Title
A Choral Symphony by Brahms?

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Until the last few years Brahms the musical poet and Brahms the taciturn friend of Clara were seen as two sides of one musical coin. Post-Romantic commentary was comfortable with an image of Brahms as a composer whose throttled feelings found therapeutic release in music usually termed "absolute" in order to distinguish it from works with extra-musical and programmatic associations. But lately, armed with quotations from Brahms's letters and the recollections of his friends and acquaintances, scholars from diverse backgrounds have begun to chip away at the graven image of Brahms as a paragon of absolute music.

Among those participating in the ongoing revaluation, George Bozarth classifies several instrumental Andantes as "songs without words" for their dependence on unprinted texts, while Siegfried Kross and Constantin Floros stress the poetic aspects of Brahms's compositional aesthetic, by examining the influence of Schumann; Allen Forte, from a theoretical perspective, argues that Brahms portrayed Clara Schumann with motivic and tonal emphases of the pitches C, A, and Eb [Es]; and investigations by A. Peter Brown, Michael Musgrave, and Eric Sams, among others, dwell on Brahms's use of motivic mottos to represent people, experiences, and ideas. Sams attaches particular importance to his association of the motive C–B–A–G♯–A with Clara, a motive featured in compositions by Schumann, Brahms, and Clara herself. This, he believes, is the "bodily" representation of Clara that Brahms perceived in the "trill passage" from the Andante of Schumann's C-Major Symphony. Sams also links this Clara theme as it appears in C minor at the beginning of the Piano Quartet, op. 60, to one of the few anecdotal references Brahms made to his own
extra-musical associations (see motive x in ex. 1). By his admission this work was written (ca. 1855) by a man driven to the point of shooting himself, “a man in blue and yellow,” an allusion to the colors worn by Goethe’s Werther, who shot himself because he had fallen in love with the wife of a man he admired.5

But because Brahms left so little first-hand evidence about his working methods, and because he decided against publishing works with programmatic titles, some scholars harbor a lingering disinclination to acknowledge the presence of mottos and extra-musical allusions in his music. The disputes over two well-known claims made by Brahms’s biographer and acquaintance, Max Kalbeck, are representative. Kalbeck is our sole source of information on the musical motto “F–A–F,” representing “Frei aber Froh” (“free, but happy”), which Brahms reputedly devised as a complement to the motto of Joseph Joachim, namely “F–A–E,” for “Frei aber einsam” (“free, but lonely”).6 Yet while Joachim’s motto has ample documentation in letters between Joachim, Brahms, and Schumann, Brahms’s has none. Michael Musgrave therefore questions the veracity of Kalbeck’s assertion, citing the lack of corroborating testimony from Brahms himself or from any members of his inner circle.7 Musgrave bases his objection on two unstated assumptions: that Brahms made a practice of informing his close friends about his compositional practices, and that these close friends would divulge all of what they knew. There is reason to doubt both.

The other disputed claim of Kalbeck pertains to the first movement of the First Piano Concerto in D Minor, op. 15, specifically to the apparent extra-musical associations of the first movement. Kalbeck traces the origins of the first movement to a sonata for two pianos written in response to Schumann’s suicide attempt in 1854. Identifying his source as a personal communication from Joachim, Kalbeck makes the connection with some of his most energetic prose [see also ex. 2].

The magnificent beginning of the D-Minor Concerto, with its pedal points insistently pounded by the timpani, with its first gesture reaching out in fearsome leaps and then receding in a trill which unites the orchestra in an elemental shudder, was all born of Schumann’s unsuccessful suicidal plunge into the Rhine.8

Karl Geiringer, following the lead of Gustav Ernest, deems this account improbable. Instead of such “rather fantastic attempts at interpretation,”9 he prefers to uphold the absolutist line and view the movement as inspired by the studies of Bach that Brahms was pursuing at the time.

The remains of this sonata-turned-symphony preserve the clearest indications of Brahms’s use of extra-musical allusion. After abandoning first the D-Minor Sonata and then its symphonic reincarnation, Brahms retained the original representations of Schumann in the musical offspring of the 1854 work—the First Piano Concerto and the German Requiem. At least one movement from each composition derives from the early work, the concerto its first

Example 1: Brahms, op. 60, I, mm. 3–7.

Example 2: Brahms, op. 15, I, mm. 1–10.
and the Requiem its second. As a result of this common origin there are distinct relationships between the Requiem and the piano concerto, relationships which bear on the previously unidentified third movement of the Ur-sonata, as well as on Brahms’s inability to finish the fourth movement of the symphony.

II

Brahms’s two-piano sonata underwent two metamorphoses in less than a year. Working quickly in what was certainly an emotionally charged atmosphere, Brahms prepared three movements within nine days of Schumann’s attempted suicide [27 February 1854]. Julius Otto Grimm praised the new work highly to Joachim on 9 March, just five days after Schumann left Düsseldorf for the asylum at Endenich. By the end of July the sonata had become a symphony, and Brahms conferred with Grimm and Joachim over problems of orchestrating the first movement. After Joachim wrote back (5 September) to compliment this movement and to express his interest in seeing the next two, Brahms’s only response was a chiding “As usual you’ve looked at my symphony movement with rose-colored glasses,” and a vow to improve the movement. Up to this point Joachim appears to have seen only the first movement. Brahms then stagnated, for the next notice of the work is a perfunctory reference several months later in a letter to Schumann (30 January 1855): “By the way, I spent all of last summer trying to write a symphony; the first movement was even orchestrated, and the second and third composed. [In D minor § slow].” Little more than a week elapsed before the second transformation. As Brahms announced in a letter to Clara, during the night of 7 February he had a dream: “I had changed my unfortunate symphony into a piano concerto and played it. [I played] the first movement and scherzo and a finale, exceedingly difficult and long. I was completely enraptured.”

There is no further mention of the symphony or concerto after this vision until April 1856, when Brahms once again turned to Joachim for advice on the first movement, now of the piano concerto.

The letters solidly establish Joachim’s familiarity with the first movement. When he speaks of the origins of the first movement of the concerto in the earlier sonata-symphony, he speaks with authority. But the letters also indicate no such exposure to the other movements until they were in concerto form. Albert Dietrich, the lone source of information for the second movement, indicates that he recognized the second movement of the Requiem as the “slow scherzo in the tempo of a sarabande” from the sonata for two pianos Brahms had written under the influence of the Schumann tragedy. Even though he had played through the first three movements with Clara, neither Dietrich nor anyone else could identify a later arrangement of the third movement.

Only after Schumann’s death (29 July 1856) did Brahms make rapid progress toward completion. December brought a flurry of activity. After Joachim sent Brahms his critique of the first movement early in the month, Brahms reciprocated by mailing Joachim the finale in mid-month and the Adagio in early January, along with a freshly revised first movement. The Adagio was new, evidently replacing the original scherzo once the outer movements had taken shape. Clara had already noted the completion of the first movement in her diary on 18 October: “Johannes has finished his concerto movement. We have played it several times on two pianos.” Only after Christmas did Brahms write Clara (30 December) of the new slow movement: “I am painting a gentle portrait of you which will then be the Adagio.”

