

Brahms's Choral Music and His Journey to Contrapuntal Transcendence

Joseph Schubert

When one thinks of the music of Johannes Brahms, it is possible that the towering masterpieces in large form come to mind: the symphonies, the chamber music, *Ein Deutsches Requiem*. Undoubtedly, certain aspects of his musical language also make an impression, such as his rhythmic inventiveness, his progressive harmonies, the folk-song element, his emotional intensity, and his lyricism. Perhaps the most pervasive aspect of his compositions, [\[1\]](#) however-and the least obvious to passive listeners-is his use of

contrapuntal techniques.

There is an old saying: “Mighty oaks from small acorns grow.” Three of Brahms’s sacred choral works can be utilized to demonstrate how his mastery and use of contrapuntal techniques became an integral part of his musical language.

Genesis of His Technical Contexts

Johannes Brahms was born May 7, 1833. He was the second of three children of Johann Jakob and Johanna Christiane Brahms. Tradition has it that the family was very poor, and that the young Johannes was forced to help support his family by playing piano in brothels or similarly depraved surroundings. Recent scholarship, however, has dispelled these myths.^[2] Jakob Brahms, a professional musician, was a citizen of Hamburg, and made a middle class living. He earned enough money to provide a good education for his children, and to supply Johannes with instruments: a piano, a cello, and a valveless French horn.^[3]

The elder Brahms supplied his son with two other things even more valuable: music instruction and a good work ethic. At first, father was teacher to son, but in recognition of his prodigious talent, Johannes was soon put under the tutelage of Otto Cossell and, later, Eduard Marxsen. Both men gave Brahms a solid foundation in musicianship, and it has been surmised that Brahms’s affection for early music may have had its roots in his study with Marxsen, who had an extensive collection of music from all eras.^[4]

Though his teachers had hopes that their *wunderkind* would choose a career of concertizing,^[5] of which he was certainly capable, Brahms was instead answering the call of his muse. By the time he was twenty-one, he had a portfolio of published compositions that included his Piano Sonatas, Opp. 1, 2, and 5, Scherzo in E-flat Minor, Op. 4, *Gesänge*, Opp. 3, 6 and 7, and Piano Trio in B, Op. 8. He had met Liszt and Schumann, both of whom had given him encouragement, and he had received favorable press reviews for his playing and composing.

Brahms was not satisfied with this state of affairs, however. One of his discontents was in the area of composition and the direction his own writing should take. Although it would be another seven years before Brahms would publicly articulate his opinions in this matter,^[6] the polarity of the two schools of thought—absolute music versus *Zukunftsmusik* (“future music”)^[7], the former represented by Schumann and the latter represented by Liszt—was causing him to wrestle with the elements of each present in his own style.

This was a critical time for Brahms because he was on a collision course with his own expectations, the expectations of others, and the conflicting musical currents of the day. It was at this juncture that he stopped publishing,[\[8\]](#) curtailed concertizing, and started on a self-directed path that would lead him to the discovery of his musical voice.

A number of events prepared him for this moment:

1. In 1848 Brahms heard in concert a young violinist, Joseph Joachim, whose playing made a profound impression. Later they toured together and developed a productive exchange devoted to the study of counterpoint.

2. In 1853, Brahms met Robert Schumann, who lauded him in an article in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* as the new voice of German music,[\[9\]](#) and the worthy successor to Bach and Beethoven. Schumann also routinely urged young musicians to study the polyphonic choral masterworks of the Renaissance.[\[10\]](#)

3. In 1854 following Robert Schumann's attempted suicide, Brahms joined the Schumann household. His study of Renaissance and Baroque music began with the music contained in the Schumanns' library.[\[11\]](#)

This study of "early music" is of primary importance because not only does it lead to Brahms's maturation as a composer, it is centered in his composition of choral music. Until he began this study, Brahms's music was very pianistically based. Immersing himself in a choral idiom allowed him to explore the idea of the absolute equality of voices, which is so essential to the polyphonic style.[\[12\]](#)

Brahms specifically studied *a cappella* choral music of Palestrina, Ingegneri, Schütz, Praetorius, Hassler, Durante, and Jacobus Gallus, along with keyboard fugues of the eighteenth century. Brahms himself wrote so little about how he learned his craft and what his influences were, that one can only speculate as to the exact nature of the study.[\[13\]](#) It included at the very least copying out of various scores by the above composers, for the extant *Abschriften*, or handwritten copies, from Brahms's estate bear this out.[\[14\]](#) One might also infer that Brahms would have done a survey of the different techniques employed by these composers, examined Schumann's treatises on counterpoint and music theory, and written some exercises using these techniques.

