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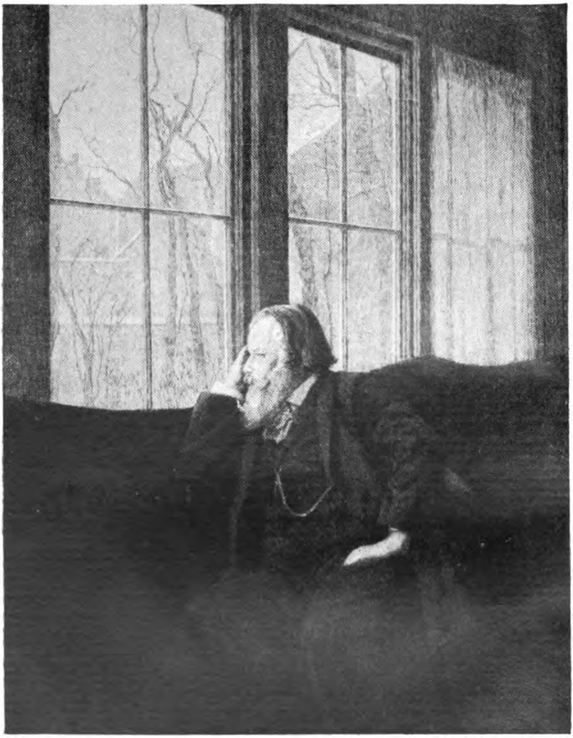

BRAHMS AT ISCHL.

(*From an etching by Moritz van Eyken.*)

Bell's Miniature Series of Musicians

BRAHMS

BY

HERBERT ANTCLIFFE

LONDON
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1908

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SOME BOOKS ABOUT BRAHMS

THE Brahms literature is as yet only small in bulk, but the following may be taken as containing considerable reliable information as to his life and works:

"Erinnerungen an Joh. Brahms," by A. Dietrich.

"Erinnerungen an Joh. Brahms," by J. V. Widman.

(Translations into English of these two works are now published in one volume.)

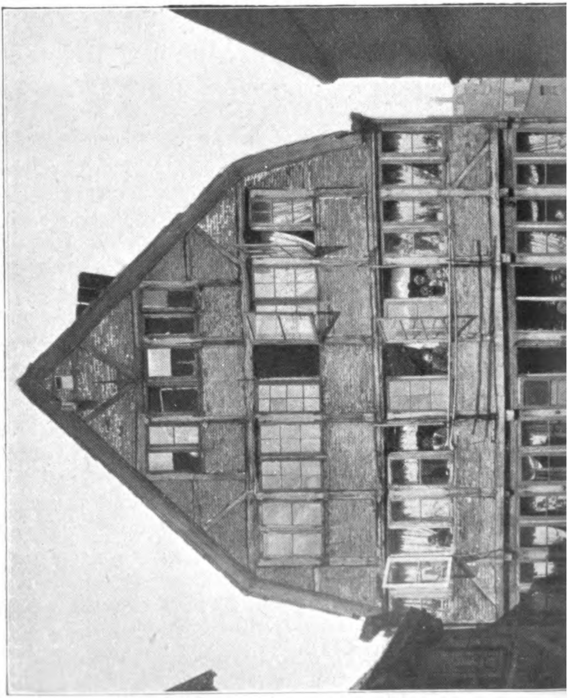
"Johannes Brahms," by H. Deiters.
"Johannes Brahms," by Max Kalbeck.
"Johannes Brahms," by H. Reimann.
"Johannes Brahms," by J. Spengel.
"Johannes Brahms," by J. Steiner.
"Johannes Brahms," by Bernhard Vogel.
"Joh. Brahms in seinen Werken," by E. Krause.
"Brahms und seine Stellung in der Musikgeschichte," by Louis Köhler.
"Brahms als Nachfolger Beethovens," by Willibald Nigel.

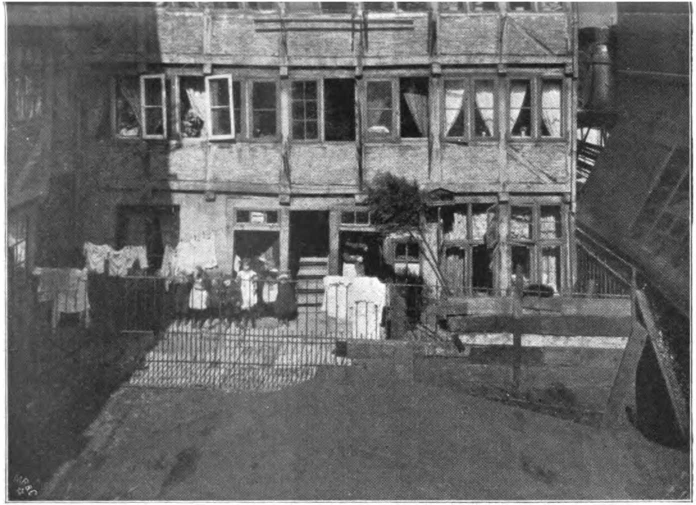
Excellent essays in English on the life and works of Brahms are included in W. H. Hadow's "Studies in Modern Music," J. A. Fuller-Maitland's "Masters of German Music," D. G. Mason's "From Grieg to Brahms," as well as in many of the music newspapers and journals.

LIFE OF JOHANNES BRAHMS

AT the period when Felix Mendelssohn, the great musician of Hamburg, was achieving the greatness which came to him at so early an age, there was born in that same city one who was to rise to an equally high pinnacle of fame, and whose work was in some respects even to surpass in glory that of his illustrious fellow-citizen. The precise date of the birth of Johannes Brahms was May 7, 1833, and the place a room in one of the most squalid and miserable courts of Hamburg. The romance of a great seaport, enhanced by the rich literary and musical traditions in which the atmosphere of Hamburg is steeped, is strangely contrasted with the squalor of the actual birthplace of the composer. Apart from poverty, however, the circumstances of his birth were not inauspicious. His father, Johann Jacob Brahms, or, as the name appears up to as recently as 1849, Brahmst, was a musician of varied capabilities and of fairly wide sympathies. His services were well in demand for various instruments, of which the horn, and later on the double bass, were the most favoured.

At the time of his son's birth he was engaged as a horn-player at the Alster Pavilion, one of the principal restaurants of Hamburg, and, whether from choice or from force of circumstances, was satisfied with one room in a tenement. His wife was a deeply religious woman who carefully avoided anything which might make her son at all selfish or conceited, and imbued him with much of her own spirit. After her death in 1865 his father married again. Between the second Frau Brahms and her stepson there sprang up a bond of affection remarkable on both sides for its intensity and unselfishness. His musical training commenced very early, and alongside with his ordinary lessons he had the informal but thorough tuition which is generally the lot of the sons of orchestral players. The thoroughness of such a training was evidently regarded as of the first importance, for we read that his schoolmaster was requested to treat him lightly with regard to his other studies, so that he might devote the necessary time and energy to music. The request may or may not have been complied with, but it is probable it was not, as it is known that the schoolmaster made him the object of his sarcasm, calling him a useless musical instrument, and saying there was no good to be obtained from such. The boy's father intended him for the same profession as himself, but his own predilection was for the pianoforte. As he could not be persuaded against his fondness for "that accursed box of rattles," as his father called it, he was placed under Friedrich Willibald Otto Cossell, a





BRAHMS' BIRTHPLACE.

(*Photo Knackstedt and Näther, Hamburg.*)

pupil of Edward Marxsen, who by his very retiring disposition, caused by nervousness, had been compelled to retire from the concert platform, for which otherwise his talents eminently suited him. Brahms very early in his career commenced arranging music for the Alster Pavilion party, and on at least one occasion composed a sextette for their performance. While under Cossell he had a narrow escape from being sent to America as an infant prodigy, but his teacher, recognising the genius of the lad, managed to prevent this, and recommended him to his own master, Marxsen, who was then the leading teacher in Hamburg, and was recognised all over Germany as a pianist and teacher of unusual power and knowledge. How thoroughly this master realized the talent of his young pupil is shown by his own statement. In a letter to La Mara, a well-known musical editor, he said:

> "His studies in practical playing progressed admirably, and his talent showed itself more each day. But when I later made a beginning with the teaching of composition, he developed sharp, clearly-defined methods of thought which captivated me; and however insignificant were his first creative efforts, I was obliged to recognise in them a spirit which convinced me that here slumbered an extraordinary, great, individual, deep talent. I therefore spared no pains to awaken and cultivate it, in order to rouse to the higher artistic life a priest who should preach in new fashion the eternal undying truths of Art."

The works of Chopin and Schumann, then the most advanced among living composers, were entirely tabooed by both Cossell and Marxsen, but those of Bach and Beethoven were the subjects of long and careful study. In later life, when in the fulness of his power as a composer, Brahms never wearied of extolling the excellence of these two teachers and the training to which they had subjected him. At his first concert, given on September 21, 1848, Brahms included in the programme a Bach fugue, a serenade for left hand alone by his teacher Edward Marxsen, and several other pieces calculated to show off his technical ability. The following year he joined with a well-known tenor singer, Theodor Wachtel in a concert at which he played a *Fantasie on a Favourite Waltz* of his own composition, Beethoven's "Waldstein Sonata," and, of course, the usual bravura pieces. About the same time he heard Joachim for the first time, and also the Schumanns, an experience that could not be otherwise than delightful as well as instructive to the youthful genius. What would have been his thoughts had anyone suggested that within a few years he was to be welcomed by these distinguished artists as one of themselves, and treated to the highest honours they could bestow?

