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**Brahms in the Meiningen Tradition --
His Symphonies and Haydn Variations According to the
Markings of Fritz Steinbach, Edited by Walter Blume:
A Complete Translation with Background and Commentary**

Jonathan Robert Pasternack

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts

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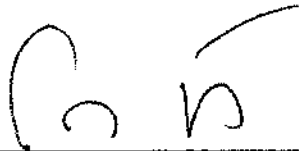
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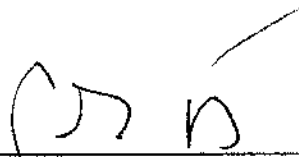
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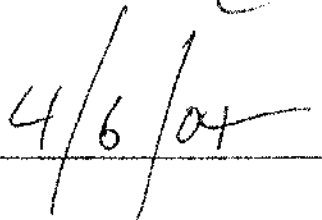


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Abstract

**Brahms in the Meiningen Tradition –
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Chairman of the Supervisory Committee:

Professor Peter S. Erös
Department of Music

This dissertation makes available the first complete English translation of *Brahms in der Meiningen Tradition*, by Walter Blume (1883-1933), an important source document relating to the performance of the four symphonies and Haydn Variations of Johannes Brahms (1833-1897). This book was based on the markings Blume found in the scores of his teacher and friend Fritz Steinbach (1855-1916), conductor of the orchestra at the Court of Sachsen-Meiningen in central Germany from 1886 to 1902. Steinbach was a musician profoundly admired by Brahms and considered by his contemporaries to be one of the composer's greatest interpreters and champions. Blume's book is all that remains to testify to Steinbach's art, aside from a small number of letters, criticisms, reminiscences and brief references. The material provided by Walter Blume represents an overall approach to music-making that was favored by Brahms and had the composer's sanction. For this reason, *Brahms in der Meiningen Tradition* ranks among the most significant works of its kind. It will undoubtedly be of great interest to conductors, performers, scholars and enthusiasts, providing a rare opportunity to consider the insights and practices of a significant Brahms interpreter and contemporary.

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Preface

This dissertation makes available the first complete English translation of *Brahms in der Meiningen Tradition*, by Walter Blume (1883-1933),¹ an important source document relating to the performance of the four symphonies and Haydn variations of Johannes Brahms (1833-1897). This book was based on the markings Blume found in the scores of his teacher and friend Fritz Steinbach (1855-1916), conductor of the orchestra at the Court of Sachsen-Meiningen in central Germany from 1886 to 1902.² Steinbach was a musician profoundly admired by Brahms and considered by his contemporaries to be one of the composer's greatest interpreters and champions. Blume's book is all that remains to testify to Steinbach's art, aside from a small number of letters, criticisms, reminiscences and brief references.³ The material provided by Walter Blume represents an overall approach to music-making that was favored and possibly even practiced by Brahms himself and certainly had the composer's sanction. For this reason, *Brahms in der Meiningen Tradition* ranks among the most significant works of its kind.

Walter Blume's book was never printed beyond its original typescript, which

¹ Walter Blume, ed. *Brahms in der Meiningen Tradition – seine Sinfonien und Haydn-Variationen in der Bezeichnung von Fritz Steinbach*, typescript (Stuttgart: Ernst Surkamp, 1933).

² Modern-day Meiningen is located approximately 100 kilometers north-east of Frankfurt.

³ See, for example, Konrad Huschke, "Fritz Steinbach und Johannes Brahms," *Allgemeine Musikzeitung* 63 (1936), 625-26; "Breife von Brahms an F. Steinbach," *Neue Freie Presse* (November 5, 1897); and Herta Müller, "Fritz Steinbachs Wirken in Meiningen und für Johannes Brahms," *Südthüringer Forschungen* 30 (Meiningen, 1999).

survives in the collections of a number of state and university music libraries in Europe and in only a handful of institutions in the United States, mostly in microfilm format.⁴ It has only recently begun to receive extensive scholarly attention in the English language.⁵ Walter Frisch's treatment of the First Symphony chapter is the only other English translation of a portion of this work.⁶

There is no question that Johannes Brahms enjoyed a special relationship with the Meiningen court orchestra under the leadership of both Hans von Bülow (1830-1894) and Fritz Steinbach.⁷ This began in 1881, when the composer was first invited to Meiningen by Bülow. An interesting perspective on Bülow's achievements at Meiningen is provided by the conductor, Felix Weingartner (1863-1942), a generation younger than Bülow and also highly regarded by Brahms:⁸

After Wagner had given up regular conducting he sought to transfer his feeling, his insight and his power to some younger, plastic spirits in whom they might live on.... Of these, the oldest is the most significant – his intimate friend, at that time his most faithful champion, his *alter ego*, as he himself once called him – the master-conductor Hans von Bülow. After a comparatively short co-operation

⁴ Based on extensive research conducted by the author using the standard bibliographies and databases. It would seem plausible that the reason for the limited circulation of Blume's work, which was completed in January 1933, had less to do with its content than with historical circumstances.

⁵ For example, see Robert Pascall and Philip Weller, "Flexible tempo and nuancing in orchestral music: understanding Brahms's view of interpretation in his Second Piano Concerto and Fourth Symphony," in *Performing Brahms — Early Evidence of Performance Style*, eds. Michael Musgrave and Bernard D. Sherman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 220-43; and Walter Frisch, "In Search of Brahms's First Symphony," in same, 277-301.

⁶ "Brahms in the Meiningen tradition: his symphonies and Haydn Variations in the markings of Fritz Steinbach," ed. Walter Blume. "Excerpt: The First Symphony," introduced and translated by Walter Frisch, in *Performing Brahms*, eds. Musgrave and Sherman, 244-76.

⁷ See, for example, Herta Müller, "Richard Wagner und Johannes Brahms in Meiningen," in *Musik und Gesellschaft*, 33/5 (May 1983), 282-85.

⁸ *Johannes Brahms Briefwechsel XII. Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel mit Fritz Simrock*, Max Kalbeck, ed. (Berlin, 1919; reprint, Tutzing, 1974), 169, cited in Frisch, "In search of Brahms' First Symphony," 300.

they had to part company, and Bülow's star first shone brilliantly again when in 1880 he became chief of the Meiningen orchestra. A year later the Duke⁹...sent him off with the orchestra on a grand concert-tour through Germany, Austria and Russia. Seldom has such a victory of mind over matter been seen. A rather poorly-appointed orchestra, by no means absolutely excellent in its proportions,¹⁰ conquered everywhere the large orchestras, famous the whole world over as possessing the best artists; this was the work of the eminent conductor who...had the courage to defy with a small troop of admirably schooled players the big musical armies that were mostly led by ordinary time-beaters. By dint of diligent, indefatigable practice he had so infused into the orchestra his own conception of the works as to get a perfection of *ensemble* at that time unknown. The most scrupulous rhythmical exactitude was united with so artistic a balance of the various timbres, that the question whether this or that player was the better, or whether this or that peculiarity of the conductor was justifiable, could scarcely be raised. The orchestra seemed to be a single instrument, on which Bülow played as on a pianoforte.¹¹

According to the account in Karl Geiringer's classic biography of Brahms, Bülow "...cherished the principle that in art nothing is insignificant, that every least detail is of importance. He therefore took unprecedented pains in rehearsing single groups of the orchestra, the result being model performances of singular beauty." Weingartner asserts further that Bülow, through his touring with the orchestra and the resulting widespread fame and attention, had a profound influence on the overall artistic improvement of orchestras throughout Europe.¹²

Johannes Brahms had first met Hans von Bülow in 1877, writes Geiringer, "...when Bülow gave the first performance of Brahms' First Symphony in Hanover, and then in Glasgow. Brahms, at this time, regarded the conductor's co-operation as of great

⁹ George II, Duke of Sachsen-Meiningen (1826-1914) who, as the financier of the Meiningen Court Orchestra, was the employer of both Bülow and Steinbach.

¹⁰ The orchestra was comprised of a core ensemble that totaled forty-nine musicians. See Willi Schuh and Franz Trenner, eds., *Hans von Bülow and Richard Strauss Correspondence*, trans. Anthony Gishford (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1955; reprint, Westport, Conn.: Hyperion Press, 1979), 24.

¹¹ Felix Weingartner, *On Conducting*, trans. Ernest Newman (New York: Dover, 1969), 9-10.

¹² *Ibid.*

importance....” Geiringer relates the story of Brahms’ initial experiences at Meiningen:

When, in the spring of 1881, on the occasion of his Viennese concerts, Bülow told Brahms of his innovations, the composer was deeply interested, and the impulsive conductor was accordingly impelled to place his orchestra at Brahms’ disposal for rehearsals of his new compositions. It was not long before Brahms profited by this offer. In the summer of 1881...he announced his intention of bringing the concerto¹³ to Bülow in October.... Bülow was completely carried away by this new composition, and by Brahms’ playing of it, and with passionate enthusiasm he placed himself at his new friend’s disposal.... All the devotion he had previously given to Wagner was now lavished on Brahms. He arranged extensive concert tours with his splendid orchestra, the principal object of which was to make Brahms’ compositions more widely known; and as pianist, too, he worked indefatigably for his friend.¹⁴

In late 1885, Bülow precipitately resigned from his post following a dispute with Brahms that occurred during an orchestra tour.¹⁵ He was replaced by Richard Strauss (1864-1949), aged twenty-one, whom Bülow had brought to Meiningen to be his assistant earlier that same year.¹⁶ When Strauss left to become Music Director in Munich in 1886,¹⁷ the conductor who took over from him in Meiningen was, according to Strauss, “a lovable man and fine musician,” named Fritz Steinbach.¹⁸

¹³ This refers to the newly completed Piano Concerto in B-flat major.

¹⁴ Karl Geiringer, in collaboration with Irene Geiringer, *Brahms: His Life and Work*, third ed. (New York: Da Capo, 1974), 146-7.

¹⁵ The conflict turned out to be short-lived, however. See Edward Dannreuther, “Hans von Bülow,” in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol. I, Eric Blom, ed. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1954), 1012-13.

¹⁶ In fact, his position as *Kapellmeister* at Meiningen provided Strauss with his first experiences as a conductor. See *Bülow/Strauss Correspondence*, 9-10.

¹⁷ Alfred Kalisch, “Richard Strauss,” in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol. VIII, Eric Blom, ed. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1954), 124. This was not the highest musical position in Munich, which instead was held by Hermann Levi, a circumstance that soon became a source of great frustration for Strauss. It is interesting to note that Bülow had advised Strauss to remain in Meiningen expressly to avoid this kind of frustration. See *Bülow/Strauss Correspondence*, 23-4.

¹⁸ From an 1886 letter to Bülow. *Bülow/Steinbach Correspondence*, 32.

Steinbach, who was a composer as well as a conductor,¹⁹ was born in Grünsfeld, Baden, in 1855.²⁰ Following early studies with his brother, Emil,²¹ he entered the Conservatory at Leipzig in 1873, where the professor of composition was Karl Reinecke (1824-1910).²² Brahms seems to have first become aware of Steinbach's existence in April 1875, when "musicologist Hermann Kretzschmar, who knew Brahms well, had asked him to accept the highly talented Fritz Steinbach as a pupil."²³ According to Geiringer, Steinbach called upon Brahms in the summer of the same year, when "the youth himself tried to persuade Brahms to accept him. Although he did not succeed in overcoming Brahms' inherent dislike of teaching, the master put his refusal so nicely that he quite won the young man's heart."²⁴ Based upon Brahms' recommendation, Steinbach went to Vienna to study with Gustav Nottebohm (1817-1882) and Anton Door (1833-1919) in 1877 and, in the next year, he continued his studies with Otto Dessoff (1835-1892) and Franz Lachner (1803-1890) in Karlsruhe.²⁵ All of these men belonged to Brahms' circle of musician friends.

After serving as Second *Kapellmeister* in Mainz from 1880-85, Fritz Steinbach

¹⁹ He was apparently known as a composer in Germany chiefly through two works, a sonata for violoncello and a septet. See Herta Müller, "Steinbach, Fritz," *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (accessed 12 December 2004), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>.

²⁰ The state of Baden is situated in the southwestern region of Germany.

²¹ Composer and conductor Emil Steinbach (1849-1919).

²² Reinecke, the noted composer and a pianist, also led the Gewandhaus concerts from 1860-1895. When he was a student in Leipzig, he had made the acquaintances of both Schumann and Mendelssohn. He first met Brahms as early as 1853, and gave the premieres of the complete *Requiem* as well as the *E minor Cello Sonata* with Emil Heger. It is interesting to note that Felix Weingartner was also a student of Reinecke's in Leipzig during the period when Steinbach was there. See Franz Gehring, "Karl Reinecke," in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol. VIII, Eric Blom, ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1954), 114.

²³ Geiringer, *Johannes Brahms*, 19.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Müller, "Steinbach, Fritz."

received two important appointments in 1886. Remarkably, the first of these came about due to Hans von Bülow's recommendation: Steinbach was made professor of counterpoint and composition in Frankfurt, at the Hoch Conservatory.²⁶ Not long after, Steinbach was called to Meiningen by the Duke to replace Bülow as *Kapellmeister*. Over the following sixteen years of his tenure there, Steinbach's achievements with the Meiningen orchestra earned him great recognition beyond that of merely being Hans von Bülow's successor. By all accounts, Brahms was impressed by the conductor's gifts. On a visit to Meiningen in late 1888, "not only did Brahms enjoy the splendid performance of his own works [by the orchestra under Fritz Steinbach]...he also permitted himself the pleasure of hearing unknown works of Bach and Mozart performed for his special benefit."²⁷ Max Kalbeck (1850-1921) reported that Brahms, having been "so taken by surprise and overwhelmed" by "the elemental effect" of Steinbach's performance of the First Symphony in December 1891, "asked for the work to be repeated outright."²⁸ The composer sometimes honored Steinbach by sharing the podium with him, taking turns in leading the Meiningen orchestra at concerts. By studying the composer's own rehearsals and performances and through his frequent interactions with Brahms, Steinbach had exhaustive opportunities to absorb the composer's approach to music-making, as well as Brahms' preferences for the performance of his own music.²⁹

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Geiringer, 171.

²⁸ Max Kalbeck, *Johannes Brahms*, vol. IV/1, 4th ed. (Deutsche Brahms Gesellschaft: Berlin, 1908-21), 224, quoted in Robert Pascall, ed. *Symphonie Nr. 1 c-moll op. 68*, Series I/1 of the *Johannes Brahms Gesamtausgabe* (Munich: G. Henle, 1996), x. The translation is my own.

²⁹ "Kalbeck reports that Steinbach actually took Brahms himself as his 'model' (*Vorbild*) for conducting..." Quoted in Walter Frisch, *Brahms: The Four Symphonies* (New Haven: Yale, 2003), 169.

Steinbach sought to establish a regular festival that would honor and popularize the music of Brahms, as Richard Wagner had done for himself through the Bayreuth Festival.³⁰ For a number of years, Brahms festivals were held every two years or so under Steinbach's leadership. In a three-day festival in Meiningen, in September 1895, the only music programmed was by Brahms, Bach and Beethoven,³¹ "the audience feeling that the place of honor next to these giants of tonal art was the rightful due of the living master."³² The festivals attracted listeners from all across Europe. Arturo Toscanini (1867-1957) wrote enthusiastically of attending the 1897 festival in a letter to a friend: "I have enjoyed myself beyond words. Brahms is great – Steinbach marvelous."³³ Aside from the first four Brahms festivals that took place in Meiningen in 1895, 1897, 1899 and 1903, Steinbach organized similar events between 1905 and 1913, in Baden-Baden, Munich, Wiesbaden and Edinburgh.³⁴

No less important to the promulgation of Brahms' music were the tours of England and Germany undertaken by Fritz Steinbach and the Meiningen orchestra in 1902.³⁵ The composer Ralph Vaughan Williams wrote of Steinbach's "renderings of Bach and Brahms being especially appreciated" by the London audiences. He also noted

³⁰ Müller, "Steinbach, Fritz."

³¹ Fritz Steinbach was one of the editors of an Eulenburg J.S. Bach edition that is no longer in print.

³² Geiringer, 189.

³³ Harvey Sachs, *Toscanini* (London: Robson Books, 1993), 109. A musician of far greater refinement and complexity than has been granted him in many modern revisionist critiques, Toscanini was arguably one of the great conductors of Brahms' music. The rhythmic subtleties, sense of lyricism and drama, and clarity of orchestral balance and texture that are displayed in his recordings of Brahms' symphonies with the NBC Symphony deserve careful attention and study, in my opinion, and less prejudiced reprobation and perfunctory dismissal.

³⁴ Müller, "Steinbach, Fritz."

³⁵ Ivor Keys, *Johannes Brahms* (Portland, Ore.: Amadeus, 1989), 127.

that “all the four Brahms symphonies were included in his programmes.”³⁶ One English reviewer of Steinbach’s concerts admired how “the four Brahms symphonies were rendered with such life and impulse, with such a spirit of romance, that one felt their power in quite unaccustomed degree; the conductor seemed to be re-creating rather than giving a rendering of the music.”³⁷

Steinbach was frequently invited back to England as a guest conductor, where he often appeared with the London Symphony Orchestra.³⁸ He took a strong interest in new music and was particularly supportive of Edward Elgar, whose *Enigma Variations* he conducted in 1902, just three years after the work had its premier by Hans Richter, another conductor with strong ties to both Brahms and Wagner.³⁹ Other guest conducting engagements took Steinbach to St. Petersburg, Moscow, Paris, Madrid and New York, where he continually took the opportunity to promote the music of Brahms.⁴⁰

In 1902, Steinbach took over in Cologne from Brahms’ friend Franz Wüllner, leading the concerts in the city’s Gürzenich concert hall and also directing its conservatory, where he taught conducting and composition.⁴¹ Among his many pupils in Cologne, three in particular went on to have internationally prominent careers: Hans Knappertsbusch (1888-1965) and the brothers Fritz Busch (1890-1951) and Adolf Busch (1891-1952), the latter having become known primarily as a violinist and composer. Fritz Busch, who during the years 1906-09 studied with Steinbach, “the all-powerful,

³⁶ Ralph Vaughan Williams, “Conducting,” in *National Music and other essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press Paperback, 1986), 282.

³⁷ Frisch, “In Search of Brahms’s First Symphony,” 281.

³⁸ Müller, “Steinbach, Fritz.”

³⁹ Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Elgar* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 73.

⁴⁰ Müller, “Steinbach, Fritz.”

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

whom we honoured as much as we feared him,”⁴² commented on his teacher’s fame attracting students from other countries: “There were many Dutch, English and Americans; and even a Basque priest appeared for some days to take part in Steinbach’s conducting class.”⁴³

We also learn from Busch that Steinbach’s programs in Cologne, where “above all the works of Brahms were regularly performed,” gave the chief preference to classical and romantic music:

Steinbach was also, however, an outstanding conductor of Beethoven, and I have never heard, for example, the *Adagio* of the Ninth Symphony played with such obvious right tempo, so warmly and tunefully, with such correct phrasing – in a word, in such a convincing manner – as by him. Though Steinbach was in the first place definitely a concert conductor, who had had relatively few opportunities for conducting opera, he possessed a naturally dramatic temperament. Even Boettcher, the Wagnerian, who knew all the important opera conductors of the time and regularly attended the Bayreuth performances, admitted that Steinbach’s interpretation of the Dead March [*sic*] from *Götterdämmerung* was one of the greatest experiences of his life.⁴⁴

The venerable English conductor Sir Adrian Boult (1889-1983) wrote of Steinbach’s “monumental performances of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony and Mahler’s VIII” at festival concerts Boult attended while he was in Cologne.⁴⁵ For Boult, Fritz Steinbach ranked among the greatest conductors ever, especially in the music of Brahms, but also for his performances of Beethoven⁴⁶ and Bach.⁴⁷

The music critic Alexander Berrsché (1883-1940) provides an important,

⁴² Fritz Busch, *Pages from a Musician’s Life*, trans. Marjorie Strachley (London: The Hogarth Press, 1953), 56. Blume dedicated his book to Fritz Busch.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴⁵ Adrian C. Boult, *My Own Trumpet* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1973), 39.

⁴⁶ Boult, *On Music* (London: Toccata Press), 94.

⁴⁷ Boult, *My Own Trumpet*, 181.

thoughtful description of Steinbach's art in his review of the 1909 Brahms Festival in Munich. Although written two decades before the publication of Walter Blume's book, Berrsché's appreciation is also a remarkably accurate summary of Steinbach's artistic priorities as reflected in the score markings rendered by Walter Blume:

There is an ability to bring out the large line without ignoring the most inconspicuous detail. Details are lovingly cultivated, yet no element loses its connection with the whole. We can see once again what phrasing means; where and how to place slurs and caesuras; how the different instrumental groups are played off and balanced against each other; how large intensifications are created, and how a melody attains declamatory power through dynamic and agogic nuances. And through every performance there surged the pulse of a terse, fundamentally musical rhythm, which is the unmistakable sign of a true and complete master.⁴⁸

After Fritz Steinbach's death in Munich, in 1916, the same writer lamented the loss of the conductor whom he called "the Brahms interpreter of all Brahms interpreters." His assessment of Steinbach's historical significance provides us with an additional context for understanding Walter Blume's motivation – and, indeed, his sense of urgency – in publishing what is effectively all that remains of Steinbach's musical legacy. In an obituary about the conductor, Berrsché wrote: "...with Steinbach's death Brahms has died a second time. A genuine and correct tradition has perished, even before it could put down roots, and together with it a culture of music-making with orchestra without which the content of this tradition cannot be expressed."⁴⁹

About Walter Blume there is relatively little information available. However,

⁴⁸ Alexander Berrsché, *Trösterin Musika: Gesammelte Aufsätze und Kritiken*, (Munich, 1942), 281, quoted in Frisch, "In search of Brahms's First Symphony," 283. Frisch mentions on p. 282 that Berrsché studied composition with Max Reger and observes on p. 284, in agreement with my own conclusion, how "very close" Berrsché comes to Steinbach's markings though there "is no evidence that Berrsché had access to Steinbach's scores."

⁴⁹ Quoted in Frisch, "In Search of Brahms's First Symphony," 282.

enough specifics about his professional life are known to make it possible to flesh out a modest biographical sketch. The conductor Walter Blume was born in Phillipsburg, Baden, in 1883.⁵⁰ He played violoncello and piano and pursued musical studies in Munich, where he was a pupil of Austrian composer Ludwig Thuille (1861-1907) and German conductor Felix Mottl (1856-1911), the latter having been one of Richard Wagner's favorite disciples at Bayreuth.⁵¹ The exact dates when Blume was a student in Munich are unknown. It can be surmised from the facts of Felix Mottl's celebrated and well-documented career that Blume, in order to have been Mottl's pupil in Munich, must have been in that city within the period 1903-11 while Mottl was music director of the opera theater in Munich, as well as professor at the city's music school.⁵²

Blume's first prominent position appears to have been as *Kapellmeister* in the German town of Koblenz.⁵³ Although it is not mentioned by name, Blume refers in his introduction to a town "in the vicinity of Cologne." It was during his time in Koblenz that Blume initially became familiar with the work of Fritz Steinbach while attending the latter's concerts in Cologne.⁵⁴ In Munich, during 1914, Blume was able to study and

⁵⁰ It is interesting to note that Steinbach and Blume both were born and raised in Baden. See Paul Frank and Wilhelm Altmann, eds. *Kurzgefaßtes Ton-Künstler Lexikon*, 15th ed., Vol. I (Munich: Frank-Altmann, 1936; reprint, Wilhelmshaven: Heinrichshofen's Verlag, 1971), 61.

⁵¹ Harold C. Schonberg, *The Great Conductors* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), 185.

⁵² Wilhelm Fürtwangler (1886-1954) was an assistant to Mottl at this time. These were also the final years of Mottl's life. In 1911, Bruno Walter (1876-1962) succeeded him in his position at the Munich opera. See Schonberg, 277, 285.

⁵³ Frank and Altmann, eds., *Kurzgefaßtes Ton-Künstler Lexikon*, 61.

⁵⁴ Blume does not mention if he attended any of Steinbach's conducting classes at the conservatory. It is not known whether Blume listened to any of Steinbach's rehearsals in Cologne, yet this is highly likely, being the best opportunity to observe a master conductor at work.

become personally acquainted with Steinbach, who had retired from Cologne that year.⁵⁵

Blume served as conductor for the Konzertverein Orchestra in Munich during the war years, 1914-18.⁵⁶ This was the period during which Blume had the greatest access to Steinbach and was presumably when he took the opportunity to transcribe the markings from his teacher's scores.

There is little to account for Blume's activities after the First World War, except that his only other known conducting position, leading the Württemberg Tonkünstler Orchestra in Stuttgart from 1931, was also his last. He died in June 1933, at the age of fifty, apparently while on a trip to Cologne.⁵⁷

Blume makes clear in his introduction to *Brahms in der Meinigen Tradition* that it is addressed primarily to conductors. It is concerned almost exclusively with the practical issues surrounding performance, and on how the music is to be perceived. Attention is given to issues relating to instrumental technique, including balance and sound production, and every section of the orchestra is dealt with in one way or another. As most of the text is concerned with matters of interpretation and instrumental performance, relatively little is written about the technique of conducting, unless conducting technique is construed – as I would argue to be the correct approach – as something that does not exist apart from the practical needs of the orchestra and the

⁵⁵ His replacement in Cologne was Hermann Abendroth (1883-1956), whose extant recordings of the Brahms symphonies have been cited by Walter Frisch, based on that author's reading of Blume, as striking examples of Steinbach's practices. See Frisch, "In search of Brahms's First Symphony." It is interesting to note further that Abendroth was also a composition student of Ludwig Thuille in Munich and, as he was born in the same year as Blume, there is a strong possibility that these two musicians knew each other as schoolmates.

⁵⁶ Frank and Altmann, eds., *Kurzgefaßtes Ton-Künstler Lexikon*, 61.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

unique musical circumstances that are manifest in each specific composition.

The theme stressed most often by Blume is tempo. In addition to presenting methods for determining the proper main tempo of a work, much space is devoted to the subject of tempo modification as the essential means for giving a composition its “musical life” in performance. The term “tempo modification” can be rather ambiguous for modern readers, as it is used interchangeably by many authors to stand for a number of different practices, including *tempo rubato*, rhythmic “agogics,” and the extreme idiosyncratic indulgences taken by some artists.⁵⁸ Although Blume does not make this distinction, I suggest that his discussion of tempo modification should be understood as referring to the elasticity of pulse and, consequently, of rhythm. This is related directly to the variation of the emotional content in a composition as implied through melody, harmony, rhythm, texture and dynamic – in other words, broadly defined, the character – of the music.