Although written months after Schumann’s death and nearly three years after the suicide attempt, Brahms’s “gentle portrait” nevertheless provides the surest means of identifying the extra-musical allusions in the 1854 sonata-symphony. In the autograph of the concerto this Adagio bears the famous citation from the Mass, “Benedictus, qui venit, in nomine Domini!” Kalbeck made the association between Dominus and Schumann, recalling the custom of Brahms, Joachim, and other intimates, of addressing Schumann as “Mynheer Domine.” Kalbeck therefore read the Benedictus verse as signaling Brahms’s assumption of the Schumann mantle: he, Brahms, came in the name of Robert to care for all that had been Schumann’s.

Subsequent interpretations of the citation have, with one exception, accepted Kalbeck’s equation of Dominus with Schumann, but differed on the presumed message. The exception,
offered by Siegfried Kross, posits instead an allusion to the E. T. A. Hoffmann character Johannes Kreisler, Brahms's self-proclaimed alter-ego. Others have suggested that the inscription indicates that the Adagio was derived from a lost mass movement, that there is Messianic symbolism, and, heeding Brahms's "gentle portrait" remark, that the one who comes in nomine Domini is Clara.

My interpretation also accepts the identification of Schumann as Dominus and the designation of Clara as the object of the inscription. However, a reading of the verse faithful to Brahms's intent must translate in nomine Domini as "within the name of the Lord," rather than the traditional rendering. It has apparently gone unnoticed that Brahms builds his graceful and gentle Adagio melody on a foundation of the passionate leaps from the first movement (ex. 3). He constructs a theme within a theme, underscoring the notes of the Maestoso motive (transposed up a major third) by letting them resound for at least a half note. The representation cryptically acknowledged in the Benedictus verse therefore equates Robert Schumann with the longer notes from the first movement and Clara with the quarter notes.

Brahms provides additional evidence for this interpretation in another musical depiction of Clara from the fall of 1854. He was present at the first of Clara's wedding anniversaries (12 September) and birthdays (13 September) celebrated without Robert, days that spurred the first exchange of letters between the Schumanns since Robert had moved to Endenich. On the day of their wedding anniversary Clara received a letter from Robert's doctor conveying Robert's wish for a letter. She responded with two, one that mentioned the pair of anniversaries, and one that did not, in case the doctor felt Robert should be spared the memories. The doctor delivered the first, and the response arrived on 15 September. Brahms sent Joachim this vivid account:

She opened the letter and could hardly mumble to me: "from my husband." For a long time she couldn't read. But then, what unspeakable joy! She looked like the F-major 3\textsuperscript{4} movement in the finale of Fidelio. I can't describe it any other way.

From the standpoints of drama and music, the moment is well chosen. Leonora's efforts to free her husband Florestan (one of Schumann's personae) from his captivity and impending death have prevailed. Over the joyous exclamations of the reunited couple, Beethoven gives the melody to the first oboe, accompanied by sustained winds and horns (ex. 4).

Brahms turned to Beethoven for this image of Clara, an image expressed in words to Joachim,
and in music in the first notes of the "gentle portrait" he presented to Clara. As in Beethoven's finale, the melody of Brahms's Adagio leaps up a fourth and steps downward through a seventh to rest on A before moving on. In both compositions the melody is supported by a pedal and is encased by the leap of a descending fourth, in the Adagio this fourth constitutes the first two framing notes of the Maestoso theme [D and A], while in Fidelio the fourth [F–C] is announced by the oboe in the first three bars of the finale as an introduction to the melody. When this theme returns toward the end of the Adagio, Brahms alludes to his Beethovenian source still more obviously by scoring the melody for solo oboe. He even prefigures the Adagio melody in the first movement of the concerto, when he sets the oboe solo in Beethoven's key, F major [mm. 151ff.]. This interpretation of the Benedictus citation implies that Brahms associated Schumann with the opening motive of the concerto before he wrote the new Adagio. In so doing it contributes musical substantiation to Joachim's recollection that the Maestoso was written in connection with Schumann's breakdown.

The depiction of Schumann, like that of Clara, also has a source outside Brahms's own music. Brahms drew Clara from Beethoven, but his Dominus representation apparently came from Schumann. The arpeggiated five-note motive which begins the concerto has specific and general relationships to several of Schumann's D-minor themes. The specific thematic relationship is to Schumann's short and foreboding setting of Friedrich Hebbel's Nachtlied, op. 108 (1849), for chorus and orchestra [compare exs. 5 and 2]. In both the arpeggiated tenth grows out of a line begun on B♭, the B♭ enters in m. 2 over a tonic pedal begun in m. 1, and each line is carried by strings (violas in the Schumann, violins and cellos in the Brahms). As in the case of Brahms's Fidelio model for Clara, the spirit of the text is also relevant. Hebbel's poem [see Appendix I] portrays a figure in the final stages of life, who, oppressed by impending death, is nevertheless resigned to it. In the deepening introversion of his final years Schumann drew his "protective circle" tightly around him, until after the suicidal outburst he required the isolation of an asylum.

The differences between the concerto and Nachtlied themes—Brahms eliminated the passing tones and emphasized the F in the descent rather than the G—seem designed to enhance the similarity between Brahms's new theme and one Schumann had used with subtle permutations in three other D-minor compositions. Chronologically the first among the general relationships is with the main theme of Schumann's Symphony No. 4 in D Minor (written 1841, revised 1851), which is presented in exs. 6a and 6b as it appears in the first and last movements.

It shares with the Maestoso theme an arpeggio emphasizing the pitches D and F, each pitch is struck twice one octave apart, thereby spanning the same minor tenth. Later, when the theme returns to begin the finale, Schumann supports it with a B♭ in the low strings and clarinets. This arpeggio also appears in the first movement of the Violin Sonata No. 2 in D Minor (1851), as the bridge theme [ex. 6c], and again in the first theme of the 1853 Overture to Scenes from Goethe's Faust [ex. 6d]. Furthermore, though they are in C minor rather than D, I include in this group the first-movement themes of Brahms's String Quartet No. 1 and his...
Symphony No. 1, which also encompass a tenth, repeating thirds in adjacent octaves as in the First Piano Concerto.

a. Schumann, Symphony in D Minor, I, m. 29.

b. Schumann, Symphony in D Minor, IV, m. 1.

c. Schumann, Violin Sonata in D Minor, I, mm. 44–45.

d. Schumann, Faust Overture, m. 16.

Example 6

III

Ever since Kalbeck published his biography, Joachim's recollection of the origin of the Maestoso and Brahms's Benedictus inscription for the Adagio have prompted extra-musical associations for those movements. The Requiem has largely escaped these claims, aside from the commonplace assertion that the deaths of Schumann (1856) and of Brahms's mother (1865) inspired progressive stages of the work. According to Albert Dietrich's testimony the funeral march "Denn alles Fleisch" is the oldest movement, originating as the slow instrumental scherzo in the sonata-symphony. I believe that, like the Maestoso which preceded it in the 1854 work, this movement also has musical references to Schumann; and that, like the Adagio that replaced it in the 1856 concerto, it also seeks to depict Clara within the confines of a Schumann portrayal.