A less-desirable companion, whose acquaintance he also made at this time, was Remenyi, the Hungarian violinist, who came with his regiment to the neighbouring town of Altona. The acquaintanceship did not at this time develop much, as Remenyi, on account of his revolutionary ideas, found it necessary to leave the country, and consequently made his way to America. Brahms then took up the work of accompanist at the concerts given in the Town Theatre (Stadttheater), and also was engaged to play the harmonium and pianoforte behind the scenes when required. This seems to have been his only theatrical experience, though he always took an interest in both opera and drama, and was a regular theatre-goer all his life. He did a large amount of composing at this time, most of which consisted of works of little artistic value, which were written for the sole purpose of making money. They were published by Cranz, the name of the composer appearing as "G. W. Marks."

In 1853 Remenyi, having returned from America, proposed a tour in Northern Germany, a proposal which Brahms readily agreed to, especially as the former artiste, although somewhat of a mountebank, had acquired a reputation which practically insured an aristocratic and appreciative audience wherever they should visit. It was while on this tour that the pianist transposed the "Kreutzer Sonata" of Beethoven from C minor to C sharp minor, in order that it should lose none of its brilliance by the flat pitch of the piano. This feat, which really only showed the excellence of his training, was probably the means of making the acquaintance of Joachim, with what results will appear later. He had an interview with that artiste before the tour was continued, at which he played his E flat minor scherzo (Op. 4) and part of his sonata in C major (Op. 1) for pianoforte, which convinced Joachim that there was even more talent in the young pianist than his playing had exhibited.

It was by his association with Remenyi that Brahms first came under the influence of Hungarian music and heard the gipsy melodies which later he was to present in a form attractive to musicians, both amateur and professional, of all nations.

The tour was brought to an abrupt close in a somewhat startling fashion. They had been commanded to give a series of recitals before the Elector of Hanover, who had at the first of these recitals shown a great appreciation of Remenyi's playing. Before the second recital the report came to the Elector's ears that this violinist was a revolutionary and dangerous to the peace of the country. Forthwith both artistes were taken in charge by the police and sent across the frontier.

Brahms therefore made his way to Weimar, where Liszt was living. He spent something like six weeks listening to the music of the great pianist, and assimilating so much of his methods and style as he felt was good. It was soon evident, however, that the two natures were entirely unsympathetic, and consequently the parting was not one which was much regretted. Brahms nevertheless always admired the playing of Liszt, and no doubt the latter was the means of further increasing Brahm's appreciation of the Hungarian national melodies.

From Weimar he returned to Göttingen, where he commenced his lifelong friendship with

Joachim, who at that time filled an official position at the University. One of the first results of this friendship was his introduction to the Schumanns and many of their school, with whom he appeared at that time to be in close affinity. Armed with letters of introduction from Joachim and Wasielewski, who was afterwards to become Robert Schumann's biographer, he approached that master in the hope of obtaining his criticism of certain compositions, and also some advice and assistance as to his future career. He had some years before sent some of his compositions for criticism, but had obtained no reply, and it was with some trepidation, one can imagine, that he prepared to present his credentials. He found his reputation had preceded him when, in October, 1853, he arrived at Düsseldorf, where the great leader of the Romantic School and his talented wife were then living. Consequently, no introduction was needed, and he was warmly welcomed by many who were to become lifelong friends and devoted admirers.

The now famous article by Schumann on "New Paths" (Neue Bahnen) was written at this time, after an examination of the works which Brahms had then completed. In this article he describes Johannes as being the man for whom the world had been waiting, the great master of the future, and the one who should carry on the work of Beethoven and the great symphonic masters. In addition to penning this article, Schumann used his personal influence with Messrs. Breitkopf and Haertel, who at once arranged to publish several of these works. On Dr. Haertel, the head of that firm, expressing a wish to make his acquaintance and to hear him play some of his own compositions, Brahms went to Leipsic, where he met with much success, both with publishers and musicians. It is interesting in this connection to know that one of his songs, *Liebestreu*, was published by Messrs. Ewer and Co. in London very shortly after its appearance in Germany, but its reception was far from being favourable, the press notices being very severe in its condemnation. Even in Germany his music did not meet with universal admiration, and was a bone of contention to the critics for some time. This did not trouble the composer, however, and he remained happy and unaffected in his intercourse with others as well as in his work. On one occasion Schumann proposed to Brahms and Albert Dietrich, a mutual friend and a consistent admirer of the two former, that the three should join in the composition of a violin sonata for Joachim, who would shortly be visiting Düsseldorf. The idea was laughingly adopted, with the result that Dietrich wrote the first movement, Schumann the second and fourth (finale), and Brahms the third (scherzo). In his share of the work Brahms took a theme from Dietrich's part in order to preserve a unity and to prevent Joachim from easily discerning the different composers of the four movements. The manuscript was then inscribed by Schumann as follows:

"F. A. E.*

"In expectation of the arrival of their revered and beloved friend Joseph Joachim, this sonata was written by Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, Albert Dietrich."

When Joachim arrived, he played the sonata with Clara Schumann, and at once identified the author of each part.

But these happy times were not to last. In February, 1854, Schumann was seized by the terrible malady which darkened the rest of his life, and clouded the days of all who admired and loved him. Johannes spent his time tending the invalid and cheering and consoling his wife, who was only on two occasions allowed to see her afflicted husband before his death on July 29, 1856.

After this the Schumann brotherhood at Düsseldorf was dispersed, each going to the place which afforded the best opening. Two appointments were offered to Brahms, both of which were acceptable for different reasons. A professorship at the Rhenish Conservatoire of Cologne was the more remunerative, and would keep him in touch with other musicians who were in the forefront of their profession. As Director of Court Concerts to the Prince of Lippe-Detmold, which was the other post offered to him, he would be more his own master, and would also have time to devote to study and composition. He accordingly accepted the latter offer, and retired into the quiet of Detmold and of his paternal home at Hamburg. As he was not satisfied with his theoretical knowledge, he arranged with Joachim for an exchange of studies in counterpoint. He considered that it was possible to learn more in that way than by taking lessons from a mere teacher. To insure regularity, a fine of one thaler was imposed on either who failed in any week to send in an exercise, and the net results of these delinquencies were from time to time invested in books.

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* "Frei, aber einsam" (Free, but retired), was a favourite motto of Joachim's.

To this period also we owe the first pianoforte concerto (in D minor), his two serenades for orchestra, the piano trio in B major, and a number of smaller works. The concerto he played himself at the Leipsic Gewandhaus concert, and again caused a newspaper war almost unprecedented in its fierceness. This did not, however, deter him from taking the work to his native city, where it received just sufficient favour to prolong the strife. The appearance of the two serenades served to calm the storm of words by delighting all hearers. One of these two works—the one in A, generally known as the second, but in its first form actually written before the other—was shortly afterwards withdrawn for revision, and the amended version was not published until 1875—that is, over fifteen years later.

In 1860 he resigned his post at Detmold and went to stay with his friend Theodor Kirchner, a favourite pupil of Schumann's, at Winterthur, on the Swiss frontier. Here he found opportunities of composition which in the busy city of Hamburg were not available, and he also obtained an introduction to the firm of Rieter-Biederman, who published his choral works and encouraged him in that form of composition.

A friend and admirer of Brahms and Joachim, Theodor Avé Lallemant, in the following year tried hard to obtain for the young master the post of Director of the Hamburg Philharmonic Society. In spite of the high position he held among musicians in Hamburg and Brahms' constantly increasing reputation, this attempt was unsuccessful.

In order to continue his work with as much quietude as possible, Brahms lived at this time in Hamm, a suburb of Hamburg, at the house of Frau Dr. Rösing, a talented lady to whom he dedicated his second piano quartette. It was while here that he wrote several of his delightful quartettes and choruses for female voices. On one occasion he was playing the organ at a wedding where the two younger sisters of Frau Rösing and two friends, Fräulein Garbe and Fräulein Reuter, were singing. He was very pleased with their voices and style, and asked them to practise his *Ave Maria*, which he had just composed. They gladly agreed to do so, and on several other ladies joining them they formed a little choral society, for which Brahms arranged old Italian Church music and composed a number of original works. The *Magelonen Lieder*, which are among his most popular works, were also composed at this time.

The restless life of a professional pianist was much against his nature and entirely contrary to his liking, and it was therefore with great pleasure that he in 1863 again turned towards Vienna. In January of that year he wrote to Dietrich: "On Monday I am going *to Vienna!* At that thought I am as happy as a child." The appointment which attracted him thither was that of Chorus Master to the Sing Akademie. He felt very keenly the responsibility of accepting the office, which was one of wide-reaching influence and importance, and sought the advice of friends who, he thought, had had more experience than himself. He only remained at Vienna for one year, but during his short sojourn there he was the means of bringing about performances of several neglected classics, including Bach's "Christmas Oratorio."