It is my understanding of Blume that the duty of the performer is to grasp all of the different characters inherent within a work, to understand how these interact and evolve, to comprehend how they are conveyed by the composer and, armed with this knowledge, to bring about the proper performance of a composition. Indeed, I believe this to be the context within which Steinbach’s marking are to be understood: as

⁵⁸ I propose that “tempo” be understood as a composer’s normative description of the main speed of a composition. As such, it is a fixed quantity, meant to be determined by the performer from a prescribed range of speeds. Thus tempo is not the flexible time element that can be modified. Instead, the modifiable quantity is a subsidiary component of tempo, namely, the pulse. The pulse is the actual manifestation of tempo in performance and is a variable quantity, dependent upon the musical context and character, and is necessarily coherent in proportion to the main tempo of a work. Rhythm can be conceived as being a fixed quantity to be executed relative to a flexible pulse.

supplements and clarifications of what is already notated in the score, toward the end of achieving in performance a realization of the complete sonic and emotional landscape of a composition.

It is now left to consider the **questions of authorship and authenticity**. The current location of Fritz Steinbach's original scores, if they have indeed survived, is unknown. It is therefore impossible to evaluate Blume's extrapolations side by side with their declared source and to demonstrate whether Blume copied and preserved Steinbach's markings exactly as they were written and intended. Did Blume come into possession of these scores following Steinbach's death?⁵⁹ Or did he work from notes and transcriptions he made while he studied with Steinbach? Regrettably, these questions will remain unanswered.

In its relationship to Brahms' work, Blume's text must be designated as a tertiary source. Without being able to compare with Fritz Steinbach's scores, it must be left to the reader to speculate about how much of Walter Blume's text reflects Steinbach's own views as opposed to representing the independent opinions of Blume.

In the final analysis, the likelihood that the information presented by Blume originated from Fritz Steinbach, an acknowledged master conductor who was closely connected with Johannes Brahms both personally and artistically is compelling enough reason to warrant our serious attention. The unavoidable caveat is that, no matter how genuine and faithful are the intentions – let alone the reputation – of a secondary or

⁵⁹ Frisch writes, "I am informed by a number of researchers looking for a Steinbach *Nachlass* [estate] (where, if they exist, the scores are likely to be found) that – at least for now – none is known to exist. It is, of course, also possible that the scores came into the possession of Blume himself; the whereabouts of his *Nachlass* is also unknown at this time." Blume, ed. Frisch, 276.

tertiary source, it is impossible to prove with certainty anything more than an informed presumption about the intentions of a great composer such as Brahms. That said, the markings and observations of Fritz Steinbach, as presented by Walter Blume, comprise an important historical document and will undoubtedly be of great interest to conductors, performers, scholars and enthusiasts, as they provide a rare opportunity to consider the insights and practices of a significant Brahms interpreter and contemporary.

In my translation of *Brahms in der Meinungen Tradition*, I have attempted to render faithfully and clearly both the tone and the meaning of Walter Blume's text. In some instances, I have simplified or elaborated upon the original material where I believed such treatment was needed to provide clarification. Otherwise, any editorial comments are to be found in the footnotes. Parenthetical remarks and underscored words within the body of the text are from Blume. The musical examples have been reproduced directly from a copy of the original typescript.

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Dedication

In loving memory of my parents, Barbara and Melvin Pasternack

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

When one speaks today about revolutions in all spheres of human activity, it is not necessary to enter into what has been or still is happening politically or economically. Also in artistic creation, that which is revolutionary and new can be established without a doubt. Concerning the fine arts, one need only point to Expressionism in painting or to Cubism in architecture, painting and sculpture.

Musicians take the lead of the most radical in revolution, inasmuch as the tonal functions of tonic and dominant – the bases of all music-making until now – are torn down and renounced, together with all triadic harmony. A new element has also been brought into music: jazz.¹ Its influence extends to the serious arts and has its effect in a more piquant rhythm as well as a certain polytonality, in which a normal triad is peppered, salted or sugared with one or more harmonically foreign notes.

It is not the purpose of these lines, however, to prove or disprove the value of

¹ For the sake of Blume's argument, I suggest that the word "jazz" be taken to mean "dance band music," since I believe this was his implication. The discussion of jazz throughout Blume's introduction seems unusually anachronistic and conservative, especially when read seventy years after the fact. He was not the only classical musician to express such negative views toward jazz, however. For example, consider the words of Bruno Walter:

It is clear that...music possesses in rhythm an element whose influence extends into the realm of the physical, and which is more comprehensible, more earth-bound, more material than the other elements of music. Jazz shows this physical effect to an extreme: here, rhythm, particularly in its syncopated forms, becomes a despot under whose rule the lofty, emotional elements of music are suppressed and violated, distorted, or destroyed altogether." Bruno Walter, *Of Music and Music-making*, trans. Paul Hamburger (New York: Norton, 1961), 48.

such trends. They should merely be regarded as established facts, as aspects of a differently oriented consciousness, one that is in opposition to an earlier, yet hardly distant past.

This differently oriented consciousness, readily demonstrated in art by comparing past works with present-day creations, is also expressed in artistic reproduction. In this case, of course, only an older person would have the possibility of making a comparison, since he would have been able to hear and witness the re-creative artists of the earlier time.

Every historical era has its own style as an expression of its consciousness. In every stylistic epoch, a tradition for the reproduction of works is formed, which often can be traced back to the creator himself. An older person greatly regrets that, as this tradition gradually gets lost, there are ever fewer older artists rooted in the earlier era who are still actively reproducing its tradition. This should not be taken to mean that the young artists of today are any less significant. But their artistic and spiritual *milieu* is a different one.

It is regrettable that the earlier recording industry was not as advanced and in full swing as it is today with regard to orchestral music. Perhaps by comparing a *Tristan* under Felix Mottl or a Brahms symphony under Fritz Steinbach with a performance today under an equally celebrated conductor, one could say with sympathy and understanding that, from two completely different and firmly held convictions, music was made. It is impossible to conceive of such a comparison in this case, since one cannot juxtapose reality with fantasy. However, two factors might be mentioned that can be objectively

established about the practice of musicians in the older era. They concern rhythm and tempo.

In general, much more importance gets placed today on the rhythmic element in music. Rhythmic precision is not a defect, to be sure. However, rhythm must not become mechanically motoric, as it is in jazz. Certainly, the West always puts more emphasis on the rhythmic element in music. After all, Richard Wagner spoke so enthusiastically about the rhythmic precision of the Paris Orchestra. It is a greater pleasure to hear a Beethoven or Berlioz symphony from a Colonne or Lamoureux Orchestra in Paris, for instance. They achieve a crystal-clear representation of the score!

What can be observed further about today's music-making is that, in general, faster tempos are taken. This is consistent with a preference for strict tempo and rhythm. The influence of jazz becomes fatal, however, when rhythm is regarded as mechanical and is only driven forward like a motor. Thus tempos are frequently generated that are too fast. In addition, any tendencies of themes, or even single-bar motives, to speed up or slow down, become rhythmically two-dimensional. This kind of music-making is boring, even if it is also dazzling and virtuosic, since it is completely devoid of tension. Tonality's functions alone cannot produce sufficient tension. It requires a suppleness, a speeding up or a slowing down of tempo. But these are not just characteristic of *stretto* and *coda*. These factors are required in almost every theme, if only as tendencies.

Thus a microscopically refined feeling for the slightest tempo modification must not be forgotten. Rather it is to be cultivated and fashioned as a counterbalance to merely precise motoric rhythm. Still, it must be clear that one can also run into a danger here.

Tempo modification, speeding up or slowing down within a measure or a period, must not be exaggerated. This would lead to an unbearable affectation, like the piano-playing of a sentimental young dilettante. It comes down to maintaining the proper balance between the two poles of *Melos* and rhythm,² tempo being the fulcrum of the scale. At one end, tempo modification protects the rhythm from becoming too motoric and, on the other end, it prevents the melody from becoming lethargic. Expressed positively: Tempo modifications are essential in giving rhythm and melody musical life.

Nevertheless, the two dangers mentioned above in connection with tempo modification are no doubt manifested in music. Exaggerated rhythm leads, in the end, to its caricature: jazz. An achievement of the West! Wherever tempo and rhythm are lacking, the *Melos* will be a creature full of anguish, having no backbone.³ In the East, this is realized in the improvisation of the gypsies!

However, gypsy music has its positive rhythmic counterbalance in the *Czardas*, throughout which the rhythm is alive and not “jazzily” degenerate and mechanical. A *Czardas* consists mostly of *stretto* and *coda*. The *stretto* implies quicker tempos than beforehand. The tempo can slow down in the *coda*, though it need not. A *Czardas* can start out hesitatingly, thus with *ritardando*, or it can get more and more intense, or a *fermata* can completely hold up its flow. All of these are indications of a living musical tempo. On the other hand, consider jazz. Its characteristic is the same, dull-headed, mechanical tempo from beginning to end, usually forgoing a *coda*-like conclusion by

² *Melos* is meant here as the melodic component in music, in general.

³ The original reads, *ohne Mark und Knochen*, which refers to the idiomatic expression, *Mark in den Knochen haben*, or “to have great strength.”

breaking off abruptly instead. Not even to mention *stretto*. What in living music-making is achieved by the speeding or slowing of a motive, jazz deals with uniquely and solely by shortening or lengthening note-values within a monotonously beaten-out tempo, resulting in syncopated rhythms. Perhaps the art of jazz can be characterized by saying that it is best conducted by a metronome, although it should not be condemned because of this. In any case, I cannot deprive it of its genuine musical charm. But its tendencies must not be carried over into completely alien territory.⁴

The radio makes it possible to listen to the entire musical world. Virtually all of the important conductors and best orchestras in the world can be heard live and on records. It must be stated with regret about many important conductors, especially the younger ones, that they are not up to the proper stylistic interpretation of many works. We have a number of conductors for whom it can be said that the works of, say, Richard Wagner or Johannes Brahms, are still in good hands because they are connected directly to the living tradition. Yet this tradition will also disappear as these artists die out.

In recognition of this, I decided to make public, and supply with text, Fritz Steinbach's score markings for the symphonies of Brahms, so that the Meiningen tradition would be made accessible to wider circles, particularly to young professional and would-be conductors. Besides the specifics pertaining to the Brahms style, they contain so many fundamental concepts that, for this reason alone, their publication would seem justified. These same specifics and fundamentals can, in my opinion, also serve to counteract the leveling effect that rhythm without artistry has on music.

⁴ This "completely alien territory" refers, of course, to the domain of "serious" art music.

Fritz Steinbach, as is well known, stepped into Bülow's legacy in Meiningen in 1886, although he had "to earn it, in order to possess it!" Through his outstanding orchestral leadership, he drove his little band to unanimous acclaim. Even in Berlin, where the rightfully deified Arthur Nikisch dominated with his Philharmonic, the Meiningen orchestra with Steinbach was an unquestionable success. And Nikisch himself had not missed a single concert of the Meiningen since, as he remarked to Steinbach, "one can always learn something from the Meiningen." The works of Brahms had already found a special home in Meiningen under Bülow. Brahms continued to sojourn often and happily in Meiningen during Steinbach's time. As a consequence of frequent and lively interactions with Brahms, who also took part in rehearsals, Steinbach grew into the composer's anointed interpreter.

Everything that Steinbach undertook relating to Brahms' works, in musical reproduction as well as literary production, had Brahms' sanction, therefore his score markings are to be recognized as completely authentic. I obtained these markings during the years 1914-15 when, no longer a young *Kapellmeister*, I came into personal contact with Steinbach and became his student. He had already retired to Munich and was conducting frequently as a guest in that town's concert hall, where I was active as a conductor. As I was previously a *Kapellmeister* in the vicinity of Cologne, Steinbach's last place of employment, I had the opportunity to hear him often. His markings are therefore not dead symbols for me, but are imbued with the living memory of Steinbach's peerless interpretations of Brahms. He was a master of phrasing and possessed the magical power to draw forth what he willed from the orchestra.

I am aware that merely publishing these score markings does not surmount the primacy of the scores themselves. But for the conductor, who must breathe artistic life into the score while working from it, these markings, representing experiences attained from professional conducting activity, can be valuable in stimulating and inspiring him to an interpretation which comes as close as possible to the intentions of the composer. Here, however, also applies the charge: "What you inherit...you must earn, in order to possess it!"

I thought it unnecessary to go into thematic and formal analysis in any lesser or greater detail, in the presumption that any conductor must account first for these himself in studying a score. I could not provide metronomic indications, as in my opinion these are useless if the tempo cannot be felt purely from the music.

So shall this work be presented to the musical world in homage to Johannes Brahms in memory of his great interpreter, Fritz Steinbach.

Preliminary Remark

The discussions that follow can only be understood with Eulenburg's miniature orchestra scores on hand. All of the explanations refer to these. Since it is not possible to provide musical examples for every remark, reference will often be made only to the corresponding measures as they appear by score page, and when the page is divided, to the first or second system.⁵

⁵ At this point in the text, Blume provides an example to explain his system for locating musical references from the text, based on the pagination of Eulenburg miniature scores that now are long out of print and practically inaccessible to modern readers. I have rendered all of Blume's page

-  over the staff = separation
 = small break for the entire orchestra
 = tenuto sign
 = down-bow
 = up-bow

Figure 1.1.1. Key to the musical examples

references to measure numbers, since these do not seem to vary among the various editions of the five Brahms compositions under consideration. This translation will be most useful when read in conjunction with a standard edition of the relevant works.

Chapter Two

SYMPHONY NO. 1 IN C MINOR

First Movement: Introduction

The tempo of the introduction is marked “*Un poco sostenuto*.” Here the emphasis is on the “*poco*”; thus the tempo should not be too slow. An effective yardstick for determining the tempo is the oboe figure in m. 29 and following. Before this passage, the tempo should have increased and become slightly quicker, so that it can now be beaten in slow half-bars, allowing the oboe to play more freely. At the start of the movement, beat in eighth-notes, but not too slowly. The oboe phrase should not give the impression of a quicker tempo.

The dynamics are to be followed precisely. In order to achieve the full magnitude of the *fortissimo* at m. 25, the *forte* at the opening should not be too strong. The strings should play with great resonance, using the following bowing:

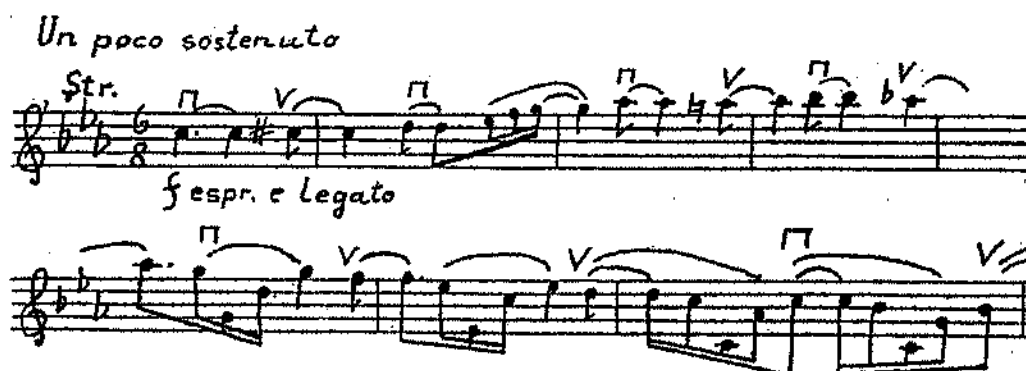


Fig. 2.1.1. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 1-9.¹

¹ The bottom note (B) of the final chord is missing its natural sign in Blume's original figure.

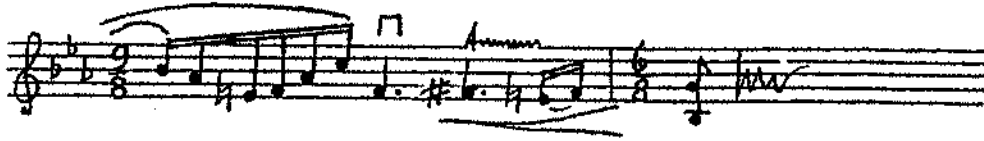


Fig. 2.1.1. — *Continued.*

The violas should change bows with every measure, the basses should play *pesante* and *tenuto* and change bow with every eighth-note, the contrabassoon should play *portamento*,² and the timpani should use mallets that are not too soft. In the 9/8 measure, the tempo should slow down a bit during the string trills, and the *crescendo* should peak at *fortissimo* on the downbeat of the following 6/8 measure.

A pedantically conscientious conductor might justify a drop back to a single *f* here from the score's instructions.³ Since the opening of the movement is marked *f* and no additional dynamic markings follow, he might again return to a single *f* after the *crescendo*. However, this would be thoroughly unnatural to do here.⁴

It should be clear in such situations that, though the composer's instructions are to be observed and studied precisely, pedantry can lead to the very opposite of a faithful reproduction. A conductor clearly shows his artistry when he understands the markings of a score enough to interpret them meaningfully. Indeed, he may even introduce retouchings to the score, if these are made in the spirit of the composer's intentions.

Special mention should be made of the three note chromatic motive in the introduction of this movement, C—C-sharp—D, as it appears over the course of all four

² The term *portamento* seems to indicate a heavily tongued *legato* articulation.

³ This refers to the downbeat of m. 9.

⁴ Thus, after the *crescendo*, the downbeat of m. 9 should be stronger than the *f* that is marked in the score.

movements in the most widely differing guises and combinations. The chromatic motive plays a significant role in this symphony, like that of mortar in construction, and requires special attention on the part of the conductor. It will be pointed out in important passages. It is left to the conductor to investigate all of its appearances and transformations.

An episode of new symphonic material begins with the recovery of the 6/8 meter, after the 9/8 measure. A small break should be made after the *ff* cadence⁵ by way of a *Luftpause*, so that the *p* entrance is not lost in the reverberation of the chord on the downbeat.⁶

What follows now is a four measure period, mm. 9-12, that is itself divided into two. The first two measures have a rigid, stiff character; the third and fourth measures sound like sighs. The *pizzicati*, when played strictly in time, lend their rigidity to the woodwinds. The woodwinds should come clearly and uniformly off each of their tied notes. This is best achieved by treating each of the tied eighth-notes as a sixteenth-note. Precision is based not only in starting uniformly and simultaneously, but also in ending uniformly and simultaneously.

In contrast to the preceding, the measures that were referred to above as having the character of sighs (the third and fourth measures of each period) must be shaped very expressively. This will be reinforced here by treating the notes after the slurs as sixteenth-notes and clearly separating them from each other, as before. If written out,

⁵ *Sic: f* is written for the downbeat of m. 9 in the original. See previous note.

⁶ This seems to be a practical consideration, as the length of the short *Luftpause* should be determined relative to the acoustics of a particular hall.

these notes would appear as follows:

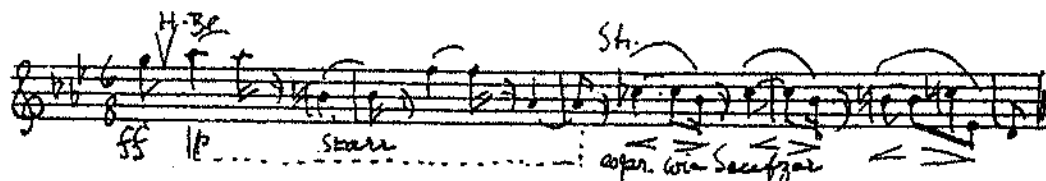


Fig. 2.1.2. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 9-12.

The same applies for the following four measures, mm. 13-16. Thereafter, each repetition of the sighing figures should become more urgent and also increase in tempo. At the *A*-flat of the violins in m. 18, the tempo should again be held back and, in the manner of a *rubato*, led back to the slower main tempo at *A* (see Fig. 2.1.3).

Fig. 2.1.3. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 17-34.

Keep the strings completely hushed at *A*. Their notes must be played without *vibrato* or slides! The timpani should play softly and strictly in time, again using mallets

that are not too soft. A resurgence in tempo and dynamic should commence with the sixteenth-notes in the strings. However, care must be taken to bring this about in equal proportion to the *crescendo*.

At the *fortissimo* at m. 25, the timpani roll must not be too strong and should hold back in its *crescendo* until m. 28. The basses and contrabassoon should give considerable weight to their eighth-notes. The tempo accelerates up to the cadence on *G* major, m. 29, at which point the oboe theme is to be conducted in slow half-bars.

The high notes of the oboe theme should each be given *tenuto* signs (see Fig. 2.1.3). Nevertheless, like all such markings, these are to be taken with a grain of salt. *Tenuto* means, literally, that the notes ought to be slightly held out. In practice, however, that is already to have said too much. In no case should the impression be given that the note values here become lengthened by the *tenuto* sign. More to the point, these notes just receive a special emphasis.⁷ Should the *tenuto* sign ever represent the lengthening of a note value, this is indicated by the word *rubato*, as in two measures before A, for example (see Fig. 2.1.3).

The *A*-flat should be held out a bit longer and then the “stolen” tempo should be compensated for. (*Rubato* literally means “stolen.” The time value of one note is robbed in favor of another note, but then is compensated for during the course of a measure, so that no delay or acceleration occurs in the overall progression of the tempo.)⁸ The actual *tenuto* sign is superfluous, if one remains conscious of the musical principle that the high

⁷ Thus the desired effect seems to be one of articulation and dynamic shading.

⁸ That is, what is perceived by the listener as a natural, seamless progression of the tempo.

notes of a musical phrase demand a pronounced, emphatic expression. However, these same high notes are likely to be swallowed, particularly when they are approached by leap, thus mostly taking away the sense of a long line from the musical phrase. The situation is similar with certain upbeats.⁹ In the latter case, a prolonged upbeat can often be very effective, in that the musical phrase is immediately imprinted with its distinctive character. The place mentioned above, the high *A*-flat before *A*, was a clear example of this.

Allegro

The chromatic motive that we know from the introduction sets in immediately with the *Allegro*, appearing first in the upper voice in mm. 38-40 and then a few measures later in the lower voice in mm. 42-44 (see Fig. 2.1.4).

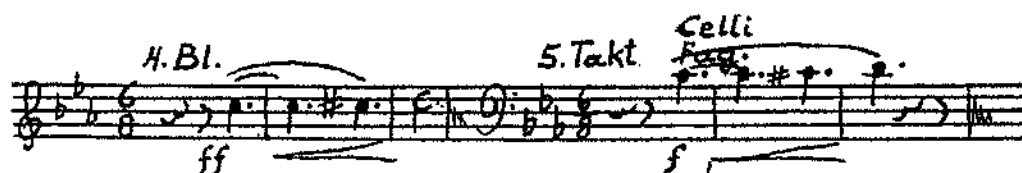


Fig. 2.1.4. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 38-40, mm. 42-44.

The motive's chromaticism itself actually forces a *crescendo*. Wherever and however this motive appears, in each instance it should be performed with a *crescendo*. Theme I is constructed above the chromatic motive:

⁹ He is referring here to those upbeats that "demand a pronounced, emphatic expression."



Fig. 2.1.5. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 42-46.

The theme is to be executed so that the non-slurred quarter-notes are always played as short *marcato* eighth-notes. The chords in mm. 49-50 should be clearly separated, as analogous to the fourth measure, where the third eighth-note is treated like an eighth-rest.

The *ff* entrance on the second beat of m. 51 announces a motive we already know from the introduction but now in a different form. Here it has a completely different character and must be played very energetically. The phrasing should be in agreement with the later parallel passage in the recapitulation, in m. 352 and following. It should be phrased in the manner given below:



Fig. 2.1.6. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 51-57.

The weak part of the measure is emphasized here, an effect Brahms liked very much and employed often. This passage is correctly phrased when the barline is thought of as advanced by half of a measure, so that the weak part of the measure becomes the

strong part and vice versa. The passage would then appear this way:



Fig. 2.1.7. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 51-52, with imagined re-barring.

It is helpful both to think and to sing through this sort of motive, with its odd barlines. In doing so, the intended phrasing is clarified and the feeling for its effect is reinforced. This formula should be shared with the musicians. The desired effect will thus be achieved more quickly.

Measures 63-69: Everyone should make a *crescendo* from *più f* to *ff*, with the basses, cellos and bassoons accenting the high notes in the weak parts of each measure (see Fig. 2.1.8).



Fig. 2.1.8. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 64-69.

At **B** the chromatic motive appears in contrary motion, or by mirroring. In the ninth measure after **B**, the voices are exchanged. The chromatic motive in the winds and violas should make a *crescendo*, similar to the basses earlier at **B** (see Fig. 2.1.9).

In this passage, pay attention to the dynamics of the horns, trumpets and timpani, as they differ from the other instruments!

m. 79ss



Fig. 2.1.9. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 78-82.

Measures 86-87: This should be very short and energetic! The quarter-notes are to be treated as eighth-notes!

Emphasize the downbeat eighth-notes of the winds as a counterbalance to the strings, from m. 89 until C. The working out of the main theme reaches a climax here, but is then superceded by the *sf* on the C-flat, for which the strings must give their last ounce of strength. At the same moment the marvelous transition to the second theme begins. Brahms dissolves what has been the granite edifice of this movement up to now, transforming it into an arabesque-like ease and grace from which, almost unexpectedly – though magnificently prepared – the second theme arises.

The transition from C cannot be allowed to continue running along in tempo. Here, as was mentioned in the introductory essay, we must allow our refined microscopic feeling for tempo modification to prevail. After performing the four measure passage starting at C in strict rhythm, the next two measures (mm. 101-02) should be driven forward “hurriedly and fleetingly” (see Fig. 2.1.10). The chromatic motive in m. 103 demands again a more deliberate tempo. The original tempo should return after m. 105. Thus we have three different tempos in quick succession of each other. An accurate rendering of the music requires that they must each be properly felt and experienced.



Fig. 2.1.10. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 101-05.

Take care that the cellos do not cover the violin and viola theme in mm. 111-13. Hold the tempo back again starting with m. 114. The wind chords should be sustained here, despite the *staccato* dots over the notes. The tempo should be resumed at D. The third horn, having the chromatic motive, can be brought out a bit here, like a solo. Measure 129 should slow down in preparation for the second main theme.

II T o conseguente di m. 121?



Fig. 2.1.11. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 130-38.

The second theme requires interpolated broadenings of the tempo, as shown in the musical example (see Fig. 2.1.11). The eighth-notes in the violas must be played with a very gentle *portamento*¹⁰ and be adaptable to the free performance of this episode.