When Brahms decided to compose a new slow movement for his concerto, not all aspects of the rejected movement needed reworking. Although he changed the key from Bb minor to D major, the meter from $\frac{3}{4}$ to $\frac{2}{4}$, and the mood from funereal to serene, other principles of the scherzo survived. Among these are the presence of basic musical connections with the first movement, connections sufficiently strong to have endured subsequent revisions made to each. The beginnings of the Maestoso of the concerto and the second movement of the Requiem share the following succession of events: each commences with the tonic sounded in the lower strings; each has a melodic line that descends from VI; the initial ambitus of both first themes is a minor tenth (ex. 7); the first theme quickly serves as the accompaniment for another (in op. 15, m. 25; in op. 45, m. 22); and the first modulation is to bVI.

The scherzo and its G major trio also carry extra-musical associations like those of the Benedictus quotation in the Adagio of the concerto. The trio resembles portions of Schumann's oratorio Das Paradies und die Peri, particularly the B-major finale of part II, "Schlaf nun und ruhe," and the codetta figure associated with falling tears because of its appearance with the words "O heil'ge Tränen." Example 8 places the conclusion of the trio alongside the last appearance of the codetta in the oratorio. This long-sustained tonic triad with its final descending third occurs three times in Peri, once to end part I and again to conclude movements 13 and 24. Later Brahms placed it throughout the Requiem; it closes movements 1, 2, 4, and 7, as well as the trio. The rest of the trio has much in common with the solo and chorus "Schlaf nun und ruhe." The triadic main themes enter without introduction (ex. 9); and then with every repetition, the first note is either suspended from the preceding bar (compare exs. 9b and

Example 7: Brahms, op. 45, II, mm. 2–8.

Example 8
a. Brahms, op. 45, II, mm. 119–23

b. Schumann, Das Paradies und die Peri, no. 24, conclusion.

Example 8

a. Brahms, op. 45, II, mm. 74–78.

b. Schumann, Das Paradies, no. 17, mm. 1–8.

Example 9

10a) or is brought in on the cadential resolution of the previous phrase. Also, the phrases leading to the varied repeat of the opening A section both feature a hemiola and the same chromatic cadential pattern [ex. 10], a V of V chord in which the leading tone resolves downward to become the seventh of V7. At the return of the A section, the previously homophonic accompaniment is subdivided, into triplet sixteenths in the Schumann, staccato eighths in the Brahms.

The text and dramatic import of “Schlaf' nun und ruhe” provided Brahms with an image of a loving and faithful wife comparable to the one he was later to describe in the 3 finale of Fidelio. In part II of the oratorio, the fallen spirit Peri seeks a gift with which to win her reentry into Paradise. Having already failed in part I with her offering of the last drop of a hero’s blood, Peri’s next gift was the final gasp of a woman who sacrificed her own life to be with her dying hus-
a. Brahms, op. 45, II, mm. 100–08.

Example 10

b. Schumann, Das Paradies, no. 17, mm. 27–32.

Example 10

band. Brahms may have been struck by the obvious parallels between the doomed husband, who had attempted to flee his wife and end his life by a lake, and Schumann, who had nearly achieved the same end in a river. At the conclusion of part II, Peri's lullaby "Schlaf nun und ruhe" addresses the wife as "the truest, the most loving heart." (Text and translation appear in Appendix II.) As a potential depiction of Clara it has one important difference with
Brahms's later allusion to Leonora. Unlike Leonora, this wife was unable to save her husband. Yet because of the difference the association fits well with the probable textual reference in the scherzo.

Brahms partially identified the thematic source of the funeral march of the scherzo. In a foreword to the Eulenburg score of the Requiem, written about the turn of the century, the conductor Siegfried Ochs reported a conversation with Brahms about the use of a chorale melody in the first two movements of the Requiem: "If you can't hear it," he remembered Brahms saying, "it doesn't matter much. You can find it in the first measures and in the second movement. It is a well-known chorale." Ochs then "solved" the problem of the chorale's identity in his Eulenburg foreword by placing the first phrase of the chorale Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten alongside the passages specified by Brahms (compare the first phrases of exs. 11a, 11b, 11c). However, when Ochs wrote his memoirs two decades later, his recollection had changed: "He also called my attention to the fact that the chorale 'Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten' lay at the root of the entire work." The discrepancy between the two is important, because according to the earlier account—the only one to quote Brahms directly—Ochs only deduced the identity from Brahms's clue, "It is a well-known chorale." Aside from Michael Musgrave no one has questioned Ochs's recollections, and Musgrave, after a lengthy discussion of the apparent conflict between the two accounts, ultimately accepts the identification of Wer nur den lieben Gott, reasoning that "of all the chorales which Brahms might reasonably have regarded as well known, none seems as close to these passages as the melody in question."

In terms of musical criteria, in terms of chorales that Brahms could have called "well-known," and in terms of an association with Schumann, I would like to propose another chorale as a more likely source for Brahms. Ochs made his deduction on the basis of the first chorale phrase alone, further restricting his attention to the first phrase of the scherzo, which, like Wer nur den lieben Gott, is in minor and has a final turn up to the supertonic before leaping down to the dominant (exs. 11a and 11c). But Brahms treats the second phrase of the scherzo as if it were also part of the chorale melody. The orchestration remains the same, with both phrases intoned by the full choir in unison, and the accompaniment repeats the same descend-


\[\text{Example 11 a}\]

b. Brahms, op. 45, I, mm. 5–7.

\[\text{Example 11 b}\]

c. II, mm. 22–33.

\[\text{Example 11 c}\]
ing figures. Nowhere in the movement is the first phrase heard without the second.  

If the second phrase is taken to be part of the chorale, rather than merely an extension of the first phrase, then the melody in Brahms’s setting bears a much closer resemblance to the chorale Freu dich sehr, O meine Seele [ex. 12a]. Both melodies lack a dominant pickup, and they share not only a first phrase rising up to the third and descending to the dominant, but also a second stepping up and down a fourth. The use of the minor mode constitutes the biggest difference, and that seems of questionable significance, especially since the beginning of the first movement of the Requiem—the other passage expressly named by Brahms—starts with the melody in major. According to Ochs, Brahms claimed that a chorale melody lay at the root of the entire work. Yet, aside from the two locations Brahms himself disclosed, Ochs named only one other. Wer nur den lieben Gott, he felt, also “haunted” the fugue that concludes the movement, an assertion no one since has cared to repeat. However, the melodic contours of Freu dich sehr recur throughout the Requiem to an extent one would expect of a chorale lying “at the root of the entire work.” Example 12 presents the initial statements of the chorale-related motives. Outside the second movement, the juxtaposition of phrases ascending and descending a third and then a fourth occurs primarily in movement 6, where the two phrases appear in three different elaborations. Example 12i, the countersubject of the fugue, “Herr, du bist würdig,” is particularly noteworthy because its corresponding subject is derived from the melody that introduces and accompanies the chorale in the second movement [ex. 7]. None of the motives has the dominant pickup of the chorale Wer nur den lieben Gott. In fact, as in Freu dich sehr, most have no pickup whatever, the major exception being the tonic anticipation of ex. 12d.  

This chorale easily merits Brahms’s description of it as “well-known.” Bach featured it in numerous cantatas, and—possibly of greater significance—Schumann also set it. It is the only chorale Schumann ever arranged as an independent piece, and he did so not once but twice in the collection he wrote for his eldest daughter, the Album für die Jugend. Perhaps Schumann’s decision not to identify the melody by name—the G-major setting [no. 4] is entitled Ein Choral, the F-major [no. 42] Figurirter Choral—lies behind Brahms’s reticence to say more than “well-known chorale.”  