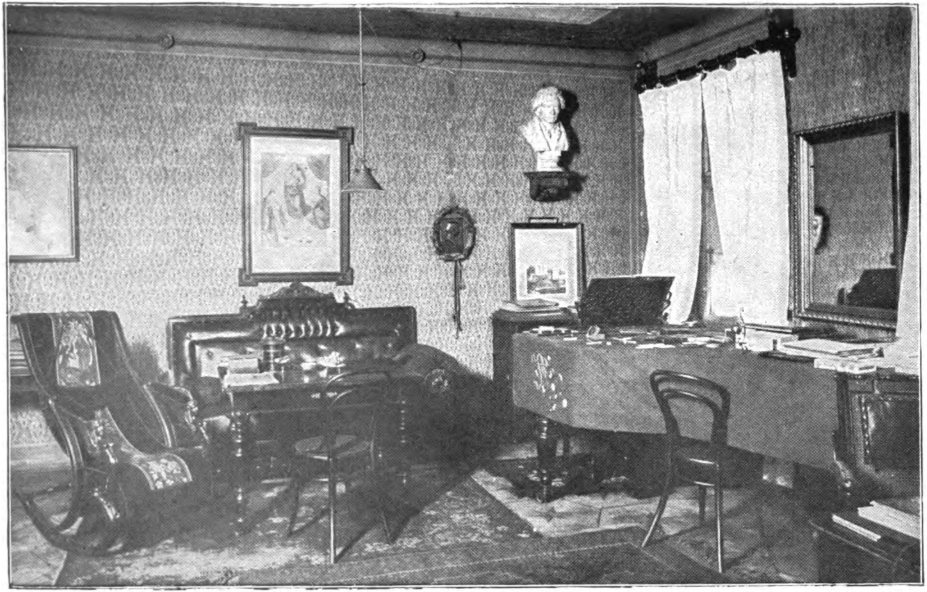
This appointment was probably the source of inspiration for his great choral works, for shortly after his resignation he was at work carrying out evidently well-laid plans. He had, some time before he obtained the appointment, commenced the composition of his first symphony, for in the letter informing Dietrich of his pending removal to Vienna he also informs him that "the symphony in C minor is not yet finished." This was now laid aside, and the work was not completed until 1877, fourteen years later. The value of this short residence in Vienna can hardly be overestimated. All the musical and artistic life of Europe centred there. Goldmark, Bruckner, and Johann Strauss, three composers of widely divergent temperaments and styles, were permanently engaged in the pursuit of their art in the city, and Wagner was a not infrequent visitor. The finest conductors and instrumentalists living were to be heard every day, and the critics were such as few places could boast of. He here laid firmly the foundations of his friendship with Hanslick, a friendship which was, owing to that writer's anti-Wagnerian convictions, to give rise to charges of a want of catholicity which were wholly false, but which did not at all interfere with his devotion to his friend.

But in spite of all these attractions, in spite of the unanimous wish of the directors of the Akademie that he should stay, and in spite of much that he found congenial in his work as conductor, he felt that composition was the chief object of his life, and therefore declined the honour of another year's appointment. After an extended stay at Zurich with his friend Kirchner, who now held an appointment there, he went on tour with Joachim, visiting Cologne, Mannheim, Carlsruhe, and Oldenburg, where a number of his latest works were performed. While at Zurich he was busy with his *German Requiem*, and one of his biographers tells how he carried to and fro between the town library and his rooms a huge Biblical concordance, by the aid of which he was compiling the text. On its completion he submitted the work to Dietrich, with a request for his opinion, and a suggestion that he would like to have an offer from Reinthaler, the conductor at Bremen. Dietrich accordingly showed it to Reinthaler, who was much struck by its intensity and depth of feeling, and decided to perform it in the cathedral on Good Friday of 1868.

What a great occasion that was! Shortly before the date of the performance Brahms was heard to express regret, how keen one can imagine, that Madame Schumann would not be present. Their mutual friends at once, without telling him, communicated with her, and her appearance at Bremen on the day enhanced the pleasure of the occasion even more by the surprise afforded. In addition there were present Joachim and his wife, Stockhausen, Max Bruch, J. O. Grimm, and Albert Dietrich, all famous musicians and all intimate friends of the composer. The work at that time consisted of five numbers only, the soprano solo and chorus, "Ye now are sorrowful" (No. 5), being added afterwards. At the first performance Frau Joachim sang "I know that my Redeemer liveth," from "Messiah," which may have suggested the additional number, and her husband played Schumann's "Abendlied." So great was the success that the work was repeated a fortnight later in the "Union" Concert-Hall at Bremen.

The words of this work and its title had raised a storm of theological criticism. It was not a requiem at all, said his critics, but a sacred cantata. Neither was it in any way distinctly German. This, however, seems to have been the only kind of criticism it evoked, and the music impressed all who heard it, both friends and foes.

He was now, at thirty-five, recognised as the leading spirit in absolute music in Germany, and his genius was acknowledged by those, such as



BRAHMS' MUSIC-ROOM IN VIENNA.

(*Photo "Harmonie," Berlin.*)

Wagner and Bruckner, whose methods were entirely at variance with his own. During his visit to Kirchner at Zurich he had made the acquaintance of Dr. Billroth, a famous scientist, who had just been appointed Director of the Technical Institute at Vienna. At the latter's urgent request he agreed to again take up his residence at the Austrian capital, but, owing to a number of engagements to undertake long tours in Northern Germany, he was unable to do this until 1872.

His fertility was at this time remarkable, all his choral works being composed within a short period after the completion of the *Requiem*, in addition to a number of smaller compositions. *Rinaldo*, for tenor solo and male voice chorus, appeared in 1869, and was followed in each of the following three years by the romance (*Harzreise*) for alto solo and chorus, the "Song of Triumph" (*Triumphlied*) and the "Song of Destiny" (*Schicksalslied*). The *Triumphlied* was written to commemorate the victorious close of the Franco-Prussian War, and was produced on Good Friday, 1872, in Bremen Cathedral together with the *Requiem*.

In 1872 Brahms was offered, and accepted, the important office of Director of the Concerts of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (Society of the Friends of Music) at Vienna, which from thenceforth became his home. His creative activity apparently ceased for a short time on this, which was probably owing to his being too busy to prepare his works for publication. Whatever the reason, no new works of any moment appeared for twelve months after the "Song of Destiny," and what is more remarkable is that for some years he afterwards composed no more choral works. What makes this especially noteworthy is the fact that he now had under his control a chorus second to none, and that he was responsible for many performances of great choral works of other composers of all schools, among whom Handel was the one most drawn upon.

From 1873 to 1875 he was constantly producing new and delightful works consisting chiefly of songs and concerted vocal music. The *Neue Liebeslieder* (New Love Song) *Waltzes* belong to this period (the first set were published in 1867), as also the pianoforte quartette in C minor, into which Herr Kalbeck reads an expression of the composer's attachment to Clara Schumann. That he was deeply attached to the widow of his former master is no doubt true, but it is difficult to imagine that its nature was such as to inspire him to a work like the pianoforte quartette.

His retiring character deterred him from in any way seeking the honours bestowed by either the populace or by those in authority. The suffrages of the people he had already obtained without any seeking, and now, in 1874, King Ludwig II. of Bavaria, generally known as the "mad King Ludwig," who was Wagner's greatest patron, bestowed on him the Maximilian Order for Art and Science. In the same year he was elected a member of the Berlin Academy, an honour even more gratifying to himself than the

Order. In the following year he resigned the directorship of the Gesellschaft, and after that held no official position at all.

With this commenced the period of his great orchestral works. The first symphony, which had been laid aside on his appointment to the Vienna Sing-Akademie, was taken up again and completed. It was produced at Carlsruhe early in November, 1876, and at once attracted a large amount of attention. The criticisms were curiously divergent, one admirer going so far as to label it "A Tenth Symphony." Others were equally antagonistic, and of the first movement, which was the part most discussed, a critic in Munich sarcastically remarked: "We cannot make head or tail of it, so we suppose it is a symphonic poem." The second symphony, in D major, was played for the first time at a concert of the Vienna Philharmonic Society in December, 1877. Dr. Richter conducted on this occasion, when the work was received with more general favour, both by the press and the musical profession, than had been the case with the first. In conjunction with his friend J. V. Widmann, he was at this time seriously considering the desirability of writing an opera. This was not the first time the question had been before him, but it had been put aside owing to the difficulty in obtaining a libretto that suited his purpose. It was not until some years after this that he fully realized his work had lain too long in another direction for him to take up what would have been an entirely new sphere of labour.

The new year, 1879, brought what Edward Hanslick called "a ripe fruit of the friendship between Joachim and Brahms"—the great violin concerto in D major. The Leipsic Gewandhaus were responsible for its presentation, Joachim playing the solo part. This work drew forth a very remarkable demonstration of interest and appreciation. The usual marks of favour were bestowed at the end of the work, but in addition, at the close of the concert, a large part of the audience stayed in the room to discuss its merits. A composer could hardly wish for a more pointed exhibition of spontaneous appreciation.

The *Tragic Overture* was completed in 1880, and, as he was offered the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by the University at Breslau about the same time, he commenced the only other concert overture he ever wrote, as an exercise for the degree. The themes for this work he based on some of the student songs he had learnt many years before at Göttingen, with the result that the *Academische Fest* (Academic Festival) *Overture* remains one of the most remarkable musical jokes extant. The two overtures were produced at the Senate meeting of the University on January 4, 1881, when the degree was conferred, under the composer's direction, and on the 13th of the same month they made their first public appearance in the same town. For some reason unexplained the opus numbers of the two works are reversed, the one written first (the *Tragic*) being numbered 81, and the other being numbered 80.

Brahms was twice offered a degree at Cambridge, but declined the honour on each occasion. His reason was his aversion to travel, especially to sea-travel, and also, as he expressed himself to a friend, that in England "one has always to live in a dress-suit and white tie." For the same reasons he refused to act as conductor for the 1881 season of the London Philharmonic Society. In spite of this dislike to travel generally, he found much pleasure in several tours in Italy, of which he took the first about this time.