The string chords in mm. 145-56 should not be connected together. Thus always separate them with a distinct break in the sound!¹¹ The dialogue between the horn and woodwinds should be shaped with freedom (see Fig. 2.1.12).

¹⁰ The term *portamento* is clearly intended to indicate a *portato* articulation.

¹¹ The original, which reads "*Also stets absetzen!*," is taken here to refer specifically to a brief stopping of the bow between each tied chord.



Fig. 2.1.12. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 145-52.

The octave drop in the third and fourth horns, in mm. 155-56, should be slightly accented and separated. Measure 157 leads over to the subsidiary theme. Here the tempo is certainly revived yet always held back slightly, so as not to deprive this section of its tension (see Fig. 2.1.13).



Fig. 2.1.13. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 157-62.

The three eighth-notes of this motive must not sound like they lead up to the dotted quarter-notes. In whatever part of the measure these three eighth-notes appear, strong or weak, the first eighth-note should always be accented.

Much more energy is required from every player from E on. The passage at m. 185 and following should sound very “chopped”¹² and thus very energetic. (Make sure here that the horns and trumpets play very short and “chopped.”)

¹² The original, “*gehackt*,” can also mean “incisive.”

Ommit the repeat and go directly to the second ending.¹³ The onset of the *B* major key change, which breaks like light into the gloomy darkness of this *C* minor movement, cannot be played too brilliantly or lushly. The first violins, obviously, should also play *ff*.¹⁴ Although the horns play at only a single *f*, they should make a *crescendo* from the second half of m. 192 to *ff* three measures later, at the *sforzando* in m. 195. Treat the quarter-note on the downbeat of m. 195 as an eighth-note, making a distinct space before the *sf*. At *F* the strings should play an eighth-note on the first beat, like the winds, thus as short as possible.¹⁵

Now the development begins. Keep to a strict tempo at first. The strings should play sixteenth-notes, not *tremolo*. The chromatic motive, now concealed in the first violin part, should not be brought to the fore but instead be played *sempre pp*. It should remain hidden.

In order to bring transparency to this episode, the following applies: All instruments should clearly separate each group of slurred notes. The *crescendi* in the strings should be very small. The basses and cellos should phrase in the following manner:

¹³ It is unfortunate that no reason is given for the omission of the exposition repeat. Does this reflect a practice begun during Brahms' lifetime, presumably with the composer's sanction, or was it a decision made later by Steinbach?

¹⁴ They are marked at only a single *f*.

¹⁵ The strings have a quarter-note on the downbeat of *F* in some editions, such as the old Breitkopf und Härtel score edited by Hans Gál, but not in others, such as the Philharmonia/Peters study score edition.



Fig. 2.1.14. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 197-222.

Make certain that the only slight breaks in sound are made at the γ marks.

This section is again typical of Brahmsian phrasing in its emphasis of the weak part of the measure (see Fig. 2.1.14). The tempo should become calmer when approaching the double-bar at m. 215. As in the earlier analogous section,¹⁶ the tempo should revive at m. 225. The main tempo is to be reached at G. Note that there is only a single *f* here. The *ff* first arrives at m. 232.

In this section, wherever the notes press upward in the principal melodic lines, all of the other instruments should support this with a *crescendo* (see Fig. 2.1.15).



Fig. 2.1.15. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 232-34.

¹⁶ Blume is referring here to m. 157 in the exposition.

The *fortissimo* in m. 232 will be made more effective by inserting a very short break just before.¹⁷ The horns play only *f* here.

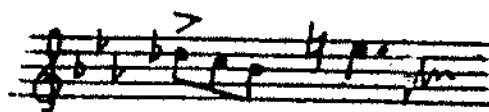


Fig. 2.1.16. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, m. 229.

Always emphasize the first eighth-note in this motive (see Fig. 2.1.16). The tempo should become calmer before H.



Fig. 2.1.17. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 273-77.

This rising and falling form of the chromatic motive (see Fig. 2.1.17) has the character of a futile attempt to reach the peak of the phrase. A *crescendo* should be made as the phrase rises. The *p* should be taken to mean a noticeable drop in dynamic but not that the *crescendo* goes only to *p*. Thus there should be an abrupt drop in dynamic after the *crescendo*.

The four measures before I should sound weary and be devoid of sonority (see Fig. 2.1.18).

¹⁷ This refers to the articulation of the upper string parts and does not seem to imply a break in the pulse.

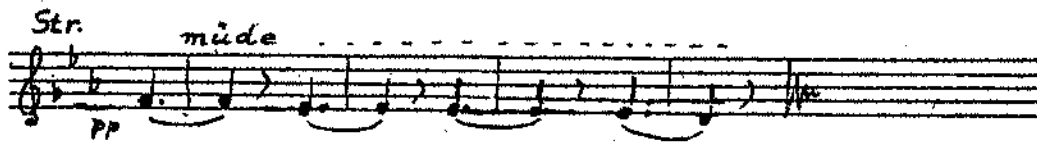


Fig. 2.1.18. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 289-93.

The *pp* entrance of the contrabassoon at I will seldom be satisfactory. It won't do here to leave out the contrabassoon, since it lends a special color to the entire episode. Make sure, therefore, always to go back to *pp* in all instruments after the slight *crescendi*.

The motive in the clarinets and oboes after I should sound very urgent,¹⁸ with a *tenuto* sign placed on the first eighth-note of each phrase (see Fig. 2.1.19).



Fig. 2.1.19. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 297-98.

The tempo should increase six measures before K, until the main tempo is reached at K. The woodwinds should accent the first eighth-note of each measure after K (see Fig. 2.1.20).



Fig. 2.1.20. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 321-22.

¹⁸ This motive also appears later in the flutes.

Horns and trumpets should play only *f* and accent the fourth eighth-note of every measure (see Fig. 2.1.21).



Fig. 2.1.21. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 321-22.

Always have the chromatic motive, which starts in the winds at m. 327, performed with a *crescendo*. In m. 333 and m. 334, cut short the eighth-note on the second beat, as well as the *F*-sharp on the downbeat of m. 335. Here, the last note of the chromatic motive is just an eighth-note with a *staccato* dot, as opposed to the earlier quarter-note in the winds. This signifies a heightening in the drama, and should be supported by a greater urgency in the tempo. The main tempo is again asserted at **L**.

The same applies to the recapitulation, which begins now, as it had before in the exposition.

The tempo should be pushed ahead rather strongly to **P** from five measures before. The *pizzicati* must arrive in the main tempo, so that there is a clear jolt at **P**. This jolt, as well as the precision of the *pizzicati*, is obtained by already taking the three last eighth-notes before **P** in the main tempo.¹⁹

The chromatic motive should make a *crescendo* as it moves upward and a *diminuendo* as it moves downward (see Fig. 2.1.22).

¹⁹ Thus a return to the more deliberate main tempo is indicated.



Fig. 2.1.22. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 478-81.

da dove comincia il ritardando? 4 mis. prima? oppure 9 misure prima? Lead into the "*Poco sostenuto*"²⁰ by way of a moderate *ritardando*. The tempo remains "*alla breve*," however.

The winds and strings should clearly separate between the slurs in their ascending motives in m. 503 and following (see Fig. 2.1.23).



Fig. 2.1.23. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 505-07.

The *crescendo* in the final measures should lead to *mf*. For precision, gesture to the strings to finish playing their chord before conducting the final *pizzicato*.

NB: non dice se i fiati debbano togliere l'accordo con il pizzicato, o tenerlo misurato. La mia opinione, è che debbano togliere insieme.

Second Movement: *Andante sostenuto*

The *E* major tonality does not bring a golden sunnyness and warmth to this movement. The tragic character of the first movement, as expressed by the tormented

²⁰ *Sic*: As noted by Robert Pascall and others, Brahms changed the concluding tempo of this movement after the first edition from "*Poco sostenuto*" to "*Meno Allegro*." In a letter written by Brahms to his publisher, Simrock, in 1878, the composer wrote that he wished to make the change since "people misunderstand this and take the same tempo as in the introduction. *Meno allegro* is what should be marked there."

chromatic motive, still trembles here. It is only with the simplicity of the second theme (m. 18, with upbeat) that a hard-earned inner peace is first proclaimed.

This movement must be very passionate in expression and shaped with great color. Steinbach's markings may help toward this aim.

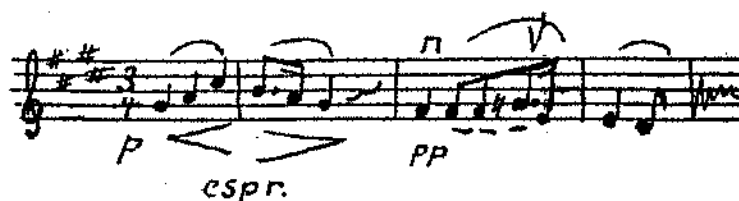


Fig. 2.2.1. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. II, mm. 1-4.

The horns are marked “stopped” in the score (*F*-sharp in the third measure). This applies when natural horns are played – in this case, horns in *E* – on which the *F*-sharp can be produced only through “stopping” with the hand. For our valve horn, this *F*-sharp is to be played “open.”

The *f* in the basses and cellos calls for well-defined triplets but should not be played too strongly.

Steinbach arrives at a beautiful effect in m. 7, where he has the first violins slightly anticipate their *G* (see Fig. 2.2.2, first measure). The *tenuto* sign in this case also represents a lengthening in duration.²¹ This fine nuance falls into the category of the prolonged upbeat. Thus it influences the expression of the subsequent measure.

²¹ This is literally the case since, by anticipating the *G*, the note value is augmented by whatever fraction of the duration of the preceding *C*-natural is borrowed for this purpose. However, in this instance the pulse does not change. Thus Blume does not designate this effect as *rubato*.

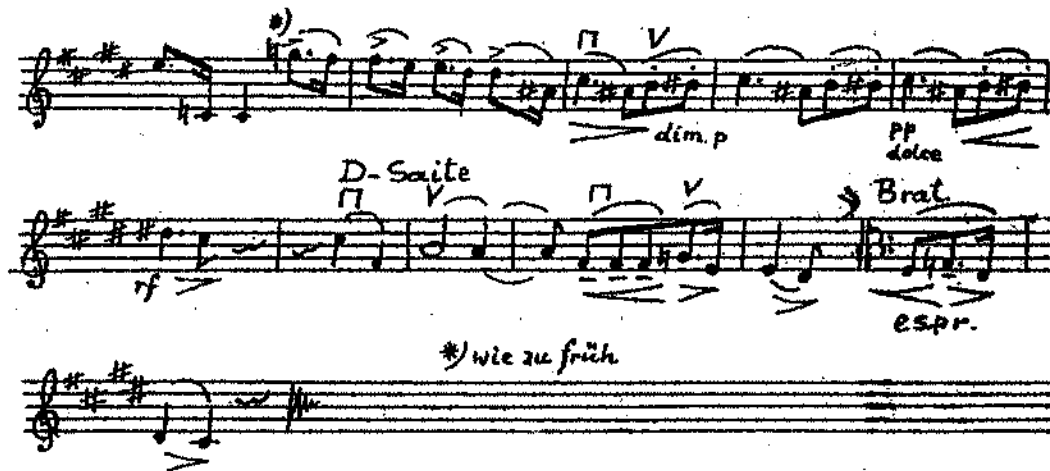


Fig. 2.2.2. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. II, mm. 7-17.

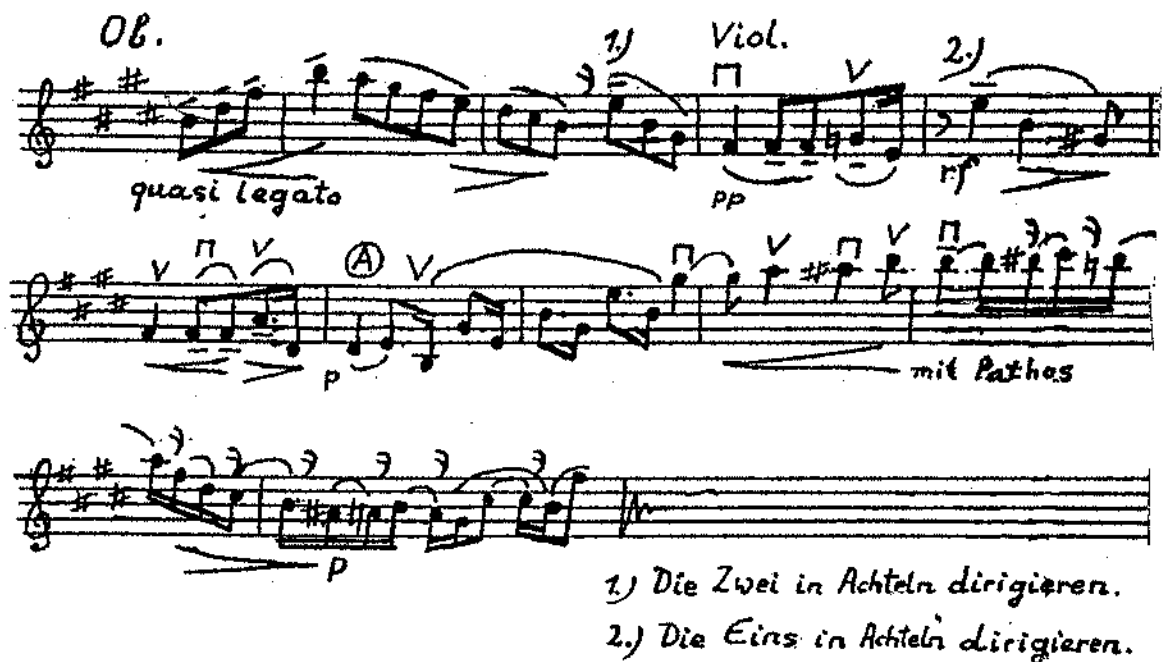
Observe the bowings for this episode (see Fig. 2.2.2). The afterthought²² in the violas (in the two last measures of Fig. 2.2.2) should be made a little more prominent and removed from the flow of the tempo. This is achieved by conducting the second beat of this measure (see the penultimate measure of Fig. 2.2.2) in eighth-notes; in particular, the *F*-sharp after the second beat, moving to the *G* on the third beat, is conducted as a separate eighth-note. This is shown graphically in Figure 2.2.3.



Fig. 2.2.3. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. II, mm. 16-17.

The oboe must play the second theme *quasi legato* (see Fig. 2.2.4).

²² Original: *Nachsatz*.



Ob. *quasi legato*

Viol. *pp*

mit Pathos

1.) Die Zwei in Achteln dirigieren.
2.) Die Eins in Achteln dirigieren.

Fig. 2.2.4. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. II, mm. 21-31.

In the fourth measure after A, the *crescendo* should extend to and end at the B-sharp. This section should be performed with pathos. In every two sixteenth-note slur in the first violin part, cut short the second sixteenth-note, making it equal to a thirty-second-note. This is shown in Figure 2.2.5 by the signs. Phrase the imitation in the second violins and violas the same way in mm. 34-37.



Fig. 2.2.5. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. II, mm. 35-36.

I. Viol *p* *pathetisch*

f *pathetisch*

mf *molto crescendo* *sf*

Fig. 2.2.6. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. II, mm. 34-38.

Each time this phrase occurs, sustain the *A*, *quasi tenuto*, and then phrase the sixteenth-note figures as shown above for the first violin part (see Fig. 2.2.6) and with similar pathos.

The second theme at B is performed *quasi legato* by the oboe. The *tenuto* signs mean the same here as was described earlier. The strings should accompany with good rhythm but *dolce*, taking every two notes to each bow stroke:

Fig. 2.2.7. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. II, m. 39.

The phrasing of the oboe and clarinet solos is given by the following musical example:

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system features an Oboe (Ob.) staff with a circled 'B' above the first measure and the markings 'p dolce' and 'quasi legato' below. The second system shows both Oboe (Ob.) and A-Clarinet (A-Clar.) staves; the A-Clarinet part includes a 'rubato' marking above a measure. The third system continues the A-Clarinet line with an 'espress.' marking above a measure. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4.

Fig. 2.2.8. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. II, mm. 39-48.

The *rubato* measure in the clarinet part should be performed so that one hurries forward a little during the first and second quarter-notes and then holds back at the *temuto*

sign on the third quarter-note. Have the clarinet draw out the *C-sharp*²³ in the penultimate measure of Figure 2.2.8. Then continue on in a more flowing tempo, hurrying with deliberation toward each *sforzato*, and afterwards returning to the main tempo. At m. 56, have the woodwinds slightly separate each pair of their slurred sixteenth-notes (see Fig. 2.2.9).

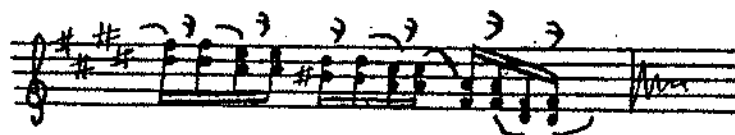


Fig. 2.2.9. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. II, m. 56.

Measure 59 is properly phrased when it is felt in 6/8.²⁴



Fig. 2.2.10. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. II, m. 59.

Slow down somewhat during the *diminuendo* in m. 60, so that the winds and strings can calmly pass their sixteenth-notes back and forth. The three eighth-notes in the violas and cellos before *C* should be quite slow. Conduct in eighth-notes on the second-beat as before, and then insert a short *fermata* at the barline right before *C*.

²³ This is the transposed note for Clarinet in *A*, corresponding to an *A-sharp* in concert pitch.

²⁴ The original example mistakenly gives the first three notes as sixteenth-notes rather than eighth-notes.

The chromaticism of the next motive is made more distinct by *tenuti* (see Fig. 2.2.11).

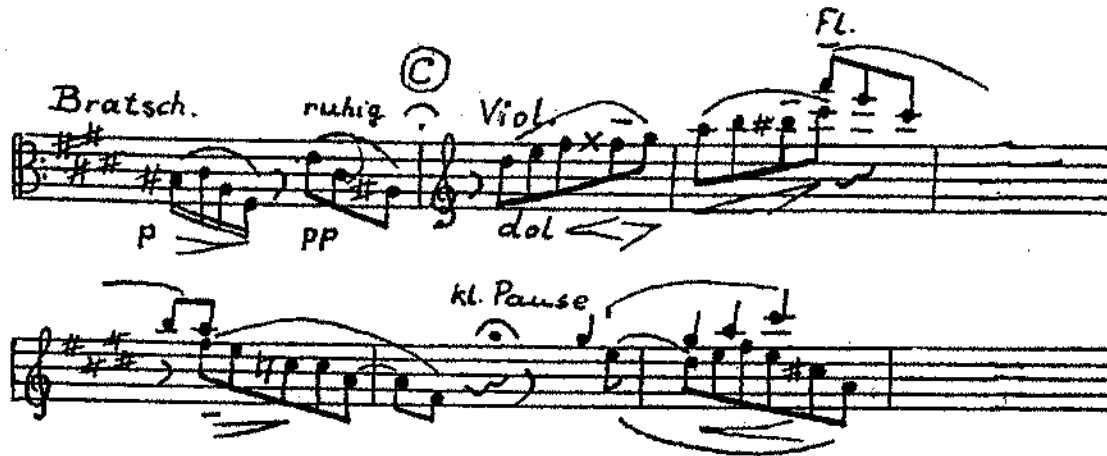


Fig. 2.2.11. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. II, mm. 62-67.

Measure 79 should be performed in the following manner, urging forward the first two quarter-notes and then broadening out on the third quarter-note:



Fig. 2.2.12. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. II, mm. 79-83.

The second theme in the horn and oboe at E is to be played *quasi legato*. The solo violin should play with broad bow strokes.

In the accompaniment, note well the differing dynamics for the different instrument groups! This passage is an excellent example of Brahms' mastery of orchestral sound.

The same markings apply for the next episode as they did for the earlier analogous section. The solo violin should phrase in the following manner:



Fig. 2.2.13. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. II, mm. 101-04.

The off-beat triplets here must be played in strict rhythm (see Fig. 2.2.13).

The chromatic motive in mm. 116-17 should be played very slowly:²⁵



Fig. 2.2.14. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. II, mm. 116-18.

The solo violin plays its final measures as follows and is the only instrument to hold its note, G-sharp, over into the last measure (see Fig. 2.2.15).²⁶ All the other instruments should cut off together before the final chord.

²⁵ It is surprising that there is no mention of how m. 122 should be performed. I suggest that, based on Blume's discussions regarding the articulation of slurs as well as the use of short breath marks to clarify phrasing, the second violins and violas should shorten their quarter-note, in order to end together with the winds. The third beat should then come after a brief *Lustpause*.

²⁶ The tie into the last measure in the solo violin is missing from some editions.

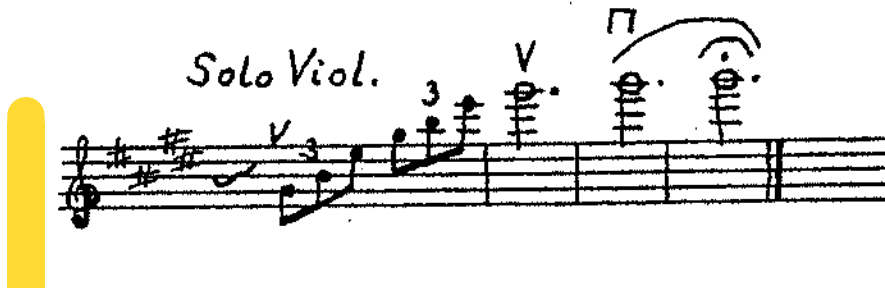


Fig. 2.2.15. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. II, mm. 127-28.

Third Movement: *Un poco allegretto e grazioso*

This movement expresses a comfortable, amiable atmosphere. The tempo should be taken leisurely, thus not too fast. In the first measure, the horn can easily become too strong. It must not drown out the theme in the clarinet. Rather, if the horn cannot be made to sound softer for acoustical or other reasons, the clarinet must play stronger.

Measure 11: Notice that the woodwinds have a simple *piano dolce*, the strings *pp*. This episode leading up to A must have a fleeting character and yet be played strictly in rhythm. The strings after A must fully sustain their tied notes! Otherwise this part will sound uneven. It would be better for the woodwinds to treat their sixteenth-notes as thirty-second-notes, so as not to sound like sloppy triplets.²⁷

Perform at A as in Figure 2.3.1. Notice the bowing!

²⁷ See, for example, mm. 11-18.

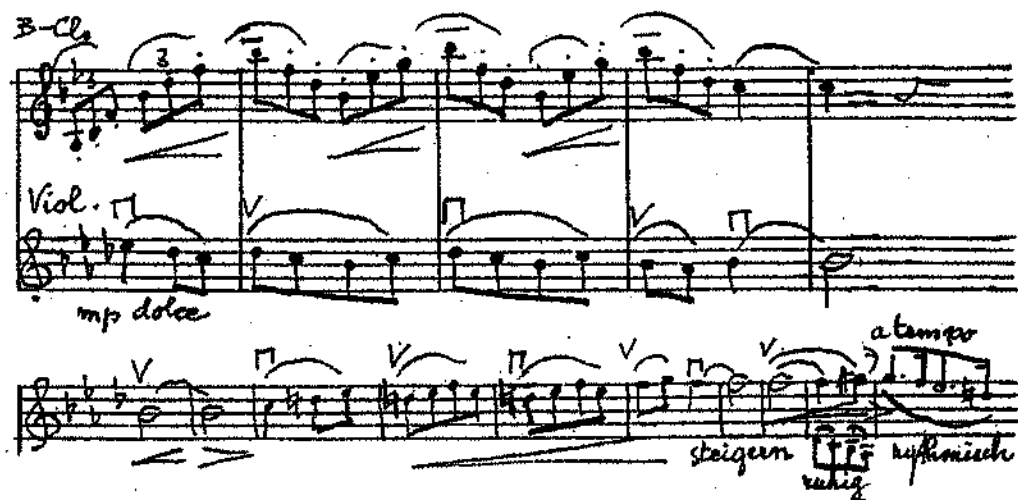


Fig. 2.3.1. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. III, mm. 19-33.

Fig. 2.3.2. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. III, mm. 51-62.

In order to get a more agitated performance from the clarinet and the other

woodwinds for the second theme at **B**, in contrast to the much more comfortable first theme, the tempo should start to increase four measures before **B**. The sixteenth-note accompaniment in the strings will provide effective support for this agitated character.

The bars marked “*quasi Hungarian*” should sound as though they are in 4/8, as opposed to the written 2/4 meter. The rest of this episode can be gathered from Figure 2.3.2.

The horn part in m. 56 should be clearly emphasized, as in the oboe phrase that directly precedes it. The general emphasis of the high notes, in typical Brahmsian fashion, thoroughly applies in the following 6/8 motive (see Fig. 2.3.3).

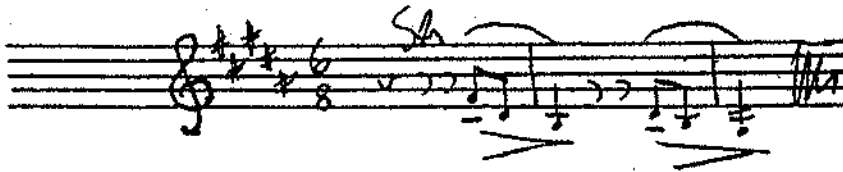


Fig. 2.3.3. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. III, mm. 71-73.

Measures 96-98: The horns must be prominent!

Measure 99 and following: Always stress the third and sixth eighth-notes (see Fig. 2.3.4).



Fig. 2.3.4. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. III, mm. 98-99.

The chords on the first and last beats of m. 108 should be played short and with energy. This section is to be repeated.

The *pizzicato* chords at E should be very strong and heavy. The triplets in the clarinets and bassoon, mm. 120-24, are wholly peripheral.

The same holds as before for the brief reprise. Measure 155 and following: Make a clear separation after every slur.

In the “*più tranquillo*” after the double-bar, have the winds make a *crescendo* on their triplets.²⁸



Fig. 2.3.5. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. III, mm. 156-57.

Insert a short *fermata* after the *pizzicato* chord in the penultimate measure and then conclude the movement in tempo.

Fourth Movement: Introduction – *Adagio*

This *Adagio* grew out of the impact on Brahms of Schumann’s death.²⁹ As is well known, Brahms was deeply attached to Schumann. This attachment was strong enough

²⁸ Incidentally, the *poco à poco* in mm. 152-53 of the score appears to indicate a *ritardando* into the subsequent *più tranquillo*.