Both Wer nur den lieben Gott and Freu dich sehr rank among the melodies most often set by Bach; each appears in eight cantatas. However, the Bach Gesellschaft did not publish the first cantatas with Wer nur den lieben Gott until 1855, a full year after Brahms composed the scherzo, whereas volume 2 of the Bach Ausgabe had come out in 1852, with settings of Freu dich sehr in Cantatas 13 and 19. The version in Cantata 19, “Es erbub sich ein Streit,” even offers two precedents for the arrangement Brahms made in the scherzo: a setting in ¾ time [ex. 13] and the presence of timpani in the accompaniment.  

Textual references once again supplement musical associations [see Appendix III]. The first two phrases comfort someone facing death, summoning the soul to “leave this vale of tears,” and there is also an affinity with Hebbel’s Nachtlied and Peri’s lullaby. Hebbel writes of one oppressed and compares the impending death to a sleep accepted with a childlike obedience; the chorale, which Schumann published for children, promises that death will bring a transition from woe and suffering to joy and peace; and the Peri text effectively completed the transition, speaking to those who sleep at last. By basing the funereal and marchlike scherzo on a chorale Schumann had himself arranged, Brahms in a sense also fulfills the image in Peri of the phoenix singing his own funeral song. With associations of Schumann in the scherzo and of a loving wife in the trio, Brahms apparently combines extra-musical references in a way that prefigures the portrait-within-a-portrait he made when he replaced the scherzo with the Adagio. In the Adagio it is a matter of motives, Clara within Robert’s; in the scherzo it is a question of form, scherzo before and after trio.  

IV  

Thus far I have pointed out possible similarities and references to compositions by Schumann in those movements by Brahms that have a securely established connection to the 1854 sonata. [Though the Adagio of the concerto was not originally part of the sonata-symphony, its
Example 12
Chorale, Freu dich sehr, O meine Seele, and motivic resemblances in the German Requiem.
Only the first appearances of a motive in each section of a movement are cited.
Correspondences are indicated by the letter assigned to the chorale phrase.
ties to the earlier work are well documented through letters and musical motives. Brahms’s inscription for this movement provides the key both for recognizing the presence of extra-musical associations and for interpreting them. For the other two movements the process of recognizing and interpreting allusions is more involved. Each movement has some indication from Brahms that the musical motives had other associations: the Maestoso has the third-hand testimony from Brahms to Joachim to Kalbeck about the significance of Schumann’s collapse, as well as the link between its opening motive and the Dominus representation in the Adagio; and the scherzo has Brahms’s reference to a “well-known chorale.” After identification of Brahms’s probable musical sources, an interpretation of what those sources signified for Brahms has benefited from the presence of a text in each.

A discussion of the third movement of the sonata-symphony demands a different procedure, because none of those who had played it in the two-piano version ever described any of its features. In order to formulate a hypothesis about what this movement was like, I will therefore assume: (1) that because Brahms’s early compositions contain apparently conscious motivic and thematic interrelations, knowledge of the first two movements of the 1854 work should assist in identifying material from its third movement; and (2) that if the Maestoso, Adagio, and scherzo contain extra-musical allusions to Schumann’s compositions, then the missing third and unfinished fourth movements would have had them also.

We know of two of the three movements Brahms composed to follow the scherzo, namely the third movements of the piano concerto and the Requiem. Although these movements were evidently written eleven years apart—the rondo finale of the concerto in 1855 and the third movement of the Requiem in 1866—they have important similarities. Both begin in D minor, shift to major for the final section, and have an extended pedal at or near their conclusions. In the Requiem this is the notorious thirty-six measure pedal on D, the foundation for the fugue “Der Gerechten Seelen sind in Gottes Hand”; in the rondo the coda contains a 351/2-measure pedal, or more accurately, a series of pedals beginning at m. 442: eight measures on D, seven on E, six on A, and then 141/2 on D.

Additionally, both movements acknowledge a common motivic link to the scherzo at the very outset. The first bars of the bass line restate the motive y from the opening of the scherzo (compare exs. 14a and 14b with ex. 7), including it twice in the course of a line that descends a tenth and ascends a third (motive z), just as Brahms had done at the beginning of the scherzo. In the rondo, motive z enters even more plainly in m. 9; the double basses play the line pizzicato as they do in the Requiem (exs. 14a and 14c). Motive z returns in various guises in both third movements, transformed by inversion or retrograde. In the Requiem it punctuates the c and 3 sections of the baritone solo as the minor-mode ascending third and descending tenth (ex. 14d) that eventually yields to the major-mode ascending tenth and descending third (ex. 14e). And taking this last form in the rondo, it comes back as the subject of the B♭-minor fugato (ex. 14f).

While these parallels may perhaps be explained as the product of the influence of the scherzo over the movements written to follow it, other parallels suggest deeper ties. A passage in the third movement of the Requiem has less in common with the scherzo (or any other movement of the Requiem) than it does with the first two movements of the concerto. At the start of the 3 section, the baritone solo “Ach, wie gar nichts sind alle Menschen” resembles a transitional phrase in the Adagio (exs. 15a and 15b). Each is a bass line, and each seems related to the bridge theme from the orchestral exposition of the Maestoso (ex. 15c). More significantly, Brahms built the main theme of the
rondo and the subject of the fugue "Der Gerechten Seelen" out of the same melodic material (ex. 16). The one is in major and c [♯5], the other is in minor (though its final statements change to major) and $\frac{3}{4}$; but they both begin with a vigorous ascent up an eleventh, followed by the same five-note figure (motive x), the one a retrograde of the other."\(^{34}\)

Brahms's source for this ascending motive appears to have been Schumann. The finale of Schumann's Symphony No. 1 incorporates a theme (ex. 16a) which, as many biographers have noted, he had earlier written for the rondo finale of the Kreisleriana (see ex. 16b). Brahms's usage even follows Schumann's alteration of the theme: the concerto, like Schumann's symphony, begins with the leap of a fourth, and the fugue, as in Kreisleriana, inserts a major third into the lower fourth."\(^{35}\) Elsewhere Schumann resurrected the Kreisleriana theme in one of his last works, the Konzert-Allegro mit Introduktion for Piano and Orchestra (op. 134, 1853), where it begins with a descending fifth rather than an ascending fourth (ex. 16c)."\(^{36}\) This D minor-major work was the first of Schumann's compositions to be dedicated to Brahms.

The third movement of the Requiem also seems to commence with a reference to Schu-
mann, once again to his First Symphony. Above
the bass line shown in ex. 14a, the baritone solo-
ist intones “Herr, lehre doch mich” to the mo-
tive with which Schumann begins his “Spring”
Symphony. In the opening fanfare of the An-
dante introduction, in the main idea of the fol-
lowing Allegro, and in the Requiem’s third
movement [see ex. 18], this three-pitch motive
appears in three different time values, but in
each the first note is reiterated for five times the
integer valor—quarter notes, eighth notes, and
half notes respectively. When Brahms brings
the motive back in $\frac{3}{4}$ at “Nun Herr, wes soll ich mich trö- sten,” the five half-note pulse remains
despite the resultant shift in the metric placement of the motive within the measure (ex. 18d). This movement of the Requiem therefore begins and ends with apparent references to the beginning and ending of Schumann’s First Symphony.