As Brahms progressed in his studies of early music, he found that an added stimulus was needed. In examining his correspondence with Clara, one can almost feel his mood swings. On 3 February 1855, after

almost a year of study, he wrote to her, “I now know how to make canons in all kinds of artistic forms; now I am eager to see how I’ll get on with fugues.”[\[15\]](#) But a short time later he wrote that he no longer knows “at all how one composes, one creates.”[\[16\]](#) In a letter dated 21 March 1855, Brahms urged Clara to join him in an exchange of counterpoint exercises, mentioning that he and Joachim have often discussed doing such a project.[\[17\]](#)

It is not necessary to speculate on any other motivation Brahms may have had in proposing this project. Although much has been written concerning his amorous feelings toward Clara, it was probably Clara herself who first encouraged him to undertake this study.[\[18\]](#) One might rightly infer that there was at least a genuine desire on his part to share his enthusiasm and to cultivate an academic side to their relationship.

Apparently nothing became of this, though, because on 26 February 1856, almost two years after beginning his study, Brahms wrote to Joachim and proposed that they commence a weekly counterpoint exchange. “For why shouldn’t we, quite reasonable and serious-minded people that we are, be able to teach ourselves better and more enjoyably than some ph[ilistine] could do it?”[\[19\]](#) Because many of their exercises took the form of choral pieces, portions of these exchanges show up in published works.

Early Music Techniques

One of the most sublime results of this exchange is *Geistliches Lied*, Op. 30. This piece demonstrates all that Brahms was hoping to accomplish through his adherence to the self-imposed rigors of *Kanontechnik*. Listening to the piece does not necessarily produce an understanding of its complexity. Brahms uses strict double canons at the ninth in the voice parts and in the organ part. Set to a seventeenth-century text by Paul Flemming,[\[20\]](#) the theme of which is consolation, the form of this piece is roughly ABA’ with a coda. The organ has introductory phrases before each section featuring canonic imitation at the ninth, and provides harmonic support to the voices when they enter. In each section, the vocal pairing, reminiscent of the Renaissance technique, of the sopranos and tenors produce a canon at the ninth at the interval of one measure, while the altos and basses weave in their own canon at the ninth based on a different theme. See Figure 1.

Figure 1

The first nineteen measures of *Geistliches Lied*, showing the canon at the ninth in the organ introduction, beginning in measure 2; the canon at the ninth between the Soprano and Tenor, beginning in measure 8; the canon at the ninth between the Alto and Bass, beginning in measure 10; and the delineated entries of the phrase “*sei stille*” beginning in measure 14.

Geistliches Lied
Johannes Brahms, Op. 30

Langsam

Organ

1 2 3 4

5 6 7 8 9

Laß dich nur nichts nicht

Laß

Figure 1, continued

10 11 12 13 14

dau - ren mit Trau - ren, sei stil - le, wie
 Laß dich nur nichts nicht dau - ren mit Trau - ren, sei stil - le,
 dich nur nichts nicht dau - ren mit Trau - ren,
 Laß dich nur nichts nicht dau - ren mit Trau - ren,

15 16 17 18 19

Gott es flugt, so sei ver - gnügt mein Wil - le, mein Wil - le!
 wie Gott es flugt, so sei ver - gnügt mein Wil - le!
 sei stil - le, wie Gott es flugt, so sei ver - gnügt mein Wil - le!
 sei stil - le, wie Gott es flugt, so sei ver - gnügt

The counterpoint in *Geistliches Lied* is a technical *tour de force*, but Brahms rises above this and uses the canonic entries as an expressive device. One can imagine the four voice parts as representing friends standing around a heart-broken loved-one, each offering words of solace. A translation of the text can be found in Appendix A.