²⁹ The suggestion that the death of Robert Schumann (1810-1856) inspired some of the ideas, if not the entirety of the *C minor* symphony, probably originated in Blume’s reading of Max

to be manifested in the subject matter of this symphony. In its allusion to *Manfred*, the second theme of the first movement breathes thoroughly the spirit of Schumann.

According to Kahlbeck,³⁰ it was necessary for Brahms to write in such a way that would finally set him free from Schumann's influence and thus allow him to find his own identity.

The tempo should be very slow. The *pizzicato* episode at m. 6 confirms this. It is fitting to conduct this passage in slow eighth-notes. By beating in eighth-notes from the outset,³¹ the opening tempo will be appropriately slow. Notice the bowing:



Fig. 2.4.1. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. IV, mm. 1-4.

The first two measures of *pizzicato* demand an absolutely rigid stillness in order to produce the intended suspense. The *stringendo* should gather only little by little.

Kalbeck's four volume biography. In his discussion of the symphony's compositional history, Robert Pascall shows that Kalbeck's dating of preliminary work to 1855, which the latter based on what he perceived as stylistic and motivic similarities with Schumann's *Manfred* overture – a work Brahms apparently first heard in 1855 – was speculation. Pascall also demonstrates how the incorrect dating of a letter to 1858 instead of 1859 adds to the misperception about when Brahms began his *C* minor symphony project. (See Robert Pascall, ed. *Symphonie Nr. 1 c-moll op. 68*, introduction.)

I have found strong motivic and emotional similarities between the first symphony's first movement and a different work by Brahms, namely, the *C* minor *passacaglia* from his serenade, op. 16 (1860), and suggest further investigation into the connections between these works and what their broader implications may be.

³⁰ *Sic*: Kalbeck is the proper spelling.

³¹ Here it is presumed that the pulse will be fairly steady from m. 1 to the start of the *pizzicato* passage in m. 6.

Above all, the tempo should not increase too quickly at the beginning of the *stringendo*, but only moderately so.

The acceleration should intensify first with the ascending scale (mm. 10-11) and then hasten to the chord at the end of the passage, on the downbeat of m. 12. This chord should be cut off abruptly. It must be played short and in no way sound arpeggiated. After a brief pause,³² the tempo should begin again, quietly, as in the opening.

A second, truncated *pizzicato* passage at mm. 16-19 demands a correspondingly quicker acceleration in tempo. Then make a short break on the barline that divides m. 19 and m. 20, like a short *fermata*, before continuing with the *p*, “in tempo” passage. Since it is likely to endanger the *piano* dynamic, the contrabassoon should continue to rest here and enter again at A. Obviously, the passage beginning at m. 20 should be conducted in eighth-notes. The tempo can push ahead somewhat from A, but it must hold firm at m. 23 for the precision of the thirty-second-note passage.³³

Before B, the interval A/C (basses, cellos, violas, horn, contrabassoon), should be sustained *fortissimo*. The *diminuendo* first begins just before the A-flat and then leads to *pp*.

Like a Phoenix rising from the ashes, the C major horn theme now emerges from the C minor darkness (motive of the Westminster glockenspiel).³⁴ The sextuplets in the strings are helpful in determining a tempo that is not too slow.

³² This pause seems to fall between the *pizzicato* chord and the second beat of m. 12.

³³ The original reads “39tel” instead of the correct “32tel” (the standard German abbreviation of 32nd-note), clearly a typographical error.

³⁴ It is not clear if Blume is rejecting or disregarding – or is ignorant of – the association of this theme with the Alp-horn melody which Brahms quoted on a postcard he sent to Clara Schumann

In the measure before C, the strings should not be allowed to completely disappear during their *diminuendo*, so that the winds can emerge with due importance and solemnity. The strings should leave out the last sixteenth-note from their final sextuplet before C, in order to produce a desirable short rest. The winds should *crescendo* in the third measure of C, as Figure 2.4.2 indicates, and perform this motive slightly broader than the main tempo:

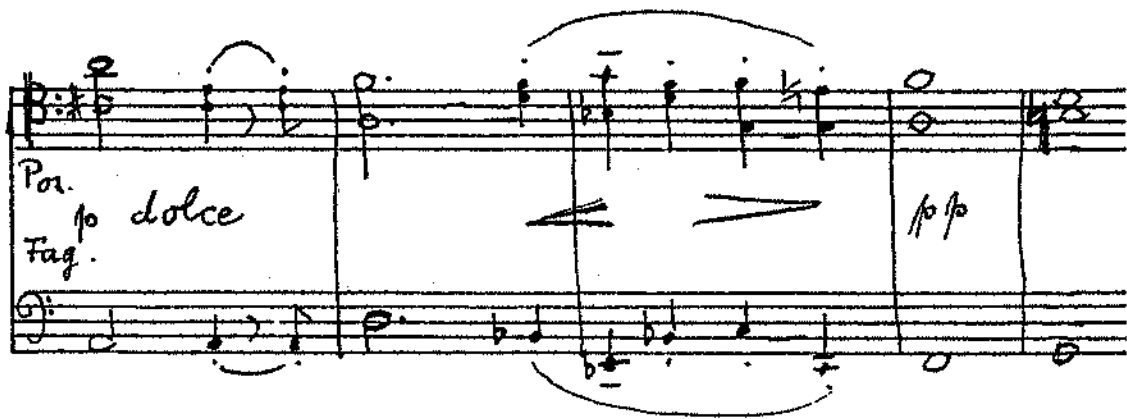


Fig. 2.4.2. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. IV, mm. 47-50.

With the horn theme in m. 52, the original tempo should be resumed.³⁵ A brief

in September 1868, although, as Pascall notes, "it is wholly uncertain whether this movement was already composed by that time." Robert Haven Schauffler mentions a 1930 article in the *New York Times* in which the music critic Olin Downes made the erroneous suggestion that Brahms wrote the famous English chime into the horn solo to show his gratitude for being conferred an honorary doctorate by Cambridge University. It should be noted that, for a variety of reasons, Brahms never travelled to England, although he did receive a number of invitations to make the voyage. (Incidentally, Schauffler's book, *The Unknown Brahms*, based on interviews he personally conducted with people who knew Brahms, is generally not considered useful as a scholarly resource because of its lack of extensive citations. I find many of Schauffler's discussions about the music and Brahms' character to be compelling and recommend that it not be discarded outright. See Pascall, x, and Robert Haven Schauffler, *The Unknown Brahms* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1933), 422n.

³⁵ This seems to refer to the tempo at B.

pause should be made after the *fermata*, before the *Allegro*.³⁶

In this movement, the theme frequently changes its character between *alla breve* and 4/4 time. A proper rendering of this music requires a good feeling for the differences between these two tempo characters. In an *alla breve* tempo, it is characteristic to have the *thesis* on the first beat and the *arsis* on the third. In 4/4 time, however, the quarter-notes are felt more or less equally. Based on these observations, whether the themes of this movement are conducted in half-notes or quarter-notes can be considered as depending not only on the tempo but also on conducting technique. This fact is not without influence on the phrasing.

Allegro

The first theme of the *Allegro* section, without a doubt, implies a decidedly 4/4 tempo. It should therefore be conducted in quarter-notes. (There are also themes in which the characters are not so easily defined.)

This is the appropriate juncture to discuss the upbeat nuances that were mentioned earlier. The 4/4 character of this first theme can be made immediately clear by taking a somewhat broadened upbeat. (The correct tempo must then be established, directly and unequivocally, in the next measure.) In so doing, this upbeat is given the weight characteristic of a full-value quarter-note. In addition to being situated still in the weak dominant position relative to the tonic, being the fourth quarter-note of the measure, the upbeat has already to assert itself against the strong *thesis* of the following downbeat.

³⁶ *Sic*: The tempo given in the score by Brahms is *Allegro non troppo, ma con brio*.

The upbeat's inherent double weakness is assisted through a slight broadening, like drawing a great preparatory breath that would be sufficient for the entire theme. It is on account of having enough air for the theme that a deep breath is taken in the form of a broadened upbeat, whereas a normal or, perhaps, more fleeting upbeat is liable to give an impression of asthma. Of course, what is advised here must not be regarded as a general rule.

We have seen and will continue to see that upbeat nuances also pertain, more or less, to sustained or pronounced notes in the weaker parts of the measure. In this respect, I will refer to an example from the *Andante*,³⁷ the viola "echo" in mm. 16-17:

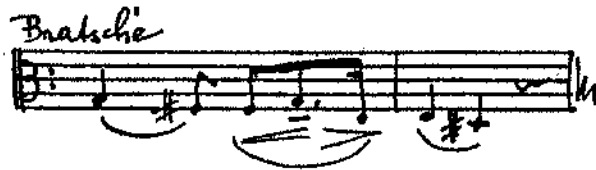


Fig. 2.4.3. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. II, mm. 16-17

Taking the motion of the *F*-sharp (the third eighth-note)³⁸ to the *G* strictly in time, the echo of the first violins in the viola part will be ineffectual. In order to obtain a special emphasis on this third eighth-note [*sic*] *F*-sharp and to give the phrase more significance, it was recommended to beat out the third and fourth eighth-notes. This *F*-sharp has the character of an upbeat and requires a slight broadening to convey its importance. This is achieved by beating out the eighth-notes since, by doing so, the motion of subdividing the beat will automatically become slower. So as not to fall out of

³⁷ The second movement of this symphony.

³⁸ *Sic*; Blume is referring to the third note written in the measure, which is an eighth-note, and not to the third metric eighth-note of the measure (which would be the start of the second quarter-beat).

the flow of the music, the third quarter-beat of this measure will be given by just a single quarter-note beat.

Explanations of this kind might be considered as going too much into detail, but they also represent some important fundamental concepts. Every note attains its meaning, in terms of *thesis* and *arsis*, through its metric placement and its relationship to tonal function. Thus, qualitatively speaking, there are strong notes and there are weak notes. Notes are “strong” if they fall on strong parts of the measure or have tonic characteristics. They are “weak” if they are found on weak parts of the measure or are more oriented toward the dominant.

Metric and tonal functions are the ties that bind the *Melos*.³⁹ These are often broken when, particularly in the case of rigid metric structures, weak notes become too strong and vice versa. In essence, this results in producing different meters. Therefore, we may refer as before to an example from the *Andante* (m. 59),



Fig. 2.4.4. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. II, m. 59.

which was accompanied by the comment that the phrasing would be correct when a 6/8 meter is felt. This distinction can be perceived by singing this measure while conducting it first in 3/4 and then in 6/8. In the 6/8 meter, the *tenuto* on the fourth eighth-note is superfluous, since this note gets its significance through its function as the *arsis*. In

³⁹ Blume also speaks about this in his Introduction (see page 4 of this translation).

contrast, the significance of the fourth eighth-note in the 3/4 meter must be achieved, somewhat artificially, by way of the *tenuto*. It can thus be said that Brahms is constantly waging a battle against the barline.

Regarding a passage to which I referred in the first movement, I remarked that, in mm. 51-59, the barline must be thought of as having been pushed back by 3/8,⁴⁰ so that the weaker part of the measure becomes the stronger part and vice versa (see Fig. 2.4.5).



Fig. 2.4.5. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. I, mm. 51-53.

This would yield the desired effect without the need for further comment. Perhaps this procedure would have been too “bourgeois” for Brahms.⁴¹ Indeed, in so doing, he would have given up a good part of his essential personality.⁴² And the distinction still needs to be made about whether a note that is performed is actually a *thesis* or if it is merely an accentuated *arsis* playing the role of a *thesis*. Doing justice to Brahms’ music demands the capacity of a reproductive artist to experience and participate in this and other kinds of thematic metamorphoses of which Brahms is the unrivalled master.

It should emerge from this discussion that the treatment of upbeats, be they actual or artificial, is of considerable import for musical performance. The intensity of the

⁴⁰ In other words, by half of a 6/8 measure.

⁴¹ That is, had it actually been written in the score.

⁴² Implying, of course, that Brahms was fundamentally anti-bourgeois in his character.

music-making of a Steinbach or a Nikisch was due in part to their having seized upon the strengthening of weaker notes as a correct approach to phrasing, as employed in the sense demonstrated above. By this means, they achieved the long breath that was essential for the grand line characteristic of their music-making.



Fig. 2.4.6. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. IV, mm. 62-66.

In this theme, the upbeat is broadened in accordance with the foregoing explanation (see Fig. 2.4.6). The theme is comprised of two measure phrases, as indicated by the brackets in Figure 2.4.6. The slight separation that follows each bracketed phrase⁴³ is accomplished by a dot that shortens the last note. Make sure that the *D* on the third beat of the fourth measure is weaker than the first *D* on the downbeat of the same measure, and is played shorter than a quarter-note. These two notes should be treated similarly to the way the word “*Wage*” is spoken, where the first note, *D*, corresponds to the vocalized “*a*” and the second *D* to the “*e*.”

Measures 70-72 contain a motive that is repeated three times with some alteration. As consecutively repeated notes often have a tendency to accelerate, so also do similarly repeated motives. Thus the tempo here should be allowed to accelerate a little. The main tempo is then recovered, beginning with the upbeat to m. 78 in the woodwinds. The

⁴³ Although Blume marks only one of these in the example, it seems that he intends the same mark to be inferred after every similar two measure phrase.

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From D on, it is necessary to recognize whether the character of the theme should be felt either as *alla breve* or 4/4.

This example may suffice for all further cases (see Fig. 2.4.7). In mm. 9-11 of Figure 2.4.7, the strings should really draw out their notes, as expressed by the *tenuto* signs.

Starting with m. 118, we have a genuine *alla breve* tempo. Pay attention to the phrasing (see Fig. 2.4.8).



Fig. 2.4.8. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. IV, mm. 118-26.

The violas, cellos and basses should separate each of their slurred phrases.

The third and fourth measures after F must be conducted in “4” but with the same flow as in the preceding *alla breve*. These two measures must be very precise!

A different tempo begins with the oboe theme. It is unmistakably *alla breve* but it must be prepared. Thus make a small “*quasi fermata*” before the oboe entry. A “*fermata*” would be too long, without a doubt. The “*quasi*” is created by beating out the first two quarter-notes of the measure, yet in a substantially slower tempo than before, and then resuming the *alla breve* tempo on the third beat. The *D* on the second beat should be treated like a prolonged upbeat:



Fig. 2.4.9. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. IV, mm. 132-35.

I would like to call attention to the “rolling” quality of this theme. This does not

roll in the manner of a wheel, though, but feels more like an ellipse or eccentric disk, when the notes before each *tenuto* (see Fig. 2.4.9) are felt as if they are trying to reach the *tenuto* note. After the first attempt only reaches the *A*, the *D* is attained on the second try and should be lingered over a bit.

In m. 142 the tempo should be taken firmly in hand and a strong *crescendo* made from *f* to *ff* in m. 146.⁴⁴



Fig. 2.4.10. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. IV, mm. 148-52.

The alternation between “drawn out” and “rhythmic” characters is repeated until the fourth measure before *G* (see Fig. 2.4.10). The four measures before *G* should sound very resolute⁴⁵ in character and, from m. 166, the tempo should be pushed ahead.

From *G* on, the tempo again has a two-fold character: *alla breve* and 4/4.

Wherever the strings have equally marked quarter-notes, the time-beating should also be somewhat marked. However, this should not be done in a way where the predominantly half-note movement falls into a 4/4 movement, but only such that the half-note movement between the downbeat and the upbeat becomes subdivided (see Fig. 2.4.11).⁴⁶

⁴⁴ It would seem that this *crescendo* should extend to m. 148.

⁴⁵ The original, “*gespreizt*”, can also mean “spread out,” “pompous,” or “stilted.”

⁴⁶ That is, it should vary between these characters within a conducted *alla breve*.



Fig. 2.4.11. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. IV, mm. 168-70.

All instruments should make a *crescendo* to the last quarter-note in m. 176. The strings should tear off their chords sharply.



Fig. 2.4.12. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. IV, mm. 176-85.

Beginning at H, start to lead back to the main tempo. The same that applied previously to the exposition applies also to the recapitulation.

The *pizzicato* passage beginning in m. 208 should accelerate, reminiscent of the *stringendo* in the introduction. The main tempo should then be seized upon, starting with the *F*-sharp upbeat to the theme, now in *B* major, in m. 212.

Measure 216 should begin an acceleration⁴⁷ to *alla breve* at the *animato* at K.

At L the winds should phrase according to Figure 2.4.13. Measure 257 and following should be conducted in quarter-notes. The canonic entrances should be

⁴⁷ It would seem that, previous to this, one should be conducting in "4."

brought out prominently. Make a *ritenuto* in the measure before M (see Fig. 2.4.14).

The last three eighth-notes in the winds should be played broadly every time they appear.

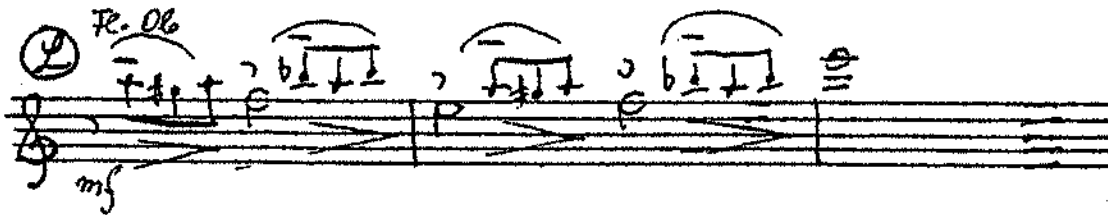


Fig. 2.4.13. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. IV, mm. 244-46.

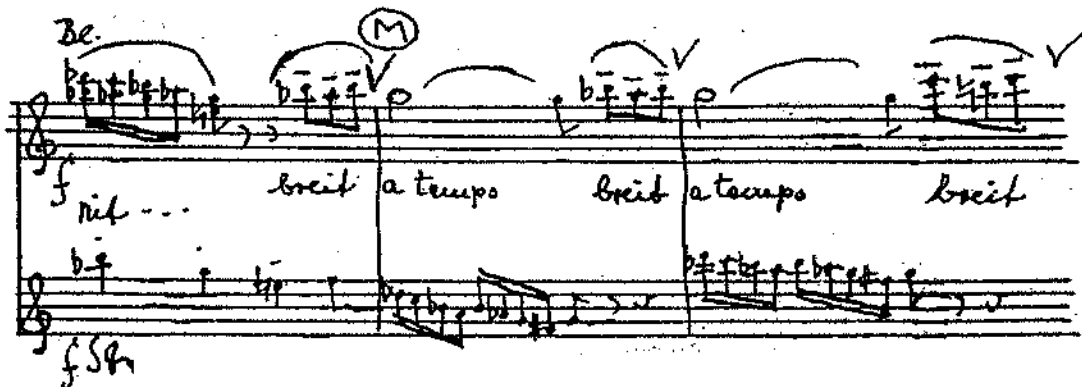


Fig. 2.4.14. Symphony No. 1, mvmt. IV, mm. 267-69.

Measures 267-70 should be shaped in this manner (see Fig. 2.4.14) and the main tempo should be resumed starting at m. 271.

All four horns should play the three eighth-notes with the woodwinds in these four measures, with the second and fourth horns playing an octave lower than the third

and fourth.⁴⁸ Play as written once again from m. 271. Measure 279 and following should be conducted in half-bars. Conduct only the first measure at N in quarter-notes, and slower than in the preceding *alla breve* tempo. In the next measure, m. 286, the previous *alla breve* tempo should be resumed without any additional holding back.

The music should first start to relax at the “*calando*,” m. 297. The change from A to B-flat in the basses before the “*animato*,” m. 300, should be given special prominence through a *ritardando*.

There should be a distinct cut-off after the first beat of the “*animato*.” The music should then continue to flow along in half-bars.

The remainder of this section should be performed as noted earlier.

The horns should play along with the woodwind triplets in mm. 352-53 and in mm. 356-57.⁴⁹ Before Q, the *pizzicati* in the basses and cellos should be very distinct.

The *Più Allegro* should not be preceded by a *ritardando*. At the fifth measure, m. 395, hold back the tempo slightly in order to reinforce the “*ben marcato*” character.⁵⁰

The *ff* in m. 407 should be prepared beforehand through a small *ritenuto*. The chords should be broad and strongly sustained.

At the *ff* upbeat to m. 417 in the strings, a *più presto* tempo should be seized upon and energetically led forward. A *ritardando* is very effective before the final statement

⁴⁸ Respectively, two octaves and one octave below the register of Figure 2.4.14.

⁴⁹ It would seem that the horns are meant to sound in unison with the bassoons in both of these instances.

⁵⁰ It is unclear how long this should apply, although it probably holds until m. 407.

of the opening theme in m. 447.⁵¹ The concluding measures should then be taken like a *stretto*.

⁵¹ "The final statement of the opening theme" would seem to refer to the first five notes of the main theme of the *Allegro* section (without the upbeat), *C-B-C-A-G*, which form the plagal cadential figure in mm. 447-53.

Chapter Three

SYMPHONY NO. 2 IN D MAJOR

First Movement: *Allegro non troppo*

The main theme begins in the horns in the second measure. The seemingly unimportant opening measure in the basses and cellos has for the course of this symphony a task similar to the chromatic motive in the first symphony. It is also the germ cell for a succession of further themes (see Fig. 3.1.1). Several variations of this three note motive, as well as the initial theme from which they develop, are given below for clarification (see Fig. 3.1.2). The other thematic transformations are left to the reader to investigate. The original form of the three note motive is:



Fig. 3.1.1. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. I, mm. 1-2.

Variations and themes derived from this motive are:

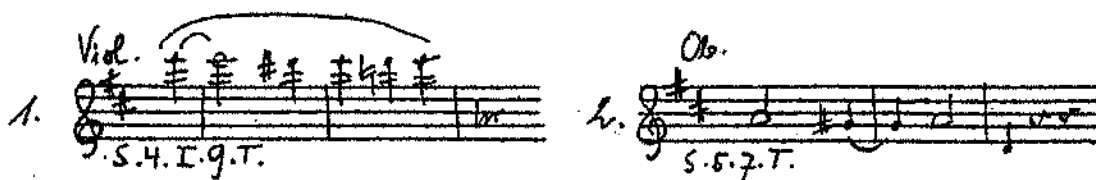


Fig. 3.1.2. Symphony No. 2, *left to right*: mvmt. I, mm. 21-22, 42-43, 44-45, 66-67, 127, 156, 187-88, 236, 501, and m. 497; mvmt. IV, m. 1, and m. 206.

Handwritten musical notation examples 3 through 12, showing various rhythmic patterns and instrument markings:

- 3. Viol. (A) $\text{♩} \text{♯} \text{♩} \text{♩}$ (quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth)
- 4. Ob. (B) $\text{♩} \text{♯} \text{♩} \text{♩}$ (quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth)
- 5. Viol. S-12. $\text{♩} \text{♯} \text{♩} \text{♩}$ (quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth)
- 6. (C) $\text{♩} \text{♯} \text{♩} \text{♩}$ (quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth)
- 7. Ob. S-19. in Unklarung $\text{♩} \text{♯} \text{♩} \text{♩}$ (quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth)
- 8. Viol. S-23. $\text{♩} \text{♯} \text{♩} \text{♩}$ (quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth)
- 9. S-47 pizz $\text{♩} \text{♯} \text{♩} \text{♩}$ (quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth)
- 10. Ob. S-46 II tranquillo $\text{♩} \text{♯} \text{♩} \text{♩}$ (quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth)
- 11. Allegro con spirito S-80. $\text{♩} \text{♯} \text{♩} \text{♩}$ (quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth)
- 12. Fl. S-103. tranquillo $\text{♩} \text{♯} \text{♩} \text{♩}$ (quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth)

Fig. 3.1.2. – Continued.

Examples 8 and 10, in Figure 3.1.2 above, demonstrate how the same intervals can give rise to completely different varieties of expression, solely through beat displacement and contrasting styles!

The last quarter of the three note motive should always be followed by a slight separation so that it can stand out (see Fig. 3.1.1).

The main theme should be phrased as follows:

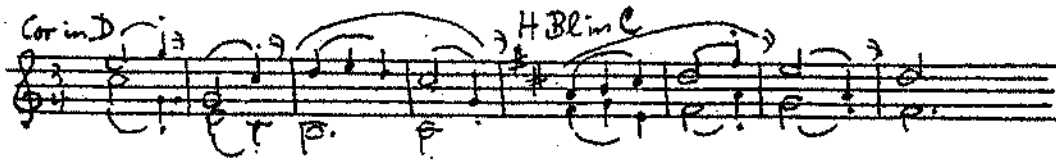


Fig. 3.1.3. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. I, mm. 2-9.

This phrasing applies also to the continuation of the theme in the third and fourth horns. Essentially, the following guidelines apply for this theme: Where a half-note is slurred with the third quarter-note of the measure, this third quarter-note should be treated as a dotted eighth-note , resulting in a sixteenth-rest at the end of the measure. Where there are three consecutive quarter-notes in a measure, the third quarter-note should be played full value. (The three note motive, however, should have a short third quarter-note!) Phrasing the winds according to these principles yields, in mm. 14-20:



Fig. 3.1.4. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. I, mm. 14-20.

The following bowing is appropriate for the strings in mm. 17-31:

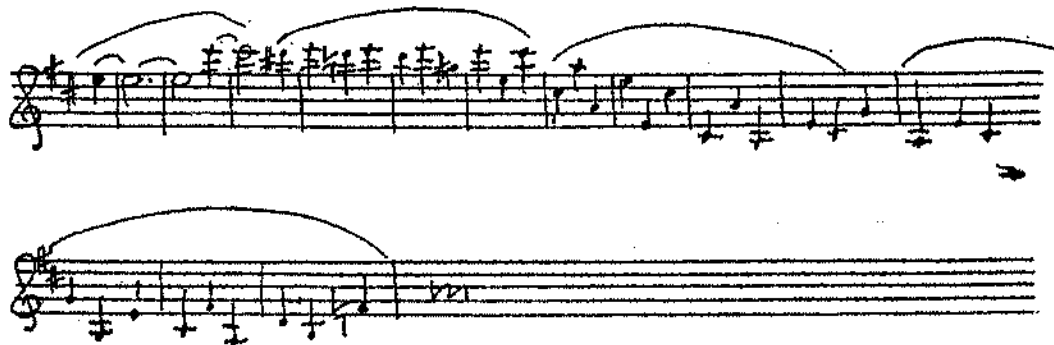


Fig. 3.1.5. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. I, mm. 17-31.