V

All of the preceding evidence suggests that the material Brahms originally developed for the sonata-symphony survives in the third movements of the Requiem and First Piano Concerto. Moreover, these movements probably contain material not only from the third movement of the 1854 work, but also from its finale. According to Kalbeck “the Allegro [finale] of the projected grand four-movement symphony should have been a soulful picture of the catastrophe that Brahms witnessed in fear and trembling.”37 Yet, while three of Brahms’s friends—Clara, J. O. Grimm, and Albert Dietrich—had played or heard the first three movements, there is no indication of anyone even seeing the finale. A fourth movement is clearly implied in Brahms’s letter to Joachim (19 June 1854) which refers to playing the first three movements (“drei ersten Sätze”) with Clara, and also in Clara’s earlier diary entry (24 May 1854) about playing with Brahms “three movements of a sonata by him.”38 When Brahms finally signalled the end of his project—“Ich hätte meine verunglückte Sinfonie zu einem Klavierkonzert benutzt”—the Unglück clearly lay with the fourth movement. Grimm after all had praised the first three movements as sending him to “even more heavenly heights” than the op. 8 Trio,39 and Clara had described them as “quite forceful, quite original, imposing.”40 The decision to convert the symphony into a concerto provided an expedient solution to a persistent problem: how to write a satisfactory symphonic finale.

While writing his first symphony, more than in his first attempts in any other genre, Brahms contended with the spectral example of Beethoven. Brahms acknowledged this, no less than his friends, and Schumann encouraged it: “He [Brahms] should always have in mind the beginnings of Beethoven’s symphonies; he should seek to make something similar.”41 The D-minor Maestoso, even though it ultimately began a concerto and not a symphony, has such a beginning, as was immediately observed by a critic who lauded the “gigantischen (der neunte Beethovens würdigen) Motive” after the Hamburg premiere.42 And in the finale of the concerto Brahms whole-heartedly embraced Beethovenian precedent. Here, as Charles Rosen recently demonstrated, Brahms modelled his minor-major rondo on the finale of Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor, at times emulating the structural details of the movement bar-by-bar.43 By the late 1850s Brahms eschewed a similar solution for a symphonic finale: “Oh god, if one dares to write symphonies after Beethoven they must look very different.”44 This conviction may stem from his failure to complete a symphonic finale that looked very much like Beethoven indeed.

Remains of Brahms’s rejected finale are most likely to exist in the third movement of the Requiem, a movement that begins in D minor with a baritone solo and concludes in major with choir singing over the long D pedal. Musically and textually it sustains many elements present in the first movement of the concerto, while suggesting the surprising possibility that the model Brahms had attempted to follow for his symphonic fourth movement was quite literally the choral finale to Beethoven’s Ninth. Incidentally, a choral conclusion to his own symphony also offered Brahms a ready opportunity to fulfill the prophecy Schumann had published several months earlier in his famous article “Neue Bahnen”: “If he should point his magic wand to where the masses of choir and orchestra will lend him their powers, we anticipate wonderful views of the world of spirits.”45

By beginning the symphonic finale with a baritone singing “Herr, lehre doch mich,” Brahms would have created a threefold allusion. As he later did in the concerto finale, Brahms would have drawn from both idol and mentor simultaneously—on Beethoven for form (introducing a baritone into the fourth movement) and on Schumann for melody (taking the motive from the “Spring” Symphony). But with this reference both to Beethoven’s last symphony and Schumann’s first, there is also an overt textual association between the Schumann motive and the German word for Dominus, “Herr.” Aside from a novel expression of the Maestoso Dominus idea, the textual-motivic linkage of “Herr, lehre doch mich” and
"Nun Herr, wes soll ich mich trösten" would thus constitute personal addresses to Schumann: "Teach me," and "in whom shall I find comfort?"

Brahms may also have attempted to emulate the other innovative feature of Beethoven's finale, namely the introduction's explicit flashbacks to the previous movements. In its present form, the third movement of the Requiem contains no quotations from earlier movements of the sonata-symphony, only motivic recollections. After the initial reminiscence of the scherzo in the bass line there is an inversion of the leaping D-minor tenth of the Maestoso at the conclusion of the first sixteen measures, set to the words "und ich davon muss" ("and I must leave it" [i.e., "life"]). As shown in ex. 19 this inversion also prepares motive z, the rising third, falling tenth motive discussed above [compare exs. 19 and 14d]. Leading to this inverted phrase the baritone sings the motive v, which had followed the Dominus motive in the Maestoso. [Compare mm. 1–3 of ex. 19 with mm. 3–5 of ex. 2.] In addition to the baritone motive, the chordal pedals present in both instances emphasize the minor sixth D–B♭ before resolving to a first-inversion A-major triad.

Had there once been sections repeating the incipits of the symphony's preceding movements, Brahms would have excised them when he subsequently reworked the movement for the Requiem in 1866. But one residual indication of where Brahms's symphonic finale might have included a quotation from an earlier movement now exists in the B♭ section starting at m. 33. There the woodwinds and brass play in block chords the distinctive harmonic progression from the beginning of the first movement of the Requiem: I, V7 of IV, IV66, I—each for one bar. If Brahms had applied this principle in the symphonic finale and inserted at m. 33 four bars from the beginning of the Maestoso, then the influence of Beethoven's finale, with its first flashback occurring in m. 30, would have been unmistakable.

This movement's inception as the finale of the symphony would also explain other features, such as the previously mentioned similarities of the 3 section "Ach, wie gar nichts sind alle Menschen" to the Maestoso, and, for reasons given more fully below, the resemblance of the rondo theme of the concerto to the fugue subject "Der Gerechten Seelen." For now, this suggests that Brahms, while abandoning a four-movement symphony in favor of a three-movement concerto, wanted to retain some version of the Kreisleriana theme originally destined for the finale. These symphonic origins also provide insights on why Brahms felt comfortable letting the third movement function as a quasi-finale at the first public performances of the Requiem. In Vienna he previewed only the first three movements (1 December 1867). In Bremen (Good Friday, 1868), when he premiered all but the fifth movement, he split the Requiem into two parts: movements 1, 2, and 3 began the concert, and after two choruses from Handel's Messiah and arias of Bach and Handel, movements 4, 6, and 7 ended it.

The likelihood that Brahms once contemplated using an earlier version of this movement as the finale to his first symphony would also explain why he eventually rejected it; for while the symphonic finale he composed twenty years later attracted the sobriquet "Beethoven's Tenth," at least it was not a blatant reworking of the Ninth. When Brahms then turned to Beethoven for the structural scheme of his concerto finale, he found in the finale of the Third Piano Concerto a less distinctive, more anonymous model based on a more traditional formal plan. The form would therefore betray neither Brahms's method of composition from a Beethovenian model nor the identity of the model itself.