His second pianoforte concerto was written in 1882, and dedicated to his "dear friend and teacher Edward Marxsen." This was not the only tribute he paid to Marxsen, although, generally speaking, he preferred his earlier teacher, Cossell. One of the ways in which he observed his own "golden jubilee" the following year was by having printed "One Hundred Variations for Piano upon a Volkslied," by Marxsen, which was at least an acknowledgment of the composer's musical ingenuity. The concerto was produced by Bülow, the director of the Meiningen orchestra, and performed several times under his direction. Its success was never in doubt, and the critics were as high in its praise as were the public.

Following this came a number of songs and chamber works, culminating in the most virile of this class of composition, his string quintette in F major (Op. 88). This was written during a holiday at Ischl in the summer of 1882.

He then turned again to choral music, and in 1883 appeared the *Gesang der Parzen* (Song of the Fates), for six-part chorus and orchestra, which was the last of his works in which a full chorus and orchestra are combined, though he wrote several after this for unaccompanied chorus and for male-voice chorus with orchestra.

During this busy period of composition he was living at Pressbaum, not far from Vienna, so that, while being in touch with that centre of musical life and thought, he could find the necessary retirement for his work. It was here the third symphony was penned, and that work was on February 3, 1884, played under the composer's direction at Meiningen. A simple but very notable evidence of the position Brahms had now attained is the fact that this work was produced for a second time on the evening of the day of its performance. It is also evidence of the reality of the appreciation which Hans von Bülow always expressed for the works of Brahms. The fourth (and last) symphony was also produced at Meiningen two years later. Owing to its difficulty, both in execution and apprehension, it did not, and has not yet, obtained the same measure of appreciation as his earlier works, and this first performance passed over with little of either eulogy or criticism. In 1886 he removed to Thun, in Switzerland, where the Lake of Thun was a constant source of pleasure and inspiration. His week-ends he spent with his friend Widmann at Berne, discussing all the latest questions in theology, literature and politics. While here he wrote his second sonata for violoncello and pianoforte, the second (frequently called the *Thuner Sonata*) and third sonatas for violin and pianoforte, the *Zigeunerlieder* (Gipsy Songs), and many other songs, as well as his great double concerto for violin and violoncello and his fourth trio for pianoforte, violin and violoncello. He was, in fact, more in his element than at any other period of his life. In addition to his friendship with Widmann, Billroth, and Kirchner, he was a frequent visitor to Zurich, where he was welcomed by Dr. Hegar and Gottfried Keller (then the foremost of Swiss novelists), with whom he had a peculiarly warm sympathy. At Meiningen, and wherever the fame of its conductor and orchestra reached—and it reached very far—"Beethoven and Brahms" was, as aptly expressed by Reimann, "the password and the war-cry" ("die Parole und das Feldgeschrei"). It was also in 1886 that he received another of the few civil honours which were accorded him, that of the Prussian Order *pour le mérite*. At Thun, however, he missed all the friends he had made at Vienna, and, in fact, felt very much the loneliness of the evenings, when he saw none save an occasional visitor.

His political sympathies, too, were entirely antagonistic to those of most of the Swiss, which made an additional reason for his returning to Germany. He accordingly, in May, 1889, returned to Ischl, not without a regret that he would be so far from Berne. He could also at Ischl keep in closer contact with Clara Schumann, for whom he had always retained a lively affection. His native city of Hamburg took the opportunity of conferring its freedom upon one who was now numbered among its most illustrious citizens, and however keenly those who bestowed this dignity felt the honour of being a fellow-citizen with the one upon whom it was bestowed, none of them could have appreciated it more than he did. According to his own statement, there was no honour which could have exceeded, in his own estimation, this conferred upon him by his fellow-townsmen. As an acknowledgment he wrote his *Fest-und-Gedenk-sprüche*, for eight-part chorus (unaccompanied), and dedicated them to Dr. Carl Petersen, who was then Mayor of Hamburg. They were sung at Berne Cathedral in the following year, the occasion being a festival held to commemorate the close of the seventh century of the existence of that town. He was invited to conduct the performance, but could not see his way to do so; but the invitation elicited one of his characteristically humorous letters, with which he frequently covered his regrets. In 1889 he had, through the instrumentality of Bülow, made the acquaintance of the Duke of Meiningen, whose guest he now frequently became. One of the great attractions here, apart from the genial and art-loving Duke and his wife, was the clarinet-playing of Richard Mühlfeld, for whom he wrote several works, including the famous clarinet quartette. What a contrast was this to a hundred years before, when it was a more general custom for the nobles to be patrons of musicians! In the earlier days the patron was also master, and frequently a master who despised and ill-treated the servant. Now the artist is on terms of friendship with the patron, and the respect the former has for the latter as his social superior is more than reciprocated by the nobleman, who honours the artist for the nobility of his character and works. A compliment paid to him, or perhaps, more strictly, to his art, which delighted Brahms extremely, was a series of "Brahms Fantasies," by Max Klinger. These were fanciful sketches to illustrate the *Intermezzi and Rhapsodies for the Pianoforte*, which had attracted much attention and appreciation.

The few remaining years of his life are little more than a record of compositions, which, by a curious coincidence, certainly not with any presentiment of its near approach, in several instances are on the subject of death. On May 20, 1896, his dearest friend and ideal of womanhood, Clara Schumann, died. The shock, although he would not admit it, was probably the cause of his last illness. His four serious songs, and also eleven choral preludes for the organ, which were not published until after his death, were written after this, and it is not known which was the earlier of the two works. Both have as their subject the brevity and sadness of life, and it is quite probable that they were both written under the influence of the feeling caused by her death. He was, however, coming much nearer than he thought to the time when he, too, should be called away. In August of the same year Brahms was sent by his medical adviser to Carlsbad. He was, in fact, at the time suffering from cancer, though he was not informed of it, but was led to believe that his complaint was merely jaundice. Happily, his health so far recovered that he was able to attend a concert at Vienna early in the new year, and again on March 7, 1897. At the latter, when his fourth symphony was played, he received a tremendous ovation, which completely unnerved him, and it was some time before he could be taken home. On March 29 he wrote a post-card to his stepmother saying he was laid up for a while, and therefore could not write much, but telling her not to be afraid, as all he needed was patience. Three days later he lost consciousness, and at 9.45 in the morning of April 3, he passed peacefully away. His body was laid to rest in the cemetery at Vienna, very near the bodies of Beethoven and Schubert, and with all the honours the world of music could bestow. These were the honours he would have sought, had he sought any, and, surely, no more fitting burial-place could have been found had his followers sought all the world over.

Johannes Brahms.

(*From a photograph taken in early life.*)

THE MAN AND THE ARTIST

TO fully appreciate the art-work of a man like Brahms, it is necessary to know something—and the more we know of the one the better we shall understand the other—of his temperament and character. Especially is this so with one who, like Brahms, firmly sets his face in a certain direction, and keeps before him a standard or a type of work or of life to which it is his object to attain. In such a case as this, character and temperament not infrequently come into conflict, with a resultant strengthening or weakening of both. Much of the music of Brahms owes its greatness to his powerful and beautiful character more than to his artistic temperament. To whatever heights his temperament and natural abilities might, by the aid of a thorough training, have taken him, without self-restraint of the severest kind he could never have attained the nobility of character which so largely influenced his compositions. He was essentially a son of the people, and in all the luxury and grandeur with which he was at times, especially in later life, surrounded, he was always conscious and proud of the fact. His innate tact and gentleness prevented him making himself noticeable on this account, however, and even as a young man he was able to mix with all classes and at all times with perfect ease and grace. His self-control saved him from many of the dangers which beset the ordinary man of æsthetic temperament, both moral, social, and artistic. The adulation which was given to him early in life was sufficient to ruin the artistic career of most men, but to Brahms it was a reason for further study, and was the cause of his determination not to be led into the many extravagances of modern art. It was this made him deliberately turn to the past, and become the conservator of the forms and rules as well as the spirit of the classic masters. It also preserved him from the many unpleasant and trying newspaper dissensions, such as those from which his great contemporaries, Hector Berlioz and Richard Wagner, suffered so severely, and by which their work was terribly hindered.

For many years the admirers of Brahms and of Anton Bruckner, an eminent composer, conductor, and organist, living at Vienna, were divided into two camps on the merits and methods of the two composers. Bruckner was one of the first to apply the methods of Wagner to absolute music, and it will thus be seen that his methods were entirely opposed to those of Brahms and to the theories of the latter's friend Hanslick. Brahms himself held quite aloof from this controversy, which was extremely distasteful to him, and more than once expressed his appreciation of the works of the opposite school. Arising from this personal self-control, no doubt, was his hatred of affectation, a characteristic which sometimes gained for him a reputation for bluntness which was hardly merited. With one at least it spoilt what might have been a lifelong friendship. Hermann Goetz, a well-known composer, was visited by Brahms, and discovered by him at work on some chamber music. "Ah!" said the latter, "do you also amuse yourself with such things sometimes?" Goetz at once replied in a solemn manner: "It is the most sacred thing I have!" This so disgusted Brahms that he at once changed the subject, only stayed as long as politeness made necessary, and never afterwards felt any real respect for the other composer. As a contrast to this, he was capable of not only admiring in others, but of feeling himself, a real healthy sentiment for both his friends and his works. His attachment to Clara Schumann has already been referred to, and this was such as to lead to many high and noble thoughts and expressions on his part. The robustness of his character was to some extent accounted for by a like physical condition. J. V. Widmann in his "Recollections," gives a description of Brahms' appearance in his thirty-third year which bears this out.