The augmentation of the three note motive, two measures before A, should be performed “without delay.” A new theme in *D* major appears at A, almost as if to demonstrate the significance of the three note motive from which it had developed. This theme should be played flowingly and without any special nuance. It is worked out in canonic imitation, beginning in m. 52 (see Fig. 3.1.6). The entrance of each voice is made more distinct when the dotted quarter-note is played with a swell in dynamics. This produces the following phrasing:



Fig. 3.1.6 Symphony No. 2, mvmt. I, mm. 52-59.

At B we have an interesting variant of the preceding two measures. Because of the way the notes are slurred and accented in mm. 64-65, they are felt as being in 6/8.¹ The oboe plays the same notes at B, though in a leisurely 3/4 meter and *staccato*, and in so doing conveys a completely different world. The effect of changing meters has already been mentioned. We will have need to revisit this at a later point. It remains to be mentioned that the seven measures before B are a prime example of Brahms' art of musical development. The substance is the three note motive.

¹ This does not seem to suggest that these measures are to be conducted in two beats to the measure as if they were, in fact, in 6/8.

Make a slight *ritardando* before the entrance of the second theme at C. This theme is to be performed in the following manner:

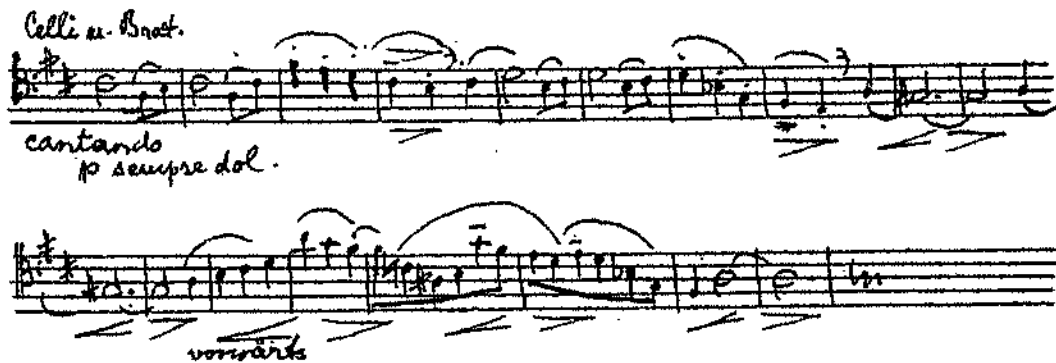


Fig. 3.1.7. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. I, mm. 82-99.

The four measure period of this theme is articulated by a slight breath in the fourth measure. In the viola and bassoon parts before E, mm. 114-16, the first eighth-note in each slurred pair should be clearly emphasized (see Fig. 3.1.7).

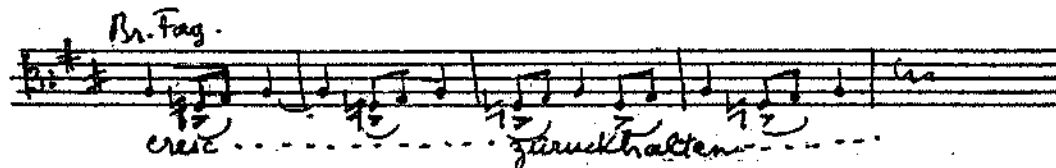


Fig. 3.1.8. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. I, mm. 114-16.

The "*Quasi ritenente*" at E should be prepared. However, be careful not to take the "*ritenente*" too broadly. The emphasis here is placed on the "*quasi*," meaning that the passage should remain "internally proportional" to the main tempo. The winds should start their chord in mm. 134-36 with a *fp* and then make a *crescendo* to *ff*.



Fig. 3.1.9. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. I, mm. 134-36.

In the motive that follows in m. 136, always make a slight break after each slur (see Fig. 3.1.10).



Fig. 3.1.10. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. I, mm. 137-40.

Drive forward somewhat from m. 147 to the chord on the third beat of m. 155. This chord should be played very short, following which the original tempo should be taken.

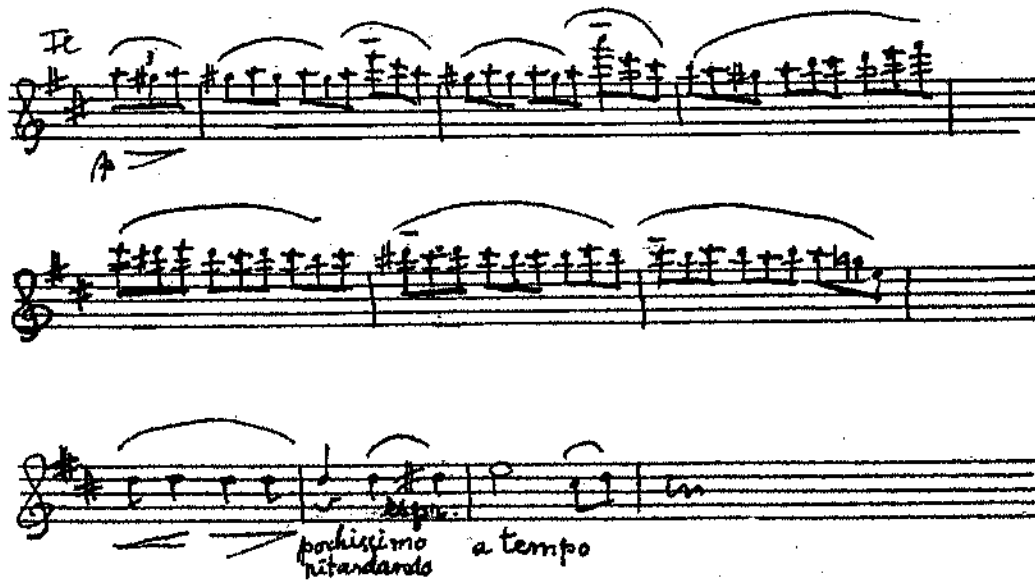


Fig. 3.1.11. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. I, mm. 156-64.

The flute plays above the theme at F with the phrasing shown in Fig. 3.1.11.

The violins should linger slightly on every third quarter-beat of this phrase:²



Fig. 3.1.12. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. I, mm. 164-65.

The woodwinds and horn should phrase thus:

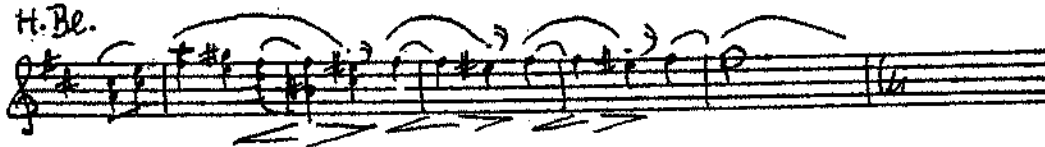


Fig. 3.1.13. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. I, mm. 166-70.

The repeat should be omitted.³

For the development section which starts here, the same applies as before for the individual themes or their fragments. The closer the markings in the score are observed, the more transparent the thematic development will be.

The three note motive, played here in inversion by the oboe (see Fig. 3.1.14), is always to be clearly articulated at the barline, wherever and however it appears.



Fig. 3.1.14. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. I, mm. 187-90.

² Obviously, this emphasis is not to be repeated in m. 169, where there is a *diminuendo* written on the third beat.

³ Regrettably, as in the exposition of the first symphony's first movement, this is offered without explanation.

A characteristic of this development is the displacement of the beat, which arises through diminution or augmentation. As an example, consider this episode:

The musical score is a handwritten manuscript for a symphony. It consists of ten staves of music. The first staff is for Violin V, marked 'f marc.' and 'Biat.'. The second staff is for Cello, marked 'Cello marc.'. The third staff is for Violin I, marked 'I Viol'. The fourth staff is for Violin II, marked 'II Viol'. The fifth staff is for Piano, marked 'Pia.' and 'ff'. The sixth staff is for Viola, marked 'Viola'. The seventh staff is for Cello, marked 'Cello'. The eighth staff is for Double Bass, marked 'Bass'. The ninth staff is for Piano, marked 'Pia.' and 'ff'. The tenth staff is for Piano, marked 'Pia.' and 'ff'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings. The handwriting is in ink on aged paper.

Fig. 3.1.15. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. I, mm. 204-52.

It is clear from Figure 3.1.15 that the accents are generated by the changing meters. The trombones should make a *crescendo* from the third to the fourth measures after G, as well as in the ninth measure after G. The strings should play every quarter-note in mm. 242-45 with a *marcato* down-bow.⁴

The strings and trombones should make a *diminuendo* to *pp* during mm. 250-53. The subsequent *crescendo* to *ff* in mm. 256-57 should be very strong!

A *subito p* is intended at H, indicating a drop back to *p* after the *crescendo*. Attention should be given to the beat displacement in mm. 284-93. Have all parts make the *crescendo* to the *sf* in mm. 296-97. In the measure with the *sf*, regard the G's in the flute and clarinet as having *tenuto* marks. In mm. 319-34, the first violins phrase as follows:⁵



Fig. 3.1.16. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. I, mm. 319-26.

Make a slight *ritardando* during the wind chords before K.

For the rest of the recapitulation, the same holds as earlier.

⁴ The text here reads "in Takt 6 und 7 S. 23" ("in the sixth and seventh measures of page 23") but Fig. 3.1.15 indicates that this holds for all four measures of quarter-notes.

⁵ It is assumed that this phrasing does not extend to the *pp* in m. 336.

The winds in mm. 402-04 should again play a *fp* on the third quarter-note followed by a *crescendo*. Have the trombones play a bit broader in the sixth measure after M. In the canonic imitation of the first violins by the second violins and violas, mm. 457-63, emphasize the *E* by means of a *crescendo*.

The horn theme in mm. 454-77 is in a four measure period and should be phrased accordingly:

Handwritten musical score for three staves:

- Cgr. in D:** Starts with *p dolce*. A crescendo line is marked with *cresc. e un poco stringendo*
- Viol:** Features a *f* dynamic and a *rit...* marking, followed by *a tempo*. A note is marked with an accent and ** nicht gebunden*.
- D-Saite:** Starts with *mp aspro.* and *a tempo ma più tranquillo*.

Fig. 3.1.17. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. I, mm. 455-84.

Have the flute and oboe play these measures with the following tempo nuances:

Handwritten musical score for **Fl. Ob.** with markings *silend* and *zurück*.

Fig. 3.1.18. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. I, mm. 502-03.

Second Movement: *Adagio non troppo*

As with all middle movements of Brahms' symphonies, the structure of this movement is very straightforward, thus there is nothing remarkable to say about it.

The cello theme should be performed according to the following markings:



Fig. 3.2.1. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. II, mm. 1-12.

In the third measure,⁶ note that the dynamics of the winds are *p* and *pp* in contrast to the *f* of the cellos.

The violins should phrase their theme in the same manner as the cellos (see Fig. 3.2.1). Clearly separate the first and second quarter-notes at A. The horn and woodwinds should play their slurred phrases as written, separating distinctly between each of them. The flutes and oboes should play with the following nuances in mm. 24-26:

⁶ That is, beginning with the upbeat to the third measure.

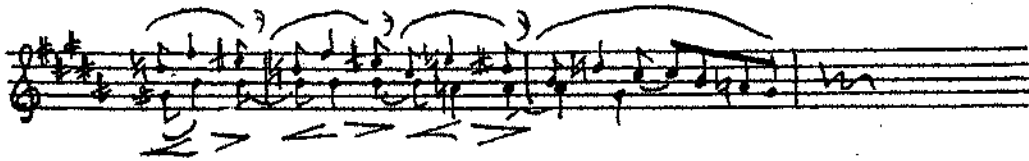


Fig. 3.2.2. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. II, mm. 24-26.

At this and in similar places, not only is the *crescendo* important but the *decrescendo* should especially be observed (see Fig. 3.2.2).

The kind of note repetition in mm. 28-30 demands a slight acceleration, which will be equally balanced out by a *ritenuto* on the last quarter-note of m. 30 (see Fig. 3.2.3). NB! Proceed into the 12/8 section without a *ritardando*.



Fig. 3.2.3. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. II, mm. 30-32.

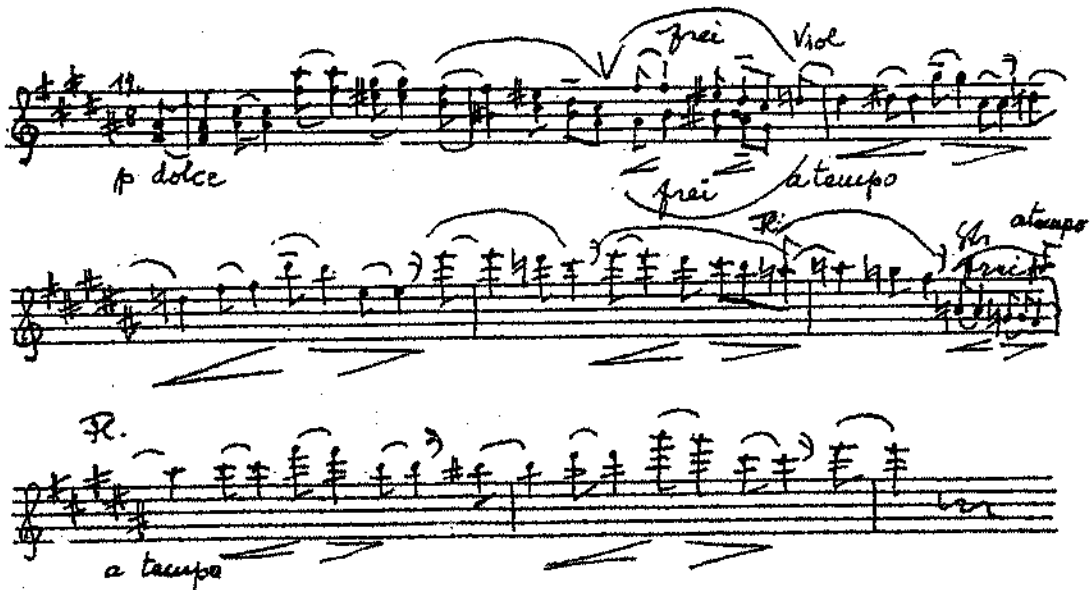


Fig. 3.2.4. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. II, mm. 35-42.

In the next episode, we should treat the imitations in the fourth and eighth measures like echos (see Fig. 3.2.4).⁷ These should be removed from the flow of the tempo and shaped freely. In addition, phrase as shown in Figure 3.2.4.

The strings should phrase in the following manner in mm. 45-49:

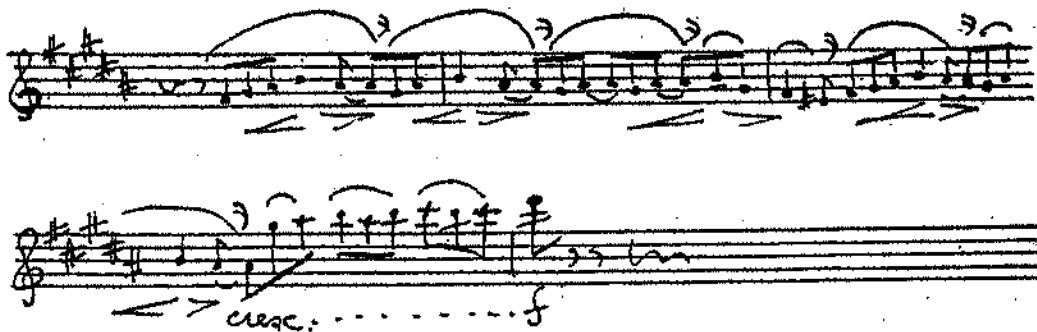


Fig. 3.2.5. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. II, mm. 45-49.

The winds should play with similar nuances and phrase in the same manner as the strings, both in mm. 47-48 and at C. Make a separation between each of the slurs (see Fig. 3.2.5).

A phrasing such as in m. 50 calls for a *tenuto* on the high notes (see Fig. 3.2.6).



Fig. 3.2.6. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. II, m. 50.

The cellos and basses should make a *crescendo* up to and after C and then make a *diminuendo* in mm. 47-48, as the violins did before them in mm. 45-46.

⁷ Blume refers to the fourth and eighth measures of the 12/8 section in the score and not in Figure 3.2.4.

The fourth beat of m. 54 should be broadened, which is accomplished by conducting it as three eighth-notes. Linger with a short *fermata* on the following *fp* in m. 55, first beat, and then return to the tempo on the second beat. Perform the third measure after D in the same way. The change to B major in m. 62 begins as a search for the main theme, and should be shaped with a corresponding hesitation.

Tempo I is fixed again with the entrance of the flute and horn in m. 65.⁸ Make a *ritardando* before E and continue in tempo with the last quarter-note before E.

At E and after, in mm. 68-76, the violins should phrase as in Figure 3.2.7.

Seize control firmly of the tempo with the entry of the horns and trumpets, at the upbeat to m. 87, and lead energetically to the return of the 4/4 meter in m. 97. Relax the tempo before the double-bar.

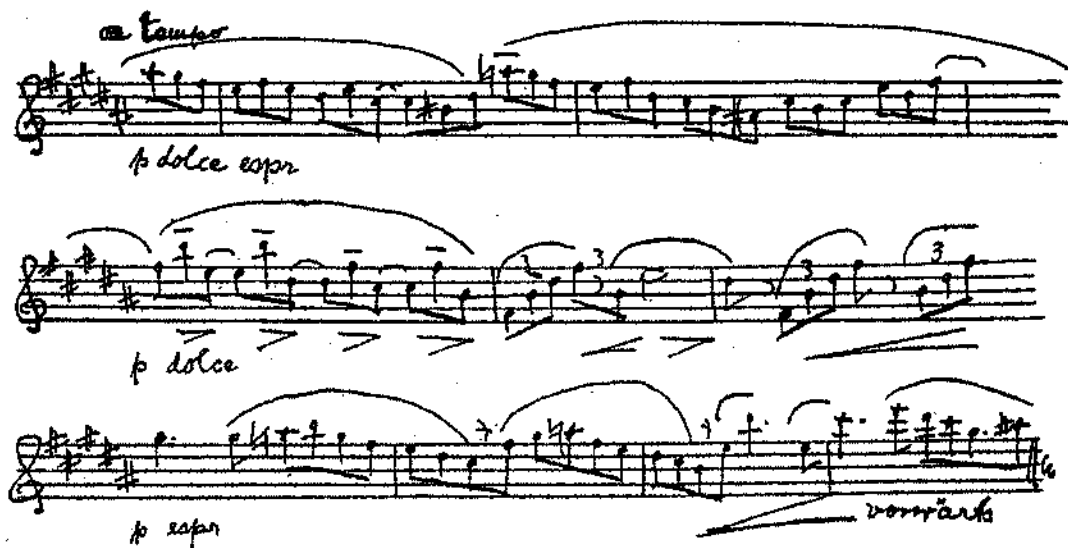


Fig. 3.2.7. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. II, mm. 68-76.

⁸ Note that the oboe also has the melody here.

The strings and winds should separate clearly between each of their slurs from F and in the measures following (see Fig. 3.2.8). Make a *crescendo* in the measure before F.



Fig. 3.2.8. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. II, mm. 94-97.

Beginning with the third measure after F, have the violins and corresponding woodwinds perform using the phrasing shown in Figure 3.2.8.

In the last measures, the clarinet should play very expressively and hold the C-sharp⁹ like a small *fermata* (see Fig. 3.2.9).



Fig. 3.2.9. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. II, mm. 102-04.

⁹ The clarinet note is the written C-sharp, sounding as an A-sharp, on the downbeat of m. 103. The original reads *das c*, an unfortunate mistake.

Third Movement: *Allegretto grazioso (Quasi andantino)*

The right tempo can be found through the *Presto ma non assai* (♩ = ♪), m. 33, when an eighth-note in the this section is thought of as being equal to a sixteenth-note in the main 3/4 tempo. In this way, a smoother transition can also be achieved from the 3/4 quarter-beats to the 2/4 whole-bars of the *Presto*. Under no circumstances should a tempo enter here other than ♩ = ♪! In order to maintain the chamber music style of this *Allegretto*, have only the two uppermost cello stands, or even just two players, perform up to the *Presto*.



Fig. 3.3.1. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. III, mm. 1-15.

Note how Figure 3.3.1 deviates from the score.¹⁰

The contrast between major and minor in mm. 25-26 is illuminated by slightly urging forward at the major part and holding back at the minor part (see Fig. 3.3.2). In this way, the two modes are distinctly characterized as active (major) and passive

¹⁰ In particular, note the added articulations as well as Blume's special breath marks.

(minor).

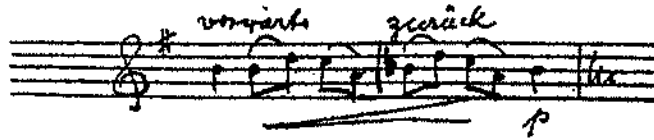


Fig. 3.3.2. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. III, mm. 25-26.

The *Presto*, once again, should be beaten in whole-bars equal to the previous quarter-notes, though the accents at A will effectively produce a 2/4 character. Strict attention to the dynamics make this *Trio*-like digression especially charming.

Incidentally, the theme of the *Presto* is simply a rhythmic modification of the *Allegretto* theme.

Continue into the *Allegretto* at m. 107 without making a *ritardando* and thus without a sudden shift in tempo. The same applies for this section as before. The strings should phrase at C as follows:



Fig. 3.3.3. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. III, mm. 114-17.

The 3/8 *Presto* (m. 126) should now be taken a little faster. The quarter-note is not equivalent to three eighth-notes ($\text{quarter} = \text{three eighths}$). Instead, three eighth-notes run in the same speed here as did four eighth-notes in the previous 2/4 *Presto*. Consequently, this 3/8 *Presto* is approximately an eighth-beat faster than the previous *Presto*, which affects the way it is conducted.

The four transition measures before E serve as a return back to the *Allegretto* tempo.¹¹ The preceding two 9/8 measures should still be taken in strict tempo. In fact, these measures simply represent the insertion of a three-bar period¹² in the course of a four-bar period.

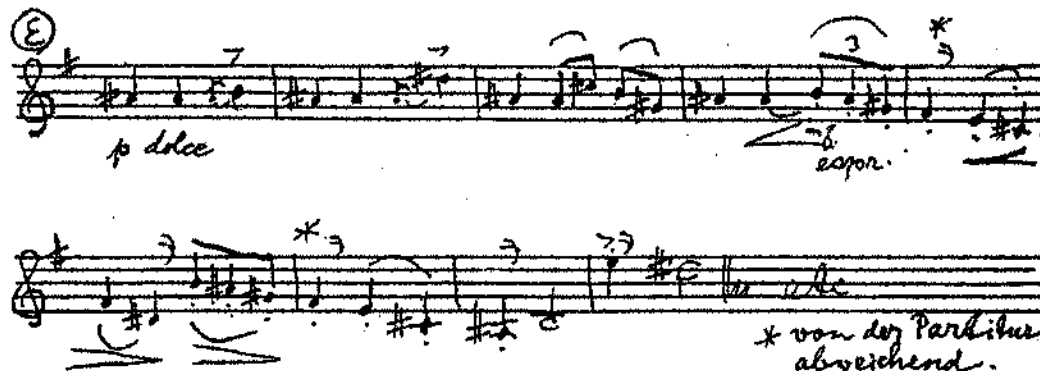


Fig. 3.3.4. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. III, mm. 194-202.

Compare Figure 3.3.4 with the score. Phrasing deviations in two of the measures are shown by the asterisks.

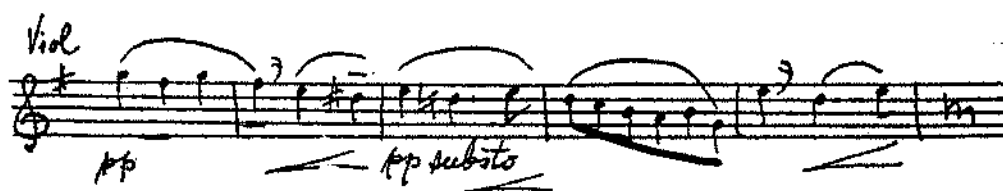


Fig. 3.3.5. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. III, mm. 205-09.

The violins should phrase in mm. 205-09 according to Figure 3.3.5. The *pp* in the third measure is treated as a *pp subito*.¹³

¹¹ Here, in measures 190-93, Brahms writes *Poco à poco*"; hence, the return is to be accomplished through a *ritardando*.

¹² Where three measures of 3/8 equal one measure of 9/8.

¹³ *Sic*: Either Steinbach or Blume changed this dynamic in Fig. 3.3.5 from the original *p* marking in the score.

The major and minor characters should be underscored by tempo nuances, as in the first section of this movement, in the third and fourth measures after F. The chords in the second and third measures before the end should be separated.

For the correct performance of this movement, a delicate chamber music style must hold throughout.

Fourth Movement: *Allegro con spirito*

Rather like the *finale* of the first symphony, it is not too difficult to grasp the form of this movement, owing to its clear and simple themes and strict form. It runs more or less on its own, thus sparing a long and involved explanation. Moreover, I believe that, through the explanations of certain typical and characteristic Brahmsian phrasing already set forth, the proper phrasing can be arrived at without further comment. Nevertheless, I will happily fulfill the chronicler's gratifying duty by conveying Steinbach's notations since, after all, there is no definitive method for interpreting Brahms.

The eighth-note rest in the first measure of the *Allegro* is to be respected. But the preceding half-note must not be left too soon, as one often hears it performed. The dynamic marking is "*p sotto voce*." The strings first retreat into *pp* with the entry of the flutes and clarinets in m. 13. The whole theme should be performed without expression and without any nuance whatsoever – except for a small emphasis on the C-sharp.¹⁴ The first nuances in the winds are as follows (mm. 13-16):

¹⁴ Measure 7, second violins and the lower viola line. It is notable that he does not mention the E-sharp in the first violin and upper viola parts.



Fig. 3.4.1. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. IV, mm. 13-16.

The strings take up the same nuances as the winds, starting in mm. 17-20 (see Fig. 3.4.2).



Fig. 3.4.2. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. IV, mm. 17-20

Hold back slightly just before A. The tempo should be strict starting at A. The first and second violins should accent the first and third quarter-notes in mm. 30-31 (see Fig. 3.4.3).



Fig. 3.4.3. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. IV, mm. 30-31.

The second quarter of m. 48 must be heard clearly (see Fig. 3.4.4).



Fig. 3.4.4. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. IV, m. 48.