The search for portions of the missing third

Example 19: Brahms, op. 45, III, mm. 9–16.
movement of the sonata-symphony leads to the finale of the concerto. Albert Dietrich, who had played the three movements with Clara in 1854, later identified the first two movements of the sonata in the concerto and Requiem, but failed to recall the third. This failure is significant, for if Brahms had simply altered the form and tempo of the original, an expert musician like Dietrich would have certainly recognized the source behind the alterations. Consequently the main theme of the rondo is not likely to have been present. One possible motivic connection between the rondo and the Maestoso or scherzo has already been singled out in the B♭-minor fugato subject. Shown with its countersubject in ex. 20a, the fugato also echoes the scherzo with the y motive and a line that steps down into an upward-resolving leading-tone suspension. As in the related passages in the scherzo (exs. 20b and 20c), the suspension precedes another descent from G♯.

For this section of the rondo, Charles Rosen’s comparison with Beethoven’s Third Piano Concerto can be amended to include the influence of the third movement of Schumann’s Symphony No. 2 in C Major. Brahms wrote Clara of his particular esteem for this Adagio (8 December 1855): “I certainly would like to have been along to hear the C-Major Symphony! That symphony is my favorite of the five, and among the four movements the Adagio most definitely.”47 At the mid-point of the Adagio Schumann included a section in free canon that has several of the contrapuntal features present in Brahms’s fugato. Schumann begins sempre pp and staccato with the second violins, as does Brahms (p sempre), and in both the imitation ceases when the movement’s principal theme returns, accompanied by the contrapuntal subject [augmented in Brahms], supported by a seven-measure dominant pedal.

There is one essential difference between Brahms’s fugato and either the Beethoven or Schumann examples. While Beethoven simply writes a fugato on the rondo theme and Schumann bases his contrapuntal subject on the main theme of the Adagio (he rearranges the first several notes), Brahms makes no effort to relate his fugato subject to the rondo theme. Instead, he derives his subject from the B♭-major theme of the middle section of the rondo, mainly by changing the mode to minor (ex. 21):

Example 20

Example 21: Brahms, op. 15, III, mm. 181–84.
However, if this section, or some form of it, once comprised the beginning of the missing third movement, then the fugato would have been a contrapuntal elaboration of the main theme of the movement, and Brahms’s debt to his predecessors all the greater.

For other reasons this possibility makes musical sense. Most of all, the major and minor forms of the B♭ theme complement motives of the other movements, providing yet another permutation of the third-plus-tenth motive seen at the beginning of each movement. Remarkably, Brahms would thus have considered initiating the four movements of his symphony with four different transformations of motive z (ex. 22): the original form in the Maestoso, the retrograde in the melody and accompaniment of the scherzo, the retrograde-inversion in the B♭ third movement and its fugato, and in the finale the inversion in D minor, the retrograde-inversion in D major, and the retrograde in the bass line of the opening bars. Also, in terms of large-scale harmonic planning, a movement in B♭ major between the scherzo and the D minor-major finale accords with what Brahms later did in the Requiem, when he added a B♭-major conclusion to the scherzo. In this light Brahms’s method of converting his symphony into a concerto was less one of excision than compression. Rather than eliminating a movement, he seems to have combined them, taking the rondo theme from the ill-fated finale and the middle section from the third movement. In other words, while formal structures could change, themes were to be retained, not from considerations of aesthetic merit, but for the allusive content the themes preserved in their constituent motives.

VI

Like the themes of the first two movements of the symphony, the theme that Brahms preserved in the concerto rondo and the Requiem fugue has extra-musical allusions, though not because of associations with Schumann’s choral works. And despite their melodic similarities to the theme Schumann had first used in the Kreisleriana finale, the principal allusion does not appear to be to Schumann. It is more probable that Brahms adopted this lively motive as a representation of his alter-ego, “Johannes Kreisler, Junior.” The allusion in the rondo and fugue themes appears to be involved with and revealing of Brahms’s personal aspirations at the time. In each theme the Kreisler motive (the ascending eleventh in exs. 16a and 16b) leads to a form of the five-note motive x that others have associated with Clara (compare ex. 1 with exs. 16a and 16b), and that Schumann used with an ascending tenth as the main theme of his Symphony in D Minor (exs. 6a and 6b). Brahms’s juxtaposition of motives representing himself and Clara may therefore be a symbolic representation of the future with Clara he wished for himself. It is this future that then looms in the Requiem as the answer of the D-major fugue to the preceding question, “In whom shall I find comfort?” And in the concerto the combination of the two motives into one theme provides a vision of life after Schumann’s death, which rounds out the triptych Brahms began in the Maestoso, with presents of death, and continued first in the scherzo and later in the Adagio, with Clara shown as the devoted wife of Robert.

An interpretation of motive z as a reference to Robert further suggests that Brahms designed
the concerto finale as a portrait-within-a-portrait to complement that heard in the preceding Adagio. By constructing the B♭ interior of the rondo on various forms of motive z, Brahms implants a representation of Robert into a movement that begins and ends by thematically binding Kreisler to Clara. If read in their musical sequence the Adagio and rondo successively portray Clara within Robert and then Robert within Brahms and Clara, but if considered in the chronological sequence of their composition, a more complex reading ensues: in 1855 and early 1856, while waiting for Robert to die, Brahms wrote a finale for a symphony and then a concerto with a motivic anticipation of the day when Clara would be his. When months after Robert’s death this vision remained unattainable, Brahms rewrote the slow movement to depict Clara as the Fidelio heroine, Florestan’s faithful Leonora.

Such a personal interpretation gains credibility from Brahms’s lifelong use of these same motives in a variety of melodic and contrapuntal combinations. A preliminary listing of these combinations is given in table 1. Two features occur repeatedly: the examples listed are beginnings of movements (or in op. 45, III, the start of a major subsection), and the motives are presented over a pedal. (In op. 15, III, a double pedal accompanies the motives at their first appearance in D major.) All of these works that contain a reference to Robert (i.e., ops. 9, 15, 33, 45, and 77) are the first works in a new genre. To this list may be added the first themes of the First String Quartet, op. 51, no. 1; the First Symphony, op. 68; and the First Clarinet Sonata, op. 120, no. 1. Each of these begins with a motive that sweeps up a tenth, emphasizing the thirds in adjacent octaves. This pattern suggests that Brahms wanted to crown some of his inaugural efforts with a private tribute to Schumann.

Two of the motivic combinations in table 1 offer corroboration for the sort of interpretive readings suggested above. The second of Brahms’s Balladen, op. 10, written during the summer of 1854, is a D-major Andante that begins with the earliest known citation of the F–A–F motto. It then leads directly to the Leonora motive he subsequently used in his Adagio portrait of Clara (ex. 23):

Example 23: Brahms, op. 10, II, mm. 1–4.