"The short, square figure," he says, "the almost sandy-coloured hair, the protruding underlip, which lent a cynical expression to the beardless and youthful face, was striking and hardly prepossessing; but yet the total expression was one of consummate strength, both physical and moral." He could not understand or enter into sympathy with those who suffered from physical weakness and the hyper-sensitiveness which frequently results from it. But although he was not by any means sensitive, he was not one who did or could talk much about his own work. He was, indeed, careful not to talk about it at any time to any but musicians, as he considered that such conversation did no good, and led to self-consciousness on the part of the artist taking the lead in the conversation.

His friends were almost all either artists or literary men, and he was thoroughly in sympathy with any artistic nature, without regard to the means of expression of each individual. Thus, he found as much pleasure in the friendship of Allgeier, the copper engraver, and Widmann, the littérateur, as in that of many who followed his own art.

With children he was perfectly easy, and was never so happy as when romping with a party of them or taking some of the more delicate aside and talking to them. He would frequently go about with his pockets full of sweets, and wherever he went he was soon known to all the children in the neighbourhood. His broadness and open-mindedness is almost unparalleled among creative artists. Although altogether out of sympathy with the methods of Wagner and Liszt, he could, and did, greatly admire their work. He considered Wagner to be one of the greatest of musicians, and of Liszt he said: "Many of us can play the piano, but our two hands are as nothing compared to one of his fingers." He was also a great admirer of Verdi, who, as a representative Italian, was entirely at variance in his methods, and widely different to Brahms in temperament; and if the following story, told by several reliable authorities, be true, it shows his appreciation of the lightest of music so long as it was good. The story is that Frau Strauss, the wife of the famous "Waltz King," once asked for his autograph to be put on her fan. He at once complied with her request, writing the opening bars of the "Blue Danube" waltz, and underneath: "Not, alas! by Johannes Brahms."

The romantic side of his nature was very deeply imbued with the Hungarian spirit, so much so, that there are few of his works where this does not appear in a very marked manner. Apart from those which are admittedly either arrangements of, or based upon, Hungarian melodies, the style and musical idiom of Hungarian national melodies constantly appear in his works in classical form. The sombre character of many of his works arises largely from the accident of his birth. It would be quite easy to a musician coming across his works for the first time, without any previous knowledge of the composer, to determine the nation, and even the district, to which he belonged. In spite of his powers of assimilation, which he used to the utmost, he remained all his life, both as a man and an artist, a typical North German.

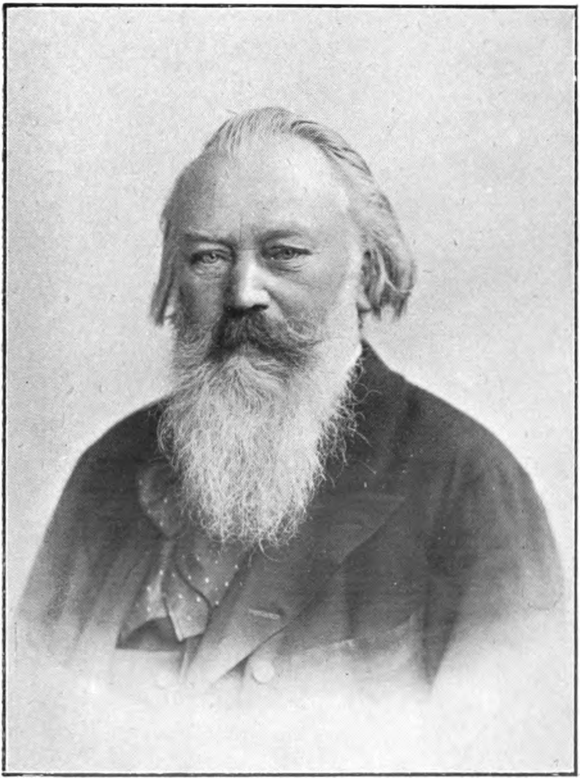
His method of composition varied with nearly every work he wrote. Early in his career he informed one of his friends that he liked to think of the words of folk-songs, which added a freshness and character to his thoughts. He did not hesitate, when it suited his purpose, to make use of the melodies of these songs, and in many of his works used the whole or part of one of such melodies as his theme. Thus, in the first composition which he considered worthy of an opus number he based one movement on a favourite North German song "Verstohlen geht der Mond auf." Many German and Hungarian melodies he practically made his own by his treatment of them as songs or instrumental pieces. He did not, however, confine himself to folk-music for his borrowings, and a similarity with the works of other composers, which arose from coincidence, troubled him not in the slightest degree. On a too candid friend pointing out to him the similarity of a passage in one of his own works to a passage from one of the works of Mendelssohn, his only reply was: "Every fool sees that!" The use of the themes of other composers for the purpose of variations is, of course, a common practice, but this disregard of mere coincidence was made, by his enemies, a reason for decrying his creative ability, without the slightest justification. He was extremely critical, both with himself and with others, but would, nevertheless, always express himself favourably towards a work which was good, no matter who that work was by. On one occasion he destroyed several manuscripts of works which many would have considered valuable and important. For other early works, notably the piano trio in B major, written during his period of office at Detmold, he preserved a fondness all his life. His *Serenade for Orchestra in A major* is an instance of his self-criticism. This work was withdrawn after its first appearance, and withheld for the purpose of revision for nearly fourteen years.

One of the characteristics which no doubt resulted from his nationality was his lack of feeling for mere tone-colouring. Symmetry of form and a good harmonic basis were his chief aims in instrumental works, and for the rest he was content to rely mainly upon variations in dynamic force and ornamentation. Several examples of adaptàbility to various tone-combinations exist, such as the pianoforte quintette in F minor, which was written originally as a duet for two pianofortes, and the variations on a theme by Haydn, which still remain in two forms—one for orchestra, and the other for two pianos. Another remarkable instance occurred to the writer recently. After hearing privately two of the Hungarian dances, he attended an orchestral concert, and two days later a military band concert, at both of which he heard the same two dances played. The general effect in each case was perfectly satisfactory, and without a knowledge of what instruments they were originally written for it would have been impossible to say which performance was nearest the composer's intentions.

Deep respect for tradition in all art matters is insisted upon by all his critics and biographers as being the trait which distinguishes him from the majority of his contemporaries. This coloured his playing as much as it did his compositions, and it was one of his chief glories—fortunately recognised by all his fellow-musicians, who were more or less his rivals—that, after the first few recitals given to gain the public ear, he very rarely played anything which was calculated merely to show off his virtuosity.

Of his assimilative methods and the result of those methods, and of his study of the old masters, we cannot do better than repeat what is said by his excellent and appreciative biographer, Heinrich Reimann :

> "From Bach he inherited the depth, from Haydn the serenity, from Mozart the grace, from Beethoven the power, and from Schubert the sincerity, of his art. In fact, a wonderfully comprehensive nature was his, that, in spite of the completeness of the natural qualifications which it contained, lost nothing of the best [of others' work]. The strong self-control was the might of the 'Great Master.'"



THE LATEST PORTRAIT OF BRAHMS.
(*Photo C. Brasch, Berlin.*)

THE WORKS OF BRAHMS

WITH the exception of his songs and pianoforte pieces, the compositions of Brahms divide into three distinct periods, corresponding with three different phases of his life. First of these came the period of his great choral works, then followed the symphonic period, and the closing years form the period of his finest chamber music. The composition of his songs and pianoforte pieces is spread out over the whole of his life, and both range from the smallest lyrical examples to the largest forms of those branches of composition. Besides these he wrote a large number of part-songs and vocal duets, and several pieces for the organ, all of which bear the same impress of genius as his other works. The last-named may be dealt with very shortly here, as the quantity is extremely insignificant, in spite of the fact that he was to a certain extent an organist himself and the accompaniments to several of his works are for the organ. Only three distinct works for organ solo are extant at the present time, though it is quite probable some of the works which he is known to have destroyed may have been in that form. The three works are a fugue on an original subject in A flat, written for the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* in 1864; a prelude and fugue on the choral "O Traurigkeit" (O Sadness), written for the yearly volume for 1881 of the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt;* and eleven choral preludes. The choral preludes were not published until some years after his death, and for this reason have been thought to be his latest work. There is nothing to show whether this is so or not, but there is little doubt they were written not very long before his death.

All the organ works are in the style of Bach, and all are of a serious and somewhat gloomy character. Of the chorals treated, *O Traurigkeit, Herzlich thut mich verlangen* (Sincerely I desire), and *Schmücke dich, O liebe Seele* (Adorn thyself, beloved Soul), had been previously used by J. S. Bach. One of the eleven preludes is in three parts only. *Herzlich thut mich verlangen* and *O Welt, ich muss dich lassen* (O World, I now must leave thee), have both been treated in two different settings. Though written after the manner of the seventeenth and eighteenth century writers, there is much in the resourcefulness and variety of treatment which is entirely original and essentially characteristic of Brahms, and with all the ingenuity in the works there is no mere paper music. These small examples only serve to show how much he could have done had he devoted more of his attention to this form of composition.

THE SYMPHONIC PERIOD.

In speaking of the symphonic period of Brahms, we refer to the period in which he wrote, not only his four symphonies, but also many other works of a similar nature. It began in 1874 with the variations on a theme by Haydn (Op. 56).