Word painting can also be found. In the A section, in E-flat major, a sighing motive of a falling fourth, in the soprano and tenor, is used in measures 12 and 13 on the word *Trauren* (grief). It is immediately followed by four clearly delineated entries of the phrase *sei stille* (be still). In phrases that talk about God and rejoicing, an upward motive is found.

The B section uses the relative minor key of C minor as the text depicts anxiety over what is to come. The organ drops out for four measures, but then re-enters with a rising quarter note figuration.

The A' section re-uses the delineated entries for the words *steh feste* (stand strong), and the rising motive again for God themes. The soaring “Amens” that follow in the *coda* give a heart-wrenching cry that fades into a blissful ending, representing the peaceful acceptance of God’s will. Joachim, although finding some disagreements with Brahms’s use of dissonance, was stunned by this piece. “Your works have astonished me; they are so artful, so deeply felt,” he wrote in July 1856.[\[21\]](#)

It is probably no accident that Brahms chose this text and rendered such a personal setting. The date of this composition, April 1856, marks a time in which Robert Schumann was close to death, and the setting may have been a way for Brahms to express his deepest sympathy with Clara’s plight.[\[22\]](#)

Though Brahms stopped publishing his works until 1860, he was by no means idle in other areas of composition. (A list of these works and their dates of composition can be found in Appendix B.) Works for piano solo, chamber music, and vocal music abounded, and showed some of the contrapuntal influences. He was evolving his craft in the realm of choral music, though, and perhaps for practical reasons: Brahms directed various choirs between 1855 and 1860, the time of his correspondences with Joachim. Some of these works were premiered by these choirs, which in essence were living laboratories for his experiments. Indeed, it wasn’t only in the area of counterpoint that Brahms was learning, as the re-write of his *Marienlieder* indicates. A set of seven pieces originally written for four-part women’s voices, the second alto parts were so low that he re-wrote the set twice: first for two sopranos, alto, and tenor, then for soprano, alto, tenor, and bass, its published version. He complained to Joachim in 1858, “How little practical knowledge I have! The choral rehearsals show me great weak points; they will not be wasted on me. My things are really in large part impractically written.”[\[23\]](#)

Brahm’s Mature “Voice”

By the time Brahms completed his *Zwei Motetten*, Op. 29, in 1860, he had reached the pinnacle of his contrapuntal prowess. These two pieces show quite clearly that the virtuosic counterpoint exhibited in *Geistliche Lied* was now a natural part of his dialectic.

The earlier of these two motets was *Schaffe in mir, Gott, ein rein Herz*, Op. 29, no. 2. It is a setting of Psalm 51, written in three movements, the first of these perhaps being the most widely known. In it Brahms shows skill blended with subtlety. Between the soprano and bass there is a canon at the octave in augmentation, so that the soprano sings the subject twice in the time that the bass sings it once (Figure 2).

Adding to this is imitation of portions of the soprano part by the tenors and altos (Figure 3). Though a delight for those who enjoy music analysis, most of this contrapuntal sophistication will not be perceived by the listener.

The second movement is less subtle in the form it takes. The tenors introduce a chromatic fugue subject set to the words “cast me not away from Thy presence.” Successive entries by the altos, sopranos, and basses underscore the pleading aspect of the text. Some of these entries are accompanied by a melodic line that descends by half-steps, set to the text “and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.” The extreme chromaticism results in a conflict between major and minor, while preventing any settling into a stable key area. This alone would be enough to depict the wrenching emotions of the words. The repetition of text that results from the fugal form, however, shows how that form serves as a means of amplifying the emotional content of the words. Brahms exceeds the call of duty, so to speak, by melodically inverting the subject, using it in tight *stretti*, melodically inverting the countersubject, and combining the original and inverted forms of the subject (Figure 4).

