duple groupings *and* a murmuring accompaniment in the bass that is comprised of little *but* semitones, in triplets.



With such a turbulent exposition behind it, the development section begins unusually hushed with a Violin 1 line that disappears up to the high register to begin a much less assertive examination of the motives of the first theme.



But this timid demeanour doesn’t last for long, and a gradual build-up of sound unleashes a full-throated defence of the second theme’s many virtues until the impetuous 16ths from the movement’s opening page break up the proceedings to usher in the recapitulation.

Little seems to have changed, though, and the recapitulation is still as grumpy and emotionally raw as the exposition, except that we are led to believe in the coda that a “happy ending” might be in store, given the change of mode to F major and a change of mood to that of peaceful resignation.

But our hopes are dashed by one last outburst from those impetuous 16ths that interrupted the main theme on the first page of this movement. Erupting one last time, they sweep us back to the dark shadows of F minor in an almost vengeful wave of concluding anger and grim defiance.

\* \* \*

After the turbulent and densely argued first movement comes a slow movement in A-B-A form of audacious simplicity and seductive Viennese charm. Its opening theme, though, appears to have little to recommend it. The phrases are virtually all symmetrical four-bar units, and the mood is sleepy, almost lullaby-ish.



The piano plays in 3rds or 6ths for most of its duration, and the same “Scotch snap” figure at the beginning of the bar keeps recurring over and over again. And yet, little by little, we are drawn in to this “cozy” texture by how melody and accompaniment seem to mirror each other, especially the “Scotch snap” figure, which appears echoed, in augmentation, in the string accompaniment.

The middle section is more active, although hardly sprightly, and is significantly less “drowsy” despite the recurrence of pedal tones in the bass.



By the time the A section returns, we are quite ready for more “nap time” music, but we dare not drift off, for fear of missing out on the luscious buckets of Viennese whipped-cream string sonority that Brahms applies with such a generous hand to his opening material.

\* \* \*

The Scherzo that follows allows the ear to work off all that rich musical food in a movement that is ear-catching not only for its propulsive rhythmic drive but also because of the way that, like the first movement, it springs from a very small number of musical elements. It begins with a suspenseful build-up of syncopations in the strings:



To this, the piano adds a busy little pattern of 16ths that sounds like a pesky fly circling round you that you just can't manage to swat.



Relief comes quickly, however, when a fresh new melody, a stirring anthem of hope and bright cheer, arrives to sweep away all trace of the previous material.

But is it really new? No, it's the same “pesky fly” motive, written in larger note values, and in the major mode.



And when this busy little motive returns to be treated in fugato, its “contrasting” countersubject is really just an augmented version of itself at double note values. The interlaced right-hand and left-hand *martellato* piano writing? Simple. It's an echoing hocket created from the repeated notes at the beginning of the “pesky fly” motive. Brahms, you see, knows how to make buns, loaves, flapjacks and crêpes, all from the same musical “flour”.

Even the Trio theme in the middle section is derived from the rhythm of the major-mode anthem, with the same triplet figure in the middle of its hymn-like, steady-paced dotted quarter notes.



And yet, even though this whole movement manages to be constructed like a house of mirrors, continually reflecting its motivic material back on itself, it never tires the ear. Its propulsive momentum, driven in large part by the hammering rhythms of the piano part, inevitably ends up making it the most memorable movement of the whole work.

So Brahms was right to re-format his original string quartet to include the piano. The riveting effect of this movement could hardly be imagined on any other instrument.

And that *semitone* motive from the first movement, the one that initiates the “pesky fly” figure in the Scherzo? Well, Brahms makes sure you remember it by poking you in the eye with it at the end of the first section and the end of the movement as a whole.





After such a movement as the Scherzo, the risk of anticlimax is real. So Brahms begins his last movement with a tortuously slow introduction, an introduction in an imitative texture rife with this quintet's favourite interval: the semitone.



After the quite grand dramatic outpourings of this introduction, the movement's main theme, when it finally arrives, is an uncomplicated affair, a decorated rising minor scale and little more.



But this being Brahms, of course, it is hardly finished when it gets immediately repeated in inversion, coming down the scale as simply as it went up.

The episodes in this sonata-rondo finale all derive in some way from the introduction, the principal theme or any number of variations of these two.

This episode, for example, uses the semitones of the introduction, with the Violin 1 taking on the melody line of the "pesky fly" motive from the Scherzo, plus the "Scotch snap" figure from the slow movement for good measure.



The massive coda, based on an up-tempo version of the first theme but in 6/8 time, is a virtual movement all in itself.



It features a Beethovenian fugato and many a thunderous climax, settling the anticlimax question once and for all.

Program notes by  
Donald G. Gíslason, 2024

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This list was created on Monday, October 28, 2024, and includes bequests, gifts of cash, donations of securities, sponsorships and ticket donations dating back to August 15, 2023. Should you discover any errors or omissions, please accept our sincere apologies and contact Sara Getz, General Manager, by email to [sara@vanrecital.com](mailto:sara@vanrecital.com) or by phone at 604.602.0363, so that any necessary corrections can be made.

There are many ways to support the VRS including making a philanthropic gift, sponsoring a concert and/or including us in your estate plans. If you would like more information, please contact us at 604.602.0363.

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