In this work, and in his symphonies, he took Beethoven as his model, using that artist's system, but speaking in a more modern idiom and with the thoughts of his own time. With the symphonies themselves, of which he wrote four, he arrived at probably the highest point it was possible to reach in absolute music. Nothing quite the same had been written before, and the greatest of his contemporaries was of an entirely different character, who was less able to control his romantic and fiery nature. This first, of which he had commenced the composition so many years before its completion, although more sombre-hued, is probably the greatest of the four —in fact, it may be said to be the greatest work of its kind since Beethoven wrote his great Choral Symphony. In character it is not unlike that work, and in their final movements particularly the two works have much in common. On its first presentation some critics found the similarity so great as to charge Brahms with plagiarism, a charge which, however, has never been substantiated. Max Klinger in his "Brahms Fantasies," represents this work by a very fine picture of Prometheus Unbound! The second symphony is of a lighter nature than the first, and much more easily understood and appreciated by the average musician. Hermann Deiters considers the first to be in character an epic, and the second a legend, and the simile is undoubtedly an excellent one. The themes are entirely different, and consequently the treatment is different. The second movement is in a delightfully dreamy style, while the third is in a piquant, lively strain, and the last has an abandonment rare in the works of Brahms. No small contributory to the effect of the third movement of this symphony is the variation in the form of the theme. First given out in stately minuet form, the same subject appears shortly in $\frac{2}{4}$ time, *staccato* and *presto ma non assai*, and still later in another slightly varied form.

Before the third symphony appeared he had written his two concert overtures, the *Tragic Overture* and the *Academic Festival Overture.* In the former he took as his subject the general idea of the tragic heroes of Lessing and Aristotle, and in consequence his themes have a sorrowful tone. Not so the other work, which brims over with a hearty goodwill and no little humour. Other composers, such as Haydn and Weber, had used themes borrowed from the folk-songs, but nowhere had such a bunch of popular student songs been gathered, and made into a bouquet, in such classical form as this overture. It was an exercise more remarkable, and in fact more appropriate, if properly considered, than the famous "Canon cancrizans" of Haydn. Passionate, but full of the joy of life, is the third symphony. The fulness of the composer's powers had been reached, and no signs of weariness had begun to show themselves. Themes pregnant with feeling appear on every page, and the orchestration is clear and limpid. Heinrich Reimann thus describes it:

> "A similar [*i.e.*, to the *Academic Festival Overture*] strong, clear cheerfulness governs and moves in the third symphony in F major (Op. 90, 1884). It is the joyful, passionate, glowing artist mind, that, in the full consciousness of its power and in the artistic joyousness of the creation of a world of rich treasures, manifests its inmost being."

The unity of the thought is maintained in this, as in his earlier works, and what forms an introduction to the first movement is the *coda* to the last—the Alpha and Omega of the work, it has been appropriately called. Appealing to a much smaller circle, the fourth symphony is deeper in feeling and sadder in tone. It lacks the melodious character, particularly, of the first and third, and its story is not repeated in the same ingenuous manner as that of the second. It is, in fact, the most difficult work to understand of any of the master's compositions. To his fellow-countryman Felix Weingartner, the well-known composer and conductor, it is a "loud-sounding hollowness," and it has found favour with few save his most enthusiastic admirers.

Very different has been the fate of the violin concerto in D major (Op. 77), which was written between the second symphony and the *Tragic Overture*. Inspired by his friendship for a noble artist, he has produced, in the form most difficult to write in a satisfactory manner, a work which will last as long as music itself. It has been frequently, and not inaptly, described as a symphony, with a violin solo running throughout. Not since Beethoven produced his great work for the same instrument had one so full of power and life, and so well suited to the genius of the instrument, been composed. The themes are bright and virile, and there is nothing in the work, although it is difficult, which is put in merely to show off the technical ability of the soloist.

The double concerto for violin and violoncello also comes within the range of symphonic music, although not quite so distinctly as does the violin concerto. The tremendous difficulties of this work, together with its sombre character, prevent its general acceptance, and even to a musician it is one which requires study before it can be appreciated to anything like its full desert.

His two serenades are the only works for the orchestra alone which were written before this period, and it was no doubt his appreciation of the finality of what Beethoven had written for the orchestra that deterred him for so many years from writing any orchestral music on a large scale. Even in his later works he was content to write for a band no larger than that of Mendelssohn, and in the two serenades, and particularly in the one in A, he wrote for quite a small combination of instruments. They are, however, the most popular of his orchestral works, which is possibly owing not only to their inherent beauty, but also to the comparative slightness of their texture.

PIANOFORTE WORKS.

It is well we should follow our consideration of the orchestral works of Brahms by a consideration of those for the pianoforte, as we can then place in close juxtaposition to his concertos for string instruments the two for the pianoforte. In the two latter the accompaniments rank so close to the solo portion in importance, and solo and accompaniment depend so much one upon the other for effectiveness, that they have, as with the concertos for other instruments, earned the name of symphonies with (in this case) pianoforte solos. The earlier one was written shortly after the death of Schumann, and produced to the public for the first time at Leipsic in January, 1859. The later one was not written for twenty-two years after this, during which time the composer had passed through all the storm and stress of life. Both works are of a somewhat gloomy character, except for certain sections in which he seems to throw a glimpse of light around, as a reminder of the brightness of his own nature. The second concerto is more cheerful than its elder companion, but its cheerfulness depends mainly upon subsidiary themes, and not on the main subjects. The first of the four movements is simple in construction, based on one theme only. The next two movements are a complete contrast, and the final rondo, which has for its second subject a Hungarian melody, is piquant and fiery.

It was by his pianoforte solos that Brahms first gained the friendship of Schumann and Joachim, and many others of their school; but in spite of this, and although the pianoforte was his own instrument, the number of pianoforte solos without accompaniment is very small. The works which achieved this early success were in an entirely different style to his later works. At this time he showed less artistic restraint than later, while exhibiting a highly romantic temperament. It was this that caused him to be greeted as a great prophet among the romanticists, and afterwards rejected by many of his erstwhile colleagues as an artistic turncoat and backslider. The fact is, however, that he had not changed ideas, but that they had, while maturing, become somewhat restrained and modified. His later works are as full of romantic feeling as the earlier ones, but it does not show itself so readily or so frequently.

One of his most happy assimilations, that of the folk-music of his own country, finds its principal escapement in his pianoforte music. Very few of his subjects are original, and even in those works in which the subjects are his own he has copied the style of some earlier composer. We thus have a study after Chopin, a rondo after

Weber, a gavotte after Gluck, and a presto and a chaconne after J. S. Bach, among his studies, while of five sets of variations only one set is on an original theme. They are all eminently suitable for the instrument, though there is little to tempt the mere virtuoso. Like his playing, they are intended for musicians, and not for those who seek for wonders of execution and show, and contain many delightful melodies and figures.

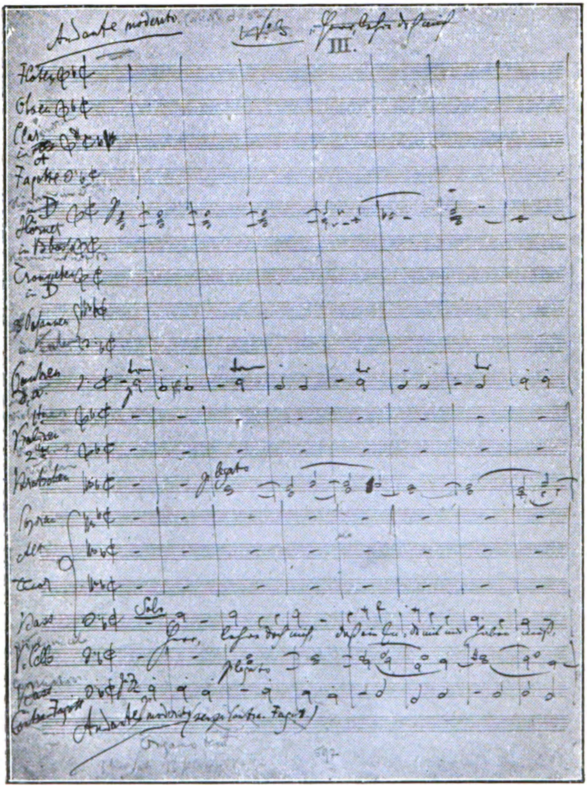
In all his works—but particularly in those for the pianoforte—the rhythmic movement is of paramount importance. It ranks far above tone-colour, figurative development, and bravura passages; in fact, it is of equal importance with melody and harmonic structure. Short phrases extended by means of contrapuntal imitation, a certain amount of repetition (not so much as was the custom with Beethoven), and a free use of variation form, are the materials with which he formed these works. In all of them a high standard of art and ingenuity is attained, and even in the studies there is little, if anything, that is at all dry and uninteresting.

GREAT CHORAL WORKS.

Brahms realized, as few modern composers have done, the essentials of good choral writing. Although what he wrote is by no means easy to sing, he did not demand any finesse of expression or any great dramatic effect. Where it could be made to serve his purpose, he would prefer a mass of tone to a complicated contrapuntal movement. His view is shown in a letter he wrote about his *Triumphlied*. "It is not difficult," he says, "only forte!" Most people would differ with the composer as to its difficulty, but this shows his idea of what a big choral work should be.