In his later set of Balladen, (op. 75, 1877) Brahms retained elements from the earlier collection, such as the depiction of patricidal Edward from Herder’s Stimmen der Völker in the first piece. Again there is a reference to Clara and Brahms, but in the later opus their motives are not so much joined as placed in proximity; that is, her motive (motive x) begins

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Motives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>op. 9, X</td>
<td>Variations on a Theme by Schumann</td>
<td>Robert and Clara*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>op. 10, II</td>
<td>Balladen (piano)</td>
<td>Brahms [F–A–F] and Clara (Leonora)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>op. 15, II</td>
<td>Piano Concerto No. 1</td>
<td>Robert [Dominus] and Clara (Leonora)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>op. 15, III</td>
<td>Piano Concerto No. 1</td>
<td>Brahms [Kreisler] and Clara (motive x retrograde)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>op. 26, II</td>
<td>Piano Quartet in A</td>
<td>Clara (Leonora) and Brahms [Kreisler]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>op. 33, I</td>
<td>Magelone Lieder</td>
<td>Robert [Dominus] and Brahms [Kreisler]**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>op. 45, I</td>
<td>German Requiem</td>
<td>Clara [motive x] and Robert (chorale)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>op. 45, III</td>
<td>German Requiem</td>
<td>Brahms [Kreisler] and Clara (motive x)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>op. 75, II, III</td>
<td>Balladen (duets)</td>
<td>Clara [motive x] and Brahms [F–A–F]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>op. 77, I</td>
<td>Violin Concerto</td>
<td>Robert [Dominus] and Joachim [F–A–E]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>op. 90, I</td>
<td>Symphony No. 3</td>
<td>Brahms [F–A–F] and Brahms [Kreisler retrograde]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*simultaneously in two parts
**intertwined in one part

Table 1: Motivic Allusions in Brahms [Preliminary List].
the second duet and his motto (F–A–F) the third. As far as I have determined, this is the first association of Brahms's *Frei aber froh* with Clara's motive; always before Brahms linked F–A–F to Leonora—a non-threatening pairing of the happy bachelor with the loyal wife—or else Clara's motive to the more impetuous Kreisler. The change between the earlier and later *Balladen* may well betoken Brahms's acceptance of a more distant relationship with Clara than young Kreisler had desired. Letters between Brahms and Clara provide one type of documentation for the changes in their relationship; another exists in the shifting motivic combinations used to build themes in ops. 10, 15, 26, 45, and 75.

There remains the question of how much Brahms's friends knew of his extra-musical allusions. Clara, who probably knew the most, divulged nothing. She is most likely to have understood the references drawn from Schumann's works, such as the five-note motive she had also used in her own compositions, and the *Kreisleriana* motive. Her singular lack of praise for the concerto rondo may betray discomfort over the motivic allusions. Once enthusiastic about the three movements of the sonata-symphony, she had also expressed her approval of the *Maestoso* in its reworked form and of the new Adagio as well. On the rondo she is silent, except for an opinion relayed by Joachim: "A conversation with Frau Schumann led me to the conclusion that you should write another last movement, as alterations are often more troublesome than fresh creations."52 And it is curious that while Brahms had shown Clara the other movements of the sonata-symphony shortly after they were written, he withheld the finales of the sonata-symphony and also the concerto. The latter emerged only in mid-December 1856, months after Robert Schumann's death. In contrast, the allusions in the *Balladen* were his own, and he freely and quickly showed this work to Clara and Robert. The motto F–A–F doubtless would have been known and recognized, but this is less certain for the *Fidelio* citation. Either Clara did not know of this one, or more probably, she did and found the association with Leonora pleasing.53

By focusing on the motives of a few early and interrelated compositions, I have attempted to relate probable extra-musical allusions to the development of the 1854 sonata-symphony. The resultant picture of Brahms's methods has implications not only for interpreting his lifelong use of certain motives, and for the way we view the construction of themes from combinations of motives, but also for how a motive is to be defined in the first place.54 Recent studies have tended to focus on the smallest possible units, two or three notes spanning as little as a third or fourth. Without denying the merits of studying how Brahms manipulates cells of this size, it also seems worthwhile to expand motivic boundaries to include seven or eight notes spread over a tenth or eleventh. But motives that recur from work to work warrant interpretation as well as analysis. While the distinctive manner in which he combines familiar motives certainly led to the creation of new themes, it may also have been Brahms's preferred means of expressing his non-musical hopes and of acknowledging changes in his personal relationships. As more of his motivic allusions are understood, Brahms's musical speech should become less and less elusive.
APPENDIX I

Friedrich Hebbel, *Nachtlied*

Quellende, schwellende Nacht,
Voll von Lichtem und Sternen:
In den ewigen Fernen
Sage, was ist da erwacht?

Herz in der Brust wird beengt,
Steigendes, neigendes Leben,
Riesenhaft fühle ich’s weben,
Welches das meine verdrängt.

Schlaf, da nahst du dich leis’,
Wie dem Kinde die Amme,
Und um die dürftige Flamme
Ziehst du den schützenden Kreis.

{Surging, swelling night, full of lights and stars: in the eternal distance, say, what has awoken there? Heart being constrained in the breast, advancing, declining life, tremendous I feel it move, squeezing mine out. Sleep, you approach it quietly, as a child would a nanny, and around the weak flame you draw the protective circle.}

APPENDIX II

*D Das Paradies und die Peri: “Schlaf’ nun und ruhe”*

Schlaf’ nun und ruhe in Traümen voll Duft,
balsam’scher umweh’ dich die Luft,
as dem magischen Brand des Phönix entsteigt,
wen er sein eigenes Grablied singt,
Schlaf’ nun und ruh’ in Traümen voll Lust,
der, die treueste, liebendste Brust!

{Sleep now and rest in fragrant dreams, may you be encircled by breezes more fragrant than those from the magical fire of the Phoenix as he sings his own funeral song. Sleep now and rest in joyful dreams, you, the truest, most loving heart.}

APPENDIX III

Chorale, *Freu dich sehr, O meine Seele*

Freu’ dich sehr, O meine Seele
Und vergiss all’ Noth und Qual,
Weil dich nun Christus, dein Herre,
Ruft aus diesem Jammerthal.
Seine Freud’ und Herrlichkeit
Sollst du sehn in Ewigkeit,
Mit den Engeln jubiliren,
In Ewigkeit triumphiren.

Lass’ dein Engel mit mir fahren
Auf Elias Wagen roth,
Und mein’ Seele wohl bewahren,
Wie Laz’rum nach seinem Tod.
Lass’ sie ruhn in deinem Schoos,
Erfüll’ sie mit Freud’ und Trost,
bis der Leib kommt aus der Erde,
Und mit ihr vereinigt werde.

(O my soul, be thou rejoicing,
Cast aside all cares and fears;
Christ the Lord for you is calling,
Bids you leave this vale of tears.
Out from woe and sore distress,
Forth to joy and blessedness,
Joy abounding, joy transcending,
Everlasting, never ending.

Let thine angels not forsake me,
But to Thee, when life shall cease,
May Elijah’s chariot take me
There, like Lazarus, in peace.
Let me rest in Thine embrace,
Fill my heart with joy and grace.
When my days on earth are ended,
May my soul with thine be blended.

—Henry S. Drinker)


4"Ich sahe Sie doch oft, so gut wie körperlich, z. B. bei der Trillerstelle in Andante der C dur-Sinfonie bei den Schlussstellen, den Orgelpunkten in den grossen Fugen, wo Sie mit mir mit einem Male wie die heilige Cacilie erscheinen." Clara Schumann–Johannes Brahms: Briefe aus den Jahren 1853–1896, ed. Berthold Litzmann (Leipzig, 1927), I, 50 (letter of 8 December 1854). Eric Sams, in his "Brahms and his Clara Themes," Musical Times 112 (1971), 433, quotes the slightly different version given in Berthold Litzmann, Clara Schumann, 3rd edn. (London, 1906), II, 344, which leads him to the translation "in the concluding passages, the pedal point in the great fugue . . . " and thus a discussion of a motive in Beethoven’s op. 133. Both the grammar of the passage [the second phrase functions as an appositive modifying the first phrase] and the context (discussing Schumann’s works) make his reading the less likely. Brahms was probably referring to the pedal “in the concluding passages” of Schumann’s Six Fugues on the Name BACH, op. 60.