The third movement sets the words “Comfort me anew with Thy succor.” Brahms begins by “restoring” the technique of canon to this movement. It begins in a three-part texture with the basses engaging the tenors in a canon at the seventh below, and the baritones filling in the harmony. This same music is then echoed by the women’s voices, with the sopranos and second altos taking up the canon, and the first altos filling in the

Figure 2

The Soprano and Bass parts from the first movement of *Schaffe in mir, Gott, ein rein Herz*, showing the entire canon at the octave in augmentation, between the Soprano and Bass. The other voices have been omitted for purposes of clarity.

The image displays four systems of musical notation for Soprano and Bass parts. Each system consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are in German and describe the creation of a pure heart and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

System 1 (Measures 1-6): The Soprano part begins with the lyrics "Schaf - fe in mir, Gott, ein rein Herz, und gib,". The Bass part enters with the lyrics "Schaf - - - fe in mir, Gott,".

System 2 (Measures 7-12): The Soprano part continues with "und gib mir ein - en neu - en ge - wis - - - - sen Geist." and "ein rein Herz, und gib,". The Bass part continues with "ein rein Herz, und gib,".

System 3 (Measures 13-18): The Soprano part continues with "Schaff in mir, Gott, ein rein Herz, und gib, und gib". The Bass part continues with "und gib mir ein - en neu - en ge - wis -".

System 4 (Measures 19-24): The Soprano part continues with "mir ein - en neu - en ge - wis - - - - sen Geist." and "sen Geist.".

Figure 3

Measures 1 through 6, and 8 through 13 from the first movement of *Schaffe in mir, Gott, ein rein Herz*, showing imitation of the Soprano part by the Altos and then by the Tenors

Figure 4

Measures 49 through 54, and 59 through 66 of the second movement of *Schaffe in mir, Gott, ein rein Herz*, showing Brahms skill in contrapuntal writing:

Beginning with the second beat of measure 49 the subject in the Tenor is combined with the countersubject in the Soprano.

Beginning with the second beat of measure 51, the inverted subject in the Alto, followed by tight *stretti* in the Soprano and Tenor, is combined with the inverted countersubject in the Bass.

Beginning with the second beat of measure 59 in the Alto, the inverted subject is combined with the inverted subject in augmentation in the Tenor part.

Beginning with the second beat of measure 65, the inverted subject in the Alto is combined with the tonal answer in the Bass

49 50 51

nicht, und nimm dei-nen hei-li-gen Geist nicht von mir,
 und nimm dei-nen hei-li-gen Geist nicht von mir, ver-wirf mich
 nicht, ver-wirf mich nicht von dei-nem An-ge-sicht,
 nicht, ver-wirf mich nicht ver-wirf mich nicht und nimm dei-nen

52 53 54

ver-wirf mich nicht von dei-nem An-ge-sicht,
 nicht von dei-nem An-ge-sicht, ver-wirf mich nicht
 nicht, ver-wirf mich nicht von dei-nem An-ge-sicht,
 hei-li-gen Geist nicht von mir, nicht von mir,

Figure 4, continued

59 60 61

Geist und nimm dei-nen hei-li-gen Geist nicht von mir, ver -
sicht, ver - wirf mich nicht von dei - nem An - ge - sicht,
sicht, ver - wirf mich nicht von
ver - wirf mich

62 63 64

wirf mich nicht von dei - nem An - ge - sicht, dei - nem An - ge -
ver - wirf mich nicht von dei - nem An - ge -
dei - nem An - ge - sicht, dei - nem
nicht ver - wirf mich nicht

65 66

sicht,
sicht, ver - wirf mich nicht von dei - nem
An - ge - sicht, ver - wirf mich
ver - wirf mich nicht von dei - nem

harmony. The tenors and basses return with a new canon at the same interval, which gives way to a spirited fugue whose subject combines rising quarter notes with joyful torrents of downwardly cascading eighth notes. Brahms takes these eighth notes and transforms them sequentially and canonically into an ever-higher motive, until the sopranos arrive on a high G. This serves as an inverted pedal tone under which the lower parts work toward the final cadence.

The later of the *Zwei Motetten, Es ist das Heil uns kommen her* Op, 29, no. 1, was written in 1860, the final year in the period of Brahms's life that is being examined. It was at this time that Brahms was finished with his studies, and his new musical voice had emerged.