The winds should phrase at B as follows:



Fig. 3.4.5. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. IV, mm. 56-59.

The clarinet motive, entering in m. 60, must not slow down! Measures 63-64 should be played with the following nuances:



Fig. 3.4.6. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. IV, mm. 63-64.

The "largamente" at C should be prepared through a *ritardando*.¹⁵



Fig. 3.4.7. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. IV, mm. 78-86.

¹⁵ This indicates that *largamente* was understood to be a musical character that implies a modification in tempo.

A *tenuto* sign is added over the quarter-note at the end of the slurs to clarify where there should not be a distinct break after the slur (see Fig. 3.4.7). This applies also to the answer in the winds beginning in m. 86. Add the following dynamics to the wind parts in mm. 90-98:



Fig. 3.4.8. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. IV, mm. 90-98.

When this figure appears, have the non-slurred notes played *staccatissimo* (see Fig. 3.4.9).



Fig. 3.4.9. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. IV, m. 102.

The third horn entry in m. 118 should be *ff*¹⁶. After E, the spiraling woodwind lines should push forward, quite flowingly, from m. 132 until F. Return to the main tempo at F. The episode in the fifth measure after F has a 4/4 character, which warrants a

¹⁶ *Sic*: In fact, this refers to both the third and fourth horn parts.

corresponding emphasis on the quarter-note. Thus the tempo clearly should not be broadened. The *p* following the *crescendo* before G is intended as a *p subito*.

The same indications explained above hold true as well for the themes and their constituent parts in the development.

The winds should adopt the dynamics of the strings at H.¹⁷ The rhythmic displacement in mm. 197-205 should be clarified through accents, as follows:



Fig. 3.4.10. Symphony No. 2, mvmt. IV, mm. 197-206.

The *Tranquillo* at I is prepared by broadening the preceding measure. A *diminuendo* should be inserted before K. The episode starting at K is mostly in two measure groupings. The period becomes irregular with the broadening of the theme around m. 234 (in the flute, clarinet and trombone).

The three measures before the recapitulation, mm. 241-43, are used to lead back to the main tempo.¹⁸ The same applies for the recapitulation as it did for the exposition.

¹⁷ Although Blume specifies only "*crescendieren*," he is taken to refer to the "hairpins" in the strings. This seems to apply not only to m. 171 but also to m. 175 and, perhaps, to m. 177.

¹⁸ Blume is apparently calling for a gradual *ravvivando* of the tempo.

The woodwind spirals should push forward from m. 333 until the tempo is regained at the syncopated figures in mm. 341-44.

The strings should play exclusively near the bridge from **O** until m. 362 to lend a special color to this section. **P** should be played “heavily and holding back.” This is achieved by giving a suitable upbeat to **P** that corresponds to the weighty character of the preceding music. The tempo can bear a gradual acceleration from the running eighth-notes in m. 391 to a *molto allegro* in m. 405. In this *molto allegro*, make a *crescendo* on the first two quarter-notes in the fourth measure of each period, and then cut off abruptly on the half-rest. The eighth-notes in the horns and trumpets in mm. 421-24 must, above all, remain clear and should not be rushed. The last measure should be delayed slightly and then not held too long.

Chapter Four

SYMPHONY NO. 3 IN F MAJOR

Dedicated to Hans von Bülow, this symphony became spoken of in many circles as Brahms' "*Eroica*."¹ This appraisal may hold true for the last movement, perhaps, but by no means – owing already to the key – should the first and middle movements bear this appellation. A heroic subject was not actually needed for Beethoven to compose his *Eroica* in *E-flat* though, on the other hand, it would have been impossible for him to find his expression in *F* major. Keys are certainly not arbitrary or accidental. Beethoven composed his *Pastoral* Symphony in *F* major and his *Eroica* Symphony in *E-flat* major because of his refined feeling for the tonal character of the keys.

I would not address these details here if such programmatic underpinnings did not lead to the false interpretations that one so often hears. One shapes a theme to correspond with thoughts about the heroic. For instance, the opening chords of this symphony become with heroic "thunder resounding," whereas the proper preparation for the main theme is a simple *forte* without *crescendo*. It would be toiling in vain to make this theme "heroic." After all, from Brahms' own testimony, it was taken, note for note,

¹ On the same topic, though he mentions a different conductor, Robert Schaufliker writes: "Hans Richter once named the Third Symphony... 'Brahms' *Eroica*,' and numerous writers have echoed him. This name seems overdrawn. The opening melody and the *finale* are the only pages that could begin to justify such a thought. But even in them there is no warrant for dreams of dragon-slaying, of Horatian exploits at the bridge or Leonidas at Thermopylae, of Gorgon slayings, Hundred Days, or chargings with the Light Brigade. Even the very instrumentation tells against such an idea. There is no brilliant 'heroic' work for the brasses; and *bravura* passages are pointedly absent." Schaufliker, *The Unknown Brahms* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1933), 428. Incidentally, this text bears an unusual resemblance to Blume's discussion below.

from eavesdropping on a Berchtesgarden yodeler.² Hence, the programmatic “heroic” interpretation is burst like a soap bubble, and the path is made clear for a meaningful interpretation.³

I deliberately cited the *F* major key of Beethoven’s *Pastoral*. Brahms likewise expresses his memory of a nature-bound yodeler in the beautiful Berchtesgarden Mountains as pastoral in *F* major. This is proof enough that a heroic conception of this symphony is indefensible.

First Movement: *Allegro con brio*

The chords that introduce the theme should be played in a simple *forte* and without *crescendo*. Similar to the opening motives of the first and second symphonies, the tonal sequence here (see Figure 4.1.1) has thematic significance for the course of the entire third symphony. Some specific instances will be mentioned.

² I have not been able to find any reference to support Blume’s yodeler anecdote. A similar situation does exist, though, in the case of the horn theme from the finale of the First Symphony. Robert Pascall cites a 1923 article by one Felix Pöschl wherein the latter author reported his supposed finding that Brahms was inspired to write his horn call by a melody he heard from a yodeler in the Austrian Alps. [“Ein interessanter Fund in der Laaben bei Neulengbach in N.-O.,” in *Das Deutsches Volkslied*, 25 (1923), 25-7; discussed in Robert Pascall, ed. *Symphonie Nr. 1 c-moll op. 68*, Series I/1 of the *Johannes Brahms Gesamtausgabe* (Munich: G. Henle, 1996), 209]

³ If one had need to append a sub-title to Brahms’ Third Symphony, perhaps more fitting than “*Eroica*” would be the “Schumann” symphony. Many authors have shown how the basic outline of the main theme of this movement is a quotation of the main motive from the first movement of Schumann’s Symphony No. 3 in *E-flat* major, the “*Rhenish*.” Schauffler points out that “melodically it comes straight from the *Larghetto* of that same master’s B flat symphony (bar 70), Brahms’ own copy of which bore the dedication from ‘Robert and Clara.’ Curiously enough, the start of the *Poco Allegretto*...of Brahms’ Third derives almost equally from the beginnings of the slow movements of Schumann’s symphonies in B flat and D minor....” Schauffler, 432.

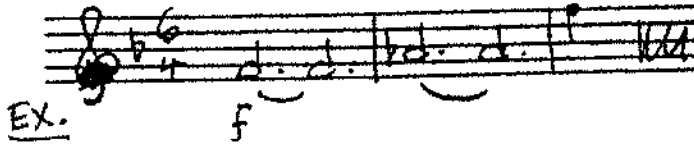


Fig. 4.1.1. Symphony No. 3, mvmt. I, mm. 1-3.

Based on the foregoing conclusion, the theme should not have any heroic meaning imposed upon it. It should rather be played just as it is. Thus, the *tenuto* signs in Figure 4.1.2 indicate that the non-slurred notes will not be played short and energetically but rather should be shaped sonorously. The slurred notes with dots above them should be treated as *portamento*⁴ and performed accordingly. Thus they are not short but “*espressivo*,” as the figure indicates. Only in m. 10 are the fifth and sixth quarter-notes to be played short and energetically. The winds follow the typical Brahmsian phrasing in m. 13 by holding out their high notes. Refer to Figure 4.1.2 for further details.

The violins should play their quarter-note after the triplets in m. 19, as well as the first quarter-note in the next measure, very short, so that the phrasing does not sound clumsy. All of the instruments should make a *crescendo* one measure before **B**. The winds should phrase at **B** as the strings did before. The fourth measure after **B** should be played *p subito*, and the fifth and sixth measures performed with a light last quarter-note, as in the prior triplet passage. The winds should follow suit in m. 22. The transition to the 9/4 meter⁵ should be freely shaped.

⁴ It is clear that Blume is referring to a *portato* bow stroke.

⁵ The original reads “3/4 meter,” which is an unfortunate error.

Viol

passionato

cresc

cresc...

sf

cresc..

lento marcato

H. Bb

Viol

Fig. 4.1.2. Symphony No. 3, mvmt. I, mm. 3-18.

The 9/4 should be slightly calmer. A fine terracing in dynamics should be elicited in the repetition in m. 38 down to *pp*; above all, have the theme performed *mezza voce*, but sonorously. In this way, the *pp* will be more effective. The long slurs show how this subject should be phrased (see Fig. 4.1.3).



Fig. 4.1.3. Symphony No. 3, mvmt. I, mm. 36-39.

The same phrasing in the repetition of the subject applies likewise to the winds and to the strings.

Letter C can be treated as "*a tempo*," since the tempo here is more internally active.⁶ It is entirely proper to take the drop to *pp* in m. 42 somewhat slower than before. The theme at C, though, calls again for a flowing tempo. However, if one speaks about this single small, subtle shift of tempo, it is almost a foregone conclusion that it will become crude. Such places should not have the feeling of two distinct tempos but should only give the impression of slower and quicker characters within a single tempo. The flowing current of the music must not be held up, suddenly, as if by a dam, only then to race hurriedly forth. Tempo modification, as it is meant here, can be compared with the rapid changes of a river that arise from the narrowing or widening of its bank but not through sudden changes in its incline.

Pay attention that the sixteenth-notes in the flute and violas are not played as

⁶ In fact, the rhythm is more active here, not the tempo.

eighth-notes in one measure before C, otherwise the eighth-rest will be lost.

The *legato* character of the theme in the following example can be contrasted more with the previous *scherzando*-like theme by slightly speeding up in the measure before, m. 46. After this method is applied, a suitable space for the following quarter-rest in m. 47 can be made by beating out the first two quarter-notes and then starting once again in tempo on the fourth quarter-note.⁷ Consequently, the upbeat gesture, E to D-sharp, will also be given the breadth it requires.

At the 6/4 in m. 49, the oboe carries the thematic interval progression from the opening chords. The oboe must be given a little more time in order to play this motive with a full tone, thus ensuring that it is clearly heard. The tone must be able to “unfurl!” But the tempo should be at once set anew with the oboe’s D-sharp, so that the *pizzicato* upbeat to the next measure can come precisely in the flowing main tempo.⁸ Notice the accented upbeat in Figure 4.1.4.



Fig. 4.1.4. Symphony No. 3, mvmt. I, mm. 47-54.

⁷ Technically speaking, the first beat is conducted as a quarter-note, the second and third beats are combined into a half-note, and then one resumes, in tempo, beating in dotted half-notes. As always, the important point is the actual rhythmic gesture of the music as it should sound and how this can be achieved most efficiently, not how it looks when it is conducted.

⁸ Controlling the rhythm in the lower strings is also important here.

The long slurs in Figure 4.1.4 show the phrasing to some extent. The markings here should be incorporated for the entire passage.

For the sake of precision at **D**, it is good to change over to conducting in eighth-beats. The tempo must not slow down because of this.⁹ The cellos and basses should accent the sixth quarter-note upbeat, two measures after **D**.¹⁰ The “*leggiero*” eighth-note runs are to be played lightly and evenly, as in mm. 41-45.

Conduct again in *alla breve* beginning with the third measure after **D**. The triplet passages should always be executed with the following accents:

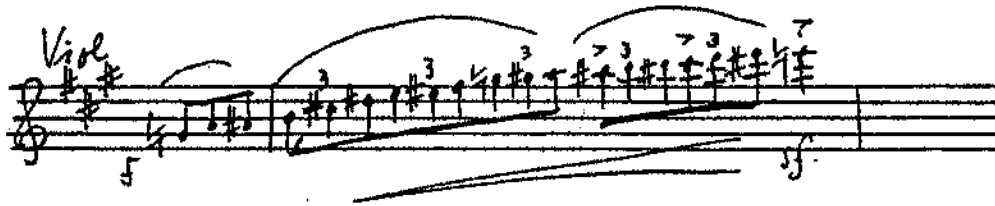


Fig. 4.1.5. Symphony No. 3, mvmt. I, mm. 63-64.

The first part should be repeated.

Between **D** and **E**, Brahms leads a furious battle against the barline, which is resolved finally at **E** in favor of the earlier *A* major theme. However, in the heat of engagement, the once peaceful *A* major theme is delivered in a very wild and agitated *C*-sharp minor. The period is again in two measure divisions. The extended phrase-lengths

⁹ This is a surprising technical suggestion. It is unlikely that Blume is advocating here a pedantic beating-out of the eighth-notes. What this indicates is that the tempo must be moderate enough to accommodate such a manner of conducting without unduly interfering in the flow of the passage. A second possibility is that Blume mistakenly typed *Achtel-Schläge* (eighth-beats) when he meant to type *Viertel-Schläge* (quarter-beats), in which case the text would read, “it is good to change over to conducting in quarter-beats.”

¹⁰ It would seem that this also holds for the measures that follow.

apply similarly here as in the earlier *A* major passage.

The eighth-notes of the first violins in mm. 87-89 should be accented in the following manner (see Fig. 4.1.6). The other strings should make these accents as well.



Fig. 4.1.6. Symphony No. 3, mvmt. I, mm. 87-89.

The horn solo at *G* does not require a broadening of the tempo, as opposed to the earlier passage where this motive was abbreviated in the oboe.

There should only be a small "*poco rit.*" before *H*. The "*un poco sostenuto*" is to be conducted *alla breve*, thus not too slowly.

Before the Tempo I in m. 120, change over to conducting in quarter-notes for the *ritardando*.¹¹

The recapitulation commences at the Tempo I in m. 120, where the same applies as in the exposition. The only difference here is that all the winds should *crescendo* to *ff* at the trombone entrance, returning to a single *f* on the downbeat of m. 124.

The theme in m. 183 should be somewhat agitated at *L*, with a view to the upcoming "*strepitoso*," characterized by the moving eighth-notes. The tempo can bear a slight acceleration directly upon the entrance of the main theme.

¹¹ In the original text, Blume instructs that this passage is to be conducted "in 6/8 beats," although he obviously means "6/4 beats" or "in 6." This seems to refer only to one measure before Tempo I.

The tempo should change gear abruptly in m. 194. While the tempo still storms forward in the first half of the measure, it should return to the slower main tempo in the second half. Such tempo nuances are not particularly easy to accomplish in *alla breve*, where there is no suitable opportunity to indicate changes with the baton. They can only be achieved through frequent rehearsal. It will help to insist that the strings take their fifth and sixth quarter-notes with two successive down-bows in m. 194, repeating this procedure in the following three measures (see Fig. 4.1.7).



Fig. 4.1.7. Symphony No. 3, mvmt. I, mm. 194-96.

It is important to take the quarter-rest here at once in the slower tempo, creating a distinct break in the sound.

Have all of the other instruments join the strings in making a *crescendo* at M.



Fig. 4.1.8. Symphony No. 3, mvmt. I, mm. 202-03

This motive after M should be articulated by treating the last eighth-note as a sixteenth-note (see Fig. 4.1.8). Begin making a *ritardando* in m. 211, delaying the entrance of the fourth horn and violas for the sake of clarity. The main tempo should

return once more with the final *F* major passage, where the phrasing is as follows:



Fig. 4.1.9. Symphony No. 3, mvmt. I, mm. 216-19.

Second Movement: *Andante*

This movement, constructed in the manner of a song, does not call for elaborate commentary. Attention will be given only to a few nuances.

Whenever the echo appears, as it does for the first time in m. 4, linger somewhat on the third quarter-note, which will have the effect of broadening the phrase without interrupting the overall flow.

The theme at C should be slightly slower and played with the following phrasing:

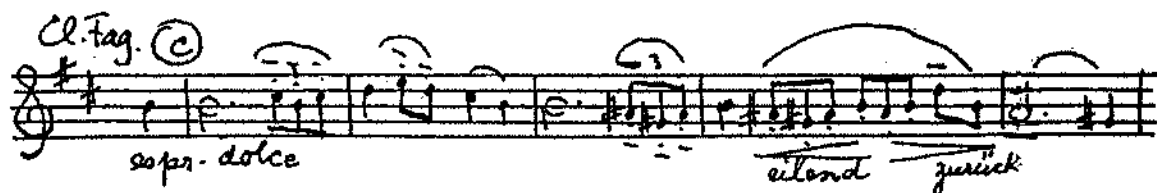


Fig. 4.2.1. Symphony No. 3, mvmt. II, mm. 41-45.

A slight *accelerando* is suitable in the fourth measure of C, which is then balanced out by performing the last quarter-note of the same measure *tenuto*.

The original tempo should be taken up once again with the eighth-note theme in

the strings, at the upbeat to m. 51.

The following episode demands great care (see Fig. 4.2.2). The tempo should again be slower. All of the notes are to be played *tenuto*. However, they must not be slurred together but instead be made to stand alone. The strings should play without *vibrato* in order to produce an icy or silvery sound.

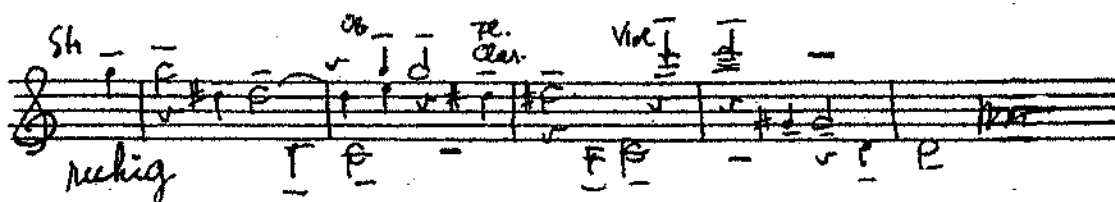


Fig. 4.2.2. Symphony No. 3, mvmt. II, mm. 57-61.

The expression is warmer at D, where the flowing tempo is begun anew. The violin theme should be phrased so that the second eighth-note of the triplet is continually emphasized. In this way, the suspended notes and passing tones will receive emphasis but not the notes of resolution (see Fig. 4.2.3).

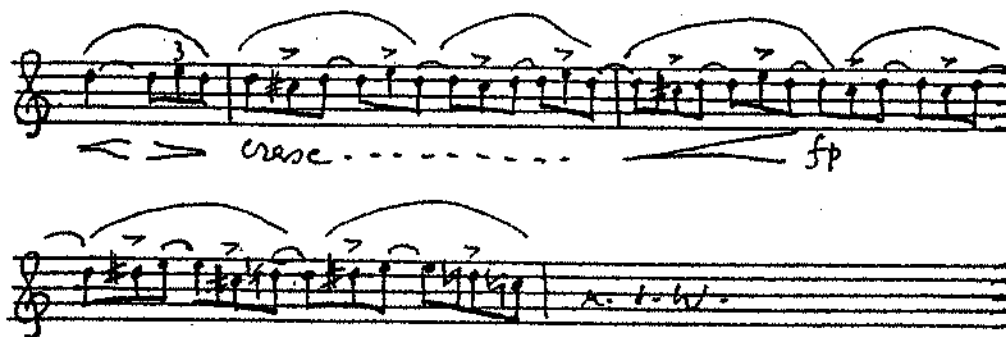


Fig. 4.2.3. Symphony No. 3, mvmt. II, mm. 62-65.

The tempo should increase slightly as the climax at E is approached, and then

slow down for the episode after E, which can be regarded as a search for the theme. Like breathing a sigh of relief, the original tempo starts again when the theme is found at the upbeat to m. 85.

Despite the *p* dynamic at F, the violins should play very expressively here and with considerable tone. In an earlier passage, I spoke about a note as unfurling through a *crescendo* and then receding toward the end of measure. The entire episode at F must have this kind of quiet spaciousness and dignity. Perform mm. 112-13 as the intensification of a more urgent expression. Icy calm at G, as before.

Have the basses play their *pizzicati* clearly in the passage leading to the epilogue, mm. 121-27.



Fig. 4.2.4. Symphony No. 3, mvmt. II, mm. 128-31.

The first *crescendo* in the trombones and horns should go to *mf*, the second less strong (see Fig. 4.2.4).

Third Movement: *Poco allegretto*

This third movement has the character of a *Notturmo* and must be accordingly shaped. The accompaniment should always be very delicate and gossamer, the melody mostly “*mezza voce*” but nonetheless *espressivo*. Above all, the cellos must not play too much into the string nor, at the *forte*, force their sound. Rather, they should always play with “lots of air” in their bows.¹² It is essential that a true *f* is never reached in the course of this entire passage.

Just a little attention will suffice for this simple and straightforward movement.



Fig. 4.3.1. Symphony No. 3, mvmt. III, mm. 8-12.

Move forward a bit to animate the theme, as indicated in Figure 4.3.1, and relax the tempo again during the quintuplet. The same holds for all recurrences of the theme.

Everyone should play very tenderly at A, especially the cellos. Using the *A* string here can lead players away from a lightness in tone and toward a sound that is too thick. The statement about “air in the bows” is especially relevant throughout this passage.

The first violins and cellos should phrase in mm. 36-40, as shown in Figure 4.3.2. It is important to separate the slurred phrases, slightly yet distinctly, so that the little

¹² Original: *viel Luft im Bogen spielen*, suggesting full bow strokes made with very little pressure, tending a weightless or “airy” quality to the playing.

repeated motive never gets lost. The first repetition should be *mf* and the second, *p*.



Fig. 4.3.2. Symphony No. 3, mvmt. III, mm. 36-40.

Make a short, definite break after the first beat of C. The *Trio* that follows has a “*scherzando*” character. The tempo should therefore be slightly quicker than in the earlier “*Notturmo*” section. A *scherzando* style is achieved by playing the second eighth-note rather short and emphasizing the third eighth-note, as shown in Figure 4.3.3.

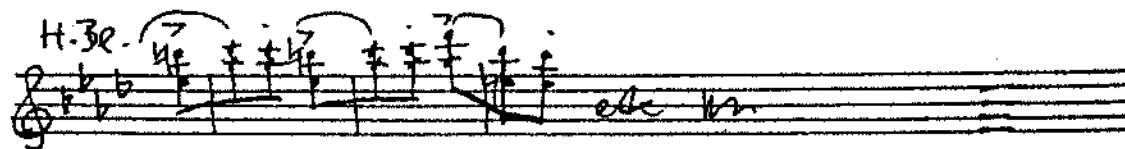


Fig. 4.3.3. Symphony No. 3, mvmt. III, mm. 54-6.

Have the third eighth-note in m. 59 and the five eighth-notes that follow it played *pp*, so that the imitation of the preceding motive is like an echo. Likewise, the tempo here can be slightly held back, keeping in mind that the “*scherzando*” begins anew with the upbeat to D.



Fig. 4.3.4. Symphony No. 3, mvmt. III, mm. 70-77.

This episode is animated through the indicated tempo nuances (see Fig. 4.3.4). It should also be somewhat removed from the flow of the *scherzando*. This is accomplished without fuss by prolonging the G-sharp upbeat.

The *scherzando* tempo is taken again beginning with the upbeat of the winds at E.

The repetition of the above-mentioned episode, starting in m. 87, should be performed without expression.

The notes C to D before the *fermata*, m. 97, should be played slowly. The same indications as before apply also to the reprise, which begins at F.

The first beat of J, m. 150, should be played short. The same holds for the fifth measure of J. The subsequent rhythmic displacement, resulting in an implied 2/8 meter, should be accordingly emphasized.

Fourth Movement: *Allegro*

The theme of this movement unwinds *sotto voce* and, until the fifth measure, without either expression or emphasis. The upbeat to m. 5 should receive a small accent (see Fig. 4.4.1). For clarity, the dotted quarter-note should be lengthened to make the upbeat a sixteenth-note.¹³



Fig. 4.4.1. Symphony No. 3, mvmt. IV, mm. 5-8.

¹³ In other words, the quarter-note should be double-dotted.

It will suffice to give this movement only a modest amount of attention. There is not much to explain about the form. It will be absolutely clear, and the best results will be achieved, if the conductor adheres properly to the instructions and markings of the composer.

The *B*-flat major chord in m. 70 should be played very short to ensure a definite break on the quarter-rest.

The upbeat before *E*, m. 75, should be played full value. If it is played too short, it would not convey the requisite strength and vitality of the entire episode that follows. Make sure as well that, in each of the first three measures of *E*, the last two eighth-notes are not thrown away but are played instead with equal intensity.

The two measures before *F* should have the character of a 4/4 within the *alla breve*. The quarter-notes are therefore to be played equally *marcato*, as notated in the score. The tempo should remain steady and uninterrupted.

At *H* the strings should play near the bridge until the *f* entrance in m. 141. The tempo must above all remain unchanged from m. 141 and on.

Although a *ff* is reached before *K*, all instruments should make another *crescendo* toward the climax one measure before *K*.

What was explained earlier is also valid for the recapitulation.

The tempo should relax at the beginning of the triplet episode in m. 252. Each of the sixteenth-note figures in the strings at *O* should be played with a slight *tenuto* on the first sixteenth-note.

The new tempo that appears in the score at m. 267, "*un poco sostenuto*," must

grow organically out of what came before and must continue in the *alla breve* character.

It must not, for any reason, strike the listener as a new tempo. Here as well, the first sixteenth-notes on the first and third beats should be held slightly longer to clarify the harmonic progression. The main theme from the first movement must be heard distinctly in the broken sixteenth-note chords in mm. 301-06.

Chapter Five

SYMPHONY NO. 4 IN E MINOR

First Movement: *Allegro non troppo*

In order to properly convey the full import of this movement's main theme, we must employ the typical Brahmsian nuances. What has already been stated about the delayed barline in Brahms' music applies here as well. The upbeat should always be stressed and the downbeat, the strong part of the measure, should be given less emphasis. Therefore, the theme is correctly and agreeably phrased when the barline is thought of as being moved back by a quarter-note. The theme appears in the following way, then, in Steinbach's markings:



Fig. 5.1.1. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. I, mm. 1-6.