5"Brahms and his Clara Themes," 432–33. Two of Sams’s examples of this Clara theme appear below, in exs. 6a and 6b.

6Max Kalbeck, Johannes Brahms, 4th edn. (Berlin, 1921), I, 98.


11Brahms, Briefwechsel V, 58 (letter of 12 September 1854).

12Schumann–Brahms Briefe I, 69.

13Ibid., 76. With this transformation, Brahms unknowingly retraced steps taken by Beethoven, who had converted sketches for a piano concerto into his Eighth Symphony.

14See Kalbeck, Brahms I, 166; and Dietrich, Erinnerungen an Johannes Brahms (Leipzig, 1898), p. 45.


16Schumann–Brahms Briefe I, 198.

17Brahms wrote the inscription between the two staves of the piano part. Floros includes a reproduction of the Adagio’s first page at the end of the brief chapter he devotes to the inscription in Brahms und Bruckner, p. 147.

18Kalbeck, Brahms I, 166.


21Forté ("Motivic Design of Brahms’s Quartet," p. 501) terms examples of one motive containing another “particularly striking” in Brahms.

22Brahms, Briefwechsel V, 64 (letter of 17 September 1854).

23This Adagio is not the first time Brahms had combined motives representing Clara and Robert. Two years earlier Brahms had quoted themes by both in his op. 9, variation 10. The intertwining of her theme with Robert’s pleased Clara greatly, see Litzmann, Clara Schumann II, 30.


25Geschehens, Geschehens [Leipzig, 1922], 302; Floros also quotes the passage fully in Brahms und Bruckner, 42, n. 3. See also below, n. 28.


27As Musgrave notes ("Historical Influences," p. 16), Brahms later echoed both phrases at the beginning of “Death cometh to both man and beast,” the first of the Vier ernste Gesänge, op. 121.


29While the choral entrances of movements II and VI begin with motives outlining a third then a fourth, so also do the beginnings of movements III and V, though less obviously. The soprano solo (movement V) has a double beginning, that is, Brahms includes a si placet part in the soprano’s second bar, ostensibly to provide an alternative to the high A. However, since the soprano is required to sing this pitch twice later, tessitura is less a justification for the lower line than melodic contour: D–E–F–E–D–G creates another third plus fourth succession. The baritone solo (movement III) also beginning with a third plus fourth, although, for reasons given below, the third is inverted.
Freud dich sehr is in Cantatas 13, 19, 25, 30, 32, 39, 70, 194, and Wer nur den lieben Gott in Cantatas 21, 27, 84, 88, 93, 166, 179, 197.

That Brahms would derive inspiration for his instrumental compositions from poetic sources is, of course, entirely in keeping with his practice in other works from this early period, especially the three piano sonatas, ops. 1, 2, and 5, and the Balladen, op. 10. See in particular the section "‘Poetisches’ bei Brahms,” in Floros, “Studien zu Brahms’ Klavierwerken,” pp. 47–58, and also his Brahms und Bruckner, pp. 73–83, and Bozarth, “The ‘Poetic’ Andantes.”


There are also similarities between movements written to precede the scherzo, i.e., between the first movements of the concerto and the Requiem. After each begins with a tenbar tonic pedal, the first modulation is to V VI at nearly the same juncture [m. 46 in op. 15, m. 47 in the Requiem], and from V VI the return to the tonic key comes in m. 67 in op. 15 and m. 65 in the Requiem.

From Brahms’s later works Musgrave has found a melody with musical and textual similarities to the fugue subject in the last of the Vier ernste Gesänge. See “Historical Influences,” p. 16.

Brahms once even programmed and performed his piano concerto with three of Schumann’s Kreisleriana fantasies (20 April 1860); see Kalbeck, Brahms I, 410. Kalbeck does not specify which three Brahms performed.

In the finale of Symphony No. 1, the penultimate statement of ex. 17a also begins with a descending fifth in the strings, see mm. 214–15. This also falls within one of Forte’s analytic guidelines: “The boundary interval [of a motive] may undergo octave inversion” (“Motivic Design of Brahms’s Quartet,” p. 474).

Kalbeck, Brahms I, 166.

Grimm also uses this last phrase in his letter of 9 April 1854 to Joachim. All three citations appear in Dahlhaus, Brahms Klavierkonzert Nr. 1, p. 3.


Brahms first heard Beethoven’s Ninth in March 1854 in Cologne; see Kalbeck, Brahms I, 164. Dahlhaus includes several early reviews of the concerto in Brahms Klavierkonzert Nr. 1. This one is from 29 June 1859 (p. 31).


The translation is from Kross, “Brahms the Symphonist,” p. 125.

On the first performances of the Requiem, see Klaus Blum, Huwerties Jahrhen Ein Deutsches Requiem von Johannes Brahms [Tutzing, 1971], pp. 36–73. His view of the Requiem’s evolution is an uncritical elaboration of Kalbeck’s ideas.

Schumann–Brahms Briefe I, 160. The total of five symphonies includes the Overture, Scherzo, and Finale, op. 52, from 1841.

Further, the motives in movements I, III, and IV actually include a sixth in one direction plus a tenth in the other, or vice versa. These transformations comprise the fourth of Forte’s general analytic guidelines: “A motive may be transformed without losing its basic identity. The transformations which Brahms uses are retrograde, inversion, and retrograde inversion” (“Motivic Design of Brahms’s Quartet,” p. 474). In retrograde-inversion this motive is particularly close to the four Schumann motives given in ex. 6.

Brahms’s identification with the E. T. A. Hoffmann character, the Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler, is well known and well documented, both in letters with friends and in autographs of early compositions. See Kross, “Brahms and E. T. A. Hoffmann”; and Floros, Brahms und Bruckner, especially chapter 12, pp. 84–98.

Roger Fiske has argued that motive x, as it appears in the rondo theme, is a motive Schumann used to represent Clara in the Davidsbündlertänze, op. 6. See “A Schumann Mystery,” Musical Times 105 (1964), 574–78. See also the reference in fn. 5 above.

This figure is also the theme of the first of Schumann’s Bunten Blättern, op. 99, which Brahms then used as the theme he varied in his own op. 9, written to raise Schumann’s spirits. Clara had written her own variations on this theme a year earlier.

Joachim then conveyed his belief that “es wäre doch schade um vieles bedeutende in dem Rondo, und vielleicht gewinnst Du’s doch über Dich, mit ersten Ungestüm wieder hinein zu arbeiten um die einigen Stellen neu zu schaffen, das wäre mir lieb.” Brahms, Briefwechsel V, 172 (letter of 12 January 1857).

In 1837 Robert had even written to Clara urging her to emulate Leonora: “Adieu mein Fidelio. . . und bleib so treu wie Leonore ihrem Florestan Deinem Robert.” Litzmann, Clara Schumann I, 154.

This study also has implications for the evolution and organization of the Requiem, which I will examine elsewhere.