In 1859, Brahms traveled to Leipzig to premiere his Piano Concerto in D Minor at the Leipzig

Gewandhaus. He received a hostile reception from the audience—he was hissed off the stage—and from the press. Although he didn't let this discourage him, it may have galvanized his decision to take a public stand in the debate over the future of German music.

In a “declaration” (*Erklärung*) signed by himself, Joachim, and others, published in *Berliner Musik-Zeitung Echo*, it is stated that “...the products of the leaders and students of the so-called New German school [a direct reference to Liszt]...can only be condemned and deplored as contrary to the innermost essence of music.”^[24] This “innermost essence” for Brahms has to do with his preference for “absolute music”—music that can stand on its own merit, without reference to a setting or literary allusion. This is the aesthetic that Schumann

Figure 5

Measures 22 through 32 of *Es ist das Heil uns kommen her*, showing fugal entries in measures 22 through 26; canonic entries of the inverted subject in the Soprano and Alto parts of measures 26 and 27; the subject in augmentation in the Baritone part, beginning in measure 29, combined with the inverted subject in the Bass; and fragments of the subject used motivically in canonic entrances, beginning in measure 27 of the Tenor part.

The image displays a musical score for the hymn "Es ist das Heil uns kommen her" by Johannes Brahms. It consists of two systems of staves, each with five parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Baritone, and Bass. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are in German and are written below the vocal staves. Measure numbers 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27 are indicated above the staves. The score illustrates various contrapuntal techniques: fugal entries in measures 22-26, canonic entries of the inverted subject in the Soprano and Alto parts in measures 26 and 27, the subject in augmentation in the Baritone part starting in measure 29, and fragments of the subject used motivically in canonic entrances in the Tenor part starting in measure 27.

language.

Whereas in *Geistliche Lied* and *Schaffe in mir, Gott, ein rein Herz* a case has been made that Brahms used the contrapuntal techniques as a manner of expressing the text, one could assert that without the text, *Es ist das Heil uns kommen her* would function as pure “absolute music,” and may have been written that way to demonstrate the “innermost essence of music” mentioned in the manifesto.[\[27\]](#) Nonetheless, these three pieces clearly show that Brahms had turned the corner in his composing and now possessed every skill necessary to speak in his authentic musical voice. As he entered into his so-called middle maturity, he would begin to freely use these perfected skills not as the sole focus of the composition, but as structural and developmental devices.[\[28\]](#)

The use of counterpoint, particularly canonic writing, can be found in virtually all of Brahms’s instrumental compositions[\[29\]](#), and was therefore a part of his style from, at the latest, 1851.[\[30\]](#) Furthermore, some assert that it is in the chamber music, which he uses continuously throughout his career as a vehicle for lofty expression, that one may “discover the full range of Brahms’s compositional genius.”[\[31\]](#) But when he sought to perfect his art in the realm of voice leading, form, and counterpoint, he did so primarily through his choral writing, until he reached that transcendent stage where technique serves the artistic goal so perfectly that it goes almost unnoticed.[\[32\]](#)

Appendix A: Text Translations

Geistliches Lied

Spiritual Song

Poem by Paul Flemming (1609-1640)

Laß dich nur nichts nicht dauren

Let naught afflict thee

Mit Trauren,

with grief;

Sei stille,

Be calm,

Wie Gott es fügt,

as God ordains,

So sei vergnügt

and so rejoice,

Mein Wille.

my will.

Was willst du heute sorgen

Wherefore dost thou take care

Auf Morgen,

for the morrow?

Der Eine
Steht allem für,
Der gibt auch dir
Das Deine.

The One God
who gives thee
what is thine
watches over us all

Sei nur in allem Handel
Ohn' wandel,
Steh feste,
Was Gott beschleußt,
Das ist und heißt
Das Beste.
Amen!