We encounter "long" upbeats in mm. 13-14, meaning that the eighth-notes must not be swallowed (see Fig. 5.1.2). The only dynamic signs Brahms gives are *diminuendi*. The eighth-note upbeats, however, require the temporary assistance of the "*tenuto*," the application and performance of which has been explained well enough in the foregoing.



Fig. 5.1.2. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. I, mm. 13-17.

The accompaniment of the theme in the cellos and violas looks somewhat pianistic. It is therefore appropriate to have these two instrument groups flow well into each other, making sure that the sound of the violas does not diminish.

At A the theme is traded back and forth between the first and second violins in broken octave eighth-notes. Observe the various nuances here (see Fig. 5.1.3). In contrast to the initial setting, the first beat here is to be emphasized through the < >, though the stress should again return to the last quarter-note in the fourth measure after A. The emphasis on the downbeat happens as a counter-balance to the fourth beat quarter-note suspensions in the winds.

Lean on the eighth-note upbeats in mm. 31-32 and mm. 37-38, as before.

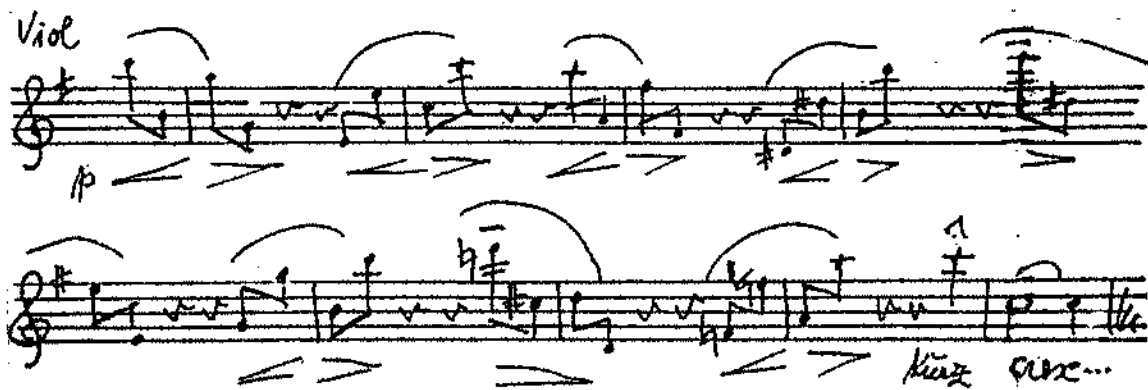


Fig. 5.1.3. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. I, mm. 19-27.

Make a short space after the first beat, both at B and in the previous measure, by

treating the quarter-note on the downbeat like an eighth-note (see Fig. 5.1.4). The imitation of the violin motive, first in the cellos and then in the horns, should be brought out.



Fig. 5.1.4. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. I, mm. 44-51.

The theme at C, m. 57, is to be performed with the following phrasing. There should be a slight lift, but not quite a breath, after each slur:

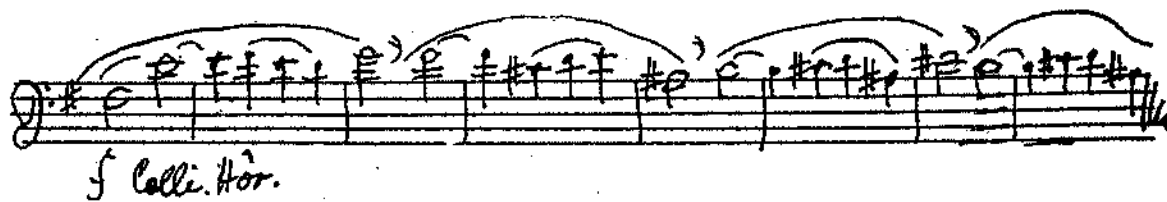


Fig. 5.1.5. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. I, mm. 57-64.

The repetition in the strings should be handled in the same way.

In the midst of the flow of the *alla breve* is a 4/4 measure, m. 76, which should be emphasized through equal accentuation of the four quarter-notes and, in the strings, by large, broad bow strokes (see Fig. 5.1.6).

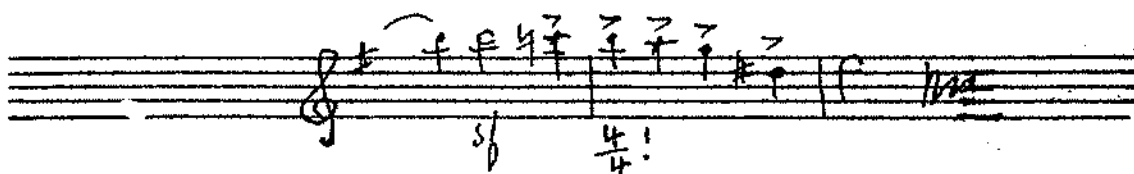


Fig. 5.1.6. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. I, mm. 75-77.

The *pizzicati* starting at m. 80 should be played *ff*. Make a *diminuendo* to *mf* in the measure before **D**, and then make the *crescendo* at **D** as written. Prolong the upbeat *D*-sharp in the fourth measure of **D** to allow for the necessary breadth of the violin line. In the interest of a big tone, the violins should play two notes to every bow stroke (see Fig. 5.1.7).

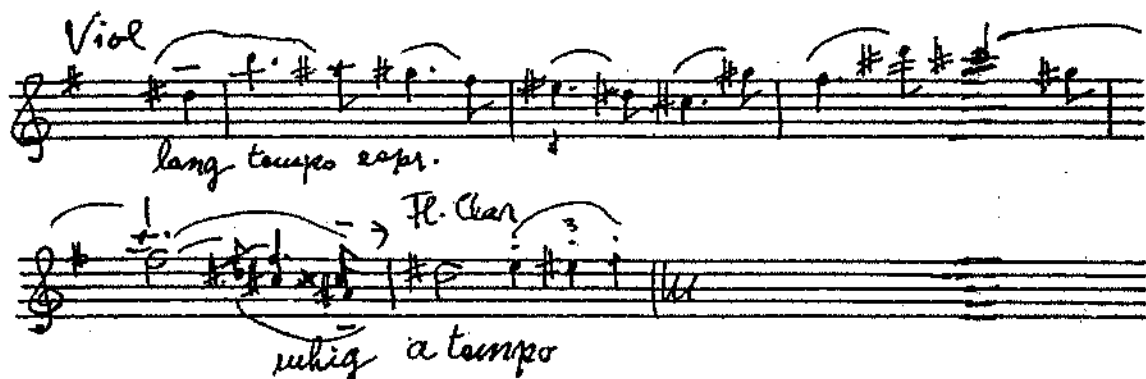


Fig. 5.1.7. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. I, mm. 91-95.

The interval of *C*-sharp/*A*-double-sharp that precedes the entrance of the theme in the flute, clarinet and horn should be clearly heard.¹ Therefore these notes should not be played too short. Also insert a small breath before the theme.

The cellos must be clearly heard in the *a tempo* and must play very rhythmically in mm. 95-106. The precision of the instruments on the off-beats here depends

¹ First and second violins, m. 94, last eighth-note. Here the text mistakenly reads *cis-ais* (*C*-sharp/*A*-sharp) instead of the correct *cis-asis* (*C*-sharp/*A*-double-sharp).

completely on the cellos, as do, in fact, all of the parts. The oboe entrance in m. 98 should be played *mf*, since the sound would otherwise be too thin relative to the flute, clarinet and horns, which previously carry the melody.

The trumpet rhythm before E sets the example for the other instruments that play after E. The string passage before E should be played without any expression.



Fig. 5.1.8. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. I, mm. 116-18.

The chromatic alterations in these string passages should be audible (see Figs. 5.1.8 and 5.1.9). The *tenuto* signs underscore this effect.

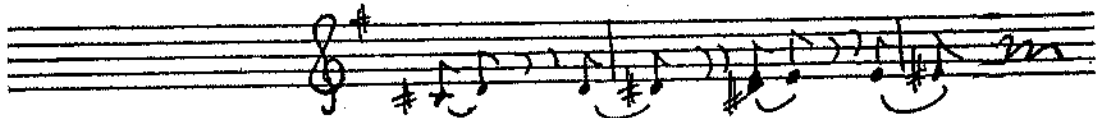


Fig. 5.1.9. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. I, mm. 116-18, showing the effect of the added *tenuti*.

The horns and trumpets should not be too strong in relation to the strings in mm. 125-36 (see Fig. 5.1.10).

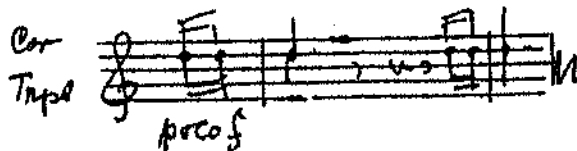


Fig. 5.1.10. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. I, m. 120.

Always emphasize the last note of the measure in the triplets, in mm. 130-33 (see Fig. 5.1.11).



Fig. 5.1.11. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. I, mm. 130-33.

The transition beginning at F leads back to the main theme and consists of two 4-bar periods. Each phrase here should be separated by a short *fermata* or, better yet, by a *ritardando*. Therefore make a *ritardando* in the fourth and eighth measures after F as well as the measure before F. Following this, the main theme should continue in the original tempo.

Above all, make sure that the motive before **G** is performed without a *crescendo* (see Fig. 5.1.12).



Fig. 5.1.12. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. I, mm. 153-54.

The winds should play very expressively at G, though without *crescendi* in m. 162 and m. 164! The strings should treat their passage as "*leggiere*," hence without expression or nuance.

The canonic motive that was first in the upper part must be brought out clearly in the basses and cellos, starting with the last quarter-note of m. 172. Thus the last quarter-note of the measures should be continually stressed. In the measure before **H**, m. 183, the chords should be well separated.



Fig. 5.1.13. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. I, mm. 190-92.

The *E*-flat in the flutes, clarinets and bassoons, the last triplet note in m. 191, has thematic importance and accordingly should be played with clarity (see Fig. 5.1.13).

The *crescendi* under the whole notes in mm. 195, 199 and 201 should not be too strong. The *piano* character of this entire section must be maintained.

Make sure at **I** that the trumpets play *f*, as opposed to the *ff* in the other instruments. However, the trumpets must not sound weak because of this.

Measures 210-11:



Fig. 5.1.14. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. I, mm. 210-11.

This motive should be executed so that the high note following the sixteenth-notes is very short and incisive (see Fig. 5.1.14).

The horns should play only *mf* on their off-beat quarter-note in m. 215.

Beginning with the upbeat to m. 223, the oboes and clarinets should phrase as follows:



Fig. 5.1.15. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. I, mm. 223-26.

The episode at K should be shaped quite freely and must diminish completely to *ppp* before L. The half-notes with *crescendi* are beautifully “unfurled” by slightly lengthening the first half of each measure. The eighth-notes falling on the second half of the measure should be played more or less in tempo (see Fig. 5.1.16).



Fig. 5.1.16. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. I, mm. 227-28.

The cellos in m. 243 should match well the sound of the violas from the preceding measure, making sure not to become too loud.

At L the main theme, now in augmentation, is utterly calm! Insert a breath before the full orchestra enters in the fourth measure after L.

The strings should apply a slight bit of pressure to emphasize the *G* to *G*-sharp in the third and fourth measures of their passage, in mm. 251-52 (see Fig. 5.1.17). They

should similarly emphasize the *E* to *F* in mm. 257-58.



Fig. 5.1.17. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. I, mm. 249-52.

Perform this passage mostly in the main tempo, but take the three measures of the broadened theme slightly slower:

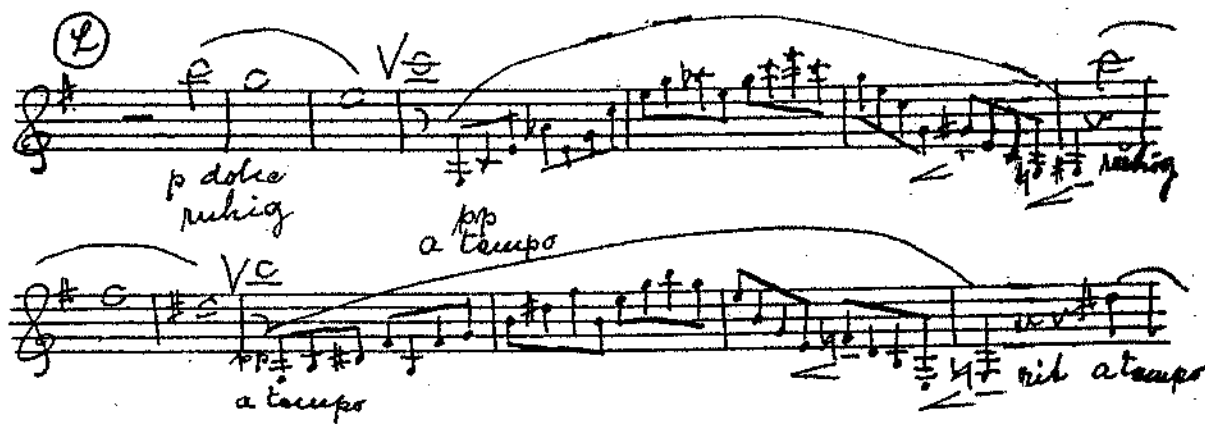


Fig. 5.1.18. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. I, mm. 246-58.

The same that applies for the exposition also holds for the recapitulation.

The upbeats should be very accentuated in mm. 380-86. With the strong *crescendo* to *ff* beginning in m. 387, the tempo should also intensify. An excellent result is achieved if one regains control of the tempo again at *Q* and now conveys the theme with the proper heaviness, for which, in turn, the upbeat must assist. The strings should

blaze through their passage leading up to **Q** in tempo, undisturbed by the prolonged upbeat.

From the fifth measure after **Q**, the heavy and massive statement of the theme should become gradually more flowing. Keep the violin eighth-notes moving in an unbroken tempo from m. 408 until the end. Broaden only in the penultimate measure, beating out the four timpani quarter-notes. The final chord should be held quite long and without *diminuendo*.

Second Movement: *Andante moderato*

It is always useful to consider the figuration when determining the tempo of a work. The correct tempo is readily conveyed by the way the figuration holds together with the theme. Early on in this movement, the theme is set with triplet figuration and, later, with thirty-second-note figuration. The tempo must therefore have a corresponding broadness into which these figurations can fit effortlessly.

Incidentally, the theme in the opening is a beautiful example of the *Phrygian* mode. We first hear it in a pure *E* major with the entrance of the clarinet, which is given suspense and allure through a slight delay. The passage should then continue in the original tempo.²



Fig. 5.2.1. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. II, mm. 9-13.

² Figure 5.2.1 contains several unfortunate obvious errors in rhythmic notation.

The clarinet should phrase according to Figure 5.2.1, beginning with its upbeat to m. 9. The directions “somewhat precipitous” and “calm” must not be exaggerated, especially the “calm” which is directly achieved by the long *D*-sharp.³

The theme, which has had a lyrical character up to this point, should be performed more *marcato* and energetically at A, and the sixteenth-notes played “with pathos” in the second and fourth measures (see Fig. 5.2.2).

The phrasing is very important in the sixth and seventh measures after A and is shown in Figure 5.2.2. The long slurs drawn over the shorter ones indicate both the note groupings and where small separations should be made.

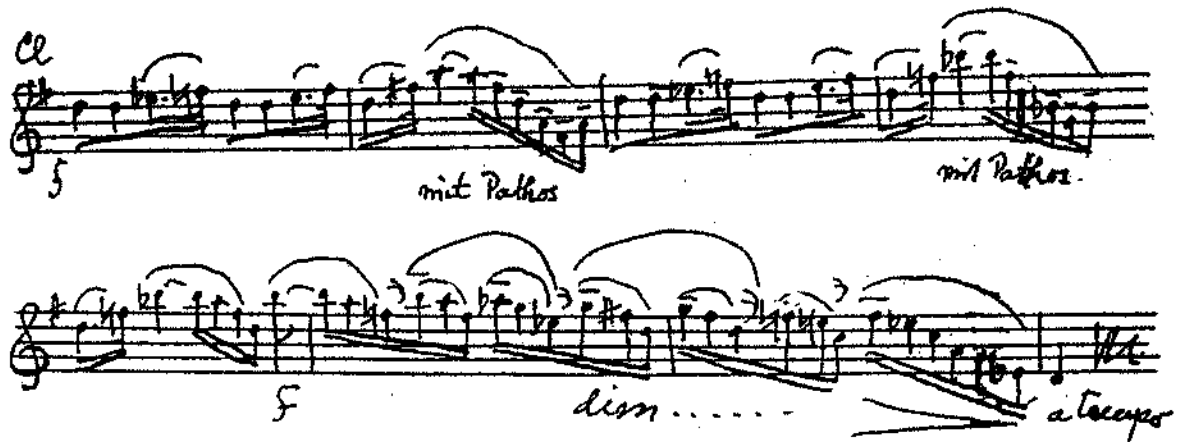


Fig. 5.2.2. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. II, mm. 15-22.

A transition to the “*a tempo*” begins on the fourth eighth-note in the last measure of Fig. 5.2.2, therefore this note should be played *tenuto* and slightly delayed.

In m. 23, the woodwinds should make a separation in their motive between the quarter-note chord and the upbeat to the theme on the sixth eighth-note (see Fig. 5.2.3).

The *pizzicati* should sound “hushed and without accent” when they are exposed

³ This is transposed in Figure 5.2.1 as an *F*-sharp for Clarinet in *A*.

during the pauses in the woodwind passage in mm. 22-25. The wind chord should again be separated from the upbeat to the phrase that follows, as before.

The *pizzicati* should bring with them a slightly broader tempo to accommodate the characteristics mentioned above. With the upbeat to the theme in the winds in m. 26, the tempo should be taken up again, not too slowly but, rather, flowingly.



Fig. 5.2.3. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. II, mm. 23-24.



Fig. 5.2.4. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. II, mm. 30-34.

The *E* major passage at B should be performed with a singing tone, regardless of

the notated “*p*,” and the clarinets and bassoons⁴ should bring their syncopations out a bit (see Fig. 5.2.4). The violins should become more animated and urgent in expression in the fourth measure.



Fig. 5.2.5. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. II, mm. 36-39.

The triplet accentuation indicated here is pure Brahms, though it must not be exaggerated (see Fig. 5.2.5).

The cello theme at C should be very sonorous! A few nuances, in the form of prolonged upbeats, are shown in Figure 5.2.6.



Fig. 5.2.6. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. II, mm. 45-48.

The first violins should curl softly and gently around the theme. The basic bowing for this passage is given in Figure 5.2.7.

⁴ Note that the oboes are also playing here.



Fig. 5.2.7. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. II, m. 41.

There is another charming metric displacement starting at m. 53 (see Fig. 5.2.8). The bracketed 2/4 measure should urge forward slightly, while the 3/4 measure should once again convey calm.



Fig. 5.2.8. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. II, mm. 53-55.

From the upbeat to m. 57 until m. 71, we encounter sixteenth-note figures in which every pair of two notes is slurred together (see Fig. 5.2.9). The second slurred note should always be considered short and thus given a *staccato* dot, so that each pair is separated from and not slurred over to the next pair. This should produce the impression of *legato*.⁵



Fig. 5.2.9. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. II, mm. 57-58.

⁵ Although the text may seem a bit confusing here, this *quasi legato* approach would be consistent with the “*dolce*” character requested by Brahms.

The theme in the violas at **D** should be played with great tenderness and by only two solo players.⁶

The wind chord on the fourth eighth-note, in the second and fourth measures after **D**, should be sustained slightly, allowing the *crescendo* and *diminuendo* to “fold in.”⁷ The tempo should be renewed again each time with the upbeat. The seventh and eighth measures after **D** in the violas should be shaped as in the earlier passage in the clarinets (see Fig. 5.2.10).

Measure 72: Make sure that the bassoon does not stand out too strongly from the ensemble. The first horn leads with the melody.



Fig. 5.2.10. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. II, mm. 70-71.

Measure 74 and following: The theme should be energetic and *marcato*, like before, and in a steady tempo.

The two chords before the triplets in m. 83 should be short and energetic. As before, the middle notes of the triplets should always be accented.

⁶ This is an interesting deviation from the printed score. Given the already modest size of the Meiningen orchestra, it seems odd that the number of violas should be reduced for this *sol*i. It is possible that Steinbach, and perhaps Brahms as well, preferred for this passage to have a genuinely intimate sound.

⁷ Original: *sich entfalten kann*.

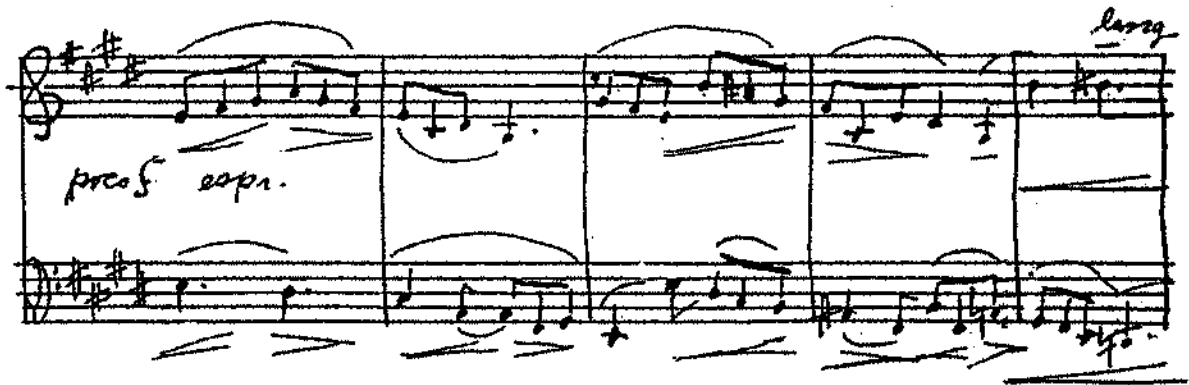


Fig. 5.2.11. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. II, mm. 87-91.

What matters most in this episode is that it be played as sonorously as possible (see Fig. 5.2.11). In the second and fourth measures, the basses should make a *crescendo* in imitation of the melody. The rest of the passage should be phrased as in the analogous section at C.

Measure 97: The tempo should increase steadily with the *crescendo* and then proceed uninterrupted with the syncopated theme that starts in the next measure. The horns and timpani should play their eighth-notes on the second and fifth beats short and accentuated (see Fig. 5.2.12).

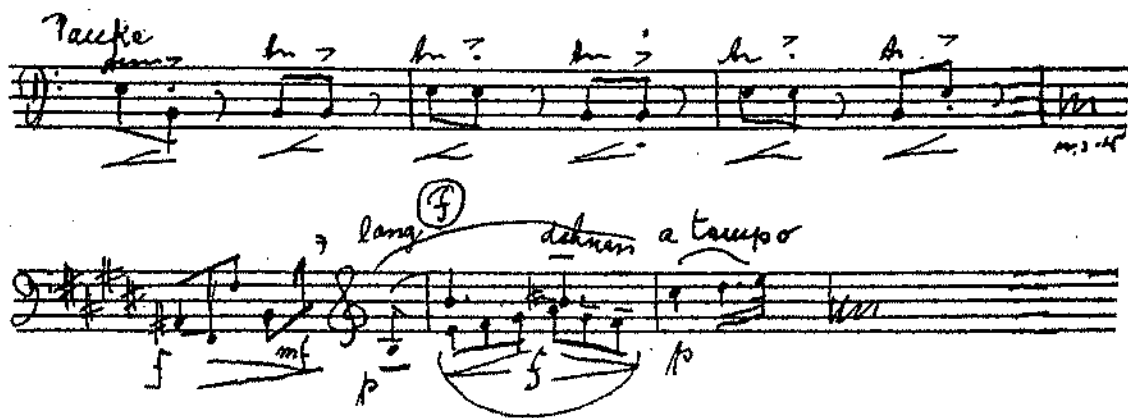


Fig. 5.2.12. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. II, mm. 97-102.

Measure 101: The cellos and basses should make a *diminuendo* in the measure before F (see Fig. 5.2.12). The upbeat to F should be made long, following a short break effected by a cut-off.



Fig. 5.2.13. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. II, mm. 107-13.

It is not necessary to describe Figure 5.2.13, as everything is given by the notation.

The cellos and violas should make a *crescendo* on their tied sixteenth-notes in mm. 113-15 (see Fig. 5.2.14).⁸



Fig. 5.2.14. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. II, m. 113.

The contrabassoon can be employed to augment the bass, beginning in m. 114 with the low C and until the end of this movement. In this way, the organ-like sound intended here would be brought out well.

⁸ This manner of phrasing should continue, it would seem, until the written *diminuendo*.

The horns must not drown out the clarinets by making their *crescendo* too strong in the third measure from the end.

Third Movement: *Allegro giocoso*

Always phrase the theme, as well as when it appears in inversion, in precisely the following way:



Fig. 5.3.1. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. III, mm. 1-5.

and:



Fig. 5.3.2. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. III, mm. 10-14.

Brahms' notation of this movement is so undeniably effective that there is scant little to add. Indeed, there should be no problem whatsoever in its interpretation.

Perhaps it may serve as stimulation, however, that Brahms admitted to having received

inspiration for this movement from the well-known bas-relief by Thorwaldsen, “*Der Alexanderzug*.”⁹

The *crescendo* to *ff* should be very strong from m. 32 to m. 35.

Move the tempo ahead slightly at **B**, so this episode will be lighter than the previous stout and massive character (see Fig. 5.3.3).

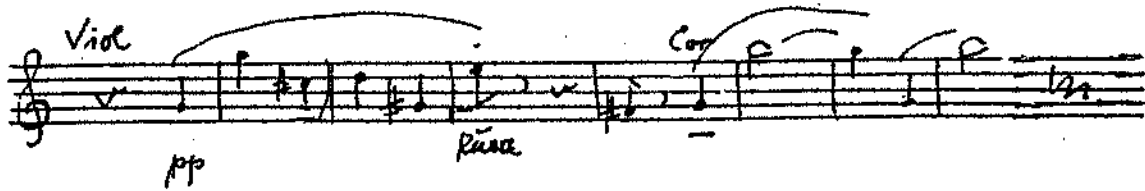


Fig. 5.3.3. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. III, mm. 76-83.

Note that the quarter-note in the strings here should be played as an eighth-note, and that the upbeat of the horns should be long (in Fig. 5.3.4)!