Starting with the experience gained at Detmold and Vienna, his first work for chorus and orchestra was not only the longest, but probably the greatest in inspiration and sustained power. "Since Bach's B minor Mass and Beethoven's 'Missa Solennis,'" said Hanslick at its first presentation, "has nothing been written of this kind which can take its place near Brahms' *Requiem*." In all his choral works he took as his model, consciously or unconsciously, the choral works of Handel. His style is of course modern, and his accompaniments of a more independent nature than those of the great Saxon. But allowing for the difference in time, there is a remarkable affinity between the works of the two masters.

The *Requiem* is not the Catholic service generally described by that name. It is more a cantata or service of consolation to the living, and there is no suggestion of a prayer for the departed. It consists of seven numbers, all of which are either entirely or partially choral. Solos for baritone and soprano (the latter being in the number added after the first performance) are included, the former twice, and the latter only once. To the musical analyst and student, as well as to those who seek pleasure or consola-


Andante moderato
III.
Solo
Andante moderato

FROM THE SCORE OF "EINE DUTSCHES REQUIEM."
(*Ges. der Musikfreunde, Vienna.*)

tion in music, the work is a veritable mine of wealth. We cannot turn a page without coming across some point of imitation or some canonic device which adds to both the interest and the beauty of the work. Two numbers (3 and 6) contain choral fugues with independent accompaniment, the former being a wonderful example of a fugue, written throughout over a tonic pedal. Both are strikingly virile, and the second one runs on for 150 bars, the interest being maintained on the original thematic material right through. The one over a pedal is only thirty-six bars in length, but is strict in form, all the entries being made in due order. Very different to these are the choruses of Nos. 1, 4, and 5, and the first portion of No. 3. More subdued in tone, and, with the exception of the first, brighter in character, they stand out as beautiful lyrics interspersed between the graver portions of a great religious epic poem.

The first chorus owes much of its sombre character as well as its richness of tone to the fact that the violins and clarinets are both silent. The following chorus, commenting on the shortness and uncertainty of human life, commences in a sombre style, but changes entirely at the words, "The redeemed of the Lord shall return again, and come rejoicing." The solo portions of the third and fifth numbers are almost Mendelssohnian in their suavity, but in the first part of No. 6 the words, "Lo, I unfold unto you a mystery," are set more in the style of Handel, and seem to suggest that the composer had the famous setting of the same words in his mind when he wrote this. The orchestral accompaniments to this and his other choral works are of great interest. An orchestra of practically the same dimensions as is required for his symphonies is used, with the addition of harp and *ad libitum* organ parts. The sombre effect is produced in a variety of ways, varying from the omission of the bright-toned instruments (such as has been instanced in the opening chorus of the *Requiem*), to a *pianissimo* on the lower registers of the whole instruments in the band.

Two works for male chorus followed the *Requiem*, both to words by Goethe, who was always Brahms' favourite poet, and a large number of whose poems he utilized as libretti. The first is the somewhat melancholy *Rinaldo*, which is largely written for tenor solo, and the other a more cheerful *Fragment from the Harzreise*, with alto solo. Both are written for full orchestra, but the vocal parts are somewhat colourless, a failing very common with works of this kind. The "Song of Destiny" (*Schicksalslied*, Op. 54) and "Song of Triumph" (*Triumphlied*, Op. 55) came very near each other in point of time, but are very different in intention and effect. The "Song of Destiny" is a setting, entirely for chorus and orchestra, of a poem by Friedrich Holderlein, contrasting the states of existence of the souls in Paradise and man. The other work is just what its name implies, being written to celebrate "the victorious close of the German War," and dedicated to "the Founder of the German Empire, Kaiser Wilhelm I."

After the first performance, which took place at Vienna in 1872, Brahms removed all reference to the occasion for which it was written, in order that the work might be of more general utility. The form largely corresponds with that of the "Anthems" of Handel, and is for double choir, with a few bars for baritone solo. The words are taken from the Revelation of St. John, and are especially appropriate for a hymn of thanksgiving for victory. The subject of the introduction and opening chorus is based upon the national hymn, "Heil Dir im Siegerkranz," which has the same melody as the English national anthem, "God save the King." The second movement has also some suggestion of this, and later on has the melody "Nun danket alle Gott" (Now thank we all our God), with a quiet but cheerful counter-melody. Brahms describes this himself in a way which shows the pleasure he felt in the work, and how nearly he had carried out his intentions. "In addition to the thanks expressed in the choral, the joy-bells are ringing, and the whole land resounds with *Te Deum.*"

The work closes his choral period, which was, however, resumed some years later with a number of small and comparatively unimportant works, and two of larger calibre. *Nänie*, written in 1881, was a memorial of his friend Anselm Feuerbach, the well-known painter. In this work he returns once more to the melancholy, though noble, manner of his early works. The poem "expresses in majestic strains a lament that everything beautiful on earth must perish," and it is easy to see how this would appeal to the composer when mourning the loss of one whom he not only loved as a friend, but honoured as an artist. A somewhat lengthy but beautifully scored introduction precedes the entry of the chorus. The voices enter in turn on the same subject, suggesting a fugue, which is, however, not worked out. For the second section the music becomes somewhat brighter, and rises to a majestic climax, afterwards dying away in solemn, quiet harmonies. His latest work in this class, *Gesang der Parzen* (Song of the Fates) was dedicated to his patron, the Duke of Meiningen. The words from Goethe's "Iphigenie" are set to music in six parts. Both this and the preceding work are in much the same strain as the "Song of Destiny," and in this he adopted the same solid style of choral-writing. The similarity of the English titles, the "Song of Destiny" and the "Song of the Fates," is explained when we observe that the former is a song about destiny, and the latter is a song sung by the Fates, the German titles being of course entirely different.

For his choral works Brahms chose as his subject the transitory nature of human life, more than any other subject, which militates against their general acceptance. Remembering, however, that Bach's St. Matthew "Passion," Mozart's "Requiem," and Dvořák's "Stabat Mater," are now recognised as being among their greatest works, and that with other composers, both ancient and modern, much the same result has been achieved, we can be quite sure that

Brahms will eventually take his place among the great choral composers, just as he has done among modern song-writers.

SONGS AND PART-SONGS.

It is by his songs more than by any other of his works that Brahms is known to the general public. And this popularity is in every way deserved, for as a song-writer he is right in the front rank. Had he written nothing but the couple of hundred songs he has left us, he would still have been worthy to rank with Schubert, Loewe, and others, whose fame depends mainly upon this class of composition. In tunefulness they may not equal those of Schubert, and Hugo Wolf may have been more successfully dramatic, but each and all of the songs of Brahms have what is more lasting than anything else—an innate sense of reality, and a rare grasp of the poetic intention of the words. It is in his songs that he manifests his general culture and intelligence most. He neither would nor could take weak or inane words, and use them as a framework for his music. He depended upon inspiration for every note that he penned, and the consequence is that each of his songs forms a complete entity only when the words and music are combined. It matters not whether the subject is a dramatic one, like his Scottish ballad *Edward*, an earnest religious one, such as is contained in his *Four Serious Songs* or a simple little cradle-song or versicle: he aimed at, and succeeded in grasping, the entire meaning without exaggeration.

Something like half the number of songs which he wrote date from the years 1882 to 1888, this period producing his five romances and songs for one or two voices, and many others of his finest and most popular songs. Two songs for alto voice, with viola and pianoforte accompaniment, date from this time. They were, however, written earlier, and revised for publication now, one of them being a sacred cradle-song written as an expression of goodwill towards his friends Joseph and Amalie Joachim, on the birth of their eldest son, who in honour of their friend Johannes was christened Brahms. Before this time, however, many charming songs had appeared. His setting of Tieck's "Magelonen Lieder" had been published in 1862, and during 1871 and 1874 he had published several volumes containing gems such as *Agnes*, (words by Moericke), in which he combined duple and triple time, and *Meine Liebe ist grün.*

His earliest songs, which he wrote for the publisher Cranz, under the name of "G. W. Marks," were among the many works which he destroyed. Whether we agree with his decision and approve of his action or not, we can have no doubt as to the excellence of the training these youthful efforts afforded him. As to their intrinsic worth we have no record.

Few of his songs depend entirely, or even mainly, upon the melody, though this is invariably expressive, and frequently is one of rare beauty.

Some of them are absolutely unexcelled in this respect, and will bear comparison with the tunes of any composer from Bach to Strauss, or from Purcell to Elgar.

The accompaniments, both to his original songs and to his arrangements of national melodies and folk-songs, range from the simplest to the most elaborate, with, however, a distinct tendency towards elaboration.

As much technical ability as well as artistic comprehension is required to play many of his song accompaniments as is required for a difficult solo, and at times the part for the pianoforte ranks in importance with that for the voice.

During his long visits to Meiningen, in 1889 and subsequent years, he wrote a number of songs with pianoforte and clarinet accompaniment, which he afterwards for convenience arranged for pianoforte and viola. The clarinet part is as important as either of the other parts, and is characteristic of the instrument. The general tone of the songs, too, breathes the spirit of the circumstances under which they were composed, so different to the strenuous struggling days of his earlier life.

In the accompaniments to his songs he reaches out somewhat towards Wagnerian methods, much nearer than in his orchestral or choral works, and frequently gives a distinct expressive colouring.