Only be in all thy doings
unchanging,
steadfast.
What God decrees
that is and shows
the best.
Amen![\[33\]](#)

Zwei Motetten

Two Motets

Es ist das Heil uns kommen her

Salvation has come unto us

Poem by Paul Speratus (1484-1551)[\[34\]](#)

Es ist das Heil uns kommen her
Von Gnad und lauter Güten:
Die Werke helfen nimmermehr,
Sie mögen nicht behüten!
Der Glaub sieht Jesum Christum an:
Der hat g'nug für uns all getan,
Er ist der Mittler worden.

Salvation has come unto us
From grace and pure goodness
Our deeds help us no more
They cannot protect us!
Faith looks to Jesus Christ:
He who has done enough for us all
He has become the intercessor.[\[35\]](#)

-Michael Schubert

Aus dem 51. Psalm

From the Fifty-First Psalm

Schaffe in mir, Gott, ein rein Herz,
und gib mir

Create in me, God, a clean heart,
and renew in me

einen neuen gewissen Geist.	A steadfast spirit.
Verwirf mich nicht	Cast me not away
von deinem Angesicht,	from Thy presence
und nimm deinen heiligen Geist	and take not thy Holy Spirit
nicht von mir.	From me
Tröste mich wieder mit deiner Hilfe,	Comfort me anew with Thy succor
Und der freudige Geist erhalte mich.	And may a joyous spirit sustain me.

Appendix B: Compositions Written Between 1854 and 1860

<u>Composition</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Date Composed</u>
<i>Kyrie</i> , and <i>Missa Canonica</i>	SATB, <i>a cappella</i>	1856
Fugue in A-flat minor, WoO 8	organ solo	1856
Prelude and Fugue in A minor, WoO 9	organ solo	1856
Prelude and Fugue in G minor, WoO 10	organ solo	1857
Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann, Op. 9	piano solo	1854
Four Ballades, Op. 10	piano solo	1854
Serenade in D Major, Op. 11	small orchestra	1857-1860
<i>Ave Maria</i> , Op. 12	SSAA, Organ	1858
<i>Begräbnisgesang</i> , Op. 13	SATB, wind band, timpani	1858
<i>Lieder und Romanzen</i> , Op. 14	solo voice, piano	1858
Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 15	piano, orchestra	1854-1858
Serenade in A Major, Op. 16	small orchestra, without violins	1859
<i>Gesänge für Frauenchor</i> , Op. 17	SSA, 2 French horns, harp	1859-1860
String Sextet, Op. 18	2 violins, 2 violas, 2 cellos	1859

<i>Fünf Gedichte</i> , Op. 19	solo voice, piano	1859
Three Duets, Op. 20	SA, piano	1858
13 Variations on a Hungarian Song, Op. 21	piano solo	1856

<u>Composition</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Date Composed</u>
<i>Marienlieder</i> , Op. 22	SATB, <i>a cappella</i>	1859
Psalm Thirteen, Op. 27	SSA, organ	1859
<i>Zwei Motetten</i> , Op. 29	SATB, <i>a cappella</i>	1857, 1860
<i>Geistliche Lied</i> , Op. 30	SATB, organ	1856
<i>Drei Geistliches Chöre</i> , Op. 37, nos. 1, 2	SSA, <i>a cappella</i>	1856-1859
<i>Drei Gesänge für 6-Stimmigen Chor</i> , Op. 42	SSATTB, <i>a cappella</i>	1859-1860
<i>Zwölf Lieder und Romanzen</i> , Op. 44	SSAA, <i>a cappella</i>	1859-1860
Canons, Op. 113, nos. 3-7	women's choir, <i>a cappella</i>	1858

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Music 497

Professor Clutterhan

Term paper AbstractAbstract

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Brahms's Choral Music and His Journey to Contrapuntal Transcendence

There are many characteristics of Brahms's music, but perhaps the most pervasive, yet least noticeable to the passive listener, is his use of contrapuntal techniques. Three of Brahms's sacred choral works can be utilized to demonstrate how his mastery and use of contrapuntal techniques became an integral part of his musical language. In these three works – *Geistliches Lied*, Op. 30, *Schaffe in mir, Gott, ein rein Herz*, Op. 29, no.2, and *Es ist das Heil uns kommen her*, Op. 29, no. 1 – Brahms demonstrates the scope of his contrapuntal skills by employing canon, *Vorimitation*, fugue, augmentation, and inversion.