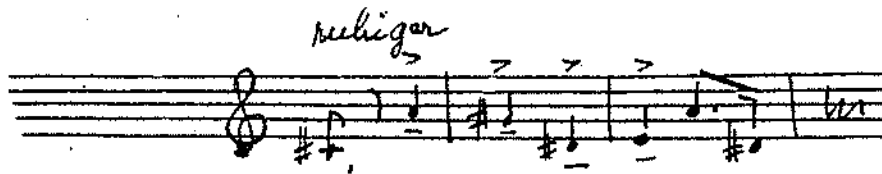


Fig. 5.3.4. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. III, mm. 155-57.

The bassoon line should be used to prepare the “*Poco meno presto*” (see Fig. 5.3.5).¹⁰

⁹ Blume’s reference to this sculpture was mistaken, as is clear from the following anecdote related by Schauffler:

“A journalist named Grosser had published a surmise that Brahms had been inspired to write the *passacaglia finale* by Thorwaldsen’s frieze of Alexander’s procession in the Villa Carlotta on Lake Como.” The Villa Carlotta was a residence owned by the Duke and Duchess of Meiningen where Brahms was often invited as a guest. The composer’s position about the journalist’s suggestion was voiced in a letter to his publisher, Simrock. It was unequivocal and can be summed up in this brief retort: “...I now content myself by loudly crying ‘Ha!’” Schauffler, *The Unknown Brahms* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1933), 180. Note further that Grosser’s story involves the *finale* of the fourth symphony and not the third movement.

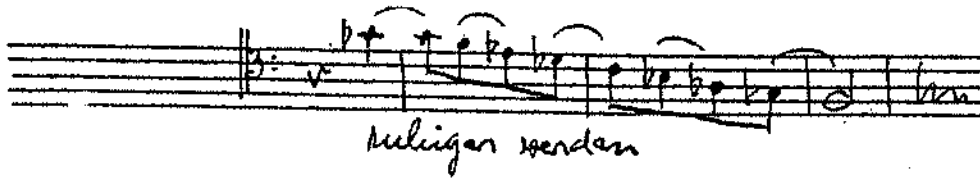


Fig. 5.3.5. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. III, mm. 174-77.

Make sure that the string episode, beginning in m. 189, is performed the second time “*più p.*” without *crescendo* and without expression (see Fig. 5.3.6).

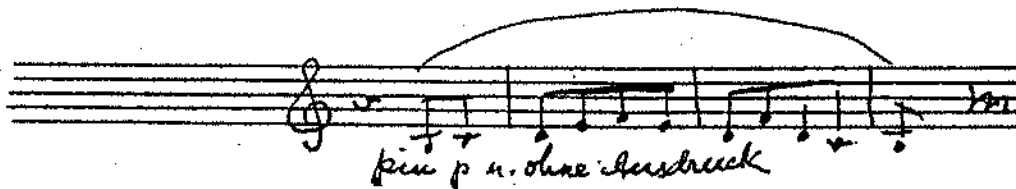


Fig. 5.3.6. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. III, mm. 193-95.

Move forward in tempo at G, similar to the passage at B. The strings should play all of their chords in the six measures before H with down-bows. The tempo should accelerate so that the character from H is restless, hurried and nervous. The tempo remains brisk and uninterrupted until the end.

Despite having already reached *ff* at m. 311, make another *crescendo* at m. 314,¹¹ energetically tearing off the chord after the downbeat of m. 314.

The entrance of the theme in the horns and trumpets at K should be played with great vigor and *marcato*. For this arrival to sound unexpected, the three measures before K should be played softer. The final chords should be in tempo, without delay!

¹⁰ This implies that the new tempo be prepared through a *ritardando*, led by the bassoon solo.

¹¹ It would seem that this *crescendo* continues until I.

Fourth movement: *Allegro energico e passionato*

This movement stands peerless in the symphonic literature because of its magnificent art of variation. Except for transitions, variation after variation of this eight-measure theme follow one another in sequence:

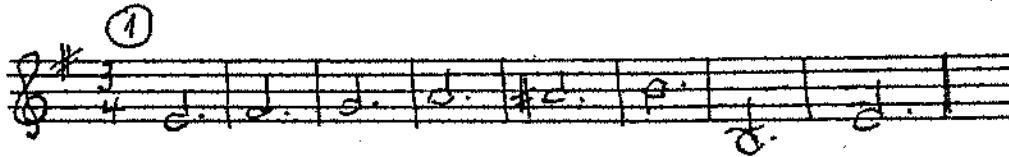


Fig. 5.4.1. Symphony No. 4, mvmt. IV, mm. 1-8.

(In order to facilitate this discussion, it is advisable to assign numbers to the different appearances of the theme. Being the first of these, the beginning of the exposition will be designated as #1.)¹²

The instrumentation of the *Grundgestalt*,¹³ #1 (mm. 1-8), requires some attention. In order to hear the theme clearly, it is essential to balance the parts well. The only instruments with the melody in the upper-part are the two flutes and the first oboe. The first trombone reinforces the theme in the middle-part an octave lower but only for six measures until the *B*. The theme then jumps up to the first and second horns in the seventh and eighth measures. From the beginning of the movement, the theme is also concealed in the horns: The second horn has an *E* in the first measure and is joined by the first horn on the *F*-sharp in m. 2. The first horn then follows with *G* and *A* in measures 3 and 4, respectively. The first clarinet and fourth horn both have *A*-sharp in m.

¹² I have added corresponding measure numbers for each variation in parentheses.

¹³ A term from Schoenbergian analysis, the *Grundgestalt* is the fundamental idea from which an entire musical structure is generated.

5, and are then joined by the third horn on *B* in m. 6.¹⁴ This first appearance of the theme must be toned down, above all allowing for the thematic pitches to be clearly heard. The *f* dynamic must not be too strong, so as not to anticipate the effect of the *ff* in the recapitulation.

At #2 (mm. 9-16), the trombones should play only *mf* and then make a *diminuendo* to *p*. The horns should play very *marcato*. The *pizzicato* chords are not to be arpeggiated but instead should be struck together. To bring the theme out clearly, one can have the first violins play just the melody notes, thus leaving out the bottom pitches.

In the last measure of #3 (mm. 17-24), the timpani should play *marcato*, with the other instruments joining in the same manner with the upbeat to #4.

#4 (mm. 25-32): The first trombone has the theme. It should therefore play slightly stronger than the others. The remaining treatment of the theme here is self-explanatory and does not require further attention.

#5 (mm. 33-40): The half notes in the basses, cellos and bassoons should make a continuous *crescendo*. The first violins should play “*ben marcato e largamente*.” Thus all of their notes should be well sustained.

#6 (mm. 41-48): The uppermost notes of the flutes, oboes and bassoons should be given *tenuto* signs and, in the sixth and seventh measures, this also applies for the violins

¹⁴ Unfortunately, Blume's description of the orchestration in mm. 1-8 is incomplete. The following is offered as a supplement to his text: The third horn and second clarinet also have an *E* in m. 1. The second clarinet continues with *F*-sharp in m. 2 and *G* in m. 3. In m. 4, the first clarinet joins the melodic line on *A*. The *B* in m. 6 is reinforced by the second oboe and second trombone. The two trumpets, first and second horns and timpani are added for the *B* in m. 7 and, together with the two bassoons, contrabassoon and third trombone, round out the sonority of the *E* in m. 8, the final note of the melodic sequence.

and violas.¹⁵

#8 (mm. 57-64): The rhythm of this figure cannot be played with enough precision!

#9 (mm. 65-72): The violin sixteenth-notes should be very *marcato*. The *sf* in the second and fourth measures should be clearly audible. The general *diminuendo* leads to *pp*.

#10 (mm. 73-80): This passage has the danger of hurrying. Thus strict rhythm is to be observed! The winds should make a clear separation between each of their slurs.

#11 (mm. 81-88): The *cresecendi* should not be strong. However, the *diminuendi* should lead all the way to *ppp*. These should all end precisely together. The last measure before #12 should be held out briefly, like a *fermata*, or one should make a strong *ritardando*.

#12 (mm. 89-96): The first clarinet should come out strongly here. For the strings, the first and second violins should play the gentlest *portamento*¹⁶ here and should not play their successive eighth-notes too short. There should be no *ritardando* going into the 3/2 meter, although there should be a distinct *diminuendo*.

#13 (mm. 97-104): The flute should be allowed to perform this variation freely. Brahms' notation requires nothing additional. Conduct the 6/4  previous. If the sound of two horns is too loud, have only one horn play. Slow down slightly in the last measure.

¹⁵ It would seem that #7 (mm. 49-56) is regarded as an extension of #6 and for this reason is not discussed on its own.

¹⁶ A *portato* or *lourée* articulation is clearly meant here for the violins, not an expressive slide.

#14 (mm. 105-12): The high notes of the clarinet, oboe and flute should be performed with *tenuto* signs. Brahms conveys this here with < >. The cello and viola dynamics in the second measure also apply to the following measures, as well as to the violin part beginning in the sixth measure.

#15 (mm. 113-20): It is important for the *Sarabande*-like nature of this variation that the half-notes on the second beat of each measure are sustained enough. Make sure that everyone ends the notes together! The quarter-note upbeats should be suitably broad! The *ppp* upbeat in the penultimate measure should be played very broadly. After lingering slightly on the next downbeat, the entry of the horn should bring the original tempo with it.

#16 (mm. 121-28): As before, the winds should give suitable emphasis to their suspensions. The viola and cello figures should be performed as if there were *tenuto* signs on each of their first eighth-notes. These figures should always be in *diminuendo*. Notice that the instruments end at different times in the last measure. The flute *fermata* should be short, whereas the strings should hold their last chord until they are almost inaudibly *ppp*.

#17 (mm. 129-36): This should be played as a striking, powerful *forte*, in contrast to both the *ppp* and the very first appearance of the theme! The strings are to play their descending *fff* scale with full bows. The tempo is faster than at the opening of the movement. One should linger on the *fz* in m. 136 in order to facilitate a proper *diminuendo* to the *p* dynamic in **#18**.

#18 (mm. 137-44): The tempo remains flowing here and also in **#19** (mm. 145-

52).

#20 (mm. 153-60): Everyone should play with an energetic, accented *staccato*.

The trombones should not be too loud.

#21 (mm. 161-68): The same as **#20**.

#22 (mm. 169-76): The tempo should be slightly broader. The trombones should play resoundingly and well sustained, and the chords should be performed short and energetically.

#23 (mm. 177-84): *Scherzando*!

#24 (mm. 185-92): Allow the theme in the horn to come through! The violins should begin on an up-bow in order to arrive on a down-bow for the *sf*. Make a clear break, like a *fermata*, on the rest before **#25**.

#25 (mm. 193-200): The horns and trumpets should play *marcatissimo* and their notes should be well sustained. The woodwinds follow them with two eighth-notes on the second beat, the strings with a triplet. The two-against-three that these produce is not so significant. Much more important is that, in contrast to the mighty horns and trumpets on the first beat, a still mightier sonority should be heard on the second. Therefore, every first eighth-note in the strings and winds must be strongly accented. However, whereas the woodwinds play their two eighth-notes in rhythm, the strings should treat their triplet eighth-notes as sixteenth-notes. Consequently, the woodwinds and strings are synchronized together. The trombones should only play *f*. It is also good to conduct only the first and second beats in order to be visually characteristic for this figure.¹⁷ Give

¹⁷ Technically, this would require stopping the beat slightly after conducting the second quarter-note, prior to giving an upbeat for the next measure.

three precise beats again in the last measure.

#26 (mm. 201-08): The above holds true here as well for the instruments that play likewise on the second beats (flutes, clarinets, horns, trumpets, trombones and timpani). The triplet eighth-notes are similarly to be treated as sixteenth-notes.

#27 (mm. 209-16): The tempo should be flowing.¹⁸

#30 (mm. 233-40): Here we have an implied 2/4 meter. It should be emphasized accordingly. In the fifth measure, the strings should play *molto espressivo* and with *crescendo*.

#31 (mm. 241-48): The basses, as well as the other parts involved in canonic imitation, should play with great weight and force. The winds should play their off-beats very short.

Più Allegro

In the *Coda*, Brahms frees himself of the eight-bar subject.¹⁹ The chords in the strings in the second and fourth measures, and in the entire orchestra in the sixth and eighth measures, should be played very short. The chromatic alterations should be heard clearly in mm. 263-272 (see Fig. 5.4.2). Thus the appropriate instruments must be brought out.



The chords at **M** should be very short and energetic (mm. 273-281).

All instruments have been given *tenuto* signs on the second beats of every measure (m. 281 ff.). The remainder of this movement does not call for specific comment. It speaks for itself.

This masterwork in the art of variation must not lose its symphonic quality through an all too fastidious attention to specifics and an overly detailed performance. Nonetheless, the individual characteristics of every variation must come through with clarity. This movement demands long and thorough study in order to do it complete justice.

The extent to which Brahms rules sovereign over the orchestra is evident from this movement as well as from the entire symphony. This is also revealed through the markings of the score, which here scarcely require supplement.

Chapter Six

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY JOSEPH HAYDN

Theme: *St. Anthony Chorale*

The *Andante* tempo is perhaps best characterized by imagining a leisurely pace or stride (*Andante* = walking). The theme should be performed simply and straightforwardly. The three sixteenth-notes leading into m. 6 are to be played without *crescendo*. Have the *p* before the double-bar, m. 11, played not too softly in order to make the *pp* in m. 15 more effective. A slight *Luftpause* is appropriate before the *pp*. However, this should be achieved only by shortening the last quarter-note of m. 14 and not by holding back the tempo. The half-notes in the horns and trumpets in mm. 23-26 should be imitative of bells.

Variation I

This is double counterpoint at the octave, thus the upper and lower parts are invertible. In the triplet passage (in which the first eighth-note is a rest), the second eighth-note of the triplet should always be played *tenuto*. After the double-bar, the horns and trumpets are again bell-like, but now *f* and *marcato*. The first violin part should dove-tail with the second. The first eighth-notes in the triplets are to be played *tenuto*, starting in m. 44 (see Fig. 6.1.1).

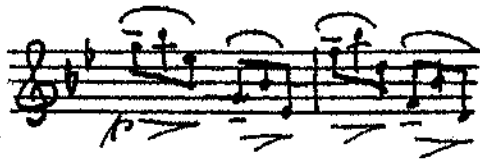


Fig. 6.1.1. Haydn Variations, Var. I, mm. 44-45.

Variation II

The sixteenth-notes should be here played as short and fleetingly as possible, so that the main emphasis lies on the dotted eighth-notes. The latter are therefore to be played *marcato*. If the sound of the contrabassoon is too disturbing for the *piano* dynamic at m. 76, it may be left out until the *f* in m. 77.

Variation III

The tempo should be determined from the motion of the sixteenth-notes at A. The winds make the *crescendo* with the strings in mm. 102-103. These two measures should be shaped freely, allowing the horn and clarinet enough time to play their motives very expressively. The repetition at m. 104 is to be played without *crescendo*! The violins and violas should become a bit broader in m. 114 and sustain the *A* as if it were marked *tenuto*.

Go back into tempo again at m. 116, yet allow some time for the *F* horn and clarinet to play in m. 120 and m. 122, respectively. Omit the *crescendi* in the viola and cello parts in the third and fourth measures after C. Make a slight *ritardando* before the entrance of the theme in m. 135 as well as at the end of this variation.

Variation IV

This variation is in double counterpoint at the twelfth. The theme is constructed as follows:



Fig. 6.1.2. Haydn Variations, Var. IV, mm. 146-50.

A small canon in contrary motion appears at E. Do not make a *ritardando* before F. The theme at E is now articulated differently:



Fig. 6.1.3. Haydn Variations, Var. IV, mm. 166-73.

Variation V

For very large string sections, have at most 3 or 4 stands play on each part in order to best bring out the chamber-music quality of this variation. The first and second horns may alternate in mm. 238-44. The rest of this movement speaks for itself. The tempo should always be very lively.

Variation VI

The accents here are significant. The music must sound like it is bubbling with excitement,¹ which can be achieved by accenting the eighth-notes. Make a strong *crescendo* from m. 286 to m. 287, and also from m. 289 to m. 290.

During mm. 290-91, the flutes, oboes, clarinets and horns should accent their first and fifth sixteenth-notes, and the strings and piccolo should emphasize their sixth and seventh sixteenth-notes.

Variation VII

The strings should play with the full lengths of their bows for this *Grazioso*, but with much “air” in the sound. Make a strong *crescendo* with the scale in m. 307 and broaden out toward the high C. The following bowing is effective for achieving the greatest possible tone:



Fig. 6.1.4. Haydn Variations, Var. VII, mm. 306-11.

Conduct in eighth-notes, beginning with the fourth eighth-note of m. 307. Hold the clarinet's G in the last measure like a very brief *fermata*. Wait until the strings have

¹ I have translated the German word, *bruddelig*, as “bubbling with excitement.” A difficult word to translate, it is a colloquial expression used in the region of Baden, where both Blume and Steinbach were brought up. Although unrelated to the present discussion, I also offer Schauffler's colorful description of the *Allegro giocoso* from the fourth symphony as similar to my own understanding of *bruddelig* as a musical character: “The peasant side of the Master is here in full force, with its hearty *naïveté*, rustic roughness, and rude vitality.” Schauffler, 435.

put on their mutes before starting the next variation.

Variation VIII

This is a variation in double counterpoint at the twelfth as well as in contrary motion. The *Presto non troppo* will be achieved by giving a slight indication of the third quarter-note of the measure. In this way, the desire to hurry will also be neutralized.²

Finale³

All parts except for the theme should play *legato*. The imitating voices should not be stressed too much. In contrast to the *legato*, the theme is to be performed *marcato*. The horns and timpani should be prepared by a good upbeat in the fifth variation after L, m. 381.⁴ The following nuances are appropriate in the sixth variation for those instruments involved:



Fig. 6.1.5. Haydn Variations, Finale, Variation 6, mm. 385-86.

² Thus, it is advisable to conduct here in a modified “1” to achieve the *non troppo* character. It is implied that conducting in an unmodified “1” would invite the greater – and here, undesirable – forward momentum of a true *Presto*.

³ As the *Finale* is its own theme and variations within the larger set – actually taking the form of a *chaconne*, in which the five measure bass theme is itself a variant of the principal “Chorale” theme – Blume uses Arabic numbers in referring to the variations within this mini-set.

⁴ The “good upbeat” – the most indispensable tool in the conductor’s technique – being the preparatory indication that effectively communicates the desired tempo, appropriate character and intensity, or dynamic, of the music.

All of the violas play at N. The oboe plays calmly here.

Finale, Variation 12

The flute solo starting at m. 416 should be played *mf*. The oboe theme at O should be played *quasi legato-portamento*.

Finale, Variation 17

The tempo should pick up a bit at m. 441. Have the strings play with these dynamic nuances:

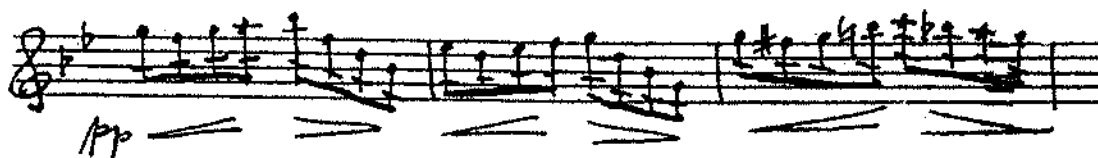


Fig. 6.1.6. Haydn Variations, Finale, Variation 17, mm. 442-44.

Finale, Variation 18

Push the tempo ahead for two measures at P, mm. 446-47, and then return to the main tempo in m. 448. Begin to broaden out with the three eighth-note upbeat to m. 453:



Fig. 6.1.7. Haydn Variations, Finale – Var. 18, mm. 452-53.

Conduct in quarter-notes during the *ritardando*⁵ in mm. 465-66. A slight break is effective just before the final chord.

⁵ *Sic*: “*molto rit.*” is written in the score.

Chapter Seven

AFTERWORD¹

By way of an ending for this work, Weber's letter to Präger, the Music Director in Leipzig, comes to mind. I offer his words as my concluding motto:

"The beat (the tempo) should not be like the hammer of a windmill, pulling back or pushing ahead tyrannically, rather it should be to a musical work what the pulse is to human life."

"There is no slow tempo in which some passages do not demand a quicker motion, in order to prevent the feeling of dragging."

"There is no *Presto* that does not demand in contrast a calmer performance of certain passages, so as not to spoil the means of expression by hurrying too much."

¹ The original typescript ends with the following words: "Completed in January 1933. Stuttgart-Wangen."

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Vita

Jonathan Pasternack has conducted symphony and chamber orchestras in a number of countries, including the Oregon Symphony, National Symphony and Seattle Symphony in the United States; the Moscow Chamber Orchestra and Pärnu City Orchestra in Estonia; the Silesian Philharmonic in Poland; the Karlovy Vary Philharmonic and Bohuslav Martinu Philharmonic in the Czech Republic; the Bourgas Symphony in Bulgaria; the Valcea Symphony in Rumania; the Cadaquès Symphony Orchestra in Spain; and the Sofia Festival Orchestra in Italy.

He has been invited to conduct the Aspen Music Festival Academy and Concert Orchestras, Brevard Music Festival Symphony, Northwest Mahler Festival Orchestra, Portland Symphonic Choir, Olympia Symphony, Seattle Philharmonic, Arcadia Chamber Orchestra, Lake Union Chamber Orchestra, Oregon East Symphony and the Young Internationals Chamber Ensemble.

His stage credits include leading performances of *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *Dialogues des Carmélites*, *Cendrillon*, *Don Giovanni*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Kiss Me, Kate*, *My Fair Lady*, and *L'enfant et les sortilèges*. He made his ballet conducting debut in December 2001 with the Oregon Ballet Theatre's production of *The Nutcracker*.

Dedicated to performing music written by today's composers, Pasternack led world premieres of a chamber opera by Gloria Wilson Swisher and a song cycle for soprano and chamber orchestra by Eric Ostling, as well as regional premieres of works by Robert Patterson, Karel Husa and Joan Tower. He has also introduced scores by young composers under the auspices of the Aspen Music School's Program in Composition Studies, the MIT Council for the Arts and the University of Washington Composer's Workshop.

In 2002, Jonathan Pasternack was appointed Conducting Assistant of the Oregon Symphony, a position created specifically for him by Music Director James DePriest. The year before, he was invited to join the Oregon Symphony Conducting Apprentice program, directed by Resident Conductor Murry Sidlin, having won the vote of the orchestra in competitive auditions.

During his two years in Oregon, Pasternack conducted the orchestra in rehearsals and performances of classical, pops, education and family programs, collaborated in the design and production of the orchestra's educational activities including young people's concerts and community outreach initiatives, and developed a strong relationship with subscription concert audiences through a series of pre-concert talks and post-concert

interviews with guest artists. He has also held positions as Assistant Conductor of the University of Washington Symphony and Opera and Conductor of the Seattle Junior Youth Symphony.

In July 2002, Jonathan Pasternack won second prize at the Sixth Cadaqués International Conducting Competition held in Barcelona, Spain, where he was the only American invited to compete. He was awarded a full fellowship to attend the American Academy of Conducting at the Aspen Music Festival in the summer of 2003, where he worked alongside conductors David Zinman, Murry Sidlin, Michael Stern and Christopher Seaman. Upon winning an audition, he was named an Academy Conductor and led weekly orchestral concerts at Aspen's Benedict Music Tent.

Pasternack received further training at the National Conducting Institute with Leonard Slatkin at Washington's Kennedy Center, at the Brevard Music Festival with Gunther Schuller, and at the David Oistrakh Festival in Estonia with Neeme Järvi and Jorma Panula. He has also worked with conductors Gerard Schwarz and Hans Vonk, and attended the mastercourse for conductors at Italy's Accademia Musicale Chigiana on a scholarship.

His awards include the Morrison Fellowship, David Fowler Travel Study Grant, and Davis, Irvine, and Beech scholarships from the University of Washington School of Music and Graduate School. At MIT, Pasternack was named a John Burchard Scholar for Excellence in the Humanities. He is also a recipient of the Mary Levine Career Scholarship.

Jonathan Pasternack was born into a family of theatrical artists and teachers in 1968, in New York City. He began his musical training at the age of ten with his father, Melvin A. Pasternack, violin classes with Ruth Bramnik and private violoncello studies with Laura Epstein. He began playing the trombone in the seventh grade and started lessons on that instrument at the age of thirteen as a student of Fred Braverman. After a formative experience at the New York Summer School of the Arts' School of Orchestral Studies, he entered the Manhattan School of Music on a trombone scholarship in lieu of his senior year of high school.

During his first year at the conservatory, Pasternack applied and was accepted as a transfer student to the Department of Physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he also pursued studies in philosophy and political science. At the age of eighteen, he was given his first conducting opportunities by John Corley, a conductor and lecturer at MIT, who also invited Pasternack to tour as trombone and euphonium soloist and timpanist with the MIT Concert Band. He was awarded scholarships at MIT for private music lessons and continued his trombone studies with Maureen Horgan and Ronald Barron. In 1988, he led in the founding of the MIT

Chamber Orchestra and later was named its Music Director and Conductor. Pasternack graduated from MIT with an SB in Political Science in 1990 but continued on with the Chamber Orchestra for an additional year, during which time he commissioned two works written by area composers.

During the years 1991-95, he worked as an educational and non-profit administrator in New York City, while pursuing studies in music theory and solfège at the Mannes College of Music, trombone studies with David Finlayson, piano studies with David Goldberger, and performing professionally as a freelance trombonist.

Following a move to Seattle in the summer of 1996, he enrolled in the keyboard harmony class of Carole Terry at the University of Washington. At the same time, Pasternack also began trombone studies with Stuart Dempster and was accepted into the conducting class of Maestro Peter Erös. At the University of Washington, where he served as a Teaching Assistant for the orchestra program as well as for the trombone studio, he earned his Master of Music degree in Trombone Performance in 1999 and was granted candidacy for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Instrumental Conducting in 2000.

He was chosen by Maestro Erös to serve as his sabbatical replacement in 2000, during which time he was given charge of the Advanced Instrumental Conducting class, University Symphony and the musical preparations for the University Opera. That year, he served as conductor of the University's Summer Orchestra.

His other experience as a music educator includes lectures on music appreciation at Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon, acting as visiting instructor for the Upper School Orchestra at Seattle's Lakeside School, teaching orchestra master classes at the University of Washington, Wichita State University, Eastern Oregon State University and Roosevelt High School in Seattle, and coaching members of the Seattle Youth Symphony and Portland Youth Philharmonic. He served for a term as Graduate Student Representative on the Educational Policy Committee at the University of Washington School of Music.