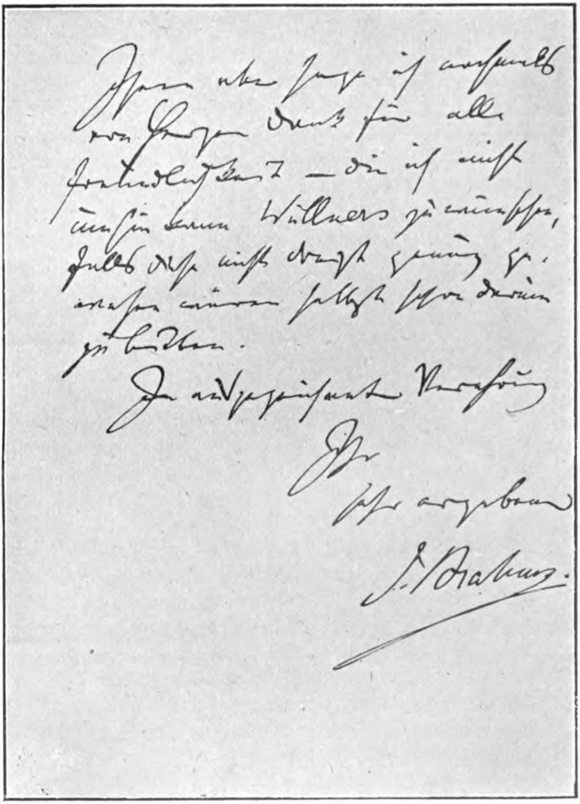
It is characteristic of Brahms that a large number of his songs are set to words relating to Nature. *Sommerabend*, *Mondenschein*, *Frühlings-*

lied, and *In Waldeseinsamkeit*, are examples of this, in which he was as successful as Mendelssohn had been with his four-part songs on the same subjects.

Brahms did not write many part-songs, but such as he wrote are well able to be placed alongside his other works, either vocal or instrumental. His *Liebeslieder Walzer* are among his most scholarly works, and yet among his lightest. They have a pianoforte duet accompaniment which is delightful in its effect, but by no means easy to play. The vocal parts, too, are not to be taken in hand by any but singers of ability; but given sympathetic artistes these delicious settings are capable of producing an effect far beyond the average of similar works.

For the quartette of lady vocalists he discovered while living at Hamm, he wrote a number of quartettes with accompaniment for harp and two horns (Op. 17). In such works as this he got the experience in instrumentation such as was obtained by Mozart in his "Divertimenti," which experience was to bear fruit in his symphonies and the accompaniments to the great choral works. He was always willing to adapt his works to circumstances, if that would facilitate a performance, and in consequence many of his songs which were written for accompaniment by various instruments are now only known with pianoforte accompaniments.

In addition to all his original songs, he arranged a large number of German folk-songs to words, with a pianoforte accompaniment. Seven volumes,



Ihnen aber sage ich außerdem
von Herzen Dank für alle
Freundlichkeit — die ich nicht
auch für Herrn Wüllners zu wünschen,
hatte doch nicht dreist genug ge-
achtet einmal selbst schon darum
zu bitten.

In ausgezeichneter Verehrung
Ihr
sehr ergebener
J. Brahms.

PART OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY BRAHMS.
(*Ges. der Musikfreunde, Vienna.*)

each containing seven songs, were published, the last volume being for leader (*Vorsänger*) and small chorus. The last number is a reminiscence of his first pianoforte sonata, being the song *Verstohlen geht der Mond auf*, which he had used as one of his themes in that work. His *Zigeunerlieder* (Gipsy Songs) were based on Hungarian melodies, the words by Hugo Conrat forming a cycle on the subject of Love. In both these series he has entered into the spirit of the national music without entirely sinking his own individuality, with an extremely happy result.

CHAMBER MUSIC.

In no other department of his work did Brahms find more pleasure than in the composition of his chamber music. The consequence is that we find many of his most beautiful and original thoughts there expressed. They were not written for the populace to hear and comprehend, but for his own edification and pleasure, and for that of other musicians of culture and feeling. Even many who can find little or nothing to admire in his vocal or orchestral music agree to admire his pianoforte quartettes and trios, and his wonderfully simple but powerful quintette in F minor. But even in his chamber music he has had some detractors. Felix Weingartner, the famous conductor, who is himself a graceful composer of chamber music, finds in the clarinet quintette as well as in the fourth symphony and other works of Brahms nothing but loud-sounding emptiness.*

His chamber music, like his other compositions, has, however, gradually increased in popularity, and now it is known and admired by practically all who have an opportunity of hearing or taking part in this work. The clarinet quintette is one of the results of his friendship with Mühlfeld, and was played for the first time by that artist, associated with the composer and Messrs. Joachim, Halir, and Haussmann. Each instrument has a part grateful to the player, and the combined effect of the five instruments is as delightful as it is unusual. This was the last of his concerted chamber pieces, but the first, which was a sextette for strings, is in its way almost as pleasing. It was written in 1862 (the composer would then be nineteen years of age), when he was first beginning to cast off the yoke of a copied style and to develop the free use of his own ideas. The other string sextette (Op. 36) is more elaborate, and requires a knowledge of the score before the beautiful significance of the somewhat involved polyphony can be fully grasped.

One of the most characteristic works of Brahms is the trio for violin, horn, and pianoforte (Op. 40), which is sombre and dignified until the last movement, which is a cheerful and lightly-sketched hunting scene.

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* It is only fair to Herr Weingartner to say that, since he expressed this opinion, he has considerably modified his views, and now numbers himself among the admirers of Brahms.

The deep feelings of one who had so reticent and refined a nature find their full expression in these works. His somewhat gloomy but original style of writing, while commanding our admiration in his larger works, appeals to the more intimate feelings in his chamber music. We feel, more than in any other of his compositions, that nere he is writing for himself, and not for the world at large; and though they appeal to all sorts and conditions of men, it is not because of the catholicity of his genius, but because of the humanness of his heart. Here he speaks as he would do to his most intimate friends, to whom he can lay bare his sensitive soul without fear of being assoiled. And it is thus we must hear it. Every one of his chamber works will bear strict and close investigation from a technical point of view, but what makes them of such tremendous value to the musician who either plays or hears them is the manly sensitiveness which is displayed right through, from his first trio, written in his early youth, to the clarinet quintette, which was one of the last dozen works which he penned.

LIST OF WORKS

BRAHMS was not by any means a prolific writer, in spite of his versatility. In his youth he appears to have composed a large number of songs and pianoforte pieces, but, as he did not consider them worth retaining, they can only be looked upon as exercises. Practically, all those which he retained are published by Messrs. Simrock of Berlin and Rieter-Biederman of Leipsic. The following list is believed to be complete as regards works now in existence:

1. VOCAL MUSIC.

1. Four cantatas for mixed choir, besides the *German Requiem.*

2. Two cantatas for male-voice choir and an *Ave Maria* for female voices.

(All these are accompanied by orchestra.)

3. A psalm, a sacred song, and a funeral hymn, for mixed chorus, and songs for ladies' choir, with instrumental accompaniment.

4. Seven motets, the *Fest-und Gedenksprüche*, and a number of songs, for mixed choir; three sacred choruses, twelve songs and romances, and thirteen canons in three, four, and six parts, for

ladies' choir; and five songs for male voices, unaccompanied.

5. Sixteen quartettes for solo voices, besides the two sets of *Liebeslieder Walzer* and the *Zigeunerlieder.*

6. Twelve duets for soprano and contralto, four for alto and baritone, ballads and romances for two voices, and five romances and songs for one or two voices.

7. One hundred and ninety songs with pianoforte accompaniment.

8. Six volumes of arrangements of German folk-songs for solo voice, one volume of the same for leader and chorus with pianoforte accompaniment, and one volume for chorus without accompaniment; also fourteen children's songs.

2. INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC.

9. Four symphonies, two serenades, two overtures, one set of variations, and three Hungarian dances for orchestra.

10. One concerto for violin and one for violin and violoncello.

11. Two concertos for pianoforte.

12. Three sonatas for violin and pianoforte, two for violoncello and pianoforte, and two for clarinet (or viola) and pianoforte.

13. One quintette, three quartettes, and three trios for pianoforte and stringed instruments; one trio for violin, horn, and pianoforte; and one trio for clarinet (or viola) and violoncello.

14. Two sextettes, two quintettes, and three

quartettes for stringed instruments, and one quintette for clarinet and stringed instruments.

15. One set of variations, three sets of waltzes, and twenty Hungarian dances (in four volumes) for pianoforte duet.

16. Three sonatas, five sets of variations, four volumes of intermezzos, etc., two volumes of fantasies, and fifty-six studies for solo pianoforte.

17. One fugue and twelve choral preludes for organ.

The *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* in 1874 gave a list of the melodies which Brahms had made use of in the first two volumes of the Hungarian dances, with the composer's names. The following is the list:

No. 1, G minor: Isteni Czàrdás (Sacred Czàrdás), by Sárközy Pecsenyanski.

No. 2, D minor: Emma Czàrdás, by Mor Windt.

No. 3, F major: Tolnai Lakadalmas (Wedding Dance), by J. Rizner.

No. 4, F minor: Kalocsay-Emlék (Reminiscences of Kolocsay), by N. Mérty.

No. 5, F sharp minor: Bartfai-Emlék (Reminiscences of Bartfai), by Béla Kèler.

No. 6, D sharp major: Rózsa Bokor (Rosebush), by Adolph Nittinger.

No. 7, A major: Folk-song, composer unknown.

No. 8, A minor: Luiza Czàrdás, by J. Frank.

No. 9, E minor: Makóc Czàrdás, by J. Travnik.

No. 10, E major: Tolnai Lakadalmas, by J. Rizner.

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