In doing so, however, Brahms's technique is serving a greater goal: the expression of the text. This, then, becomes one of the markers of his mature style: use of a technique for structural and expressive purposes, at the same time employing it discreetly enough that it doesn't call attention to itself.

[1]. Ivor Keyes, Johannes Brahms (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1989), 302.

[2]. Styra Avins, "The Young Brahms: Biographical Data Re-examined," 19th Century Music vol. 24, no. 3 (Mar. 2001): 277ff.

[3]. Kurt Hofmann, "Brahms the Hamburg Musician 1833-1862." The Cambridge Companion to Brahms, ed. Michael Musgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 9.

[4]. Hofmann, pp. 10ff.

[5]. *Ibid.*, 11. As early as 1842, Cossel complained that Brahms "could be such a good player, but he will not stop his never-ending composing."

[6]. Daniel Beller-McKenna, "Brahms's Motet *Es ist das Heil uns kommen her* and the 'Innermost Essence of Music'." Brahms Studies vol. 2, ed. David Brodbeck (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 36.

[7]. Michael Schubert, conversation with author, 11 Aug. 2002, and e-mail to author, 12 Aug. 2002. This was first used as a polemic term directed against the music of Wagner. In modern usage this word means something whose realization lies in the distant future. It can also have a slightly pejorative or sarcastic tone, meaning "pie-in-the-sky" or "utopian."

[8]. David L. Brodbeck, "The Brahms-Joachim Counterpoint Exchange, or, Robert, Clara, and 'the best harmony between Jos. and Joh'." Brahms Studies vol. 1 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 31. 1854 was the date of publication of Opp. 1 through 8. Brahms did not publish again until 1860.

[9]. Michael Musgrave, A Brahms Reader (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 66.

[10]. Siegfried Kross, "The Choral Music of Johannes Brahms." American Choral Review, XXV, no.

4 (Oct. 1983): 5.

[11]. Brodbeck, p. 32.

[12]. Kross, p. 6.

[13]. Virginia Hancock, Brahms's Choral Compositions and His Library of Early Choral Music. (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983): 109.

[14]. Hancock, pp. 26ff.

[15]. Styra Avins, ed. Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters, trans. Styra Avins and Josef Eisinger. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 87.

[16]. George S. Bozarth and Walter Frisch, "Johannes Brahms," The New Groves Dictionary of Music And Musicians, 2nd ed. vol. 4 (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd, 2001): 181.

[17]. Brodbeck, 68.

[18]. Ibid., 68.

[19]. Avins, Life and Letters, 124. Joachim perhaps desired to help his friend in matters of the heart, for Broadbeck documents a letter that he wrote to Clara the very next day telling of the proposed exchange and adding that "if eventually...you join in, it will not be lacking its most beautiful measure!" (34).

[20]. Broadbeck, 64.

[21]. Broadbeck, 55.

[22]. Ibid., 66.

[23]. Beller-McKenna, 36.

[24]. Beller-Mckenna, 37.

[25]. Beller-McKenna, 60.

[26]. Virginia Hancock, "Brahms's Performances of Early Choral Music," 19th Century Music, 8, no. 2 (fall 1984): 126.

[27]. Beller-McKenna, 38.

[28]. Michael Musgrave, The Music of Brahms (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), 1985.

[29]. Jürgen Wetschky, Die Kanontechnik in der Instrumentalmusik von Johannes Brahms (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1967), 26ff.

[30]. Leon Botstein, ed., The Compleat Brahms (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 410. Scherzo in E-flat minor, Op. 4, is Brahms's earliest surviving composition, and was composed in 1851.

[31]. Botstein, p. 37.

[32]. Burnett James, Brahms: A Critical Study (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), 106.

[33]. Broadbeck, 64ff.

[34]. Keith Anderson, Jacket notes for Brahms Motets. [on-line] (Naxos,1996, accessed 18 Sept. 2002); available from <http://www.stbrides.com/music/recordings/brahms/main/htm>.

[35]. The author is indebted to Michael Schubert for the translation of this text, as well as consultation on the translations of the other two texts.